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From Prairie to Corn Belt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century

Allan G. Bogue

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Between 1820 and the 1990s settlers broke the tallgrass prairies of mid-America and, by the 1870s, had begun to use the term "Corn Belt" in relation to much of the region. In *From Prairie to Corn Belt* Allan G. Bogue describes this remarkable transformation and challenges the view that the post- Civil War period constituted thirty years of unrelieved agricultural depression.

From *Prairie to Corn Belt* is still the only study of Midwestern agricultural development that focuses on the farmers themselves, the whole range of problems relating to production that they had to solve on their holdings, and the diversity of their responses.

Opening with a picture of the prairie environment of Illinois and Iowa during the early nineteenth century, Bogue describes the pioneer farmers, their reasons for coming and the impressions that the new land made on them. How farmers acquired land on the prairies, the prices that they paid, and the development of tenancy covered. Bogue also discusses in considerable detail how the pioneers improved their farms, livestock, and crops and how they used agricultural machinery and the process of innovation. He also notes the relative costs of credit, labor, and taxes.

A series of personal sketches of farmers based on diaries, journals, and letters will be of particular interest to historians and students of agriculture as well as to general readers with an interest Midwestern history.

This printing of *From Prairie to Corn Belt* includes a new preface by the author in which he describes the background of the book, its initial reception and its relation to the research in Midwestern rural history since its original publication in the mid-1960s.

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