ficult task of writing economic history. This book will go instantly into the
canon of civil rights scholarship.

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The desire for food security is highly motivational, and generally everyone
agrees that more is better. But the emergence of genetically modified (GM)
organisms in agriculture has divided eaters into increasingly distant dining
rooms: technophiles who see GM as another scientific improvement in agri-
culture and biophiles who argue that a line has been crossed and a balance
upset. Growing Resistance is the latest Canadian book to engage this debate,
and it will certainly engage historians interested in how Prairie farmers re-
sponded to GM crops such as Roundup Ready wheat, canola, and Triffid flax.

Indeed, the book centers on a historical problem. Following the federal
government’s permissive attitude to GM and what it calls “plants with novel
traits,” the biotech sector quickly developed and approved several GM organ-
isms (36). Beginning in the late 1990s, herbicide-tolerant varieties of canola
and flax appeared and experienced strong uptake with farmers. But when
Monsanto announced the development of Roundup Ready wheat—a variety
that would tolerate the widely used herbicide Roundup—several producer, in-
dustry, and health groups rallied to stop it, and in 2004 the company stopped
developing the variety. Eaton sets out to explain why the same farmers who
adopted GM canola would reject GM wheat, and, more generally, how pro-
ducer-led resistance complicates the literature on consumer anti-GM move-
ments.

Eaton eventually argues that the very different responses to GM wheat and
oilseeds stemmed from the history of the plants themselves. GM canola found
purchase because canola was relatively new and already highly transformed,
and GM wheat caused protest because of the cereal’s centrality in Western
diets and its history in Prairie agriculture. The distinction is explained in “The
Difference Between Bread and Oil,” a chapter that promises in its subtitle to
put “People-Plant Relationships in Historical Context.” Here, Eaton follows
a growing literature on companion species, arguing that we shape our plants
and then our plants shape us. However, as the author admits, the historical development of Prairie wheat and oilseed systems—including the important history of biological innovation in Canadian wheat breeding—is too brief. Granted, the book’s focus is on recent politics, but when a plant’s history is offered as a determinant in its unique passage through modern biotechnology, readers will expect historical evidence. We are left wondering, how is bread any different than oil? Especially since Prairie vegetable oils are found in most of the same products as wheat and in a whole host of others.

The adoption and then rejection of GM is also puzzling in the case of flax, a small oilseed industry that has been centered in the Prairies for as long as wheat. Unlike canola, GM flax was rejected four years after its approval, and although Eaton presents it as an example of producer resistance, it was clearly the result of the anti-GM stance taken by the European Union, flax’s largest consumer.

Resisting GM wheat was about protecting food, enabling process, and empowering producers, but in some places the takeaway is confused by historical gaps and theoretical jargon. Eaton’s personal bias is clear—she is in favor of renewed resistance against genetic modification or at least against the companies that want blanket permissions and exclusive rights to do it. Growing Resistance offers practical advice for the anti-GM movement, including the need to listen to producers and to consider the local and historical contexts of each plant, and in this way the book is a welcome resource for all parties.

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Soft Soil, Black Grapes is a welcome and lively addition to the growing set of works combining social history, critical cultural studies, and agricultural history. Cinototto argues that race and ethnicity were the decisive factors shaping Italian winemaking in California in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That racial milieu was a “changing, modular, and heavily contextual process that influence[d]... social status... power relations... [and] the reception of commodities produced by ethnic businesses in the marketplace” (2). Focusing on the Italian Swiss Colony, Italian Vineyard, and E.&J. Gallo wineries,