



DURABLE TRADES:

Family-Centered Economies That Have Stood the Test of Time

by Rory Groves (Wipf & Stock Publishers; \$25)

SUMMARY: With over 30,000 occupations currently in existence, workers today face a bewildering array of careers from which to choose, and upon which to center their lives. But there is more at stake than just a paycheck.

For too long, work has driven a wedge between families, dividing husband from wife, father from son, mother from daughter, and family from home. Building something that will

last requires a radically different approach than is common or encouraged today.

In *Durable Trades*, Groves uncovers family-centered professions that have endured the worst upheavals in history—including the Industrial Revolution—and continue to thrive today. Through careful research and thoughtful commentary, Groves offers another way forward to those looking for a more durable future.

Who the Book is For

Work is a particularly relevant topic right now; millions are out of work and millions more are re-evaluating the priorities they place on work. *Durable Trades* can serve as a timely “second opinion” for those searching for an alternate path to the one they have been traveling (or ladder they have been climbing).

Durable Trades is for the husband or wife or young person who is looking for more than most modern careers have to offer. It is for the father who wants to build a lasting inheritance for his children. Or the woman who wants to team up with her husband to build something beautiful together. It is for parents who want to pass on their values to their children. It is for the young person who is interested in more than just a paycheck, who wants a meaningful, fulfilling career.

About the Author



A computer-programmer-turned-homesteader, Rory Groves left a career in technology to begin the journey towards a more durable way of life. Rory and his wife Becca now reside in southern Minnesota where they farm, raise sheep, host homesteading workshops, and homeschool their five children.

What was your motivation behind this project? I'm a computer programmer by training, which means everything I create goes obsolete in a couple of years. On our farm I witness real things, tangible things, happening all around me: lambs being born, seeds sprouting,

sap dripping from trees which we boil down into maple syrup, harvests from our garden lasting through the winter. I began to question if maybe the land and professions connected to it held more promise in the long run than cubicles and keyboards.

What do you hope folks will gain from this project? This book started as a research project for our own family, but I realized it might benefit other families who are looking for another way forward. Family-centered trades are not only the most durable throughout history; they are also the ideal context by which parents can pass their values, faith, and culture on to the next generation. My hope is that this book inspires readers in some way to begin building a lasting inheritance for their families.

How were you personally impacted by working on this project? Researching and writing this book has changed our lives. One of the most surprising discoveries was how modern, industrial economies negatively impacted family relationships. With the Industrial Revolution, efficiency became our highest virtue, and generational stability collapsed. The factory replaced the family as the primary means of sustenance. As a result, opportunities for apprenticeship, mentorship, and cross-generational continuity of faith and culture disappeared. But we can recover what was lost if we prioritize family and community ahead of modest gains in efficiency, if we reclaim time together rather than paychecks apart.

REVIEWS

“Not every book is necessary—not by a long shot—but *Durable Trades* is necessary.”

—WENDELL BERRY

“If you desire to build your life and work around a durable, resilient, and family-centered career then *Durable Trades* is an excellent place to start your journey.”

—MOTHER EARTH NEWS

“Even if you’re not searching for potential new careers, *Durable Trades* is a great read, describing how our fragile economies have compromised other values in life and offers discussion on ways to refocus on our jobs, families, and communities.”

—COUNTRYSIDE & SMALL STOCK JOURNAL

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