

Book Review – The American Farm

The American Farm – John Fraser Hart – 1998 Barnes & Noble, Inc. – ISBN, 0-7607-0614-X

The American Farm is the fourth book published by the author. It is preceded by *Look of the Land* – 1975, *The South* – 1977, and *The Land That Feeds Us* – 1993.

The American farm, and the men and women who have tilled the soil, has shaped the land making it both bountiful and beautiful. *The American Farm*, the book, is a pictorial essay of farming throughout the Eastern half of the USA from Main to Minnesota. Mr. Hart's commentary and insights are complemented by the gorgeous photography lavishly scattered throughout the text, making *The American Farm* "both a visual and historical feast."

The story of farming is, in some way, the recounting of the history of our great country. The pioneers from Pennsylvania to the Great Plains sculpted the landscape and advanced our civilization into the twentieth century. The author shows us how and why the farmer was able to change the landscape of rural America in so many positive ways.

The author takes us from the birthplace of American farming – southeastern Pennsylvania, through the bluegrass country of Kentucky, the corn belt from Ohio to Nebraska, down into the Southern plantations, and out onto the Great Plains, culminating in the magnificent cattle ranches of the West. Quite a trip – full of history and adventure.

John Fraser Hart does a good job of combining history and photography to produce a beautiful and informative book. *The American Farm* sings the praises of so many of the hard working people that have come before us helping to make our country what it is today. *The American Farm* is a book well worth adding to one's library.

John Fraser Hart is a professor of geography at the University of Minnesota. He is the former president and executive director of The Association of American Geographers.