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Manhood on the Line: Working-Class Masculinities in the American Heartland

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Kraus's portrait and many other images in the book capture the blend of revered traditions with fresh opportunities. Amana's centuries-old Pietist religion remained alive and well, headed by a separate Amana Church Society. The ethereal light sifting through a room of plain wooden benches for daily prayer services shown in a Paul Kellenberger photo suggests an allegory of faith flowing strong. Still, the Great Change streamlined religion, too, as the mandatory 11 services dropped to one on Sundays.

Hoehnle's chapters cover religion, farming, industry, crafts, schools, tourism, the home scene, and several other topics. Captions carry additional details of everyday life preserved in lyrical compositions and lively snapshots such as one of two little girl sitting atop a Ford. "The first large purchase made after the reorganization by many Amana families was an automobile," Hoehnle reports (84).

True to the mission of recovering this lost era, Hoehnle painstakingly identifies every person shown in the photos, thanking more than 30 people for their assistance with this momentous effort. The photo-essay format for chapters offers a front-row seat to history and is a signature of Arcadia's Images of America series.

Manhood on the Line: Working-Class Masculinities in the American Heartland, by Stephen Meyer. The Working Class in American History Series. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016. xiii, 247 pp. Notes, index. \$95.00 hardcover, \$28.00 paperback.

Reviewer Dennis Deslippe is associate professor of American Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Franklin & Marshall College. He is the author of *Protesting Affirmative Action: The Struggle over Equality after the Civil Rights Revolution* (2012) and *Rights, Not Roses: Women, Industrial Unions, and the Law of Equality in the United States, 1945-1980* (2000).

When automobile union leader Walter Reuther was elected president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1952, *Life* magazine published a photograph of the labor leader, cigar in hand, taking a swig of beer. A buzz went through the crowd: "The 'red head' drinks beer!" Reuther, who abstained from alcohol and tobacco, cut an unlikely figure in the rough-and-tumble world of factories, union halls, and picket lines.

Although Stephen Meyer does not discuss Reuther's celebratory drink, his richly detailed *Manhood on the Line* joins a growing list of studies on twentieth-century working-class masculinity. Meyer, a sure-footed labor historian whose long list of publications includes a study of Henry Ford's "five-dollar day," captures the raw and often violent way white male workers constructed and maintained their masculine

identities. The book's title, however, is a bit misleading: Meyer's "American Heartland" is, for the most part, Detroit-area automobile plants. Therefore, scholars concerned with the history of masculinity in Iowa's packinghouses, coal mines, railroads, and other worksites will welcome Meyer's new book more as a general contribution to their interests.

Manhood on the Line explores the origins of workers' masculinity. Meyer tells us that, as mass production came to dominate the industrial landscape, workers expressed a masculinity that was an unwieldy amalgamation of the older, upright artisan republican notion of manhood, as well as a volatile, muscular form of the "bachelor man" common in the nineteenth century. He illustrates how this new masculinity emerged in the context of a transient workforce. Southern and eastern European men came to toil on the factory floor alongside native-born white men as well as Irish and German Americans. Young men from farm communities in the Midwest joined them, as did African Americans and whites from the South. They drank, fought, played endless pranks, and frequented houses of prostitution. When they weren't competing for jobs, they were fighting to combat management favoritism and to secure wages sufficient to support themselves and their families. Class solidarity came into focus as much as a result of rejecting company spies and hired thugs as through ideological appeals to social unionism.

Gender and racial inequality helped to define the dominant white, working-class masculinity. Meyer's discussion of the influx of minority men—and women of all races—into factories during World War II is a familiar one. He reminds us that masculinity is relational in nature: white men contrasted their masculinity to both management and new wartime workers. Their protests took the form of unauthorized "hate strikes," which came less from economic competition during the war and more from anxiety over social equality. The unrest cut several ways; white women workers participated in these walkouts as well. African American men defended African American women's right to work alongside white women. Yet, as other scholars have shown in studies of various occupations in the 1960s and '70s, they, too, balked at gender equality.

Meyer ends his study with a survey of working-class masculinity since the 1940s. While acknowledging improved status for marginalized workers, he offers a portrait of masculinity in crisis as autoworkers were buffeted by a shrinking workforce, aggressive anti-unionism, and the grueling effects of automation.

The strength of *Manhood on the Line* is its unvarnished examination of the power of masculinity. At the same time, it slights other forms of masculinity present at the height of industrial America. The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU), for example, played a powerful role in unionizing efforts and in opposing communists in the labor movement. In a different context, Meyer identifies Paul Ste. Marie as a militant union leader but does not note that he was an ACTU leader as well. Beyond their ability to shut down Charles Coughlin, the “Radio Priest” who voiced anti-Semitic and pro-fascist sentiments by the late 1930s, and to mobilize priests to participate in organizing Ford Motor Company workers in neighborhood parishes, the ACTU offered a model of masculinity inflected with Catholic notions of fatherhood and respectability. Informed by Meyer’s impressive book, other scholars will come to study a fuller range of working-class masculinities.

Pesticides, A Love Story: America’s Enduring Embrace of Dangerous Chemicals, by Michelle Mart. CultureAmerica Series. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015. 344 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer David D. Vail is assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. His book, *Chemical Lands: A History of Pesticides, Aerial Spraying, and Health in North America’s Grasslands*, is forthcoming from the University of Alabama Press in 2018.

In 1945 *Capper’s Weekly* reported that many residents agonized over the rise of agricultural chemicals such as DDT and 2,4-D. An October editorial captured those anxieties: “Little is known about the toxic effect of DDT on humans. . . . Much confusion has resulted over the popular sale of DDT recently. Most users will have to learn what form or with what solution they want to buy it. There’s a very specialized form of DDT for each use. Some dealers are reported[ly] selling very weak solutions and making exaggerated claims for it. To protect themselves purchasers are advised to read the labels carefully and acquaint themselves with the potency needed for the job to be done” (*Capper’s Weekly*, October 13, 1945). Pesticides could protect crops, but landowners and agriculturalists worried about the risks.

A growing group of scholars such as Frederick Rowe Davis (*Banned*), David Kinkela (*DDT and the American Century*), and Nancy Langston (*Toxic Bodies*) has been exploring the scientific, political, and ecological histories of the toxic chemicals so ubiquitous on Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas farms. Michelle Mart adds a new cultural synthesis to help explain an ongoing paradox: How, even in the midst of caution and skepticism, can Americans view pesticides with such “remarkable