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From Pioneering to Persevering: Family Farming in Indiana to 1880 (review)

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Book Reviews

From Pioneering to Persevering: Family Farming in Indiana to 1880. By Paul Salstrom. (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2007. 208 pp. Paper \$23.95, ISBN 1-55753-453-5.)

Paul Salstrom has, in his telling of Indiana farming, traced the state's agriculture from Native Americans to the twentieth century, specifically from the period before European contact to 1880—a time before government intervention, large-scale mechanization, and the introduction of the tractor. In this brief account of the state's agriculture, it is impossible to answer all questions, but Salstrom stays with one: "Why?" In following his chronological framework of farming in Indiana, Salstrom questions how and why Indiana agriculture became "economically viable" for its pioneers. Salstrom begins his account with an examination of Indian agriculture in the region that became Indiana. Dependent on European observations and histories of agriculture and Native Americans, Salstrom tells a standard story of Indian agriculture before and after European contact. The examples that make the telling specific to Indiana are few and add some detail to the general account. The remainder of Salstrom's text follows the arrival of settlers to Indiana, the reasons they settled there, and the success they enjoyed.

Paul Salstrom devotes much of the text of *From Pioneering to Persevering* to the presence of Euro-Americans in Indiana after first contact with the Native Americans. Beginning with a chapter titled "Why They Came," he continues with his questioning of Indiana pioneers and how/why they became successful family farmers. In fewer than 100 pages, he traces the pioneer story from independence through the nineteenth century with chapters that examine pioneer agriculture, trade, and travel; emergence of marketable

commodities and establishment of the “corn belt”; settlement in remote areas of the state; agrarian leaders; and perseverance of Indiana agriculturalists in the late nineteenth century in competition with others of the Midwest and Corn Belt. Finally, he completes the text with a glimpse into the twentieth century and advances that would be made. Although each chapter does address Indiana and its early settlers, the examples are few and not consistent throughout the text. At times the text itself is vague and too general. The greater importance of Salstrom’s manuscript is the placement of Indiana, its pioneers, and family farming within the larger context of American agriculture prior to the twentieth century. Salstrom’s use of statistics and trends within the larger subfield of agricultural history adds to this study.

Written as a brief study of Indiana’s farming history, while providing the larger agricultural context, the book also includes an extensive list of sources and source citations. Although primary and unpublished sources are few, the list of secondary sources cited is all inclusive. Chapters contain extensive citations, and although chapter text rarely identifies scholars, the presence of the notes and the bibliography allows readers to find sources. It is from the source list that readers can view the breadth of this work, rather than from the text itself. *From Pioneering to Persevering: Family Farming in Indiana to 1880* gives a small glimpse of Indiana pioneer agriculture and the traditions of family farming, but readers will have a hard time answering the “whys.”

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Steel Remembered: Photographs from the LTV Steel Collection. By Christopher J. Dawson. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2008. xvi, 155 pp. Cloth \$39.00, ISBN 978-0-87338-911-2.)

We are accustomed to photographs of deserted, rusted, and decayed steel mills that graphically depict the nation’s rust belt in decline. With this volume of remarkable photographs culled from the LTV Steel Collection, Christopher J. Dawson reminds us of the time when the steel industry was the nation’s economic pacesetter. The Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) acquired the collection, one of the largest collections of steel industry records in the United States, after the bankruptcy of LTV. In addition to print records, the collection includes thousands of photographs. For *Steel Remembered*, Dawson, who was curator of Urban and Industrial History at the WRHS, selected photographs of Republic Steel, Otis Steel, and Cor-rigan, McKinney Steel mills, most located in Ohio. Taken between 1910 and 1970 by unnamed photographers for company publications and records, the images are good examples of industrial photography and are interesting to business and labor historians.