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The Last Prairie Historian

An Interview with Professor Allan G. Bogue,
Historian of the American Midwest

In recent years, when working on projects related to the history of the Midwest, I have benefitted enormously from the assistance of Allan G. Bogue, a long-time historian at the University of Wisconsin, where Bogue held the Frederick Jackson Turner Chair. Bogue also chaired of the University of Iowa History Department; served as president of the Organization of American Historians, the Agricultural History Society, the Economic History Association, and the Social Science History Association; and was named a member of the National Academy of Sciences. Bogue generally considers himself a midwesterner and has written extensively about the history of the Midwest, including a biography of the Midwest's most famous historian, Frederick Jackson Turner. In this interview, which first began in 2007 and was finally completed in early 2014, Bogue discusses his long career and accomplishments, his work with other historians interested in the Midwest, and the profession of history more generally. Bogue still lives in Madison, Wisconsin, on Vilas Avenue. He turned ninety-three years old in May 2014. Bogue's career is also discussed in the chapter about "The Prairie Historians" in my recent book *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (University of Iowa Press).

Lauck: Were you born on a farm?

Bogue: Yes, and lived on the farm until well into my nineteenth year. My great grandfather was born in the Scottish lowlands in 1800 and emigrated with an English wife and three children in 1837, settling on a farm just

outside of London, Ontario (then Upper Canada), where he farmed and made bricks from clay on his property until age ninety, also establishing five of his six sons on farms. My father was born on one of these farms on the North Talbot Road, one of the original settlement roads in the township. He liked to say that he started as a farmer with no assets but a team and its harnesses, a good bit of an exaggeration but by my birth in 1921 he was a reasonably prosperous farmer. He considered himself to be a progressive farmer as well, serving as long-time secretary of a farmers' cooperative, and developing a purebred Holstein Friesian herd which he monitored by participating in the federal Department of Agriculture records of production program. He served as secretary and sometime president of the Middlesex County Holstein Friesian Breeders Association and participated at the local levels in politics as a Grit (Liberal). He was also in the United Farmers of Ontario, the Progressive Party, and back in the thirties was a Liberal Party activist. He was also on the school board. Despite such public spiritedness his family found him difficult at times. He encouraged me to join a Holstein Friesian calf club in which I remained active as long as we farmed, and I had several winners over the years and also competed in judging contests including a provincial one in which I placed second in 1939. I owned three purebreds at that time, and their sale helped pay my university costs.

Lauck: Why did you become interested in history?

Bogue: I found it interesting at an early date in my public and secondary school years, and I was an avid reader of historical fiction and biography. The family trip to the village library on Saturday evening was a favorite event. But English literature was my favorite subject in secondary school with history a close second, perhaps because the country continuation school that I attended for my first three years of high school only had two teachers, and the one who taught most of the math and science was a washout, and I reacted by disliking the subject matter. That changed in my last two years—the Canadian secondary school system had a five year curriculum with some of the fifth year courses acceptable for college credit—when I shifted to a large city collegiate institute but perhaps [it was] too late. My preliminary declaration of interest as a freshman in 1939 was English literature, but I found my courses in history and economics much more interesting, having experienced a good deal of the practical side of life.

My focus began to center on agricultural history after returning from

two and half years on active service in the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps to do masters work at the University of Western Ontario because my discharge came too late to apply to American graduate schools. My advisor in that year was Fred Landon, a wonderful man who was also university librarian, a former journalist, and London City librarian. He had done graduate work at the University of Michigan and taught the one semester survey of US history that I had taken at Western as an undergrad. Landon knew of my agricultural background and pointed out that Canadian historians were neglecting the history of Canadian agriculture. He suggested that I pick a thesis topic in that area. And so I wrote a 266 page MA thesis on Ontario agriculture during the 1880s and decided to use the rest of my Canadian GI bill for doctoral work in the US.

Lauck: After you received your PhD in history, you joined the History Department at the University of Iowa. How did that happen?

