

hallmark of the present book, which were made for Richard Wright's *12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States*; and Delano's coverage of two families—one black, one Italian—to demonstrate the contributions of ethnic groups toward the war effort. These groupings provide the reader with a vivid sense of how the FSA generated and exploited photographs.

Picturing Minnesota incorporates 171 images from approximately 1,500 that were made by eight photographers, but 80 percent of the Minnesota volume is composed of the work of just two photographers, Lee and Vachon, a St. Paul native who made half the photographs in the book. The chapters are characterized by regions, assignments, activities, events, and FSA projects. With some exceptions, such as Lee's series on logging camps or Vachon's documentation of life on a family friend's farm, continuity within the book is inconsistent, as photographs from the same assignments are often scattered throughout. The arrangement lends little to a comprehension of how the photographs were used by the government or others, and the reader comes away with the impression that the photographers' results were simply filed away. On the positive side, it should be noted, however, that Reid is more thorough in the sectional introductions in both of these books than he was in *Back Home Again*.

Chicago and Downstate and *Changing Chicago: A Photodocumentary* are both volumes in the *Visions of Illinois* series by the University of Illinois Press. These connections, coupled with its internal coherence, add a relevance to *Chicago and Downstate* that enhances its significance. The only suggested motive that may have prompted Reid to compile *Picturing Minnesota* is that he hails from Red Wing, Minnesota, which detracts from the book's worthiness. It would be truly disheartening if a "pick-a-state, any-state" pattern is emerging where market-driven researchers troop off to the Library of Congress to select images, then hurry back to yet-one-more large university press for publication before someone else realizes they could do the same. Unfortunately these books have taken on a cookie-cutter persona, mimicking the style of Beverly Brannan and David Horvath's Kentucky volume in format, structure, size, typeface, titles, and subtitles. Reid, in following Brannan and Horvath, has imitated a respectable model, but Nancy Wood's *Heartland New Mexico: Photographs from the Farm Security Administration, 1935–1943* best exemplifies that the mold can be successfully broken.

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Shake-Out: Iowa Farm Families in the 1980s. By Mark Friedberger. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989. Pp. xiv, 199. Tables, appendixes, notes, index. \$22.00.)

An American would have had to have been living on the moon during the past decade to have been unaware of the farm crisis. Newspaper articles, segments on television news, concerts by rock stars, and pronouncements by politicians, leaders of farm organizations, and government bureaucrats regularly drew attention to the plight of farmers losing land that had been in their families for generations. Even more ominous than the personal tragedies suffered by a hard-working people was the danger that the crisis would destroy the family farm and replace it with faceless corporate agribusiness.

In this splendid little volume, Mark Friedberger investigates the farm crisis in Iowa, the nation's preeminently agricultural state. Using a combination of careful archival research in land and court records in county courthouses, the reading of local newspapers and government reports, and extensive interviews of 135 farm families, Friedberger provides an insightful and balanced picture of how the crisis affected Iowa's farm families. The families Friedberger interviewed were not a random sample; he conducted interviews in three areas with different conditions, sought families with at least two generations on the farms, and had to confine his interviews to those willing to participate. If, therefore, his discoveries cannot be considered "typical" in any statistical sense, they nevertheless provide valuable information about the personal effects of the crisis on the farm population—of mounting generational and sibling tensions, of the increasing role of women in decision making, of the growing importance of off-farm work, especially by women.

Farm families that faced the greatest hardships were those who borrowed on the security of the rising value of their land to buy more land and machinery to work it at high prices and spent a considerable amount of borrowed money to increase significantly their standards of living. Those most likely to weather the downturn were those who inherited their land, received help from family members, and eschewed rapid expansion financed on borrowed money. Amidst considerable variation between those who suffered and even failed and those who did not and between those who saw family and community ties crumble in the face of trouble and those who did not, what emerges from Friedberger's study is the basic conservatism of Iowa farm families. Even among those who suffered and failed, radicalism, even of the relatively bland variety of neopopulism, made few inroads. The affected farmers most often sought to solve their problems as individuals or, more precisely, as individual families. As Friedberger puts it, "the farm families . . . found little value in . . . [the] verbiage packaged for their consumption." If many became "more cynical and alienated than ever before" (pp. 150-51), those who remained after the "shake-out" em-

braced no significant new policies. Farming in Iowa "goes on much as it did before the crisis" (p. 160).

In the longer-run, however, the shake-out of the 1980s merely continued the trend toward larger, more capital intensive agriculture. Farmers retain ownership of the land, but become junior partners in international agribusiness enterprises; they assume the greatest risks but enjoy the fewest benefits. If Friedberger does not discuss this trend in detail, his discussion of what is only its latest manifestation provides rich insights into the attitudes and outlooks of the nation's declining number of farm families.

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