

Some New Books in Review

Architecture of the Old Northwest Territory: A Study of Early Architecture in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, & Part of Minnesota.
By REXFORD NEWCOMB. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1950.
xvii, 176 p. Illustrations. \$20.00.)

Here is a book which has long been needed. As the author of numerous books on American architecture and professor of the history of architecture and dean of the college of fine and applied arts in the University of Illinois, Rexford Newcomb was in a unique position to write this book. Limiting himself in time as well as area, he covers developments only to the close of the Civil War. He has, however, made a conscientious and most successful effort to trace the beginnings of all types of construction back to New England, New France, and even to Europe. The importance of geography, climate, and natural resources, and the influence of the Indians and the various nationality groups that settled in the region are fully considered. All must be understood if the structures which grew directly out of frontier conditions are to be appreciated. The author gives full consideration to political and social influences, but he might have given more attention to the economic factor.

"Architecture," writes Dean Newcomb, "is not a phenomenon apart but an intimate expression of the life of a people at a given time." His book, therefore, is not only about buildings, but about the people who built them. They migrated into the Old Northwest from all directions—French, British, Spaniards, Southerners, Yankees—from the North, the East, and the South. The region is studded with excellent examples of architecture peculiar to each group. Although Dean Newcomb discusses each of them fully, he devotes almost a third of his book to classicism, discussing its development in each of the five complete states of the Northwest Territory and giving some attention also to southeastern Minnesota. It is probably appropriate to devote so much space to Greek Revival architecture, for more examples of this style remain today than of any other form. The section on this subject is definitely the most interesting in the book. With one exception, the examples of Minnesota architecture mentioned are west of the Mississippi, and thus outside the Northwest Territory. It is unfortunate that the author did not draw them from Stillwater, Marine, Afton, and other places where excellent examples of classicism are to be found. St. Paul, too, has many interesting Greek Revival houses to offer, in addition to the one illustrated.

The book's richness of detail, its clear organization, and its illuminating recital of the actual conditions which gave rise to the architecture of the Northwest Territory are all attributable to Dean Newcomb's thirty years of

careful observation and study. He was fortunate in receiving support from the Newberry Library, which granted him a subvention, as well as from a publisher who made the fruits of his labors available in such a handsome and appropriately designed book. Although in price the result is quite beyond the reach of the average layman, it is written simply and well, and it can be enjoyed by all who can afford to own it. The volume is illustrated throughout with line etchings, supplemented by a section of exceptionally beautiful photographs at the end.

HAROLD DEAN CATER

The Index of American Design. By ERWIN O. CHRISTENSEN. Introduction by HOLGER CAHILL. (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1950. xviii, 229 p. Illustrations. \$15.00.)

This volume is the most ambitious attempt made thus far to present a comprehensive selection of the drawings of American crafts, and of the popular and folk art which comprise the Index of American Design. In appearance the book is a handsome compilation, with 117 plates printed in full color, as well as some 261 in black and white. Produced on a coated white paper, the plates stand out starkly and brilliantly.

The preface and running text is by Erwin O. Christensen, curator of the Index of American Design and Decorative Arts Collection in the National Gallery of Art. An introduction by Holger Cahill affords a detailed history of the early efforts of collectors and others toward the appreciation and preservation of American folk and popular art, with an account of the development of the idea for the Index of American Design under the WPA federal art project in 1935. Of special interest is Mr. Cahill's description of the setting up of the plan for the Index, of the difficulties encountered at the outset, and its eventual success. The techniques developed specifically for the Index drawings are discussed, and the training of the artists employed for the very specialized work is described. A subject list covering the entire collection of water colors and photographs in the Index and a selected bibliography are appended.

The tremendous value of the material cannot be underestimated from the documentary point of view, and it is certainly to be hoped that a further extension of the project can soon be carried out along the lines already evolved. Without question the Index will eventually become an irreplaceable source for material of a perishable nature. At present, however, when most of the objects illustrated are still extant, it comes to mind that color photographs of the originals, in their actual settings, might be more vital and thus preferable to reproductions twice removed from the originals.

The fact that the drawings were created against neutral backgrounds, without any of the accessories which give so many of the objects pictured real meaning and usefulness, is perhaps unfortunate. In this volume they give the impression of paper cutouts, frequently offering a somewhat uncomfortable

sensation. The grouping of such objects, without any indication of scale or size of the originals, is a serious fault in this publication.

If this book is intended for the layman, as the text presentation tends to indicate, its cost is certainly prohibitive. The little volume on the Index, also by Mr. Christensen, published by Penguin Books, is a thoroughly admirable and inexpensive publication, valuable to layman and student alike. Would not a series of small publications, dealing individually with the many subjects included in the Index, and issued at a reasonable price, be preferable to the present elaborate volume?

E. MAURICE BLOCH

The Eyes of Discovery: The Pageant of North America as Seen by the First Explorers. By JOHN BAKELESS. (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1950. 439 p. Illustrations. \$5.00.)

Geography is considered old-fashioned. Modern education either neglects or rejects it; as a subject in the growing child's curriculum it has not long outlived the Buster Brown haircut. Yet the study of geography is alive and vigorous; it integrates the most recent findings of a dozen disciplines, for geography, by definition, is the noble science that describes the surface of the earth, its peoples, its plants and animals, its natural products. And reflecting modern trends, it inquires into the intricate, subtle, multifaceted, changing, and changed relationships that mark the elements of each region. Geography can be as comprehensive as the earth, as limited as Walden Pond. When, from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, it was confined mainly to cartography, it was the science that bridged the worlds of abstract thought and political purpose; in exploration, astronomy was the servant, territorial conquest the spur. Today geography has allied itself with newer disciplines; it has other goals.

