

on his laurels and let a thriving business continue as it had been going. But, having a vision of far better things to come from the new approach to corn breeding, he saw to it that generous provision was made for continued research. The result has been a high level of accomplishment in producing greatly increased yields, consistent uniformity, and resistance to fungus diseases and insect pests. Funk's Research Acres, near Bloomington, has become a mecca for agronomists and plant breeders from all over the world.

Funk was a leader in the planning and support of the corn fairs, corn schools, and national corn expositions which left their unique mark on American farm life during the first fifteen years of the century. He also took an active part in the founding of the American Seed Trade Association and served as its president in 1925. Although basically opposed to interference with free enterprise, he often served as consultant and aided in studies leading toward the regulation of prices and production.

A book which resulted from the assimilation of materials from the numerous diaries, journals, and other documents to which the author had access could not be expected to be entirely free from error. The corn plant may be called maize or *Zea mays*, but never *Zea Maize*, as on p. 161. Errors in spelling are noted on pages 93 (Kjeldahl), 396 (Gibberella, Pythium), and 536 (corn borer). The description of Nilsson-Ehle's work (p. 83) would lead the reader to believe that he was working with corn. It was probably wheat or some other small cereal. Nowhere in the book do we find a clear, concise account of the exact steps by which hybrid seed corn is produced or of the theory underlying the process. These and other amateurisms lead to the impression that the author has not succeeded in getting very close to the scientific aspects of the subject.

The main fault that we find with the book is the failure to assimilate the voluminous details. What might have been a moving story of a great man and a fascinating era has remained too much a tabulation of unadorned facts, with little to indicate their relative values. Even the reader who is pretty well acquainted with the subject often finds himself floundering in a mire of details which do not lead anywhere. This makes dull reading. The book will serve as a valuable reference work, but, if there was hope that it might be widely read, this could have been much better accomplished by stripping away two-thirds of the detail and then weaving the remainder into a smoothly flowing narrative.

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Paul Weatherwax

Patterns from the Sod: Land Use and Tenure in the Grand Prairie, 1850-1900. By Margaret Beattie Bogue. *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, Volume XXXIV; *Land Series*, Volume I. (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1959. Pp. 327. Charts, maps, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$2.50.)

This book, which is dedicated to Paul Wallace Gates, is a comprehensive study of land use and ownership in eight east central Illinois counties forming the bulk of the Danville Land District. This area was a rectangle which included the rich farm land now extending from

U.S. Highway Thirty-six on the south to Illinois Highway Seventeen on the north, and from the Indiana border on the east almost to U.S. Highway Fifty-one on the west. Four chapters are devoted to the topic "The Frontier Heritage in Landownership" and six chapters to "East Central Illinois in Transition, 1850-1900."

Possibly the reviewer found the book of more interest than the casual reader might because of numerous relatives who lived in or near the area that was dissected. As a former supervisor and member of a board of tax review in another state, he was less interested in the feuds between the settlers and the speculators, the rise and fall of the cattle kings, and the struggles to deal with such perennial problems as fencing, drainage, and farm tenancy than he was with taxation, the subject covered in the final chapter.

Far too little attention has been paid even by the economic historians to the assessment of real and personal property, which formed the principal source of governmental income in the nineteenth century. (To this day the average citizen only casually understands handling of delinquent taxes, let alone the more complicated matters of appealing apparent tax inequities and the need for equalization of assessment on a county and state basis.) Mrs. Bogue reviews legislative efforts to deal with these problems—problems complicated by some of the unusual features of the charter given to the Illinois Central Railroad. Not only were its taxes limited to 7 per cent of its gross annual earnings, to be paid into the state treasury, but local levies could not be made on land grants until purchasers *completed* payments and secured deeds from the company, a process carried on in a most leisurely fashion—at least from the viewpoint of those whose lands carried the full burden of local property taxes. Hence, governmental services suffered, as was evidenced by the poor roads and the underpaid school teachers. The author concludes that the higher taxes of the third quarter of the century encouraged large owners to dispose of unimproved land and to rely heavily upon tenant operators. All landowners tended to intensify the raising of corn and oats rather than devoting land to pasture.

The author has done a tremendous amount of research which has included the usual government records, newspapers, monographs, and county histories, as well as the personal papers of large landowners such as Matthew T. Scott and loan agents such as Addison Goodell. Since this book is by and large a statistical study, the writing can scarcely be sprightly. Nevertheless, it might have been improved by reducing the length of quotations such as the ones which constitute the major portion of pages 37, 63, and 177, to cite the most glaring examples. Possibly some of the charts and tables might have better been included in the Appendix. In contrast to the traditional thanks paid by a historian to his wife, the author here reverses the tables and includes her husband among those to whom she is in debt, the latter being Dr. Allen G. Bogue, chairman of the Department of History at the State University of Iowa. The book is well documented and is definitive for the area under consideration.

McKendree College

Max P. Allen