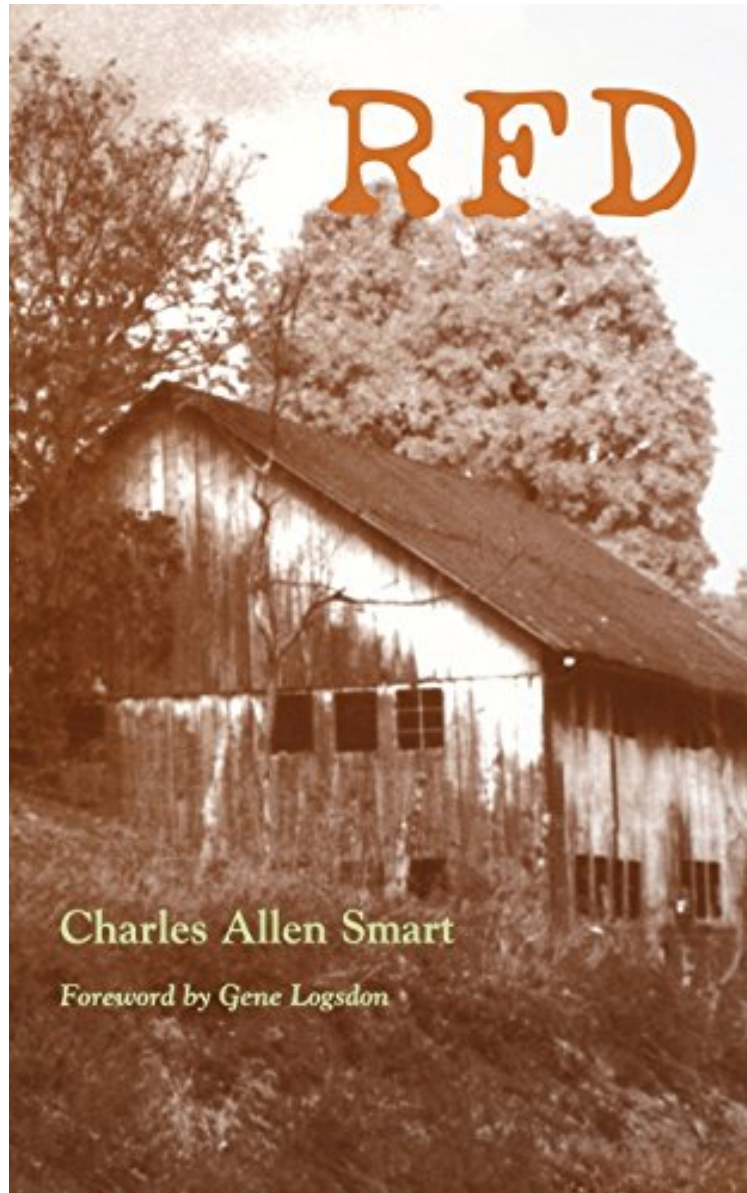


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#3600794 in Books Ohio University Press 1998-07-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.99 x .65 x 5.001, .70 #File Name: 082141254X288 pages | File size: 48.Mb

Charles Allen Smart : R.F.D.: Charles Allen Smart before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised R.F.D.: Charles Allen Smart:

This book, the author tells us in his preface, is intended to be a picture of life on a farm in Southern Ohio in the 1930s.

RFD is a faithful portrait of farm life as thousands of men and women experienced it from one end of the country to the other and from pioneering times to the present century. Originally published in 1938 to enthusiastic reviews and commercial success, RFD is the story of one couple's trials with leaving the comforts of city life for a chance to get back to the land. Charles Allen Smart was a New York novelist and prep-school teacher when he inherited his aunt's farm in Chillicothe, Ohio. He and his wife moved into a rustic stone farmhouse, determined to combine their lives as working farmers with their active intellectual life, love of art, and political progressivism. They upset some in their small town by staging parts of Clifford Odets's play *Waiting for Lefty*, but they won respect for their hard work and honest dealings. Smart conveys the feel of their lives at a time when living in the country was a meaningful distinction in America. He also writes movingly of his concerns regarding America's materialism, the rise of industrial agriculture, burgeoning chain stores, and frayed communities. Told with sensitivity, gusto, and a fierce honesty, RFD became a classic because embedded in its charms as a first-rate farm memoir is the universal story of one couple's earnest, joyful attempt to live meaningful lives. Ohio University Press is especially pleased to reissue this midwestern classic with a new foreword by noted farm writer Gene Logsdon.

From *Publishers Weekly* This reissue of the 1938 bestseller is an engaging and honest memoir of the first three years the author and his wife spent farming in southern Ohio, close to the city of Chillicothe. Smart (1905-1967), a writer (Sassafras Hill) and teacher, inherited the farm from his aunt and details here both the joys and hardships of rural life. Smart and his wife, Peggy, whom he clearly adored, raised both sheep and cattle and, in addition, cultivated a productive vegetable garden. He provides many descriptions laced with dry humor of the backbreaking labor involved in small farming. Despite the hard work and isolation, Smart found great pleasure in country living and expresses a deep respect for his neighbor farmers. He and his wife sought relief from their daily drudgery by taking an active part in a community theater group. They also found farm life conducive to their sensual natures and indulged themselves in a mutual enjoyment of good homemade food, flowers, art and bathing in the open air during the warm months. A committed socialist during the Great Depression, Smart frequently remarks on the negative effects the profit-driven U.S. economy had on agriculture and farmers. Unfortunately, Smart's attitudes toward African Americans were not as liberal but instead reflect the prejudices of his time: several condescending references to the black men and women who worked for him undercut the book's otherwise generous, bucolic tone. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From *Library Journal* In this 1938 best seller, Smart reveals how he gave up his life as a novelist and teacher to run an inherited farm in the boonies of Ohio. He and his wife raised livestock and crops while trying to remain intellectually active through the community's limited theater offerings. Along with his description of farm life, he contemplates America's material lust and more. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. It is not at all easy to get at the sprawling message of this book in a few words. It would not be such a good book if one could. It is full of wisdom without setting out to be wise, and the wisdom is of the sort that comes out of sweat and simple satisfactions. ---The *New York Times*, upon RFD's first publication This is a wonderful book. It is delightful. Smart comes across as so honest and passionate. He would have been a wonderful neighbor. I could have learned from him. David Kline, author of *Scratching the Woodchuck: Nature on an Amish Farm* What a welcome resurrection! Here is a voice from the 1930s that speaks to the dilemmas we were certain to face in the next century. His mind moves easily between farming and philosophizing, between strategies for the survival of households during the Great Depression and strategies for the renewal of our ailing civilization. I would have walked a long way to meet this man. I'm glad to have his book. Scott Russell Sanders