served. Probably more volumes have been written about Gettysburg than about any other event in American history, but none is clearer or more firmly grounded in research than this one. It is certainly among the best ever written about the battle. The author sets forth the development of the second day of the battle and introduces readers to the people in the fight, from the leaders to the rank-and-file soldiers, from the brilliant to the foolish.

Pfanz is an excellent writer, and the style and organization of this book make it eminently readable. The historian must search out the truth in often conflicting personal narratives, reconciling or choosing among them. The battle of Gettysburg produced thousands of accounts, and the author has done an outstanding job bringing some of these together to tell part of this epic story. He has made his choices well. If points are to be disputed, such dispute is one of the aspects of Civil War history that makes it so abidingly interesting. Pfanz documents what he says, and his notes are logical, well reasoned, and add immeasurably to the work.

The first and third days of that monumental struggle were deadly in a straightforward way: head-on clashes of mighty masses of men, bloody and devastating. This book is the story of Robert E. Lee's attempt to win the fight on the second day of the battle by turning the Union left and of George G. Meade's successful defense against it. It was a day of boggling complexities, of mistakes, of ingenuity, of seemingly superhuman effort, of courage, savagery, pain, kindness, and death spread across the fields and hills south of the town. To tell the story coherently and to breathe historic life into the people who were there and figured into the scheme of things is difficult. Harry W. Pfanz has spent a good portion of his life tramping the ground of Gettysburg, searching the libraries, seeking new material to enrich the mountains of the old, developing an understanding of what happened on that crucial day. He has put it into writing, and readers are the richer for it.

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Corncribs: In History, Folklife, & Architecture. By Keith E. Roe. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988. Pp. xi, 103. Illustrations, map, bioliography, index. $24.95.)

Observers of changes in the Midwest's rural landscape generally recognize that the form and function of agricultural structures reveal the evolution of occupational processes and technologies. Some of these structures, including corncribs and summer kitchens, are still commonly seen even though the particular occupa-

tional needs that motivated their constructions are only infrequently encountered. More ephemeral items of material culture such as the hayrick or grain strawstack are today only encountered in Old Order religious areas, at festivals and reunions, and through the oral histories and narratives of older regional residents.

Keith E. Roe's contribution to understanding this landscape is an eminently readable and copiously illustrated historical overview of American corncrib design and construction. The author's interest and obvious fascination with corn storage structures reflects in part his own experiences on his father's corncrib carpentry crew in Iowa in the late 1950s. The accelerated demise in corncrib construction is only a single generation old (and by no means complete), and Roe deserves credit for portraying an aspect of agricultural life before the wholesale disappearance of the structures or the people who built and used them.

The book begins with short chapters on corn growing and crop preservation techniques used by Indians, colonial settlement groups, and pioneers of the Upland South and Old Northwest. The brief overviews of agricultural systems are sometimes simplistic, yet Roe is generally successful in charting the ethnic and occupational influences on the development of corn storage structures in the New World. He gives particular attention to Scandinavian and Central European immigrant structures as he contends that the v-shaped upward flaring style of these immigrant groups' log haysheds are the precursors of a basic American corncrib design. The small bins built on farms in the colonies, and later in Appalachia, the Upland South, and the Old Northwest between 1800 and 1850, were typically single crib structures constructed with horizontal logs or boards.

Corncribs focuses primarily on the structures built between 1860 and 1960 in the Midwest where there were the largest crops and greatest need to dry and conserve ear corn for livestock. Roe is clearly most comfortable with twentieth century descriptions. Two-thirds of the book's total text and two hundred illustrations focus on the period between 1930 and 1960 when most of the largest and still-extant cribs were built. The author succinctly treats the factors that increased corn production (including hybrid corn, fertilizer increases, adoption of cornpickers and elevators) and thus necessitated changes in crib volume, design, and construction techniques, as well as the changes (including earlier-maturing hybrids, mechanical grain drying, and combines with corn heads) that eventually led most farmers to abandon their cribs or modify them to some more practical use. He traces design evolution from single to double crib design and clearly details the various construction techniques used for the wood structures. Perhaps due to Roe's pre-

CORNCRIB

vious occupational experiences, the book's strongest features are its functionalist discussions of building forms and processes.

Corncribs is thus a combined text and photographic introduction to a once-everyday farm structure made obsolete by changes in agricultural production, technology, and marketing. As the author notes in his preface, he is not concerned with writing a "definitive history" (p. ix) of corncribs or corn storage. The book's excellent illustrations, high-quality paper, fast-paced text, and clean design will appeal to a wide general audience. Agricultural historians, folklorists, and cultural geographers, however, may find the volume's discussion too generalized and brief. Roe's bibliography is comprehensive; unfortunately, it is not keyed to the text through citation references. In fairness to the author, there are few subregional studies of corncribs (or silos, granaries, and similar-function structures) upon which to base a comprehensive study. Roe's volume will thus remain the best available study of corncribs until more fieldwork is completed.

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