

To Sow One Acre More: Childbearing and Farm Productivity in the Antebellum North. By Lee A. Craig. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. Pp. xii, 161. Tables, appendixes, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$28.50.)

Families in the United States and Europe produced diminishing numbers of children in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Lee A. Craig briefly surveys the scholarly literature on this subject and devotes most of his pages to one of its subtopics, falling birthrates among northern American farmers before the Civil War. His book explains why farmers chose to diminish their family sizes and why that kind of fertility dropped further in the Northeast than it did in the Midwest or on frontiers.

There were a number of reasons for this reduction in family size. Knowledge of contraception was widespread by the mid-nineteenth century; people born in the United States practiced it more than did some immigrants, but immigrants and natives both used it in the Northeast more than they did in midwestern and frontier areas of the North. The growing amount of time that children throughout the North spent in schools added to the cost of raising them while reducing the amount of work that they did for their parents. Moreover, women had an increasing number of opportunities away from their families' homes; getting freedom to pursue them was a reason for limiting births. After briefly examining these and other factors, Craig concludes that they influenced the numbers of children families chose to have but are not "sufficient explanations of the pattern of rural fertility in the early nineteenth century . . ." (p. 20).

The search for "sufficient explanations" concentrates on economics, which happens to be Craig's academic specialty. Readers who are uncomfortable with economics as literature should be assured that the author's language is not dauntingly technical. Although his tables and mathematical statements, which sometimes express ideas that would be clear enough in ordinary writing, can slow the pace of reading, they do not stop it. Apart from the third and last appendix, "An Economic Model of Farm Family Fertility," which really demands mathematical literacy, Craig's work should be clear to everyone who is interested in the history of farm people.

The book emphasizes farm children's economic value to their parents. They helped to clear land in new farm areas and contributed still more by helping to raise crops and produce dairy products in settled country. They were also, however, "net costs to their parents in every region of the antebellum North" (p. 91), especially in the Northeast where the birthrate dropped most. Northeastern children helped with dairying and truck gardening, specialties that grew when western competition drove northeastern farmers away from grain production, but they were also increasingly likely to spend their adulthoods on western farms or in urban jobs. They worked, but the chance that they would be on hand to care for aging

farms and parents declined. "So broadly speaking," Craig concludes, "the value of children did correspond to East-West differences in fertility rates" (p. 104).

Students of Indiana history will find no extensive discussions of their state in this book, but its comparisons of northern regions provide a setting for information about the Midwest, including Indiana and neighboring Ohio and Illinois. Because Indiana still lacks a general history of its farming, this book's facts about crops and their prices, farm wages, and farm children are valuable. Its fine bibliographical essay and endnotes will also be helpful to students of rural, specifically rural Indiana, history.

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"No Sorrow Like Our Sorrow": Northern Protestant Ministers and the Assassination of Lincoln. By David B. Chesebrough. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1994. Pp. xxii, 200. Tables, illustrations, appendix, notes, annotated bibliography, index. \$24.00.)

Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865, and for five straight days northerners reveled in the victory. Church bells clanged, fireworks brightened the nights, parades ribboned village streets. The celebrating ceased abruptly, however, when word spread of what had happened at Ford's Theatre on the night of Good Friday, April 14. With the assassination of Abraham Lincoln a sudden transformation of mood gripped the nation. As northerners sought meaning in that dark moment, they streamed to their churches, looking to their pastors for comfort, guidance, some understanding of it all.

Their pastoral needs did not go unmet. As David B. Chesebrough demonstrates in this penetrating account of the preaching ministry of hundreds of Protestant clergy, congregations heard ministers struggle with the irrationality of that horrific event and with the role of God within it. Like Chesebrough's earlier assessment of preaching during the sectional crisis, *"God Ordained This War"* (1991), the present volume illustrates the value of sermons as historical documents. Recognizing the vital role that preachers played as molders and reflectors of nineteenth-century public opinion, Chesebrough examines 340 sermons delivered during the seven passion-filled weeks after the assassination, including over a hundred hastily prepared for "Black Easter," the day after the president's death. His analysis provides an illuminating glimpse of public reaction to the assassination and, particularly, of the impact of theology on that response.