

Frontier Farming in an Urban Shadow: The Influence of Madison's Proximity on the Agricultural Development of Blooming Grove, Wisconsin. By Michael P. Conzen. (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, for the Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1971. Pp. xviii, 235. Figures, illustrations, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. \$10.00.)

This study focuses on Blooming Grove Township in Dane County which is adjacent to Madison, Wisconsin. Michael P. Conzen has attempted a microscale examination of a midwestern community in an effort to show the impact of an emerging city on the farming community nearby. The text covers the years from 1838 to 1890. The book is designed primarily for economists and economic historians who are interested in case studies of agricultural regions.

The content includes meticulous data on such topics as land survey, demographic structure, land ownership, farm crops, livestock, marketing procedures, transportation facilities, and indices of agricultural growth. The 235 page volume includes 8 pages of pictures and approximately 60 graphs and charts. The research in archival materials is impressive.

In this investigation the author tries to determine if the farmers' proximity to an urban center increased or decreased their mobility, whether farm size affected per capita income, whether older people maintained more permanent residence than younger people, and whether ethnic clustering was typical of the township population. Conzen concludes that Madison did influence the economic life of these rural people, but this impact was not as dramatic or striking as one might have anticipated. Changes appear to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. The conclusions seem rather disappointing because there are few surprises and virtually no interesting interpretations. The author suggests that studies of other townships are needed before many of the generalizations can be verified.

Although this evidence will have some interest for those living in the township, the book will have little appeal for the general reader because of the writer's preoccupation with statistics and the abundance of behavioral science jargon which envelopes the work. For example, it does not make for exciting prose to read such statements as, "the mean number of horses per farm," "the standard deviation of horses per farm," or "farm value predictors based on partial correlation coefficients."

Furthermore, the general reader will frequently get the impression that great efforts have been made to prove the obvious. For instance, the reader discovers that as settlement continued, the number of horses tended to increase, or that the advent of railroads fa-

cilitated marketing of agricultural commodities, or that the farms tended to increase in size, or that several ethnic groups such as Norwegians and Germans engaged in farming, or that the growth of Madison tended to increase the value of land on the outskirts of the city, or that the large farms were usually more prosperous than the smaller ones.

Although the author is interested in the demographic composition of this community, he makes no reference to the Indians from whom the land was taken in the first place. In a day when scholars are becoming more sensitive about the role of minorities in American society, this glaring omission is regrettable.

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Fields of Rich Toil: The Development of the University of Illinois College of Agriculture. By Richard Gordon Moores. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, for the College of Agriculture, 1970. Pp. 266. Illustrations, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. \$6.95.)

As more and more colleges and universities in the United States approach their centennial years, inevitably there will be more histories written concerning their long years of progress. A centennial history not only serves as a convenient benchmark for determining the growth and progress of an institution but also it holds a nostalgic appeal for alumni. This history of the University of Illinois College of Agriculture is no exception.

As is true of most books on agricultural education, *Fields of Rich Toil* recognizes that one of the most significant federal laws concerning higher education in the United States is the Morrill Act of 1862. At a time when a majority of the population of the United States was classified as rural this law offered financial assistance for the development of agricultural technology in the land grant universities throughout the nation. Along with other leading agricultural states Illinois used this grant to good advantage.

Richard Gordon Moores, publication editor in the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois, presents a brief but lucid account of the successes and failures which took place during the formative years of this prestigious midwestern institution of higher education. He begins his narrative by citing the controversy which raged over the selection of Champaign-Urbana as the site for the university and traces the institution's growth until it became recognized as one of the leading agricultural and mechanical arts schools of the nation.