

origins of agrarian protest to the independent parties of the 1870s and 1880s. But historical literature about the independents has long been dated and inadequate. The profession has needed a good study of the ideological origins and political structure of the independents. Michael R. Hyman has filled half that void.

*The Anti-Redeemers* explores the ideological roots of independents in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. The three-state comparison is particularly valuable; it demonstrates the inadequacy of studies that have focused on only a few counties in a single state. For instance, Hyman discovered that independents in Georgia and Mississippi lived mainly in the northern hill counties, sought primarily to reform the Democratic party, and resisted the Greenback-Labor party; but in northern hill-country Alabama, many blacks joined the protest movement and led independents in that state into the Greenback fold.

Hyman examines six categories in the process of developing his argument. He begins by exploring the disaffection of small farmers from the Republican party. Then he surveys the role of local political conflicts, state legislative actions, taxation policies, the controversy over creation of state agricultural departments, and railroad regulatory agencies as sources of small-farmer and working-class disaffection from the Redeemers. He also explores the role of race among independents. Although anti-Redeemers did not endorse racial equality, they did make overtures to blacks, who generally responded favorably. This effort also provided the most effective Redeemer strategy against the independent insurgency.

In conclusion, Hyman maintains that hill-country political dissidents did not develop strong political organizations during the 1870s and 1880s, although the movement did prepare the ground for the rich harvest of Populism later. Specific conditions shaped independent movements differently in each of the three states. The experiences of small producers amid commercializing agriculture and the rise of small towns shaped their political ideology and helped prepare the way for their acceptance of a more active regulatory and interventionist role for the federal government. But, at the same time, small producers

bitterly resented higher taxes and the centralization of governmental power.

Perhaps the weakest part of the book is Hyman's obvious sympathy for independents and their ideological assumptions. For instance, the author argues that state agriculture departments tilted policy in favor of wealthy planters and reformist state agricultural societies and uses director Reuben F. Kolb's role in Alabama as an example. His argument is greatly weakened by Kolb's subsequent role as architect of the populist revolt in Alabama and his two runs for governor at the head of the Populist (Jeffersonian-Democratic) ticket. The inference that Kolb favored conservative, Redeemer interests as head of Alabama's state agriculture department certainly does not square with what we know of his subsequent political career.

But this is a minor flaw in a fine work. I hope we will soon have a structural history of the independents to match this excellent study of their ideology.

Wayne Flynt  
Auburn University  
Auburn, Alabama

*Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy.* By Sarah Carter. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. xii + 323 pp. \$34.95.)

The myth that Amerindians are by nature hunters rather than farmers was particularly influential in Canada as the buffalo herds were disappearing and after they were gone. The dramatic suddenness of that pitched Amerindians and government administrators alike into a situation for which neither had any precedent. The difficulties that ensued have usually been attributed to Amerindian incapacity to adapt to the new order of things—the belief that it was “sheer folly to attempt to make farmers out of the roving bands of the plains”—a view vigorously challenged by historian Sarah Carter. She demonstrates that in Canada at least, it was not the Amerindian character that was the problem, but government determination to impose its social ideals upon the starving Amerindians, usually without any consultation that could be considered meaningful.

In hindsight, it is not surprising that frustration and disillusion resulted on both sides; for those involved, however, it was not easy to see where good intentions had gone wrong.

Carter has no such difficulty. Drawing upon the voluminous evidence available for those who care to look, she carefully documents her case for the Amerindians of southern Saskatchewan, those who signed Treaty Four at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1874. These were largely Cree, with some Ojibwa; they very early recognized what was happening to the herds and realized only too clearly that this would call for fundamental readjustments in their way of life. When they could not deal with the problem themselves, despite some attempts to do so, they turned to the government for help. Although farming was both widespread and ancient among Amerindians, they were adaptable enough to ask that they be taught the white man's style of agriculture; they also wanted schools to prepare their children for the new order of things to come. They saw themselves functioning as partners in this new enterprise; officials saw it as an opportunity to enforce assimilation and wasted no time issuing directives to implement it. When tensions erupted into open hostilities to the north in 1885, the result was more and stiffer regulation, to the point where Amerindians could not even sell their farm produce without special permits. As Carter shows, the government stifled Amerindian enterprise, including agriculture, rather than encouraging it. It was a situation that would last until after World War II.

Although Carter makes a convincing case, one could question whether the situation was quite as black and white as she has painted it. The men who devised and carried out the repressive policies were not just individuals with queer ideas; most were representative of their times. Many of them were sincerely dedicated to Amerindian welfare and actually believed they were acting in the Amerindians' best interests. They accepted the prevailing idea that peoples could be regulated into a cultural conformity that the dominant society considered acceptable. Today such a notion appears at the very least quaint, but fifty years ago it was not considered arguable. The changing tenor of the times means that Carter's

documentation of the Amerindian side of the story will have a sympathetic audience. She is to be congratulated for presenting it in a readable and, on the whole, balanced form.

Olive Patricia Dickason  
*University of Alberta*

*Prevailing over Time: Ethnic Adjustment on the Kansas Prairies, 1875-1925.* By D. Aidan McQuillan. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990. xx + 292 pp. \$37.50.)

This book is a comparative study of the origins and economic developments of three ethnic agricultural communities in central Kansas: Swedes in McPherson and Rice counties, Mennonites in Marion and McPherson counties, and French Canadians in Cloud County. The author collected extensive census data regarding farm size, crop yields, household persistence, capital investments, tenancy rates, and additional variables. Most of the narrative consists of point-by-point comparisons among the three communities, from European origins to early settlement to "improvement of fortunes." But it also includes comparisons of homogeneous settlements with more mixed areas, as well as comparisons of ethnic settlements with nonethnic control groups. The comparisons yield a few surprises. The French Canadians, stereotyped as "inattentive and spendthrift," in fact "attained a higher level of financial success than Swedes."

D. Aidan McQuillan's analysis suggests that theoretical models of Americanization must be modified by the idea of ethnogenesis—the creation of distinctive ethnic identities that had their own impact. In some cases ethnic communities developed farming systems especially well suited to ecological conditions in Kansas, and these systems may have influenced nonethnic communities in the region. The Mennonites get especially high marks as "innovators par excellence," "the acme of the Protestant work ethic," and leaders in agricultural diversification to adapt to an uncertain moisture supply and fluctuating market prices. The author promises to explore how ethnic value systems are expressed in farming decisions, but the definition of those value systems and how they changed is limited.

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