

Erie County Historical Society. The De Witt Clinton Papers at Columbia University, contemporary newspapers, and documents of the State of New York were also consulted.

While unduly favorable to Joseph Ellicott and the Holland Land Company, Dr. Chazanoff's work is an outstanding research job and a readable account of that critical early national period when New York surged ahead to become the Empire State. Chazanoff's work is skillfully organized and places the history of the Holland Land Company and the politics of western New York within the larger context of national trends.

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The Troubled Farmer. By EARL W. HAYTER. (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1968. Pp. 263. Illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index.)

Dr. Hayter is in the unique position of having, in some measure, lived the part of the troubled farmer as well as having the opportunity to do scholarly research on rural adjustment to industrialism. The book covers the period from 1850 to 1900 in America. Dr. Hayter observed the transitory period around the turn of the century as a child in the Dakota area.

The book is a moving, compassionate narrative which throws a ray of light on the complexities of the farmers' idealism in conflict with the realities of self-subsistence. Between the individual and his God stood many happenings to which the farmer had to put his own interpretation. In the light of present-day scientific advancements, the man of today can look back and say the farmer was stupid, superstitious, gullible, and grasping. Dr. Hayter plants a doubt in the mind of the reader, causing him to wonder if, given the same circumstances, he would have acted any differently.

For instance, did you know a major controversy was waged over whether or not cattle should be permitted to retain their horns, and why or why not? Just as big an issue for the farmer in favor of removing the horns, was how to do it. This section reads like science fiction, but it is all too true, and in horrible detail. The acts these gentle farmers perpetrated on their animals in the event of illness, would today be prosecuted by the humane society. If, perchance, the animal

recovered, the "cure" was proclaimed a success. If the animal failed to recover, the "cure" was never blamed. Rather the farmer had waited too long to apply it.

The intricacies of human nature are well portrayed in the butter vs. oleomargarine controversy. Your reviewer had always wondered at the seemingly deep-seated prejudice against margarine by older relatives.

Most people are familiar with the famous range wars of the west between the cattlemen and the "sod-busters." To fence or not to fence was a bigger dilemma than to be or not to be. First, should the animals be fenced in or fenced out? Think about that one. It is still not a uniformly settled problem today. What kind of fence — worm, rail, zigzag, post-and-rail, stone, stone-and-rail, sod, or live? What kind of live fence? The trouble was one kind of fencing could not keep all kinds of animals in or out, and nothing kept dogs in or out. There was such a fight over dogs, licensing was started, and you all know how well that works.

The first confidence man was Satan working his wiles in the Garden of Eden. Although he is with us still, he was certainly more prolific in the nineteenth century. Dr. Hayter definitely gives the impression the unswindled farmer was a rare bird. Everyone and everything was fair game — from seeds, trees, wells, fencing, sewing machines through lightning rods. Relatives of owners of a family *Peoples Standard Bible* may have paid three hundred dollars for it.

The unlettered farmer was particularly victimized by the patent situation, especially in connection with barbed wire. Paradoxically, the agricultural colleges shunned by the farmer could have given him a great deal of protection from these people-hazards as well as from climatic and geographical ones.

The reader is left with a feeling of having struggled and survived with the knowledge a nation is comprised more of the day-by-day problems faced by all its people than the large well-publicized battles of its collective citizenry. For each collective unit contains many individuals with their diverse problems.

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