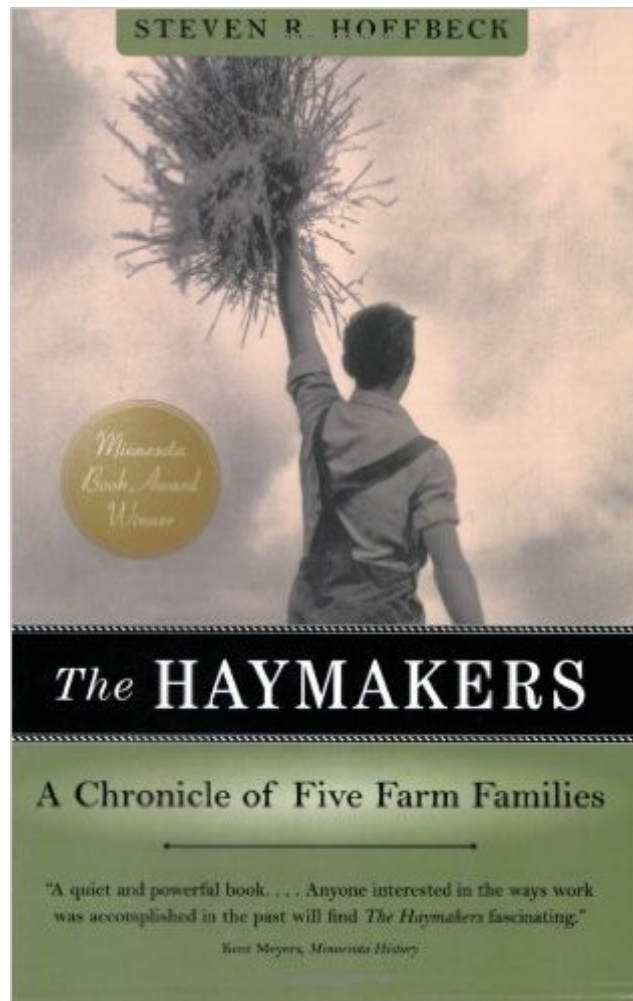


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The Haymakers: A Chronicle Of Five Farm Families (Minnesota)



Synopsis

Winner of the Minnesota Book Award and the Red River Heritage Award! *The Haymakers* is an epic—the history of man’s struggle with nature as well as man’s struggle against machines. It relates the story of farmers and their obligations to their families, to the animals they fed, and to the land they tended. But *The Haymakers* is also an elegy—to a way of life fast disappearing from our landscape. In the most heartfelt essays, Hoffbeck chronicles his own family’s struggle to hold onto their family farm and his personal struggle in deciding to leave farming for another way of life. Hoffbeck also seeks to document and preserve the commonplace methods of haymaking, information about haying that might otherwise be lost to posterity. He describes the tools and the methods of haymaking as well as the relentless demands of the farm. Using diaries, agricultural guidebooks and personal interviews, the folkways of cutting, raking, and harvesting hay have been recorded in these chapters. In the end, this book is not so much about agricultural history as it is about family history, personal history—how farm families survive, even persevere.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (15 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Dr. Steven Hoffbeck’s fast-moving book is about haying, or the process of putting up of hay, to feed farm animals through the long winter months. This is an unusual topic and if the book were only about haying techniques, it would have little interest except to farming historians, but the book is more than haying, much more. "The Haymakers" is about the struggles and triumphs of real people

dealing with the joys and many heartrendering difficulties of farm life. Dr. Hoffbeck takes the reader through 100 years of haymaking by describing and telling us the personal chronicles of 5 farm families. Haymaking methods are described, from the simple yet laborious scythe-harvest method through the making of large round and small square bales by machine. I found the evolution of haymaking facinating in itself, and it gave me an appreciaton of what farm familes have to go through to "get in the hay". For without hay, there is no winter feed for the many farm animals; and without farm animals, there is no farm. As any farmer will tell you, close calls and accidents are unfortunately all too frequent on the farm. Dr. Hoffbeck shares his experiences of losing his own father, and then tragically his brother, all due to accidents on the home farm. I was touched by the way Dr. Hoffbeck writes about these tremendous losses, and one can feel his pain, anguish, and loss through his words. Dr. Hoffbeck also clearly explains the farm crisis American farmers face today, that of debt, the trend to larger and larger farms, and the slow but steady passing of the small American homestead farm. Not having been raised, or even associated with the travails of farming life, I found his explanation quite enlightening.

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