and possibilities in land speculation, trade, and industry in Western Pennsylvania.

Professor Walker has edited this journal with skill and attention. Since he is a native of Pennsylvania and an economic historian, his introduction and explanatory footnotes are quite helpful. However, the editor made no effort to change Gilpin's words. Thus, the spirit, style, and pomposity of Joshua Gilpin's prose is preserved so that the reader can obtain a clearer insight into the man and his times.

In addition to the intrinsic value of making such a volume more readily available, its usefulness as a source for research is enhanced by an extensive bibliography of source material relating to the Gilpins and Western Pennsylvania. Professor Walker has given us a good list of relevant sources in research libraries, historical societies, and printed documents to broaden one's knowledge on the economic history of Western Pennsylvania. Also, there is an excellent list of secondary works for the reader's benefit. Taken as a whole, the volume, published by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, is worthwhile both for the scholar and the casual reader interested in the commercial development of Pennsylvania. Professor Walker's introduction puts the journal in its proper historical perspective, and the reader readily gains a keen insight into the mind of one of Pennsylvania's earlier entrepreneurs. While this volume is only a slice of life, it is the basic stuff upon which good economic history is built. This volume is by no means a major reference work, but it is something that scholars and general readers can peruse for pleasure as well as serious purposes.

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Hired Hands and Plowboys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815-60.

From county histories, farmers' diaries, account books, reminiscences, and newspapers, David Schob has produced a study which significantly enlarges our understanding of farm life and labor in the antebellum midwest (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota). What we refer to as farming was, in fact, a series of
tasks of varying levels of complexity, many of which were performed by itinerant hired hands, specialists in setup labor (clearing, chopping, constructing temporary dwellings), prairie-breaking, short-haul teamstering, harvesting, drainage, well and cellar digging, and horticulture. Because of the seasonal nature of most of these occupations, in the winter one large group of farm laborers turned to the cities, especially Cincinnati, for work in the growing hog slaughtering and packing industry; another segment found off-season employment in the lumber trades — chopping cordwood, rafting, sawmilling. Each of the rural occupations is superbly described. The book also contains a chapter on leisure time and recreation, and one each on the employment of boys and girls.

The study's basic occupational structure and its data base are at once the source of its contributions and its weaknesses. The book lacks a significant chronological framework. With few exceptions, the forty-five years under discussion here are treated as a coherent unit. Aside from an occasional reference to the depression of the early 1840s, an overview of wages presented in the conclusion, and the suggestion of a changing attitude toward farm labor in the 1850s, there is little here to suggest that these farm laborers moved through time or were much influenced by the development and growth of the economy. Schob's topical approach was perhaps the most profitable, but it results in certain kinds of questions remaining unasked and unanswered.

Readers could also profit from some kind of historical structure in which to evaluate the various forms of farm labor as work. In its absence, we have Schob's subjective and largely negative views on almost every form of activity: clearing was "grim, back-breaking toil," prairie-breaking was "grim and toilsome work," digging and ditching were "dirty, back-breaking and sometimes dangerous jobs," horticulture was "tedious," and packinghouse work, "basically unpleasant and repelling, attracted the coarser elements of society . . ." (pp. 20, 21, 148, 171).

This antiromantic approach to work is not consistently applied to other areas of midwestern society touching on farm labor. As a statement on the quality of nineteenth-century community, the book is ambivalent. On the one hand, Schob clearly rejects the heavy co-operative emphasis which Frank Owsley claimed for the antebellum South. Schob's midwest is a place where cabins were raised by hired labor rather than community effort, where neighbors overcharge, where a boy might purchase the last years of adolescence from his
father, and where the legal contract was the basic method of arranging to sell one's labor. On the other hand, Schob seems convinced of the existence of some special sense of community, particularly among the hired hand, farmer, and farm family. He arrives at this view by over-emphasizing, and perhaps misunderstanding, the custom of hired hands eating at the farmer's table, and by interpreting the contract as a veneer for a farmer-laborer relationship that was personal, governed by notions of fairness and responsibility, and therefore self-regulating. This ambivalence prevents Schob from focusing on, and conceptualizing, what may be the book's most important contribution: the startlingly impersonal, formal, and contractual nature of early nineteenth-century rural society.

On the timely subject of occupational mobility, the book has much to say. For the most part, Schob argues that sodbusters, teamsters, harvesters, and other farm laborers wanted to become farmers and that a reasonably large percentage of them did (mobility was not always perfectly linear, since some farm owners continued to work for wages). This thesis permeates the book until Schob introduces, and accepts, a contradictory interpretation based on the United States Census. "The vast majority of farm hands," he concludes, "lacked the means to buy a farm. Few made the successful jump directly from hired farm work to outright farm ownership" (p. 271). The apparent contradiction is a product of the evidence on which the mobility thesis is grounded; the county histories, in particular, present the region's successes rather than a representative sample.

These reservations aside, this is a significant book. Rich in detail, exhaustively researched, and courageous in scope, Hired Hands and Plowboys is a pathbreaking account of a major element of the agricultural working class.

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Anyone with a serious interest in Pennsylvania politics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is obliged to consult the publica-