

division by subdivision, block by block, and lot by lot. Hardly as romantic or exciting as studying reformist rhetoric, campaign debates, or legislative combat, her approach reveals a great deal more about how the world really works.

Relentlessly, Burgess asks four crucial questions of her often deliberately obscurantist sources. Did zoning ordinances conform to Columbus's comprehensive plan? Did their implementation produce a balance of land uses, allowing sufficient housing for various income levels and providing for commercial and industrial sites in proportion to employment and consumer needs? Did zoning prevent the intrusion of incongruous or potentially harmful uses? Did zoning actions serve all income groups equally well, lessening inner city congestion and protecting the residential environment for those lacking adequate financial resources? Her judicious and carefully nuanced answers are all the more persuasive and damning precisely because of their dispassionately professional tone. While zoning boards and developers did not necessarily collude, she explains, their actions were frequently "almost reciprocal in nature." Although zoning "was not directly the cause of social stratification or racial segregation," she asserts that it "formalized and perpetuated existing development trends." Nor did zoning effectively serve the public interest in metropolitan Columbus. When "all was said and done," Burgess concludes, "planning served the private interest."

If anything, Burgess is too modest in her interpretive claims, both for the Columbus case study and for the possibilities of its wider application. Those who would challenge her book on either score had better be prepared to buttress their arguments with research that is equally detailed and time-consuming.

*Public Values, Private Lands: Farmland Preservation Policy, 1933-1985*, by Tim Lehman. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995. xii, 239 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PHILIP J. NELSON, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

In his compact book, *Public Values, Private Lands*, Tim Lehman gives us an intriguing look at the historical processes at work in farmland preservation. The author deftly blends four areas of history—land use, the environment, agriculture, and public policy—into a cohesive analysis and explanation of why the United States, with much of the best land in the world and some of the strongest traditions of localism and individualism, would even be interested in the amount of farmland as a national issue. Both the tight focus of the book and the

author's strong biases in favor of national involvement in farmland preservation in particular, and land use in general, are brought out clearly and unapologetically from the beginning. Happily, the book does not bog down in historical particularism, dealing as it does with a plethora of institutions, agencies, studies, and individuals, but returns often to larger themes in American cultural history and political reform. Of special interest in this regard is the ambiguity, ambivalence, and importance of much social science research and expertise in relation to public policy formation in the modern American state.

Lehman begins his analysis with the debates in the 1930s over the first genuine attempts to conserve land by means of soil-holding techniques and to preserve land through a comprehensive national land use planning authority. At issue was one of the most fundamental realms of cultural contention in American history, the conflict between the national government and locales. Lehman claims that the tension between bureaucratic control and the localist political tradition was resolved through a kind of dialectical movement towards a synthesis, represented by the founding of a new agency—the soil conservation district. Institutional resistance by the Extension Service and others to the new districts and the land use planning concept they embodied forced the Soil Conservation Service to organize the districts along county lines, not on the ideal basis of watersheds. Lehman succeeds in clearly bringing out the institutional conflicts that attenuated land use planning, but treats its demise in the 1940s somewhat cursorily.

The bulk of the book comprises the history of recent farmland use, taking up the thread of farmland preservation policy again in the 1970s. Fundamental changes in agricultural productivity, land philosophies, suburbanization and metropolitan sprawl, the demand for American food exports, and environmental standards forced people to see the quantity of remaining farmland in a new light. As a result of the all-devouring maw of urban-suburban sprawl, people had tangible proof of the disappearance of prime farmland beneath asphalt and concrete. Many of agriculture's shortcomings became more evident in the 1970s, too, as fence row to fence row planting increased soil erosion with a vengeance. With the era of cheap energy apparently over and environmentalism on the rise, agriculture's sometimes extravagant use of petroleum in fuels, fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides belied claims about efficiencies in farm production and an absence of farm-caused pollution. Lehman rightly looks at the rise of the sustainable agriculture philosophy and the connection between the deterioration of the land and the decline of the rural community. But one wishes the author would have expanded his treatment from

a mere nod to Wendell Berry and Murray Bookchin to include the significance of Wes Jackson and his Land Institute, Frank Popper's "Buffalo Commons" idea, Robert Rodale, and Iowa's own Dick Thompson, member of the Practical Farmers of America, who surely helped bring this issue to light on the federal level.

