

ployer and society than their northeastern factory counterparts. She cites as evidence that, because mine work was seasonal, many took summer jobs and lived in cities like Chicago—and returned to Iowa. Also, the author attributes a greater economic role to women than is generally perceived. The miner's wife cared for house and children, of course, but she also took in three to five boarders at an average eight-dollar monthly charge per boarder. She sometimes earned more than her husband, and her work was steady and nonseasonal. Nor was income from garden-grown produce and midwifery negligible. The author found interviewees generally optimistic, probably reflecting the Iowa expectation of owning the family home or a nearby rich farm.

For Indiana readers this book substitutes for a comparable study of the Indiana coal-mining industry. Indiana and Iowa are related not only through the UMW and miners moving from one state to the other but also because the decline of Iowa mining in the 1920s led some former miners to find jobs at United States Steel in Gary and Ball-Band in Mishawaka, further enriching the economy and ethnic composition of this state.

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Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century. By Walter Licht. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983. Pp. xx, 328. Notes, tables, illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$27.50.)

With this study of rank and file employees of America's first big businesses, Walter Licht has taken a long step toward closing a large and inexplicable gap in the history of nineteenth-century railroading. He has also made a substantial contribution to American labor history. At a time when workers' "cultures," strikes, and the ever-popular Industrial Workers of the World absorb the attention of most scholars, Licht reminds his readers of the central role of work in the lives and behavior of industrial employees.

Licht asks the right questions. Who were the early railroad workers, how were they recruited and compensated, what did they do, what difficulties did they face, and how did they live? By scouring the records of early railway companies, the reminiscences of railroad employees, the reports of various public agencies, and the many historians' studies of railroad companies and railroad lore, he provides convincing but hardly definitive answers to most of these questions. In a series of useful tables Licht documents wage levels, turnover, discharges, mobility, ethnicity, and other pertinent subjects. In general, he finds that railroad workers lived hard and insecure lives. They came from farm homes, reached

their highest positions while still in their thirties, worked long hours, earned high but uncertain wages, chafed at managerial directives and restraints, and often suffered death or disability in the performance of their duties. In short, Licht concludes that railroad workers worked and lived much like most other nineteenth-century industrial workers, despite the distinctive character of the railroad industry. While much room remains for additional studies, Licht's research will be a benchmark for all subsequent explorations of railroad labor in the nineteenth century.

Of his many conclusions, Licht is most intrigued with the discovery that local superintendents and foremen exercised virtually complete control over subordinate employees. They hired and fired and disciplined at will. In effect, the corporate bureaucracies of the nineteenth century operated at the lowest level, just as did the small factories and mines of the period. In his last chapter Licht exploits this insight to explain the rise and success of trade unionism among railroad employees in the years after the great strikes of 1877. He is fascinated by the phenomenon of workers demanding the extension of bureaucratic procedures to the base of the corporate hierarchy. His analysis is persuasive as far as it goes, but it is also incomplete and perplexing. It disregards several relevant inquiries, most notably why corporate managers did not realize the disadvantages of unsystematic, decentralized supervisory practices before the workers did. Licht seems to be arguing that railroad executives were far less astute than manufacturing executives, a point that deserves more thorough and detailed development. The last chapter therefore should be read as an invitation to additional research, rather than an extension of the earlier material. The rest of the volume will stand alone, a valuable examination of an important but little-known group that occupied center stage in the drama of American industrial expansion.

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German Workers in Industrial Chicago, 1850-1910: A Comparative Perspective. Edited by Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz. (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1983. Pp. viii, 252. Illustrations, maps, notes, tables, figures. \$22.50.)

A happy juxtaposition of the three-hundredth anniversary of German emigration to North America and the growing influence of labor history is found in this collection of thirteen essays that endeavors to discover the reality of immigrant German working-class experience in ethnic Chicago's golden age. In earlier form