Bogue: My year to search for a job after graduate school was 1949. Unfortunately, after showing some activity immediately after the war, the job market was really flat. At Western Ontario Fred Landon had become vice president of the university and his associate director at the library, James Talman, had succeeded him. Both Landon and Talman were productive historians, and they wanted another historian to come in as an administrative assistant librarian. Talman sounded me out on the job, but I was bound for Kansas and asked if the position could be held over for a year. It was, and I became an assistant librarian and lecturer in economics and history at Western. While there my teaching was all in the Economics Department—the economic history of Europe (first semester) and US and Canada (second semester) and as a second course, the basic economics survey and later a course in agricultural economics. I had been impressed by what Malin had done with a state history course and, once established, I proposed a history of Ontario to the History Department, but the Canadian history specialist, a one time student in Turner's Harvard seminar, and a veteran of both world wars, nixed the idea as duplicative. In my third year I added the post of adjutant of the university OTC unit to my titles. In the library I had various administrative duties, including handling student protests—such as the one from Mary Labatt, daughter of the local beer baron, who thought she should be exempt from fines—writing some copy for the president's speeches to agricultural gatherings, helping to host an annual meeting of the Ontario Historical Society, etc. But Talman was a

good boss and insisted that I keep writing on my unfinished dissertation, even dictating some of it to library typists. That was a big help in getting a big manuscript ready for defense in 1951.

I gave a paper on my research at the Mississippi Valley Historical Association meeting in 1950 (I think), and my friend Tom LeDuc heard it and liked it and said I should look for a job in the US. Professional history was lagging in Canada, he thought. By 1952 the diffusion of energies involved in my job was getting to me, and when my boss told me I should put my US research interests aside and shift full time into Canadian research I did some career analysis and happened to mention it to LeDuc. He passed on my name to an old Yale friend at Iowa where the young specialist teaching the West and middle period had accepted an offer to return to Yale. I survived a rigorous screening and was hired, although I learned much later not without some reservations from the department chair, Bill Aydelotte, who liked his appointees to come from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, or Oxbridge and be bubbling with interest in things intellectual. The decision was a hard one. I was satisfied there and I later learned that my promotion to associate librarian at Western Ontario was already on its way through the administration. Margaret, who had given up a post at Vassar to join me in 1951 in Ontario, was a US citizen, which would simplify my naturalization later on.

Lauck: Did you hire Christopher Lasch at Iowa?

Bogue: Yes. Under chairman Bill Aydelotte at Iowa the hiring process was rigorous. Replacing him as departmental chair in 1959 I tried to maintain the same rigor. When the departure of Sam Hays left us with a vacancy in post-Civil War [and] recent American history I resorted to our standard policy of notifying the major departments and graduate directors in the field—this was before the current practice of advertising vacancies—and of the names suggested, that of Lasch seemed most promising. I hosted a departmental gathering to meet in a social setting at our place, and I expected that he would be brought there from the airport by a colleague earlier than the assembling of other colleagues, allowing me to make an initial pitch. But a respected older colleague with an excessively hail fellow well met manner arrived early as well, and I feared for the result.¹ Although Kit expressed fear that he would find the shift from city to mid-western college town hard to bear, he accepted our offer. Of my colleagues only Aydelotte had expressed any doubts about the appointment, and

that was about the possibility that his interests might overlap unduly with those of our American intellectual specialist, Stow Persons. The latter, however, saw no problem.

I thankfully gave up the Iowa chair after one more year, and after another year we departed for the University of Wisconsin, so I had little opportunity to mingle with Kit or to gain the impression of him that one did after sitting with colleagues in incidental discussions or on MA or PhD exams. As chairman in my last year in that office and Kit's first year with us he came to me wondering if he could be awarded a semester research grant. We allowed any departmental member to seek whatever grant money he could, but there was a college requirement that he should be in the second year at least of his appointment. Kit was only in his first year. I went to our new graduate dean and pleaded special circumstances, and Kit got his money. I left Iowa knowing that Kit was deeply concerned about the state of politics and society but never strident in expressing his ideas.²

Lauck: After so much time at the Universities of Iowa and Wisconsin and after researching the history of the Midwest, do you consider yourself a midwesterner?

