

on changing agricultural practices, crops, government policies, and agricultural agencies, the text is more focused on the agriculture produced by rural people than the people themselves. In this sense, *Born in America* is an excellent introduction to the new agricultural history, a broad spectrum of scholarship that has so informed our understanding of rural America.

Another limitation is Danbom's Turnerian approach. The first chapter discusses Native American agricultural practices and identifies key European rural traditions, but from that point on, once the first settlers arrive in the Chesapeake, these themes fall out of the narrative. Later mentions of plains tribes, for instance, treat them as obstacles to settlement; their acculturation, either by force or choice, to an agricultural way of life is a missing, yet important, story. Puzzling, too, is the omission of how the waves of largely eastern European immigration affected agriculture, especially in the Great Plains. Little is said about the Southwest, or the old Spanish frontier, save for Texas Populists. Rural traditions tied to Spanish culture are missing, too. Considering their importance to modern American agriculture, neither California nor Florida receive adequate attention. Little coverage is given to irrigation or migrant labor.

These omissions do not overshadow the value of *Born in America* as a synthesis of a generation of scholarship. Rural historians at the state, regional, and national levels owe David Danbom much for conceptualizing their field of study for a new generation of historians.

Legacy of the Land: Agriculture's Story to the Present, by Hiram M. Drache. Danville, IL: Interstate Publishers, 1996. xxv, 494 pp. Illustrations, tables, references, index. \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY MARK FRIEDBERGER, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Hiram Drache's *Legacy of the Land* is the third survey of agricultural history to have appeared in as many years. This relative abundance contrasts to a dearth a few years ago when the economist Thomas Cochrane's *The Development of American Agriculture* was the only text in print. Drache is an agricultural insider, in that while he taught history, he also farmed. This background is reflected not only in this book, but also in his previous work. Drache is a rarity today among academic historians because he is an unabashed enthusiast and booster for industrialized agriculture.

Arguably there are two ways to approach textbook writing. The first is to write a brief interpretive essay that makes up for its lack of comprehensiveness with an intriguing thesis and fresh insights. This

was the methodology of David Danbom's recent *Born in the Country*. Douglas Hurt's *American Agriculture* provides an alternative approach: a relatively long narrative that tries to be encyclopedic in coverage. Drache follows the latter model, but with less felicitous results. Textbook writing works best when several specialists combine their talents to coauthor a volume. Although on paper Drache is as well qualified as anyone to survey American agriculture, he is surprisingly parochial when it comes to coverage. He is in his element with the row crop farming of his native upper Midwest, but is less sure when he ventures to other regions or sectors of farming.

Drache's strategy is to divide his volume into five chronological sections: colonial, antebellum, 1865–1914, 1914–1954, and post-1954. Unfortunately, without a series of overarching themes to tie the discussion together, these "units" are often a bewildering hodgepodge of information. Like many textbook writers, Drache has a dilemma about what to include and what to cut. For example, he neglects to mention riverine agriculture in his exposition of Indian farming; his coverage of the South is weak; Iowa and traditional cornbelt agriculture is hardly mentioned; and despite his enthusiasm for big farming he fails to include much on the wonders of California agriculture or the post-1960s High Plains. Instead, rather like a high school social studies text, the volume is chock-a-block with little sections. These include snippets of information on such topics as the binder, rural schools, the radio, soybeans, and chemurgy. The early sections of the book are only marginally influenced by the huge amount of recent work done by rural social historians — although some of this material is cited in the references. To be fair, Drache has made a considerable effort to trace the changing role of farm women over time.

Not surprisingly, Drache comes into his own in his coverage of the twentieth century. He emphasizes the workings of the food chain and how large conglomerates dominate the industry. There is also some welcome discussion of horticulture and the salience of part-time farming and part ownership. However, the most important aspect of the final sections is the mention of the unmentionable — that is, the increasing redundancy of the small family farm in American agriculture after 1945. For much of the book Drache is measured in his tone — his analysis of another controversial topic, the farm program, is balanced — but he obviously could not resist the urge to take potshots at that icon of Americana, the family farm. From the perspective of 1996, his pronouncements are probably on target. But it is worth noting that he includes hardly any discussion of the farm crisis of the 1980s, when boosters of production agriculture like himself found egg on their faces. Drache knows that many of the "successful professional

farmers" who had adopted the land-grant creed were crushed, while many old-style frugal farmers survived.

Drache's book will fit snugly on the shelf of the agribusinessman/twenty-first-century commercial farmer. His judgments about agriculture are for the most part conventional and uncritical. In his preface he looks for scapegoats for contemporary agriculture's problems and finds them in the environmental, animal rights, and consumer movements. This failure to take the critics of production agriculture seriously means that much of the new rural history that has changed how we look at the countryside—such as the negative impact of science and technology on rural society—get short shrift. Thus a most important lay historical audience, whose only contact with the history of agriculture will be through this volume, will be denied access to fresh interpretations. For them, Drache will have confirmed the conventional wisdom.

Farm and Factory: Workers in the Midwest, 1880–1990, by Daniel Nelson. *Midwestern History and Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. ix, 258 pp. Tables, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PETER RACHLEFF, MACALESTER COLLEGE

Farm and Factory deserves to take a place among the most respected books consulted by students of midwestern history. Daniel Nelson is an experienced and esteemed scholar of American labor history, the author of two well-researched and tightly argued labor history monographs (*Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880–1920* [1975] and *American Rubber Workers and Organized Labor, 1900–1941* [1988]) as well as several articles in scholarly journals. His writing style is clear and uncluttered, and he has cast his net over a broad expanse of not only geography but also history.

Farm and Factory is full of information on topics ranging from the impact of technological and managerial changes on the organization of production in specific industries and the changing role of government in the economy to the emergence of mass production unions and new political expressions. From automobiles, tires, and farm machinery to white collar offices, service and retail establishments, and the growth of the government bureaucracy, *Farm and Factory* is sure to become the first source consulted by future students of work in the region.

Nelson is at his strongest when he offers a detailed case study, often of a subject on which he has conducted his own research. Their value lies not just in the richness of the detail he offers, but also in the ways that he manages to anchor wider trends in specific experiences. Readers are certain to spend extra time with chapter four, "Revolutions

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