

Old Farm: A History

Jerry Apps

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One of the Midwest's best-loved authors tells the story of his land, from the last great glacier that dug out its valleys and formed its hills, to his own family's 40 year relationship with the beloved farm they call Roshara. In this quiet but epic tale, Apps describes the Native Americans who lived on the land for hundreds of years, tapping the maple trees and fishing the streams and lakes, as well as the first white settlers who tilled its sandy acres, plowing the native grasses that grew taller than their teams of oxen. For all their work, the farm proved tough to tame. Hardscrabble farming methods and hard luck often brought failure.

"From land that provided only a marginal living for its early owners, this place we call Roshara has provided much for my family and me," writes Apps. He and his wife and their children have cared for the farm not so much to make a living as to enhance their lives. Apps chronicles the family's efforts — always earnest, if sometimes ill-advised — to restore an old granary into living space, develop a productive vegetable garden, manage the woodlots, reestablish a prairie, and enjoy nature's sounds and silences. Breathtakingly beautiful color photographs by Apps's son, Steve (a professional photographer), highlight the ever-changing beauty of the land in every season and hint at the spiritual gifts that are the true bounty this family reaps from Roshara.

Central to Apps' work is his belief that the land is something to cherish and revere. Like Aldo Leopold before him, Apps sounds an inspirational call to readers to preserve wild and rural places, leaving them in better condition than we found them for future generations.



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