Bogue: Actually I was born a midwesterner because southwestern Ontario is essentially midwestern in its natural environment—farther west than Ohio, farther south than much of Minnesota and Wisconsin. My brother cheered for the Detroit Tigers, and I for the Chicago Cubs. I have taught on the east coast and west coast and had job offers from both east and west, but I like the Midwest.

Lauck: Did you know John Hicks?

Bogue: I never met John Hicks.

Lauck: Do you think that Hicks was too sympathetic to the Populists?

Bogue: I thought that essentially he accepted the Populist line and failed to put the movement and the party in their broader context. Malin believed that Hicks had borrowed unduly from the doctoral dissertations of others, not plagiarism but excessive dependence.³

Lauck: With your book *Money at Interest*, you entered the debate over Populism at a critical moment.⁴ Were you criticized for questioning one of the basic rationales of Populism?

Bogue: I was trying to write a good economic history of the western farm mortgage business of the late nineteenth century. But late in the game,

as I thought about the task of obtaining publication and readers, I made some connection to Populism early and particularly late in the book. I perhaps overdid it a bit in the final chapter. Professor Norbert Mahnken gave an impassioned critique when I gave my paper at the Mississippi Valley Historical Association annual meeting, saying that I had it all wrong, that he had talked to old Populists. He waved his arms and came close to shouting while I cowered in my chair, looking about twenty-one. He overdid it. When the chair turned to me for rebuttal I merely got up and said that until then I had not known what a Populist sounded like but that now I did. The room burst into applause, and Rodney Loehr, the session chairman, later complimented me on having handled “a windbag” just right. Hicks’s former student and coauthor Theodore Saloutas gave the book a very belittling review, even challenging my title choice of *Money at Interest* as misleading and uninformative, and this from a man who had a book under the title *They Remember America* about Greek repatriates.⁵ The other reviews were pretty good. Later, Lawrence Goodwyn called the book a whitewash. Later, while lunching with one of my students Stan Parsons I remarked that I wished I had the time to consult the Dun and Bradstreet merchant credit rating booklets of the nineteenth century for hard evidence about the location and duration of farm cooperatives. He asked if I would mind if he did so and I said go to it. That research became a nice article in the *Journal of American History* and I believe qualifies Goodwyn’s work on Populism significantly.⁶

Lauck: C. Vann Woodward has noted the appearance of a “neo-Populism” in the 1930s and 1940s that affected historical interpretations of the movement. Was *Money at Interest*, in part, a reaction to the enthusiasm for the Populists in the decades before you wrote it?

Bogue: Not at all, or at least not much. My background made me sympathetic to the Populists. As a farm co-op man and a United Farmers of Ontario stalwart, my Dad came close to being Populist kin, but his attitudes and those of his fellow co-op directors did not seem to reflect intense ideological commitment. During the 1930s I stood in the doorway of the farmhouse adjacent to ours and listened to Ike Brooks, the local auctioneer, put the farm up for sale at foreclosure. I knew how much my mother hated the small mortgage that stood against our farm for a few years and how many family hopes faded when farms were lost by forced sale. I tried to reflect that in my closing passage in my book, but the late nineteenth

century farm distress does not yield to simplistic explanation. When Gates suggested western mortgages as one of a number of western history topics that could reward research I leaped on it. If my attitude was neo-Populist it was also a reaction carried onward from my farming days.

Lauck: Did you become entangled in the debates between scholars of Populism such as Richard Hofstadter and Norman Pollack?

