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Groundwater Exploitation in the High Plains. Edited by David E. Kromm and Stephen E. White. Index, foreword by Gilbert F. White. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992. xiv + 240 pp. \$27.50.

Henry A. Wallace's Irrigation Frontier: On the Trail of the Corn Belt Farmer, 1909. Edited by Richard Lowitt and Judith Fabry. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. Introduction, index, xi + 228 pp. \$24.95.

David Kromm and Stephen White, both professors of geography at Kansas State University and experts on water use in the West, have gathered pieces by water experts. The result, *Groundwater Exploitation in the High Plains*, is a first-rate exploration of the methods and problems of groundwater utilization in the Ogallala Aquifer and the states overlying it—Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico.

The editors themselves contribute two substantive chapters. The first, on the physical geography of the region, gives an overview of the uses for Ogallala Aquifer water. The second focuses on issues in the management of groundwater—depletion, water quality, and the perceptions of these problems by farmers.

Other contributions in the book delve into nearly every facet of groundwater use. Donald E. Green, of Chadron State College, provides a look at the historical development of irrigation technology, from pumps to center pivots. Jack Musick and B. A. Stewart of the USDA Conservation and Production Research Laboratory in Bushland, Texas, examine modern irrigation technologies. Duane Nellis of Kansas State shows how remote sensing surveys crops for water needs and use.

Steve Gaul, Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, contributes a chapter on the Nebraska Sandhills. Irrigation by center pivot in that fragile area of the state in the 1970s and 1980s, spurred by government policies and high commodity prices, and totally uncontrolled, resulted in ecological damage to the largest sand dune area in the western hemisphere.

Readers are also given a good overview of state water laws in the region by Texas Tech's Otis Templer and of state water management institutions by Iowa's Rebecca Roberts. In-depth explorations of water management mechanics come from Wayne Bossert, Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, and Texas Tech's Lloyd Urban.

Groundwater Exploitation in the High Plains is a book that is comprehensible to the lay reader as well as the expert. It is liberally interspersed with tables, graphs, and photographs that add to the clarity. It is an invaluable reference resource for those studying the Great Plains.

Students of Western agriculture will find *Henry A. Wallace's Irrigation Frontier* a valuable primary source in studying farming at the turn of the century. Wallace, future secretary of agriculture and vice-president under Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the Progressive Party's presidential candidate in 1948, undertook a tour of the West in 1909, at the behest of *Wallace's Farmer*, a weekly edited by his father. At the time, young Wallace was a twenty-one-year-old senior at Iowa State University.

Wallace began his journey by noting irrigation projects around Garden City, Kansas, particularly the budding pump irrigation industry. He then traveled to the Texas Panhandle, the Salt River Valley in New Mexico, and found himself in "the real California," which he claimed was "quite unknown east of the Rockies." In his journey to the Pacific, Wallace witnessed the humble beginnings of present-day metropolises such as Phoenix and Los Angeles, and the birth of irrigated agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley. Wallace headed back east through Utah, Idaho, and Colorado, viewing irrigation projects at Umatilla, Boise, and Greeley.

Throughout his travel, Wallace frequently talked with the men and women who farmed the arid lands of the west. He noted their methods of tillage, troubles encountered with frosts, and lack of government water (especially in the headlands of the Roosevelt Dam in Arizona). The farmers, and their wives, were divided as to the worth of the country, complaining of the

isolation and the dust yet determined to stick it out.

Wallace acts as an advance scout for those Iowans interested in trying their hand in the West, carefully recording favorable areas for agriculture and for irrigation. He also casts a wary eye upon real estate men seeking to lure prospects, exposing some of their deceptive practices for the Corn Belters.

Wallace's style is straightforward, quoting liberally in the dialects of those he talked with, and makes excellent reading. The book is an excellent snapshot of American agriculture at the start of its modern era and an interesting social history as well.

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