

Book Reviews

and experienced greater unemployment than the other resident populations" (p. 125).

Unquestionably, Dorothy Schwieder has written a pioneering study of life in the Iowa coal fields. Yet this book is disappointing in some ways. For one thing, she ignored what might be considered the state's most significant coal community, Hiteman, located six miles northwest of Albia in Monroe County. This camp, founded in 1890 by the Wapello Coal Company, an affiliate of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, grew to about 3,500 residents by World War I. But its ethnic composition was more important than its impressive size. Hiteman was originally home to a labor force of Welsh, English, Swedes, and a few blacks, but around 1915, Eastern Europeans, mostly displaced workers from the dying Smoky Hollow mines near Avery, began to arrive. While their appearance did not lead to a massive exodus of first inhabitants, there were those who left. For example, the town's popular druggist, H. A. Dinsmore, relocated his family to Albia and commuted to work on the electric interurban. Hiteman, too, offers the fascinating mixture of company and private businesses. There was the Hiteman Supply Company, but individual merchants co-existed with the company store. And unlike the typical "company" town, workers owned their homes, a factor that gave the community a degree of permanence even after the mines closed in the late 1930s. It is also unfortunate that Schwieder did not examine the extensive Iowa mining materials in the James J. Hill Papers in St. Paul, or the records of the coal companies (including the Hiteman Supply Company) owned by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy at the Newberry Library in Chicago. And if she had been persistent, she would have discovered that the Chicago & North Western Transportation Company retained a rich variety of records for its Consolidated Coal Company, developer of several southern Iowa camps, including Muchakinock, Buxton, and Haydock. Finally *Black Diamonds* is attractively printed, contains a number of fine photographs and maps, and has a reliable index.

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

H. ROGER GRANT

The Governing of Agriculture, by Bruce L. Gardner. Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1981. pp. xii, 148. Appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$9.95.

Bruce L. Gardner's *The Governing of Agriculture* is a straightforward attack on agricultural policy as we know it. In a nutshell, Gardner's argument is that *governing* agriculture has been, with few exceptions, a failure. In addition to the failure to realize its own goals, the govern-

ing of agriculture has relied on methods that are inequitable to taxpayers and consumers. Gardner concludes by recommending a virtual dismantling of the agricultural "government," and replacing it with a new reliance on market institutions.

Gardner first argues that commercial farmers are, as a group, more wealthy than average Americans. (One notes with some suspicion that Gardner places great weight on income statistics for one year—1978.) Therefore, commodity programs that have the effect of transferring income to commercial farmers, either as price-supports or as higher prices, are inequitable.

Gardner next argues that agricultural policy has failed to achieve its goals because commodity programs of all varieties give commercial farmers great incentive to produce more—an irrational result, since overproduction is the chronic problem of American agriculture. Gardner would rather that commercial farmers were left to plan for contingencies themselves, through the futures and options markets—and to pay for their mistakes. Gardner has little doubt that farmers are capable of such market strategies, and that a market regime would create a stable agricultural economy without social costs.

Gardner's argument is stated with forceful clarity. His primer on federal commodity programs is highly informative and insightful. In particular, his analysis of the contradictions and irrationalities in the sprawling collection of individual programs that constitute farm policy is telling. His arguments that many, perhaps most, of the economic rationales for current farm policy lack credibility are usually convincing.

Many readers will agree with Gardner that farm policy is a mess. (In this, at least, the book is uncontroversial). Many will also find themselves in agreement with Gardner's criticisms of specific programs. It is doubtful, however, that many minds will be changed on the issue of government intervention in the farm economy. Those who have little faith in market institutions will note that Gardner's brief for a return to the market relies more on ideological assertions than on solid evidence. They will note that Gardner's attack on the governing of agriculture is only one aspect of Gardner's attack on the legitimacy of economic-governing *per se*: state power, Gardner alleges, "is a continuation of the struggle for wealth by other means, a tool by which organized groups of citizens attempt either to increase their slice of the economic pie or to prevent others from decreasing it" (p. 115). Likewise, those who adhere to Gardner's neoclassical economics will be most enthusiastic about the book.

Throughout the book, Gardner disregards the long history of farm strife in America and the social and cultural factors that are significant elements in the debate over farm policy. Gardner makes a

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compelling argument that the economic rationale for current farm policy are vacuous. To the extent that he is correct, it would seem that factors other than pure economics are determinative and thus should be the focus of analysis. An economic analysis of policies determined by non-economic factors may be very effective as advocacy for the market, but it is also uninformative as to the social and cultural realities underlying the problem.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

STEVEN C. KRUMPE

The American Farmer and the New Deal, by Theodore Saloutos. Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1982. pp. xviii, 327. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.75.

This, the last book by the late Professor Theodore Saloutos, is a fitting memorial to his pre-eminence in the field of agricultural history. Although the author adds nothing new to our knowledge of New Deal agricultural policies and programs, he contributes a masterful synthesis which will undoubtedly stand for a long time as the major reference in the field.

In his treatment of the conception, launching, activities, and decline of the New Deal program for the farmer, Saloutos skillfully unravels the tangle of philosophical and personal conflict which permanently handicapped the efforts of Henry Wallace and his associates. Particularly strong is his treatment of the struggle between the agrarians led by Chester Davis and Cully Cobb and the urban liberals led by Jerome Frank over the issue of landlord versus tenant rights. Saloutos clearly outlines the manner in which politics and personal rivalry affected the lives of millions as this fight led to the ultimate removal of the liberal influence from the AAA. The spirit of complacency which prevailed thereafter permanently affected the direction of government agricultural policy.

The book contains an analysis of the effort to reopen world markets to American agricultural products between 1934 and 1936 and the reason for these efforts being only partially successful. It also includes a discussion of the problems peculiar to the efforts to handle rural poverty and an analysis of the failure of these efforts to provide the rural poor with a level of assistance commensurate with their needs. Included here is an excellent summary of the activities of the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration as well as an assessment of the impact of the Bankhead-Jones Act.

In a summary chapter notable for its insight and clarity, Saloutos evaluates the New Deal agricultural program. It was an effort, he concludes, to resolve the unresolvable. The multifaceted nature of the

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