Bogue: Yes, in a most peculiar way. My wife Margaret was a [University of] Maryland BA and as an undergraduate had Frank Friedel, Ken Stamp, and Richard Hofstadter as instructors there. Pollack worked with Friedel at Harvard and while he was researching in the Middle West he visited us and talked about his research. Meanwhile at Columbia, Hofstadter was working on *The Age of Reform* and getting leads on articles dealing with late nineteenth century agricultural protest from Lee Benson who was teaching sections at Columbia and working with Paul Lazarsfeld at the Bureau of Social Research. By the early sixties I was being pulled into committee work with some of the history associations, and Bennett Wall asked me to organize a session on Populism for an upcoming meeting of the American Historical Association. Coincidentally, Gates, while visiting at Harvard, had come to know Pollack and suggested that he should be given a hearing, and he and others suggested that Hofstadter should be paired with him. It sounded like a great idea, and I invited Pollack and Hofstadter. While researching radicalism Hofstadter had used a collection of far out materials in the Iowa library and invited Margaret and me to chat with him during a busy visit. He came across as a very pleasant man. Pollack, of course, was delighted to be invited to receive my invitation, but Hofstadter politely refused and then went on to give a very frank estimate of Pollack as critic, ending by saying that he would never appear on the same program with him. I had forgotten about that exchange when David Brown came to town while working on his Hofstadter bio and lunched with Margaret and me.⁷ Last year, while working through my Iowa correspondence I came on the Hofstadter letter and sent him a copy. He responded that the Hofstadter reaction to Pollack had been hard to find and that the letter was by far the clearest statement of Hofstadter's feelings that he had seen, unfortunately too late for the book. In the end, I found a substitute for Hofstadter on the panel.

Lauck: How would you describe the current state of the debate over the meaning of Populism?

Bogue: Perhaps I should plead complete disclaimer here because I ceased to follow the literature of Populism at all closely after I ceased classroom teaching and before that was much more interested in western than southern populism. I did direct three dissertations in the area that I believed were pretty good (all published) and which Martin Ridge commended for bringing new methodology and perspectives to the field, and much later I interacted a good deal as a committee member with Jim Hunt while he was doing his biography of Marion Butler (also published). I thought that Robert McMath's *American Populism* was a sensible and insightful summary of the development of Populist historiography to the early 1990s.⁸ I still think that there is more to be learned about the ethnocultural roots of the movement and from electoral analysis in general; that Pollack was excessively generous to the Populists; and that Dick Hofstadter quaffed too many martinis at the luncheon meeting of the Columbia social scientists from whom he borrowed his status decline ideas. I believe that Victor Ferkiss was dead wrong and that Lawrence Goodwyn was interesting in various ways—the movement culture idea, for example, although I don't think that culture is quite the right word to describe something that fell apart as rapidly as Populism. But he was reckless in its application and arrogant in dismissing much of the movement as mere shadow populism and obviously wrong of course in his reaction to *Money at Interest*. Stan Parsons and some of his confidants used to refer to Goodwyn as Crazy Larry. Now as to the present, I have not noticed any reviewer hail a striking revision of our ideas about Populism since I left the classroom in 1991, but my reading is pretty selective these days. I put the question to a former student of mine, now editor of the *Western Historical Quarterly*, and he reported a similar feeling that the field was a bit comatose. We may be wrong.

Lauck: Why did you decide to leave the University of Iowa?

Bogue: That was a really tough decision. The members of the Iowa department were young for the most part, highly professional, interested in research, and friendly. Bill Aydelotte was chair when I went there, and he had rebuilt an old fashioned, undemocratic department into one with high standards of performance and recruitment. He was the son of the long-time director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, and his ideal at Iowa had been to turn the Iowa [History] Department into a top ten history department in the US. But by the late 1950s he had become frustrated with the duties of chairman and in early 1959 announced that he would not accept another three year term as chair. To my surprise the depart-

ment turned to me, only in my second year as an associate professor. I had served briefly as graduate advisor and on various committees, but I was green to say the least. At the end of three years the department wanted me to continue, and I finally said that I would chair for one more year. But the amount of time wasted on inconsequentials and other petty frustrations while I tried to finish off my book *From Prairie to Corn Belt* had convinced me that chairing was not for me.⁹ In my fourth year as chair I was offered the editorship of the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* and considered it carefully but in the end decided to stay at Iowa, thinking it would not be a bad place to stay for the rest of my career. But in the next year Wisconsin came calling, and despite some concerns the promise of frequent research leaves and the great library resources of the Wisconsin State Historical Society were too tempting to refuse.

