

The book proper begins with an essay on Thomas Jefferson and the creation of what the author calls an “agrarian ethos” of the individual landowning farm proprietor. In this first chapter, the author maintains that because of Jefferson’s influence, the United States pursued a public land policy in support of sales and grants to individual landowning farmers. Chapters two through four recite, entirely from secondary sources, the history of U.S. public land policy, or, more precisely, the history of public land legislation passed by Congress. There is no treatment of how the General Land Office operated to implement, or not, congressional policy. These chapters depend largely on the work of Paul W. Gates; indeed, Krall almost never cites anything written after 1968. The dated histories she consulted are all treated in the present tense, as if Fred Shannon or Roy Robbins were alive and writing today. Krall is on surer ground when she brings in her economics expertise, notably in chapter two in discussing a subject of considerable scholarly research in Iowa history: land speculation. She writes that the speculator was a “rent-seeker,” or, as the type is known in financial markets, an arbitrager, trying to make money on inefficiencies in the market. This reader wished the author had expanded on this insight into why market inefficiencies arose and how, if at all, markets worked or did not work to correct economic rents.

A fifth chapter on an American “wilderness ethos” covers congressional legislation, notably the Wilderness Act of 1964. It is unclear why the author included this chapter. Perhaps it was to suggest that the Wyoming in which William Krall attempted to start a ranch in 1918 should never have been open to homesteading or other private ownership of the land. However, the book never does return to Wyoming. The verdict of the Wyoming jury in the 1921 murder trial of Steve Lasich was surely unjust to William Krall; I have my own Scotch verdict on Lisi Krall’s thesis that her grandfather was a victim of the dysfunctional American public land system: not proven.

*Ben Shahn’s American Scene: Photographs 1938*, by John Raeburn. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010. xiii, 190 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$75.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper.

Reviewer Constance B. Schulz is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. She has edited collections of documentary photographs from the 1930s and 1940s for South Carolina and Kansas.

The Farm Security Administration (FSA) was an agency created to deal with problems of the nation’s poorest farmers during the Great Depression, first in 1935 as the Resettlement Administration, then re-

named and located within the Department of Agriculture in 1937. It is best known today, however, not for its larger successes, but for a small department within it, the Historical Section, usually referred to by the FSA initials of the parent agency. Headed by Roy Emerson Stryker, the FSA's Historical Section produced more than 180,000 photographs of America and Americans between 1935 and 1943. The photographs, housed since 1943 at the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division and now digitized and available for all to see on the library's website, were rediscovered by scholars in the 1960s. Numerous books have since appeared that use them as illustrations of the impact of the Depression, comment on them as New Deal propaganda, or reproduce ones from a particular state as a photographic album of state history.

Stryker directed the work of more than 50 photographers; this study is an in-depth analysis of the work of only one of them (Ben Shahn) produced within the space of a single summer (1938) in a handful of towns in central Ohio. Ben Shahn (1898–1969) is best known for the murals he painted in public buildings during the Depression, but he had traveled in the South as a photographer for the Resettlement Administration in 1935–36. Early in 1938, between commissions for murals, he asked Stryker for a photographic assignment to central Ohio. (His wife, Bernarda, was staying with her parents in Columbus awaiting the birth of their second child.) Stryker hired him and allowed him to spend the summer there documenting the harvest rather than requiring him to move on after a week, the usual practice of such assignments. Shahn did photograph the Ohio harvest, but the 900 photographs he took that summer also included 320 that surveyed small-town life.

Raeburn's achievement is a remarkable one. Instead of using the photographs as illustrations or memorabilia, they serve as the primary evidence for his well-argued thesis that by the late 1930s the towns in this part of Ohio, and perhaps by extension others throughout the rural Midwest, were beginning to experience the economic and social decline that has usually been traced to the post-World War II expansion of interstate highways and the resulting exponential growth of urban areas. In developing his argument from a relatively small body of photographs, 100 of which are reproduced in the book interspersed with the texts that describe them, Raeburn has analyzed the images carefully. Employing a sophisticated reading of the visual evidence, Raeburn explores the different experiences the photographs reveal based on the class, race, or gender of those captured by the camera's carefully framed images.

Iowans may find this thesis, and the images used in support of it, an intriguing suggestion for studying the Depression-era experiences of their own small towns. There are 2,170 images of Iowa in the FSA collection digitized and available online. John Zielinski published a selection of these in *Unknown Iowa: Farm Security Photos, 1936–1941* (1977), but most of the photographs he selected are of rural scenes. Iowa towns that appear in a name search of the online catalog include Spencer, Clinton, Iowa Falls, and Woodbine. Ames is listed with 284 photographs. Perhaps Raeburn's thesis will stimulate those who read his work to study the more scattered Iowa small-town photographs, taken by several different photographers, to discover for themselves the pleasures of FSA photography.

*Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise*, by Kevin M. Schultz. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. viii, 256 pp. Notes, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Bill R. Douglas lives and works in Des Moines. He has written articles for the *Annals of Iowa*, *Minnesota History*, and *Quaker History*.

The religious shift in the United States from early twentieth-century Protestant hegemony to the present-day reign of diversity proceeded in stages, Kevin Schultz argues persuasively in *Tri-Faith America*. My major problem with this fine book is its subtitle: as I read it, it implies that Protestants were somehow shamed into expanding the franchise. As the book makes clear, more often than not Protestants took the lead, and of course Catholics and Jews sometimes had their own agendas. For that matter, the subtitle's adjective "postwar" slights Schultz's work in part one in framing the 1920s and 1930s as decades when the tri-faith project got underway. Most of that section deals with the pioneering work of the National Council of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) and its forgotten hero, Everett Clinchy, but Schultz also points to the 1924 founding of the University of Iowa's School of Religion, which became a model for tri-faith academic inquiry at other American universities. NCCJ's tactic of sending out a "brotherhood trio" of a priest, a minister, and a rabbi on speaking tours included a Des Moines team nicknamed the "Corn Belt Crusaders" — clearly a term coined before sensitivity to Muslim concerns registered on the liberal consciousness. But in a state where rural Catholics had reason to fear the Ku Klux Klan, Des Moines Bishop Gerald Bergan would later claim, notes Schultz, that the trio "had fundamentally changed the culture of Iowa."