

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 It was withdrawn and only now is made generally available.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

best-known agricultural economist—he was often called “the father of agricultural economics”—he had to go. A foreword and appendix by Kenneth H. Parsons add to the value of the book and to our understanding of Taylor.

My Double Life: Memoirs of a Naturalist, by Frances Hamerstrom. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994. xii, 316 pp. Illustrations. \$35.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY CORNELIA F. MUTEL, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Frances Hamerstrom, an internationally known wildlife biologist, presents her life story in a multitude of enticing vignettes that span her eighty-plus years. Born in 1907 into wealth and privilege, Frances was an unusually independent child, identifying more with the wild creatures around her than with humans. Her affinity for wild animals grew when she married and attended college at Iowa State University, where she studied under Paul Errington. She received her doctorate at the University of Wisconsin under Iowa-bred Aldo Leopold, the only woman to do so. She and her husband spent much of their professional lives in central Wisconsin, researching prairie chickens, hawks, owls, and other wild creatures.

Although Hamerstrom's connections to Iowa might appear minimal, her story is one to touch any Iowan interested in the state's natural and human past. The prairie chicken, the bird most symbolic of Iowa's original prairie habitat, was a major game and market species before it disappeared from Iowa. Through descriptions of her life and research, Hamerstrom gently educates us about this lost part of our heritage. She also paints a graphic picture of pre-World War II mid-western culture, describing communities in which owners of small farms were bound closely to nature. And lastly, she blesses her female readers with a model of a woman who forged a professional life with determination and grace and, in doing so, teaches us to better understand the earth's balances and the passions that tie us—spiritually as well as physically—into the web.

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