Lauck: Was the lingering presence of Frederick Jackson Turner still strong when you arrived at Wisconsin?

Bogue: Of course the direct linkage was broken when Turner went to Harvard. Frederic Logan Paxson, Turner's replacement, was not a Turner student, although a dedicated follower. John Hicks, who succeeded Paxson as western historian in Madison, was a Paxson student. Merle Curti, who succeeded Hicks briefly in the West course, was a student in both Turner's undergraduate and graduate offerings at Harvard, but Turner had retired before Curti was ready to address the dissertation. He completed his work at Harvard with Arthur Schlesinger Sr., who rejected his initial project, but Curti continued to receive encouragement from Turner, and Turner also encouraged him to consider intellectual history as a promising new area for specialization. After Vernon Carstensen joined the Wisconsin [History] Department to coauthor a multivolume history of the university, Curti shifted the West course to him. I was to be Vernon's replacement. Of course, Turner returned briefly to Madison after his retirement, building a little house on the West side of Madison, and the [Wisconsin] Historical Society allocated him an office. But the climate drove him to accept the invitation of his friend Max Farrand at the Huntington Library in California. Curti of course was always willing to talk about Turner and his achievements, and these were considerable despite the criticisms leveled at his work.

Lauck: How many dissertations did you direct at Iowa and Wisconsin?

Bogue: I believe that we came up with a total of about fifty when we tried to work up a list in connection with the program session on the Boggles that

some of the old grads arranged for the 2005 Western History Association meeting. That may have included several who were well advanced in their doctoral work at Iowa and defended under Mac Rohrbaugh, my replacement at Iowa, after I left. At the other end I left a few to finish under my successor at Wisconsin Bill Cronon, although in my last few years at Wisconsin I was advising committed westerners of ability to go elsewhere after the MA because the hiring stringency here in the late 1980s had put the department in the position of not being able to guarantee to faculty close to retirement that their fields would be retained after they retired. It turned out that mine was. Of course I had students majoring in other fields or from other departments in my seminars in some numbers, and I participated quite actively in the development of the dissertations of some of them. I was pretty much a fixture on the doctoral committees of historical geography graduate students and must have served on more than a dozen such committees. The job market for new PhDs was really flat in the seventies, and graduate student morale was low as a result. Although my people had good success in finding jobs, four or five of my doctoral advisees succumbed to the general malaise and took positions in state government or local business, including one who made himself an expert on historical house reconstruction and helped us later make some alterations in the house that we bought in Madison from the Carstensens and which Mary Carstensen explained had been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Lauck: What dissertations are the most memorable?

Bogue: That is hard. Memorable for me does not mean best because some stick in my memory because of the way that the research was handled or other circumstances. The very first one presented has a special place as the first one ever. That first one was John Clifford on the literature of ranch and range, a literary analysis which was well done, but he never published it. Others include: Jim Wright on Colorado politics; Joel Silbey, congressional voting behavior in the 1840s and early 1850s, the first US history doctoral dissertation to use Guttman scaling; Stanley Parsons on urban versus rural tensions in the Populist era (he was the first of my students to use regression analysis); Robert Dykstra, the cattle towns, a Spur Award winner; Robert Swierenga, land speculation in the Black Hawk Purchase, the first elaborate computer analysis done by one of my students; Peter Argersinger, a great political biography on William Peffer; Peter Iverson, "A History of the Navajo," with lots of anthropological understanding; Margaret Thomp-

son, US congressional lobbying in the 1870s, a cross-disciplinary analysis; Kenneth Winkle, migration and politics in pre-Civil War Ohio, an imaginative use of data drawn from the manuscript census; Michael Engh, religion in frontier California, revealing a real grasp of theological issues; Pamela Riney Kehrberg's revisionary work on the Dust Bowl.

