Fertile Connections: 
Agriculture, Environment and Society in a Global Perspective 

Agricultural History Society Conference 
2008 

University of Nevada, Reno 
19-21 June 2008 

Sponsors: 
Agricultural History Society 
Department of History 
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Welcome to the 2008 Agricultural History Society Conference in Reno, Nevada. The conference features distinguished authors, speakers, and historians from multiple institutions and disciplines.

Reno is located in the Truckee Meadows, an inviting valley on the leeward side of the Sierra. The transcontinental railroad completed tracks into the Truckee Meadows in 1868, choosing a site near a toll bridge across the Truckee River for its first major depot. Central Pacific Railroad officials named it Reno in honor of a fallen Civil War Union general. Reno soon became the starting point for Nevada’s mining strikes. It was also the center of a thriving agricultural economy. Ranchers made major diversion from the Truckee River to meadowlands starting in 1861. Turn-of-the-century debates revolved around moving Nevada from a mining economy to an agricultural economy based upon irrigation. Further controversies developed over sharing Truckee River water amongst farms and ranches, urban centers, and the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation.

Located in Reno since 1885, the University of Nevada was first established in Elko in 1874 under provisions of the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act. As a land grant university, the school seriously began its mission in agricultural and applied science education beginning in the 1890s, which it continues today with other disciplines. The Agricultural History Conference will be held in one of the newest buildings on campus, the Joe Crowley Student Union.

Lodging information appears on page 11.
Officers:

Jess Gilbert, President, University of Wisconsin
Anne Effland, Vice President, USDA
Claire Strom, Editor, North Dakota State University
C. Fred Williams, Executive Secretary Treasurer, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

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Alissa Franck, North Dakota State University
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Melissa Walker, Converse College
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Schedule of Events

Thursday

Registration opens, 8:00 am—4th Floor, Crowley Student Union

Session #1 – 9:00am-10:30am

1. Expanding California’s Irrigated Empire: Reclamation, Irrigation and Restoration—Room 402

Chair: Michael Magliari, California State University, Chico

- Michael J. Meloy, Menlo College, “Marketing Irrigation in California”
- Steven M. Fountain, Washington State University, Vancouver, “Marketing Animal Reintroduction in California”

Comment: Audience

2. International Sharing of Agricultural Knowledge—Room 422

Chair and Commentator: Anne Effland, Economic Research Service, USDA

- Paul Burnett, University of Pennsylvania, “Extending Agricultural Extension: Theodore W. Schultz, Technical Cooperation in Latin America and Human Capital, 1941-64”
- Leland Turner, Texas Tech University, “Taurindicus Tex in the Land Down Under: Texas Cattle Breeds, Environmental Challenges, and Identity Constructs in the Australian Outback”
- Laurel Myers, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia, “Australian Agricultural Economics – The American Connection”

3. Cultivating Opinion: The Media in our Rural Past—Room 423

Chair and Commentator: Jane Pederson, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

- Thomas J. Arnold, University of Kansas, “Speaking of Trees: German Views of the Forest during the Late Enlightenment”
- Angie Gumm, Iowa State University, “‘Never Out of Place’: Popular Opinion of Cement in the Rural Great Plains from the 1900s to the 1930s”
- Lake Douglas, Louisiana State University, “‘To Improve the Soil and the Mind’: Cultivating Nineteenth-Century Agricultural Literature for Cultural and Environmental Research”
Session #2 – 11:00am-12:30pm

   Chair and Commentator: Deborah Fitzgerald, MIT
   • Andrew Case, University of Wisconsin-Madison, “The Organic Front: J.I. Rodale and Organic Agriculture in Postwar America”
   • Todd Dresser, University of Wisconsin-Madison, “From Country Life to Family Farm: Rural Social Science’s Changing Object of Concern, 1908-1947”
   • Amrys O. Williams, University of Wisconsin-Madison, “‘Have Youth and Trees Grow Up Together’: Wisconsin’s 4-H Conservation Movement and the Ecology of Rural Reform”

2. Ecocritical Approaches to Agricultural History—Room 422
   Chair: Michael P. Branch, University of Nevada, Reno
   • Kyhl Lyndgaard, University of Nevada, Reno, “Maple Syruping at Saint John’s Abbey”
   • James E. Bishop, University of Nevada, Reno, “Feeling Farmers and New Men: Crevecour’s Eco-Masculinity”
   • Megan Kuster, University of Nevada, Reno, “Collecting Crops for the Colonies: A Cultural and Literary History of Breadfruit”

