

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 65 | Number 1 (Winter 2006)

pps. 86-87

The Furrow and Us: Essays on Soil and Sentiment

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ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Dilly, Barbara J. "The Furrow and Us: Essays on Soil and Sentiment." *The Annals of Iowa* 65 (2006), 86-87.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.1018>

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tent of the faith-based initiatives. Enlisting religious agencies is not new, she points out. Organizations such as Catholic Charities have long relied on public funding to sustain their work. But the new approach is rife with politics, favoring conservative religious agencies, seriously reducing professional standards, and naively assuming that small religious institutions will actually have the inclination and the staff to take on new social welfare responsibilities, given their already busy ministries. Finally, Mapes criticizes what she sees as the most detrimental aspect of the new view: the rejection of a notion of public responsibility for social welfare and a focus on private charity as the key to this enduring social problem. That shift allows the state to define assistance to the poor as a gift rather than a right of citizenship. As a gift, it may be reduced at the convenience of the giver, precisely what has happened over the past 30 years.

Mapes's book is written with clarity and an obvious belief in the state's responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens. The book is impressive in scope, and her documentation is extensive and persuasive. The book's organization is so sound and the writing so clear that the main points are never swamped by details, a definite hazard in a story this complicated. The monograph does what a case study should do: It gives a wealth of information specific to Indianapolis while illuminating the national history of social welfare—and it does so briefly and eloquently.

The Furrow and Us: Essays on Soil and Sentiment, by Walter Thomas Jack, edited by Zachary Michael Jack. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005. xi, 82 pp. Appendix, notes. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Barbara J. Dilly is assistant professor of anthropology at Creighton University. Her dissertation was "Religious Resistance to Erosion of the Soil and the Soul among Three German-American Farming Communities in Northeast Iowa."

Walter Jack's great grandson Zachary is a fourth-generation Iowa farmer's son who found that, after 60 years, the wisdom of the old Quaker farmer Walter Jack still spoke to him about what the soil really needs to sustain agriculture and us. For those who grew up with the mold-board plow, this reprint of *The Furrow and Us* could be a nostalgic journey back to Jack's sentimental essays on soil science first published in 1946. But this classic collection is more than just a legacy. If we place Jack's concerns about sustainable growth, local ecologies, and organic methods in the twenty-first century, where they certainly still belong,

we can see that his vision about the appropriate relationship between a farmer and the soil is also a vision about our own health.

Walter Jack's accounts of what he learned about caring for the soil as a farmer are also a cultural critique of the values and historical circumstances that made soil science an economic issue and not a philosophy of nature. Jack asserts that we need to learn how nature thinks. Then, he asserts, we will see that all plant, animal, and human health is dependent on soil health. Such health, not economic issues, should be the focus of agricultural research. Within these essays, the soil and tith primer is a must read for all Iowans who seek some basic knowledge in order to participate in the ongoing debates about soil fertility and healthy agriculture.