With the exception of the first, the John Clifford volume, these were all published, but a fair number of others were published as well, some of outstanding quality. I think that those mentioned here, though diverse in subject, all had the unifying theme of demonstrating the usefulness of related disciplines or fresh methods or hitherto little used sources. Was I ever dissatisfied with a dissertation that was approved? Yes, in two cases, and the author of one of these found a publisher, and it suffered a bad reception. In 1985 the author, now a college executive, wrote to tell me that if he had been willing to accept my suggestions it would have fared better.

Lauck: What was your reaction to the student radicalism at [the University of] Wisconsin in the 1960s?

Bogue: I was on leave during part of this period and perhaps would have been more directly involved had I been there right through it. I remember attending a faculty meeting at the time of the Dow sit-in and voting with the faculty to support the university administration, at least provisionally, although Harvey Goldberg, who with Bill Williams constituted the department's left wing, gave a passionate oration demanding that the faculty go right down the line with the students. I was not a conservative like Merrill Jensen or E. David Cronon. I thought that US foreign policy was a mess, but I was also involved in trying to reform American political history through membership in the American Historical Association's Quantitative Data Committee and was content to let others reform the country. The police of course got out of hand, as well as our protesters, and one afternoon I watched them from my office window clubbing students on Bascom Hill, and the area between the Humanities Building and the Historical Society was blue with tear gas. Williams ultimately gave up on trying to lead radical students to a more moderate position, but Goldberg remained or said that he remained completely radical until the bombing of the Physics Building and the death of an occupant during an August recess. That took the steam out of local radical activity. I did not favor banning ROTC from campuses. I abhor war, but with a background of some fifteen plus years of either active service or Canadian Army Reserve connection I feel

that national military forces, if wisely used, are essential and that the military offered careers just as does Merrill Lynch. If we prepare individuals for one so should we for the other.

Lauck: What is your reaction to the renewed attacks on Frederick Jackson Turner by the new western historians?

Bogue: Every generation tries to eliminate the tribal elders, and we must accept that fact. There was a lot unaccounted for in Turner's rendering of America, both material and intellectual. I think that the new westerners have given us a rather mixed harvest. Some very good things, some bad, and some very bad or silly. Of those who have been given primacy in the movement I think that Richard White has done some solid work, but his decision to refuse to mention Turner in his big text was showoff stuff, and despite its value the book really lacks a central intellectual theme, or so I thought.¹⁰ Don Worster has written in an impeccable style that is sometimes marred by the shallowness of his research. My former student Bill Cronon is very bright and energetic, but seems to have trouble maintaining focus. The Guggenheim Foundation still awaits the work that their award of the early 1990s subsidized. Patty Limerick rode the crest of feminist history and really seems happier as an op-ed writer. I thought her much lauded book was too simple—single factor interpretations seldom work. I have always thought that American development was complex, and some of my earlier writings fell on both the pro and contra side of the Turner debate, but on the significance of sectionalism, Turner's main interest after about 1905, he was right on, and his willingness to see students move into new fields and to use empirical methods if need be made him something of a hero to me.

Lauck: Do you think the scholarship of the new western historians has been affected by their sympathy for the causes associated with the American left?

Bogue: Most American historians are liberals and the new western historians have illuminated some issues that reflect current social concerns. How much causal relationship is involved I would not guess, but there is some.

Lauck: Do you share the concerns that some have expressed about the current state of the historical profession?

