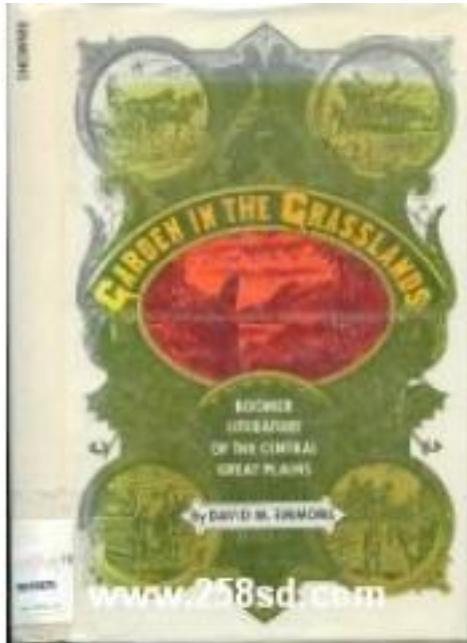


Garden in the Grasslands: Boomer Literature of the Central Great Plains



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著者:

出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780803207530

The American people had always expected much of their frontiers
These outlying regions whether located in the Connecticut River valley
or in the blue grass hills of Kentucky served as a constant pull upon
the American imagination Their challenges and promises supplied a
part of the generative energy that propelled the settlers westward It
was little wonder that a grateful people invested their frontiers with hazy
images of the garden regained describing them in language reserved
for Edenic landscapes only The people who lived within them were
thought to enjoy the favors only an Eden could supply The vast material wealth
the frontier offered the fertile soil and benign and productive climate afforded

predictable and conventional
 rewards there a man could make a decent living. Similarly as the
 number of settlers increased new resources and markets would be
 made available to the more developed regions farther east. A nation
 constantly growing it was thought was a nation constantly prospering
 and tiffs growth this westering was central to the thinking of those
 who envisioned a powerful and self-sufficient nation. But economic
 prosperity was not the only benefit Americans could expect to receive
 from their frontiers. There were political and spiritual rewards as well
 A frontier by definition would be settled by agriculturalists and most
 Americans shared Jefferson's belief that these were the chosen of God. S
 people. The American agriculturist the yeoman had been selected as
 the standard-bearer of American culture. Simple in his tastes frugal
 in habits he was the ideal republican and upon him rested much of this
 nation's cultural and political identity. A constant supply of frontiers
 must be provided for his occupation.¹ The literature of the garden and the yeoman is vast and extensive. The seminal
 work is Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*
 (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) but see also Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden*
 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) Charles Sanford's *The Quest*
 J.

作者介绍:

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