

documentation contained in these sketches—many are 150 to 200 words in length—could have been omitted without detracting from the Davis material. It is not simply the amount of text taken up by the sketches, but rather the time and effort taken by the editorial staff in gathering and verifying this information. This observation focuses on editorial policy and in no way detracts from the contribution this volume makes to students of Jefferson Davis and Mississippi history and genealogy. It also does not detract from the excellent selection of illustrations, the Davis chronology, and the extensive list of sources included in the volume.

National Archives, Washington, D.C. George C. Chalou

Whereby We Thrive: A History of American Farming, 1607-1972. By John T. Schlebecker. (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1975. Pp. x, 342. Illustrations, tables, bibliography, index. \$12.95.)

This book is a history of American farming without the farmer. Though the author says his work “becomes basically social history,” it is far from the kind of social history written by such outstanding practitioners as Everett Dick and Merle Curti. Nowhere does the farmer appear except as influenced by government, science, politics, and education. The author who is curator of agriculture and mining in the Smithsonian Institution has drawn upon his work at the Smithsonian on the development of agricultural machines and the use of science in agriculture to good effect. He has given us a history of the development of agricultural machinery, of the marketing of farm commodities, and of the application of science to agriculture. Chapters on tools and machines, on transportation and methods of food processing, on biochemistry and genetics are all done with skill and understanding. For this part of his task he was admirably prepared and has done very well. Though the entire book is apparently written for the general reader rather than for specialists, these chapters make clear much that is important for the student of American agricultural history.

Schlebecker's treatment of government policy, despite some perceptive observations, is disappointing. It has too many errors, misunderstandings, and erroneous information. In places it reminds one of Frederic L. Paxson's *History of*

the American Frontier and Benjamin H. Hibbard, *History of Public Land Policies*, both published in 1924. Though these works are generally displaced, had the author used their data more carefully he might have avoided some of his worst errors. Also, in neglecting many more recent works such as those of Malcolm J. Rohrbough, Hiram M. Drache, Robert R. Dykstra, Robert P. Swierenga, Yasuo Okada, Richard S. Kirkendall, Thomas LeDuc, and the reviewer and older works of David M. Ellis, James B. Hedges, and Everett Dick, he cut himself off from the best treatments of government land policy. Instead, he lists eleven textbooks.

To list all the errors would take far more space than is justified, but a few will be mentioned. Schlebecker quite misunderstands the many varieties of land paper issued by the government (p. 62). Warrants and scrip did not enable purchasers of government land to avoid the usual public auction; that was accomplished by the preemption laws. The warrants had no advantage over cash. The United States never abandoned "the concept of money making off the land sales" (p. 62). True, free lands as embodied in the homestead laws were a step in that direction; but preemption entries, commuted homestead entries, desert land entries (\$1.25 an acre, not \$.25 an acre), mineral land entries, and timber and stone entries all called for money payments. In the twentieth century income from royalties, leasing, power site development, and off shore oil drilling have been in a single year far larger than the entire income from public land sales in the nineteenth century. The Agricultural College Act of 1862 was not intended to provide land for farmers, for congressional leaders were aware that the land being granted would mostly pass to speculators. The Corn Laws of England were not responsible for the South's concentration upon cotton rather than wheat (pp. 74-75). The South did not entirely halt cotton planting during the Civil War, but the extreme scarcity of food forced a sharp reduction in the acreage in cotton (p. 155). Much of the cotton raised during the Civil War was burned to prevent its falling into the hands of the Union army. The author missed the significance of the Timber Culture Act which allowed settlers to hold land for as much as a decade until the demand for it enabled them to sell relinquishments at substantial profits (p. 144). The data on homesteading on pages 139 and 208 are seriously wrong,

and the figure on land sales is too large by 100 per cent. Except in the periods from 1816-1819 and 1834-1837 it was only in rare cases that the government received more than the minimum price for its land. The creation of the forest reserves did not take "place only under the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt." Withdrawals under Harrison were 13,053,440 acres, not "some 13,000 acres" (p. 146), and other extensive withdrawals were made by Presidents Grover Cleveland and William McKinley. Neither land purchased for national forests under the Weeks Act nor land "put into national parks" was generally "taken out of agriculture" (p. 219). It is hardly correct to say in this more sophisticated day that "under consumption" and the low wage levels of workers were responsible for low farm commodity prices from 1920 to 1933. The land grants for the transcontinental railroads are given as double what they actually were. Schlebecker misnames the Stock Raising Homestead Act and surely is wrong in calling it the "most popular homestead law" (p. 208).

Cornell University, Ithaca, New York Paul W. Gates

Rich Harvest: A History of the Grange, 1867-1900. By D. Sven Nordin. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1974. Pp. ix, 273. Notes, tables, bibliography, index. \$12.00.)

More than sixty years ago Solon J. Buck published the traditional, interpretive study, *The Granger Movement*, on the post-Civil War wave of agrarian discontent. Since that time Buck's assumptions and conclusions have been challenged by other historians including George E. Miller and Gabriel Kolko. Disagreeing with Buck, Miller and Kolko argue convincingly that farmers contributed little to the state and federal regulation of United States railroads. Miller asserts that in most states regulation of railroads was sponsored by local businessmen who were being threatened by discriminatory railroad rates. Kolko shows that federal regulation was preferred by railroads over state laws to remedy injurious competition or arbitrary regulation by states. D. Sven Nordin accepts Miller's and Kolko's conclusions and advances the thesis that the Patrons of Husbandry, or the Grange, "was primarily a social and educational fraternity for farmers and their families rather than a medium for political and economic activities" (p. viii).