Bogue: I believe that there are a number of different types of history and that the major issue in part lies in how well the authors render their par-

ticular variety. Of course I believe that rigorous scholarly history ranks first and foremost and deplore the fact that it is the successful popularizer who rakes in the shekels. But honesty and rigor are the key in my book and that involves finding all of the evidence and showing how your explanation is the best of all possibles. I have found the number of recent plagiarism cases in history to be shocking although there have always been some rascals among us, even in the History Department at the “great” University of Wisconsin. Clarity and felicity of expression come next in my opinion, although Jim Malin would not agree on the felicity part. The search for that leads to warping the evidence, he believed, and that position explained his distrust of editors. I believe that description and explanation of past individuals, their ideas, natural environment, and events involving any expression or combination of the listed categories is the province of the historian, and in pursuing this task it is also incumbent to seek any knowledge or methodology in other disciplines that can prove helpful. I think that defining our job or field any more closely than that is nonsense, and quibbling about disciplinary boundaries is counterproductive. So is deploring history’s proliferation of interests. I sometimes half regret coining the “New Political History” label in an article done for Walter Laqueur and George Mosse’s [Harper’s] Torch Book on new history trends.¹¹ I believe that in a limited way history can provide the grounds for prediction. I believe that relativism in its various manifestations including linguistic constraints is a problem but not an insurmountable one. History is a great deal more than story and saying that it is, as has been said a lot recently, puts the stamp of approval on one-dimensional narrative history where authors argue by assertion and expect the reader to assure that their interpretation is the right one. It is a sellout, an abnegation. In short, the historian’s job is tough.

Lauck: What is your current scholarly project?

Bogue: I am working on two things and at my age neither may get out of my computer. However, in order to keep my memory cells active, I started to reconsider the history profession as I knew it. After my first six years at Iowa Bill Aydelotte, the chairman, decided that he wanted to devote more time to his research on the British Corn Laws Parliament, and my colleagues surprised me by telling me that I was to be his replacement. I took the job with mixed feelings and decided that I would keep a diary on the experience. I begged off after four years, but I continued the diary for some years more, and I found on going back to it that I had put a great

deal about the university and the department in it, some rather amusing stuff. So what I have almost finished doing is an account of the life of a young historian getting started in a midwestern state university and the state of the history profession and the university in the fifties and early sixties as he knew it. Will I find a publisher? Who knows? At Iowa I was expected to supervise western history and the American middle period, and to validate myself with my grad students in the second area I thought that I must publish in it. That got me off into the history of middle period legislative politics, and that became a second research area where I still do some work.

Lauck: Do you think the effort to revive interest in the history of the American Midwest will take flight?

Bogue: It is impossible to predict. There are so many variables that might come into play.

Lauck: Thank you, Professor Bogue.

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Jon K. Lauck received his PhD in history from the University of Iowa and his law degree from the University of Minnesota. His most recent book is *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (University of Iowa Press, 2013). Lauck is an adjunct professor of history at the University of South Dakota and the coordinator of the Midwestern History Working Group.

NOTES

1. "Hail fellow well met" describes someone with a convivial personality.
2. At this time, Lasch was working on his soon-to-be-famous book *The New Radicalism in America, 1889–1963: The Intellectual as Social Type* (New York: Knopf, 1965). On Lasch's hiring at Iowa, see Jon K. Lauck, "The Prairie Populism of Christopher Lasch," *Great Plains Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 183–205.
3. John C. Barnhart wrote his Harvard dissertation about Nebraska Populism. See Frederick Merk to Barnhart, Feb. 19, 1926, Barnhart Papers, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.
4. Allan G. Bogue, *Money at Interest: The Farm Mortgage on the Middle Border* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955).
5. Theodore Saloutos, *They Remember America: The Story of the Repatriated Greek-Americans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956).
6. Stanley B. Parsons, Karen Toombs Parsons, Walter Killilae, and Beverly Borgers, "The Role of Cooperatives in the Development of the Movement Culture of Populism," *Journal of American History* 69, no. 4 (Mar. 1983), 866–85.
7. David S. Brown, *Richard Hofstadter: An Intellectual Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

8. Robert C. McMath, *American Populism: A Social History, 1877–1898* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).
9. Allan G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).
10. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
11. Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse, eds., *The New History: Trends in Historical Research and Writing since World War II*, Torch Book ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).