

Farming in the Black Patch. By Bobbie Smith Bryant (Morley, MO: Acclaim Press, 2015). Pp. 192. \$39.95 cloth).

Bobby Smith Bryant, a Murray native who currently lives in Jefferson County and is community development advisor for the Kentucky League of Cities, is the author of *Farming in the Black Patch*. The book is designed as a supplement to her PBS documentary *Farming in the Black Patch* screened in 2013 and draws heavily on her experiences growing up on Smith Farms in Calloway County. Other farms, all in the Kentucky portion of the Jackson Purchase, featured in this splendidly illustrated volume are Carraway Farms, Lowe Farms, Cunningham Farms, and one owned by John Michael Puckett.

Farming in the Black Patch provides useful balance to Ann K. Ferrell's 2013 *Burley: Kentucky Tobacco in a New Century*, which pointedly ignores the contribution of dark-fired tobacco in Kentucky. Burley, which is air-cured and used by cigarette makers, is grown more widely, and its cash value to the Kentucky economy is nearly double that of the dark-fired tobacco grown primarily in western Kentucky counties. This leaf is smoked and is raised for other uses than cigarettes. Nevertheless, the relative value of the dark-fired tobacco has grown in recent years. According to United States Department of Agriculture statistics, burley sales in Kentucky dropped more than \$500 million annually, but dark-fired sales rose nearly \$75 million for a 176% increase. From 1990 to 2015, the value of dark tobacco grew sharply from slightly more than 5% of total Kentucky tobacco sales to more than 36%. In both cases, expectations of supporters who hoped that the tobacco industry would collapse as a result of the 1998 Tobacco Settlement Master Agreement that forced tobacco companies to make payments to the states for deceptive past marketing practices have not been realized.

Bryant does a good job of presenting the history of tobacco production in the Black Patch and describing in great detail current practices. Persons unfamiliar with the history of tobacco cultivation in the Jackson Purchase should be astounded by Bryant's useful account of the Black Patch War during the first decade of the 20th century. The story of the small tobacco farmers of western Kentucky and Tennessee pushed to the wall by the power of the tobacco trust resulting in thousands banding together for economic survival by holding back crop production for higher prices and organized vigilante action against the trust and farmers who refused to adhere to the tactics of their neighbors to the point that civil authority broke down is a much more compelling story than the Hatfield-McCoy feuds that is told over and over, but the Black Patch War has been ignored by cinematographers.

The reader who wistfully recalls their youthful experiences decades ago working in the tobacco patch will discover dramatic changes in today's methods wrought by the mechanization and rationalization employed by large tobacco operations. Many would be surprised by the degree that family labor has been replaced by seasonal migrant workers. From start to finish, a primary goal of the tobacco farmer/entrepreneur is to remove risk from the venture starting and

ending with the vertical relationship established with the tobacco companies, which Bryant suggests is “imperative” (p.155).

George Humphreys

Madisonville Community College (emeritus)

Kentucky and the Great War: World War I on the Home Front. By David J. Bettez (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016). Pp. 428. \$45 cloth.

David Bettez’ *Kentucky and the Great War: World War I on the Home Front* is part of the University Press of Kentucky’s Topics in Kentucky History and the 2016 winner of the annual Thomas D. Clark Medallion Book awarded by the press for books that stand out for adding to the understanding of the culture and politics of the Commonwealth. The author makes a concerted effort in emulating David Kennedy’s acclaimed *Over Hear: The First World War and American Society* by providing a comprehensive overview of the effort to mobilize all parts of the state’s civilian population in the war effort. Both authors see the war experience as preparation for greater government involvement in American lives that would come later with the New Deal.

Through the application of “coercive voluntarism,” state and local defense councils encouraged participation in bond drives and various war-related organizations. On the more coercive end of the scale, local communities, including several in the Jackson Purchase, enthusiastically applied federal and state directions to enforce efforts towards requiring service-age men to either “work or fight” and to crack down against vagrants. For example, the city of Hickman with support from the Fulton County Defense Council fined “slackers” and posted signs announcing that “Hickman is a 100 percent American city and we have no room for slackers.” Local lawmakers also joined the campaign to make life uncomfortable for those who might be German sympathizers as in the case of Ote Piper, Democratic state representative from Hickman County, who was the author of bill passed in the state legislature to ban the teaching of German that was vetoed by the governor.

However, not all residents of the Jackson Purchase were as militantly patriotic as Piper. H. Boyce Taylor, the minister at the First Baptist Church in Murray and the moderator of the Kentucky General Association of Baptists, gained a reputation for his vigilance against “Catholicism, tawdry entertainments, and the preeminence of the secular world.” He also opposed the work of the YMCA and the Red Cross in providing comfort to soldiers who, as he suggested, faced death at the front unprepared for the “eternal darkness and hell.” Taylor was reported to state and federal authorities several times for urging young men to avoid the service or seek non-combatant assignments, but was never convicted.

In general, Bettez suggests that most segments of Kentucky society, including many that were originally opposed to America’s entry into the war, were cooperative in the war once it was