

Roswell Garst: A Biography. By Harold Lee. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1984. Pp. xv, 310. Illustrations, sources, index. \$12.95.)

Although Roswell Garst only attended college for a few semesters, he became an eminent agriculturalist and practical agronomy experimenter of great stature. He, as a close friend and business colleague of Henry A. Wallace, pioneered in the production and sale of hybrid corn. Garst was an Iowa farmer, landlord, and founder of Garst and Thomas Hi-Bred Corn Company. Aptly dubbed the "Great Innovator," he vigorously promoted such practices as the widespread use of hybrid corn seed, intensive use of nitrogen as a chemical fertilizer, irrigation of corn, utilization of the trench silo, greater mechanization on the farm, and the development of commercial feed lots in the corn belt.

Because of his close personal ties with Wallace, Garst supported the New Deal farm programs and even contributed to the implementation of the corn-hog allotment program set up under the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Although he was a lifetime Republican, Garst's loyalty to Wallace and other Democrats, such as Hubert H. Humphrey, motivated him to support government management of agriculture despite his free market inclinations. It was paradoxical that while he backed farm programs to pay farmers not to produce surpluses, his own activities in promoting scientific farming were instrumental in dramatically increasing the production of agricultural commodities. Garst, like so many who lived during the Great Depression, could never quite relinquish his loyalty to the New Deal for rescuing the farmers during the economic hard times of the 1930s despite the drastic transformation that subsequently took place on America's farms.

Garst received brief national attention in 1958 when Nikita Khrushchev visited his farm. His subsequent role as an advisor to the Soviet Union on agricultural matters was unique. Garst, a capitalist entrepreneur seeking to profit from hybrid corn seed sales to the Soviets, nevertheless became a trusted friend of the Soviet leader and an amateur diplomat working for peaceful relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Seemingly, both Garst and Khrushchev did not look upon the Soviet purchase of hybrid seed corn as opening the door to American economic imperialism, since both countries benefited from the ensuing trade relations. Garst gave freely of his knowledge to the Russians in an attempt to upgrade their archaic and inefficient agricultural system. The grateful Khrushchev later wrote in his memoirs: "I recognized Garst . . . [as] a human being whom I re-

spected for his energy, his knowledge, his willingness to share his expertise and, so to speak, his trade secrets with others, even with us to put to use in our socialist enterprises" (*Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, Boston, 1974, p. 400).

Although criticized by ecologists for his advocacy of chemical fertilizers, Garst was always on the lookout for ways to increase the production of food at home and in underdeveloped countries. He was forever the salesman of scientific agriculture and the preacher of peace through agricultural abundance. He lectured Khrushchev on the need for the Soviets to turn military armaments into peaceful plowshares and was saddened by such Cold War events as the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution, the Berlin blockade, and the Cuban missile crisis.

Garst was one of those rare individuals who, though generally not known among the general populace, did influence the course of agricultural history. Many who enjoy the bountiful cornucopia of America's farmers will benefit from reading this superbly written biography of a man who deserves to be recognized as a pioneer of modern farming.

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Normal

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A Black National News Service: The Associated Negro Press and Claude Barnett, 1919-1945. By Lawrence D. Hogan. (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984. Pp. 260. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$27.50.)

Inspired by the success of nationally circulated black newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender*, Claude Barnett launched Associated Negro Press (1919), a black analog of Associated Press and United Press International. For forty-five years ANP's small staff reliably distributed a large quantity of well-written news and feature stories to member newspapers. Relying heavily upon volunteers and poorly paid stringers, ANP covered black civic life and leadership, national politics and government, black entertainment and sports, and developments in Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean.

Barnett dreamed of having a large, full-time, salaried staff with bureaus in major cities. He hoped to add comics, editorial cartoons, photographs, and a pictorial magazine to his news and feature service. Moreover, Barnett sought a reciprocal relationship with member newspapers in which they would send news to ANP, thus shaping the wire service to their needs. None of this came to be. Afraid of aiding competing papers, Barnett's clients did not accept reciprocity and therefore never strongly identified