

*Aristocracy on the Western Frontier: The Legacy of the Marquis de Mores*, edited by Virginia Heidenreich-Barber. Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1994. 57 pp. Illustrations. \$6.50 paper.

REVIEWED BY PAULA M. NELSON, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-PLATTEVILLE

The Marquis de Mores and his wife, Medora, came to northwestern Dakota Territory in 1883 hoping to make a fortune in the meat-packing industry. Their venture failed spectacularly and they departed for adventures elsewhere in 1886. The three essays in this nicely produced booklet help answer some important questions about the de Mores and their tumultuous years on the Dakota plains.

The first essay, D. Jerome Tweton's "The Marquis de Mores in the Badlands of Dakota," places the marquis squarely within the entrepreneurial spirit of the Gilded Age. Tweton's reasoned discussion explains the visions and possibilities of the times and locates de Mores' failures in the many distractions that beset him during the formative years of his endeavor.

The second essay, by Frank E. Vyzralek, explains in detail the most pressing distraction, the trial of the marquis for murder. Several locals, angry over the marquis' fencing of the range, engaged him in a gun battle. Subsequently charged with murder, the marquis embarked on a two-year legal odyssey that made fascinating newspaper copy and, as recounted here, reveals much about frontier justice.

The final essay details Medora Von Hoffman's vision for the chateau she and her husband built in the North Dakota Badlands. The chateau brought a touch of the aristocracy to the arid plains. Mary S. Hoffschweli's essay explains how the home's structure and decor can provide clues to the daily life of the nineteenth-century elite.

In sum, *Aristocracy on the Western Frontier* is a useful introduction to the de Mores legacy.

*Early Stories from the Land: Short-Story Fiction from American Rural Magazines 1900-1925*, edited by Robert G. Hays. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1995. xx, 300 pp. Illustrations. \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY KURT E. LEICHTLE, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-RIVER FALLS

Dr. Hays's ear for stories is excellent; these were the types of stories I heard while leaning on the counter in my grandfather's Wisconsin store. This interesting and entertaining collection of stories from farm journals and magazines of the early twentieth century features tales about six topics: humor, machinery, romance, the human condition, women, and animals. The stories span the nation, though most contain

themes that are universal to the American rural experience. Several stories are set in the Midwest, including one about a bank robbery and one about a locomotive.

What could be enlarged is Hays's discussion of the stories' history and context. His introduction to the book begins to place the magazines in time and suggests their importance to and impact upon rural America, yet most readers will hope for a longer and more analytic discussion. Likewise, each of the chapter introductions seems too brief, leaving the reader wondering why this type of story was popular and why these particular stories seemed so representative of their type. Hays has immersed himself in these magazines and has a strong sense of what they meant to their original audience. Modern readers, both popular and academic, would enjoy reading more about his reactions to the stories and magazines. In the end, however, the book will be enjoyed by anyone who read the magazines and wants to remember or who wishes a brief introduction to farm magazine fiction.

*A Farm Economist in Washington, 1919-1925*, by Henry Charles Taylor. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992. xii, 263 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes. \$24.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY WAYNE D. RASMUSSEN, AGRICULTURAL HISTORIAN

Henry Charles Taylor (1873-1969) was dismissed from the United States Department of Agriculture in 1925 over a political disagreement with the Coolidge administration. He spent most of the next two years writing this book. At least three slightly different versions of it exist, with one in the Department of Agriculture edited and marked for printing. It was withdrawn and only now is made generally available.

Much of the book is uncontroversial, discussing the applications of economic theory to agriculture and the functions of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, which Taylor established. In the last section, which was quite controversial at the time of original publication, Taylor contrasts the agricultural policies of Presidents Harding and Coolidge and those of their Secretaries of Agriculture, Henry C. Wallace and Howard M. Gore. Taylor suggested that perhaps Coolidge and Gore had been influenced in their thinking by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover.

Shortly after World War I, farming fell into a depression from which it was not to recover until the late 1930s. Taylor and Wallace advocated government intervention in the aid of farmers, probably by some variation of the McNary-Haugen bills, while Gore and Coolidge opposed intervention. Even though Taylor was the nation's

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