

1985, but he does this statistically and anecdotally. He leaves the reader wishing for a more detailed treatment of the creation and early years of the Denver and Kansas City companies, or a fuller description of the spread of appliances and heated living spaces touched upon in the other chapters.

Rose's topics, considerations of motive, and his bibliographic essay will make this a useful work for those interested in urban history, the diffusion of technology, and the American culture of comfort.

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Sustainable Agriculture in the American Midwest: Lessons from the Past, Prospects for the Future. Edited by Gregory McIsaac and William R. Edwards. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994. Pp. x, 291. References, tables, maps, illustrations, figures, index. \$32.95.)

This collection of twelve essays, lucidly introduced and eloquently concluded by Gregory McIsaac, asks whether and how mid-western agriculture can be sustained. The contributors are mostly scientists who bring knowledge of agricultural engineering, soils, climates, and geography to the discussion. A few of them specialize in social studies, notably agricultural economics and anthropology, but none are historians. Their discussion principally concerns the future, not history, but they acknowledge that "studying the past . . . may help us to divine the future" (p. 1). Accordingly, the essays examine agriculture's history as well as its prospects and deserve a broad audience of readers who care about the Midwest's part of that history and need clear, readable guidance to its technical and environmental aspects.

The book's attention to the past begins with McIsaac's introductory essay, which includes a brief history of the terms "sustainable" and "sustainability" as they have been applied to agriculture. It would be good to sustain agriculture, nearly everyone agrees, but what is needed to give agriculture sustainability varies with the interests and academic disciplines of those who have studied the subject. In his concluding essay, McIsaac fervently argues that the division of academics into separate disciplinary tribes has blocked really inclusive studies of what sustaining agriculture requires. Sustainability gets studied in fragments even on land grant campuses which should, and perhaps increasingly will, foster holistic studies of agriculture and its prospects. McIsaac's general argu-

ment, nicely illustrated by the intellectual variety of this book's more specific essays, should interest everyone who studies or worries about American higher education.

Valuable historical sections of this book include geographer John Thompson's history of the lower Illinois River valley's drainage between the 1890s and 1930. Bottomland produced extraordinary corn yields during that period, and drainage brought more land into use at enormous cost to investors, to the valley's environment, and to the people who lost fishing and hunting opportunities. That is an Illinois story, as are most of this book's essays. The essay also makes a brief reference to Hoosiers, specifically the "wealthy manufacturers and nationally prominent Republican party leaders from Indianapolis and Terre Haute" (p. 90) whose hunting and fishing club made a profitable sale of wetland to a Chicago investor who had it drained. Most of the essay is solid business, political, and environmental history that illustrates the movement that produced so much drainage throughout this country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Now, Thompson hopes, the high cost of keeping the bottoms drained may allow some of them to be wetlands again.

Other valuable history lessons in this book include William R. Edwards's brief discussion of the relationship between midwestern farming and upland game species; Richard Weinzierl's account of human struggles with insects, especially his explanation of integrated pest management, which he considers "in its fullest sense . . . an essential component of sustainable agriculture" (p. 183); Dennis Michael Warren's analysis of the farming cultures of Native Americans, Americans of Finnish ancestry, Iowa's Amish, and the Practical Farmers of Iowa, all of whom have lessons to teach about making agriculture sustainable; and Sonya Salamon's comparison of the farming cultures of German and "Yankee" communities in south-central Illinois, where she finds the Germans "predisposed toward sustainable farming systems" (p. 73).

All of the book's essays end with substantial bibliographies, and all of them avoid the sort of technical jargon that might repel or defeat readers with limited knowledge of the authors' disciplines. Part of the publisher's series on "The Environment and the Human Condition," the book aims to make specialists' knowledge available to an audience of people who care about farming, the environment, and the Midwest. Though the authors are not historians, they have made a valuable contribution to the knowledge available to students of the region's agricultural history.

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