

Illustrations, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95; CAN\$38.50; £21.99.)

Douglas Hurt has published widely, and this big book reflects his interests. As he shows in this impressively researched volume, the Great Plains, with a few exceptions like Wichita, Kansas, was a backwater in World War II. Unlike California, the Great Plains was not transformed by the war; agriculture remained the most important activity, and the region continued to lose population. Hurt emphasizes the irony of the term the "Good War" as it is applied to the home front: for although the population became fervently patriotic, selfishness and self interest characterized attitudes towards financial matters. Enlightened behavior in the treatment of minorities and a disregard for civil liberties also was lacking.

Like others who have written about the war, Hurt emphasizes the impact of the boom on communities, the contribution of women, manpower dynamics, bureaucratic intrusions, rationing, and demographic disruptions. His major contribution, however, comes when he tackles topics that are not often covered in more industrialized regions: farming and ranching, farm labor, the internment of aliens, the pressures that POWs brought to isolated communities, and the travails of Native Americans.

The isolationist impulse, so characteristic of the region in the 1930s, dissipated after Pearl Harbor. However, fighting totalitarianism did not mean that complaints about government policies were forgotten. Farmers retained their characteristic individualism, and despite high prices, they remained combative. A similar lack of consensus emerged over the farm labor question. While the government instituted the Bracero Program, some farmers skirted provisions, and others treated Mexican labor shabbily. Racism also characterized the treatment of Japanese internees. At the same time, Italian and German POWs, though

greeted with hostility initially, were eventually welcomed as farm laborers. A chapter on the fate of Native Americans during the Collier regime makes depressing reading.

The book also follows many of the patterns that emerged in more industrialized regions of the country as a result of mobilization for the war effort. Racial strife between whites and African Americans on military bases became a concern for the authorities. Small war-boom communities were not prepared for the influx of transients. Housing shortages, school overcrowding, and lack of recreational facilities often caused trouble between old-timers and plant workers. While locals desired the economic benefits that a boom brought, they were often unhappy with the behavior of newcomers—drinking and dancing were frowned on. The emergence of socially transmitted diseases, and a vibrant black market for food and gasoline also soured relations.

In this beautifully produced book, Hurt has brought together disparate evidence that until now has rested in obscure state journals, government documents, and newspaper collections. As a result, he has provided fresh insights to the WWII Home Front.

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Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement. By Neil M. Maher. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. x + 316 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$35.00.)

In *Nature's New Deal*, Neil Maher ambitiously reexamines the Civilian Conservation Corps's place in American environmental history. Maher counters earlier treatments of the CCC that divorced the program from landmark conservation battles in the early-twentieth century. Instead, he depicts the

corps as the linchpin between Progressive Era conservation and the post-WWII grassroots environmental movement.

When President Roosevelt inaugurated the CCC as part of his New Deal in 1933, he based the corps on traditional Progressive Era ideas of "simple" conservation. Enrollees planted trees to improve forest health and worked to slow soil erosion. FDR quickly seized upon the program's popularity and used it to his political advantage, placing CCC camps in all fifty states to curry favor with politicians. Camps conspicuously appeared in areas where he received little support in his 1932 election. As CCC enrollees worked to improve natural resources, their camps boosted local economies, converting a much wider public to the gospel of conservation.

Maher deftly details how the CCC's focus on improving the physical health of its enrollees through work in the outdoors expanded conservation for the first time into the realm of conserving human resources. Conserving the human body extended beyond the CCC enrollees to the public as the variety of CCC work projects shifted from forest improvement to building parks, playgrounds, and campgrounds. The author traces the concept of providing opportunities for citizens to improve the body through contact with nature back to youth reform programs such as the Boy Scouts, which Roosevelt actively supported as governor of New York.

Despite its widespread appeal, support for the CCC was not universal. Maher follows an ecological critique of the corps's activities, which escalated in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as ideologically diverse wildlife and wilderness groups criticized the CCC for upsetting the balance of nature. However, the criticism from these groups did not terminate the CCC in 1942; WWII owns that distinction. Instead, critiques from Aldo Leopold, Robert Marshall, the Audubon Society, and others laid the foundation for the grassroots environmental movements in the post-WWII era.

Maher's important study successfully connects the CCC's intellectual origins to the conservation of the Progressive Era, featuring the gospel of efficient use of natural resources, and delineates how the corps later shaped the quality-of-life environmental movements of the post-WWII era. Using the CCC as the vehicle to bridge the divide between the Progressive and post-WWII eras, *Nature's New Deal* forces readers to re-think one of the most storied conservation programs in this nation's history. Buttressed by exhaustive research, Maher's inventive work illustrates how environmental history can change the way we think about American history. *Nature's New Deal* is now required reading for anyone interested in the American environmental movement.

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Plowed Under: Agriculture and Environment in the Palouse. By Andrew P. Duffin. Foreword by William Cronon. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007. xv + 240 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00; £16.99.)

Andrew Duffin's *Plowed Under* examines the political ecology of soil erosion in the Palouse—the semiarid rolling prairies of eastern Washington and northwestern Idaho. This bioregional case study enables Duffin to reposition agriculture—as opposed to wilderness—as the analytical framework for exploring the human-nature relationship over time. Informed by the seminal research of cultural geographer Piers Blaikie, and expertly conversant in the scholarship of the American West and environmental historians, Duffin crafts an original narrative thematically focused on agricultural sustainability.

Duffin contends that Palouse farmers consciously repudiated adopting sustainable soil conservation practices throughout the



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