3. Surviving Environmentalism: Farmers in the Post-War Era—Room 324
   Chair and Commentator: Kathleen A. Brosnan, University of Houston
   • David Vail, Kansas State University, “‘Kill that Thistle’: Rogue Sprayers, Bootlegged Chemicals, and the Kansas Chemical Laws, 1950-1980”
   • C. Fred Williams, University of Arkansas Little Rock, “Blue Herons and Silver Shiners: Bait Fish Farmers vs. Environmentalists in the Arkansas Delta, 1960-1990”
   • Sandra Schackel, Boise State University, “‘We’d be in bad shape if it wasn’t for hunting’: Farms and Ranches as Sites for Western Recreation”

4. Richard Kirkendall’s Social Scientists and Farm Politics in the Age of Roosevelt (1966): A Retrospective Appraisal—Room 402
   Moderator: Brian Cannon, Brigham Young University
   • Anne Effland, Economic Research Service, USDA
   • Jess Gilbert, University of Wisconsin-Madison
   • David Hamilton, University of Kentucky
   • Richard Kirkendall, University of Washington
   • David Schweikhardt and Jim Bonnen, Michigan State University
   • Mary Summers, Yale University
1 pm Luncheon—4th Floor Ballroom

Speaker: welcoming remarks Marc Johnson, Provost, University of Nevada, Reno

Session #3 – 2:00pm-3:30pm

1. The Politics of Agricultural Research—Room 324
   Chair and Commentator: David Danbom, Fargo, ND
   - Mark Finlay, Armstrong Atlantic State University, “Rubber Research Behind Barbed Wire: The Juxtaposition of the Emergency Rubber Project and Science at the Manzanar Internment Camp”
   - Jonathan Harwood, University of Manchester, “Political Motives behind the Establishment of State Plant Breeding Stations in Southern Germany”

2. Fertile Connections? Tourism in the Rural West— Room 402
   Chair and Commentator: Hal Barron, Harvey Mudd College
   - Kyle Livie, University of California, Los Angeles, “Pageants and Problems: Tourism and the Spanish Fantasy in Rural Southern California”
   - Kathleen A. Brosnan, University of Houston, “Visitors Among the Vines: The Odd Partnership of Tourism and Agriculture”
   - Susan S. Rugh, Brigham Young University, “The Old Roadside Attractions: Highway Motels in the Rural West”
   - Amanda Moore, University of Utah, “The New Roadside Attraction”

3. Production, Consumption, and Gender—Room 422
   Chair: Katherine Jellison, Ohio University
   - Cynthia Culver Prescott, University of North Dakota, “Prosperous Providers and Manly Men: Competing Masculinities on Oregon Farms”
   - Tovis Page, Harvard University, “Pious Milkmaids, Harvest Queens, and Mario Andretti: Religion, Gender, and Agriculture at Grailville, 1944-1964”
   - Abigail Hunt, University of Lincoln, “Women as Producers and Consumers in Lincolnshire: Changing Agricultural Practice and its Effects on Rural Culture during the 1960s and 70s”
4. Creative Nonfiction from Farm and Garden: Literary Approaches to Agricultural History—Room 423  
Chair: Michael P. Branch, University of Nevada, Reno  
• Colin Robertson, Nevada Museum of Art, “46 Degrees North, 95 Degrees West: A Personal Reflection on the Agricultural and Environmental History of the Old Northwest”  
• Steven K. Hall, University of Nevada, Reno, “My Father, the Doctor Farmer: A Son Seeks to Reap Where He Has Not Sown”  
• Michael Branch, University of Nevada, Reno, “A Child’s First Garden”  

Thursday Evening  
4:30pm - Presidential Address and Reception  
Harrah’s National Automobile Museum, Downtown Reno  
(Please use complimentary Sierra Spirit Transportation)

Postcards portrayed Reno’s divorce “trade” by 1910.
Friday

Session #1 – 9:00am-10:30am

1. **Enduring Family Farms: Three Examples**—Room 422
   Chair and Commentator: Melissa Walker, Converse College
   • Peter Kopp, University of Nevada, Reno, “Hops: An Enduring Specialty Crop in Oregon”
   • Sarah Glassford, University of Ottawa, and Larry Glassford, University of Windsor, “Deconstructing and Re-constructing a Family Farm in Rural Ontario: A Post-Modern Dialogue”
   • Carrie Fathman, University of Minnesota, “A History by Design of the Stark Brothers on North Manitou Island”

2. **Science and Reform: Land Use and Management**—Room 423
   Chair and Commentator: Joe Anderson, University of West Georgia
   • Sigma Colón, University of Arizona, “Cultivating the Sonoran Desert: Scientific Agriculture in Pima County, 1890-1910”
   • Justin Roberts, Johns Hopkins University, “‘Systems’ of Management: British West Indian Approaches to Agricultural Reform, 1750-1810”
   • Douglas Helms, Natural Resources Conservation Service, “Hugh Hammond Bennett’s Journey: Soil Scientist to Soil Conservationist”

