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February 1991

Review of *Damming the Colorado: The Rise of the Lower Colorado River Authority, 1933-1939*, by John R. Adams, Jr.

F. Andrew Schoolmaster

University of North Texas, a.schoolmaster@tcu.edu

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Schoolmaster, F. Andrew, "Review of *Damming the Colorado: The Rise of the Lower Colorado River Authority, 1933-1939*, by John R. Adams, Jr." (1991). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 12.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Damming the Colorado: The Rise of the Lower Colorado River Authority, 1933-1939. John R. Adams, Jr. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1990. xvii + 161 pp. Maps, tables, illustrations, bibliography, and index. \$32.50 cloth (ISBN 0-89096426-2).

This book provides an insightful and useful case study of political compromise and regional conflict resolution stemming from the construction of multipurpose development projects on the Colorado River of Texas. The author focuses on the maneuverings of Texas politicians such as James P. Buchanan, J. J. Mansfield, and Lyndon B. Johnson in creating the Lower Colorado River Authority, and bringing a New Deal reclamation project complete with dams, reservoirs, and hydroelectric power stations to central Texas. The book is divided into six chapters, supplemented by a brief introduction, an extensive collection of footnotes, and an excellent bibliography.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the severity and frequency of flooding on the Colorado River and why early attempts by private companies failed to harness the river. The importance of Franklin D. Roosevelt's election and the federal government's emergence as a major sponsor of water resources development through New Deal reclamation projects is examined in Chapter 2. Adams details the political compromises among local, state and federal authorities that facilitated the creation of the Lower Colorado River Authority, and resulted in the initial appropriation of federal construction funds.

Chapter 3 chronicles how the scale of the Colorado River Project expanded from that of completing the half-constructed Buchanan Dam to building a series of dams with hydropower generating capabilities. This chapter provides insights into the "bigger is better" mentality that has characterized western water resources development, and clearly illustrates how a few well connected individuals can influence the scale of a project. Chapter 4 discusses the influential role of Lyndon B. Johnson in expanding the scope of the project and documents the impact the 1938 Colorado River flood had on the Lower Colorado River Authority. Rural electrification and how the Colorado River project came to be known as "Texas' Little TVA" are examined in Chapter 5. The final chapter summarizes the creation and development of the Lower Colorado River Authority and the role the agency played in the economic recovery of central Texas.

Adam's book is insightful, providing the reader with glimpses into the highly politicized nature of water resources development in the western United States in general, and Texas in particular. It is generally well

written, although more information on the Bureau of Reclamation's evaluation of the structural integrity of the Buchanan Dam could have been provided. Map selection, design, and placement could have been done differently to enhance the contribution of these figures to the book. To avoid confusion, the author could also have handled the name changes of the dams better. This book is a useful contribution to the water resources literature. It complements other works on river basin management and development, and contributes a much needed historical perspective on a period when many of the large-scale multipurpose river projects that we still benefit from today were conceived, planned, and built. **F. Andrew Schoolmaster**, *Department of Geography, University of North Texas.*

The Sociology of U.S. Agriculture: An Ecological Perspective. Don E. Albrecht and Steve H. Murdock. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1990. Tables, references, and indexes. vii + 249 pp. \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0-8138-0192-3).

Albrecht and Murdock provide a thorough examination and discussion of the changing structure of American agriculture. The authors, adopting an integrated approach, examine the major trends and changes in farming and the causes of these changes.

This book provides a theoretically informed framework that allows dimensions central to the understanding of past, present, and possible future changes in the structure of American agriculture. The text examines ecological factors that influence and are influenced by the changing structure of agriculture. It describes the relationship between technology and agriculture. The authors discuss nonfarm organizations such as government and financial and economic institutions that dramatically influence the structure of agriculture. They also examine demographic changes in the distribution, and size and composition of the rural population.

The concluding chapter of the book examines research topics that are likely to affect American agriculture in coming decades. Specifically, this chapter discusses changes brought about by the financial crisis in agriculture in the 1980s and changes being brought about as a result of the expanding ecosystem of international competition.

Overall, I enjoyed the book and highly recommend it for introductory classes in rural sociology. The book would also be useful in courses focusing on social change in traditional rural societies and the impact of agricultural and rural industries on the quality of the environment. **Keith D. Parker**, *Department of Sociology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.*