The author's third chapter out of five, and perhaps the strongest, concerns farmland protection on the federal agenda. Lehman is at his best in analyzing bureaucratic machinations and departmental interactions. He posits that elements of the federal government were able to relegitimize the concept of farmland preservation as the issue of national growth faded slightly in the 1970s. In this regard Lehman analyzes several studies, including the USDA's Seminar on Prime Lands and *Potential Cropland Study*. Efforts to legislate land use boiled down to four causative dimensions: ideological clashes, as exemplified by the opposing views of conservationists (land as resource) and economists (land as commodity) in the USDA; "the desire of centralizing elites to find rational, orderly procedures for guiding chaotic local land use decisions" (69); bureaucratic infighting over institutional needs; and the often conflicting research conclusions of social scientists. While the federal government engaged in extended debate, a few states, such as Maryland, New York, and California, acted to contain a new pattern of development called "buckshot urbanization." These states used a number of control mechanisms, including differential property assessments, restrictive building agreements, and rural zoning to combat scattered new construction, none of which worked very well. Lehman concludes that local governments were not able to resist national patterns of growth, and so the impetus for farmland preservation returned to the federal level.

Land preservation in Congress centered on the Jeffords Bill in the House, which proposed to establish a commission to research the problem, but most importantly to "support a selected number of state and local farmland protection programs" (107). In the Senate, Iowa's Dick Clark pushed a bill that included an "innovative farmland protection program in Iowa's Black Hawk County that had caught national attention" (112). Both bills eventually died. Opponents generally justified their hesitation to support some sort of national land planning not only on the basis of ideological opposition, but also because they were waiting for the completion of yet another study—the National Agricultural Lands Study. Finally in 1981, despite great contentiousness over the definition of endangered lands, the Farmland Protection Policy Act was passed. As a "pale imitation" of the Jeffords Bill, it could only ask federal agencies to limit prime farmland wastage to a minimum

in their programs. Farmland preservation moved one more step closer to reality with the passage of the 1985 Farm Bill, which contained provisions such as the Conservation Reserve Program, "swampbuster" and "sodbuster" restrictions, and conservation compliance.

Lehman does a commendable job in bringing the overall land preservation story to life. Thus *Public Values, Private Lands* is necessary reading for both rural and urban midwesterners, because our greatest resource besides people is the land itself.

*Smith Wildman Brookhart: Iowa's Renegade Republican*, by George William McDaniel. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1995. xviii, 378 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PETER L. PETERSEN, WEST TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY

In this sympathetic but far from uncritical chronicle of the life of Smith Wildman Brookhart (1869–1944), George McDaniel has made a major contribution to Iowa history and biography. In the history of Iowa politics, few individuals were as colorful or controversial as Smith Brookhart, one of the Senate's "sons of the wild jackass" in the 1920s. He won his first office, that of Washington County Attorney, in 1894. Initially a "regular" Republican, Brookhart's admiration for Theodore Roosevelt and Albert Baird Cummins led him toward the "progressive" wing of the party. Over time Brookhart came to see himself as the champion of farmers, small-town merchants, and laborers and proudly proclaimed that he "would rather be right than be regular." His views often brought him into conflict with the Republican establishment, particularly during the 1920s, when Iowa politics, McDaniel argues, "was largely characterized by the struggle between the regular Republican Party and Smith Brookhart for the support of Iowans" (xvii). In many ways, McDaniel's account of that fight is the most valuable part of the book, as he details how this internecine conflict led to Brookhart's defeat in 1924 by Daniel Steck, the first Democrat to represent Iowa in the United States Senate since the end of George Wallace Jones's term in 1859.

An angry Brookhart soon had his revenge, however. After defeating Cummins, his one-time hero and ally, in the 1926 Republican primary and Democrat Claude R. Porter in the general election, he triumphantly returned to Washington, "the chosen voice of agrarian protest" (198). For a time he cooperated with Herbert Hoover, but Brookhart soon broke with his fellow Iowan over the issue of agricultural relief and eventually supported Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election. By then, many depression-weary Iowans had grown

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.