3. **Teaching Agricultural History in a Global Context**—Room 402
   Chair/Moderator: Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, Iowa State University
   Panelists/Discussants:
   • Sterling Evans, Brandon University, “Researching Transnational Agricultural History”
   • Michael Magliari, California State University – Chico, “From Chico to Liverpool: Teaching Local California Agricultural History with a Global Perspective”
   • Robyn Metcalfe, Boston University, “Teaching Agricultural History Topically at Boston University: A Work in Progress”
   • Debra Reid, Eastern Illinois University, “The Rural World: Where to Start?”
Session #2 – 11:00am-12:30pm

1. Exhibitionists, Agricultural Fairs, and Rural Culture—Room 423
Chair and Commentator: Pete Daniel, National Museum of American History
- Connie L. Lester, University of Central Florida, “Farmers, Boosters, and a Romanov Prince: Florida County Fairs and the State’s Agrarian Image in the 1920s”
- David Mizener, York University, “Telling the Farmer’s Story”: Exhibitions, Ploughing Contests and the Representation of Agriculture in Postwar Ontario, 1946-1987”

2. Culture Shaping Landscape: The Baltic Sea Region, Canada, and the United States—Room 422
Chair and Commentator: Elizabeth Raymond, University of Nevada, Reno
- Hele Kiimann and Göran Hoppe, Uppsala University, “Landscape Change in Relation to Human Activity in the Baltic Sea Region”
- Peter A. Russell, University of British Columbia, Okanagan, “‘Similar, but Completely Different’: The American Homestead Act, the Canadian Dominion Lands Act, and Their impacts”

3. David Vaught’s After the Gold Rush: Tarnished Dreams in the Sacramento Valley and the State of Rural History in California—Room 402
Discussants:
- Richard J. Orsi, California State University, East Bay
- Donald J. Pisani, University of Oklahoma
- Linda Ivey, California State University, East Bay
Responder:
- David Vaught, Texas A & M University

1pm Luncheon—4th Floor Ballroom

Speaker: Jim Harkness, President, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minneapolis, MN
“From Gloom to Doom: The State and fate of Agriculture” Thoughts on the State and Fate of Agriculture”
Session #3 – 2:00pm-3:30pm

1. The Transition to Capitalism Revisited—Room 422
   Chair and Commentator: Susan S. Rugh, Brigham Young University
   • R. Todd Welker, University of California, San Diego, “The Productive Strategies of California’s Earliest American Farmers”
   • Gary T. Edwards, Arkansas State University, “We Did Anything That Would Pay: Safety-First and Profit-Second on the Antebellum Cotton Frontier”
   • Jeff Bremer, Stephen F. Austin State University, “Frontier Capitalism: The Market Revolution in Rural Central Missouri, 1830-1860”

2. Water Use and Development—Room 402
   Chair and Commentator: Brian Q. Cannon, Brigham Young University
   • Tony E. Carlson, University of Oklahoma, “The Other Side of Reclamation: Wetland Drainage in the Upper Midwest and the Aborted Nationalization of U.S. Water Policy, 1879-1910”
   • Abigail Schade, Columbia University, “Water, Space and Time: Technological Diffusion Theory and Qanat Irrigation Systems”
   • Fred Waage, East Tennessee State University, “Buried Land: TVA versus Agriculture in U.S. Novels, 1945-Present”

3. Migrant and Itinerant Workers in Agriculture—Room 423
   Chair and Commentator: Carmen V. Harris, University of South Carolina Upstate
   • Randal Beeman, Bakersfield College, “Ending the Bracero Program, 1964-65”
   • Prue Laidlaw, Charles Sturt University, “The Romance of the Swag: Itinerant Workers in Rural New South Wales, Australia, 1850-1930”
   • Jim Norris, North Dakota State University, “Before César Chávez: Social Services to Mexican Migrant Workers on the Northern Great Plains, 1941-64”

4:00pm Plenary Session

FSA Photography and Social Inequalities: Dorothea Lange and Marion Post Wolcott—Room 402
Chair: Jess Gilbert, University of Wisconsin-Madison
• Linda Gordon, New York University, “American Exodus: Dorothea Lange’s Photographic Critique of U.S. Agricultural Labor”
• Pete Daniel, National Museum of American History, “Marion Post Wolcott’s Tobacco Auction Photographs”
Comment: Deborah Fitzgerald, MIT
Friday Evening
6:00pm - Banquet/Awards Ceremony
4th Floor Ballroom, Crowley Student Union

Saturday

Session #1 – 9:00am-10:30am

1. Revolting Farmers in the Jaws of Industrialism—Room 423
   Chair and Commentator: Michael J. Brodhead, University of Nevada, Reno
   - Elizabeth Cafer du Plessis, Indiana University, “Rural Identities, Global War: American Farmers in World War I”
   - James Ross, University of Arkansas Little Rock, “Jesus is Coming Soon: Religion, Social Change, and Meaning in the Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union”

2. Florida and the Environment—Room 422
   Chair and Commentator: Connie Lester, University of Central Florida
   - Claire Strom, North Dakota State University, “From Seminoles to Uncle Joe: World War II and Tick Eradication in Florida”
   - Robert Hutchings, North Dakota State University, “Golden sunshine: Family farms, the environment, and growing citrus along the Indian River”
   - David Nelson, Florida State University, “Conservation, Commodification, and the Creation of Paradise in New Deal-era Florida”

3. Agricultural Science and Technology: The Role of Institutions and Concepts in the Twentieth Century—Room 402
   Chair and Commentator: Hamilton Cravens, Iowa State University
   - Laura L. Lovett, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, “Managing the ‘Baby Crop’: Agricultural Analogies in Progressive Era Public Health and Eugenic Campaigns”
   - David L. Seim, Texas A&M University, “The Purnell Act as Capstone to the Rise of ‘Scientific’ Agricultural Economics”
   - Micah Rueber, Mississippi State University, “Out With the Old and In With the Moo: Cattle Judging, Modernity, and the Emergence of Agribusiness, 1930-1960”
Saturday Field Trip

11am—Bus leaves Student Union Parking Lot

Destinations:

Virginia City
Carson Valley
Lake Tahoe

5pm—Return to Student Union Parking Lot

Trip includes:

Lunch—Fourth Ward School, Virginia City
Catering by Café Del Rio

(see insert for cost and registration)
Hotel and Transportation Options

Circus Circus Reno Hotel and Casino
800-648-5010
Agricultural History conference attendees receive an Executive Club discount, which, with other perks, includes a discounted room rate of $45/weekdays and $95/weekends plus applicable taxes. The best way to arrange for the discount is to call for reservations and mention the Executive Club for the Agricultural History Conference through the UNR's history department.

Eldorado Hotel Casino
888-889-9338
Agricultural History conference attendees receive a special rate of $59.99/weekdays and $109.99/weekends plus applicable taxes. For this rate, please call Dora Brooner directly at the number above and mention the affiliation as Corporate Execuline under the account HIST.

Super 8 Motel Reno/University Area
775-329-3464
This motel is within walking distance of the University of Nevada-Reno, and the closest one from this list. Rates vary between $49.99 and $69.99, depending on the day of the week and number of beds.

NOTE: Both Circus Circus and the Eldorado are in downtown Reno and conference attendees can either walk or take a free bus to the University of Nevada-Reno. Super 8 Motel is within five minutes walking distance to the Joe Crowley Student Union.
I’m On My Way to Reno
By Billy Murray (1910)

My wife and I don’t get along, we simply fight and fight
I married her to win a bet, it really serves me right,
The love she once declared was mine has simply turned to hate
So I’ve made up my mind to visit old Nevada State.

I’m on my way to Reno, I’m leaving town today,
Give my regards to all the boys and girls along Broadway
Once I get my liberty, no more wedding bells for me
Shouting the Battle Cry of Freedom.

I’ve stood an awful lot from her and never said a word,
But on the level, as a wife she simply was a bird.
At night when I came home from work, all tired out an dead
I always found her eating soda crackers on the bed.

I’m on my way to Reno, I’m leaving town today
It’s liberty or death with me my hair is turning grey
Reno life is simply great, they grant divorces when you want
Shouting the Battle Cry of Freedom.

It’s awful when you tie yourself up to a suffragette
And suffer, suffer, suffer till your brains are all to let.
She has the sign on me all right, I really will admit
She used to make me stay at home and try to learn to knit.

I’m on my way to Reno, I’m never coming back
And if I do I surely hope the train runs off the track
Life in Reno must be grand, husbands marching hand in hand
Shouting the Battle Cry of Freedom.

There was a time when South Dakota was the proper place
But when compared to Reno, it was never in the race.
The only real Arcadia from Frisco east to Maine
Just think of it, the judge and jury meet you at the train.

I’m on my way to Reno, to break the marriage knot
You just get off the train and drop a nickel in the slot
You just get off the train and then turn around and jump right on again
Shouting the Battle Cry of Freedom.
Nevadans adopted the “One Sound State” slogan in the 1930’s Great Depression to describe their state’s sound fiscal practices in contrast to New Deal extravagances.
Top: Dignitaries gathered to open the Derby Diversion Dam on the lower Truckee River providing water to the Newlands Reclamation Project (June 1905).

Bottom: Desert sage in contrast to irrigated alfalfa.