John Bakeless has written a unique, a fascinating, and a rewarding book. *The Eyes of Discovery* is "an effort to describe North America as the first white men in each area saw it: landscape, forests, plains, animals, plants, streams, and Indians." Since the author was concerned with geography at a special moment in history, he enlisted the help of specialists in "botany, zoology, ecology, dendrology, climatology, anthropology, and a half dozen other sciences." Lest this sound formidable and frightening, it must immediately be said that his book has all the lively charm of a love story. How else describe Mr. Bakeless's loving preoccupation with the physical appearance of this continent when it was fully formed, unspoiled, marvelously endowed?

And what a continent it was! The air was scented with the fragrance of sweet wild flowers and wild grapes and stirred by the sound and winging of birds—some never before seen, like the hummingbird, or seen in vast numbers, like the thunderous clouds of migrating geese and ducks and passenger pigeons. The waters were thick with cod and sturgeon, catfish and trout, monstrous lobsters, and foot-long oysters. The timber-hungry Europeans re-

marked endlessly on the incredible forest that covered the East from the coast to the Mississippi — the northern forest of mighty white pine and hardwood, the southern stand of magnolia, persimmon, and longleaf pine, and the two meeting and mingling in Virginia. It was the Spaniards who first saw the redwood along the Pacific.

The Eyes of Discovery considers the evolution of the American forests and the peopling of the continent before the European advent. To comprehend the various regions, Mr. Bakeless relies on the great names in exploration. But they are not enough for his purpose — a host of forgotten names are recalled and used to give the details of regional variation. Two chapters paint in the southeastern country De Soto crossed, two more follow Coronado's wide circling in the Southwest. The North Country, as far west as Pierre, South Dakota, comes to life in the chapters on Cartier, Champlain, Radisson, and the Vérendryes; the picture of the Eastern Seaboard from Maine to the Carolinas, including the western Pennsylvania territory, is culled from accounts of English and Dutch pioneers. La Salle and Marquette and Jolliet present the Mississippi; and Jesuits, officers, and traders, the "wild Middle West." In three short chapters, using French, Spanish, and American eyes, the book hurries over time and terrain, surveying the vast trans-Mississippi West, rushing from Cabrillo to Lewis and Clark.

One can complain about the book — its disproportionate attention to the Atlantic littoral, and its tendency to equate the continental mass of North America with the United States and the country immediately bordering it. The Arctic, Alaska, and the Canadian Shield are ignored, as are Mexico and Guatemala and Panama. But such complaints are also compliments. One can only regret that these regions were not brought to vivid life as were the others, more favored. The thirty-four illustrations add to the book's story.

Both the average reader and the professional historian will enjoy the volume and be well rewarded by reading it. John Bakeless has brilliantly recreated the history and geography of North America.

JEANNETTE MIRSKY

Red River Runs North! By VERA KELSEY. (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1951. xviii, 297 p. Maps. \$3.75.)

This is unfortunately a book many people will enjoy. The author has dealt with a great subject — the exploration, exploitation, and peopling of the Valley of the Red River of the North down to 1890. The text is a vivid treatment of an exciting theme — a theme the author found and makes exciting. The stress of the narrative is on the picturesque, the colorful, and the individual, the looped and tawny Red himself, the Sioux of the Dakota Plains, the Ojibway of the Canadian Shield, the *métis*, the fur traders, the steamboatmen, the railway builders, Strathcona and Hill, the bonanza farmers, Dalrymple and Larimore. Many sons and daughters of the valley, in its broad reaches and scattered over the continent, will read it with pleasure and be moved.

Yet the critic must at the same time pronounce it, by all common tests of style, accuracy, and achievement, to be a very bad book. It is simply unfortunate that it should have been published as it is, for it will close a rich field to cultivation for a generation. Sound advice on all points might easily have been obtained in St. Paul, Winnipeg, or Grand Forks, and, if followed, would have made this abortive effort a delight for the general reader and a reference for the student.

The author's style this reviewer found jerky, diffuse, and self-conscious. The images are undefined, the rhythms unsustained, the sentences frequently incomplete, the paragraphs often undone and swinging like an unlatched barndoor in a prairie wind.

The want of accuracy in the text is similarly lamentable. The list of noted errors mounted beyond possibility of citation in a limited review. They are obvious to the informed; they will not irritate, though they will misinform, when they do not positively mislead, the general reader. It was a deplorable mistake to let such an admirable undertaking go to press in this condition. Both author and publisher are open to grave rebuke for offering the public a book so besprinkled and pitted with casual errors. As the book stands no student may be referred to it.

That the book, despite its inaccuracies, arouses interest has been said. It remains also to ask whether, despite the inaccuracies, the author accomplishes her task.

This reviewer, perhaps biased by his own interest in Canadian history, feels that the author has not really grasped the seeming significance of the affirmation of her title, that the Red River flows north. It does indeed, and its waters drain down to Hudson Bay. For almost a century before 1870, the great century of the northern fur trade, the Red River Valley was the pivot of the whole northern half of the continent, from Ungava to the mouth of the Columbia. This fact is not firmly established by the text.

Nor is it certain that the author solved all the problems of composition which that most difficult essay, a regional study, poses. Red River Valley, with its definite geographical character and striking history, is almost a model subject for regional study. In such a study the need of a constant horizontal panorama clashes with the need for vertical chronological narrative. Two general solutions are possible: the block treatment of subregions by time periods—a kind of industrial exhibition layout, or the ascending spiral treatment in which the narrative rises from level to widening level, as in A. L. Rowse's *Tudor Cornwall*. The author of *Red River Runs North* slips from one treatment to another, perhaps without having thought out the problems, and advances boldly, but without conscious art. As a result, the narrative is frequently clogged and the panorama distorted.

Nonetheless, Miss Kelsey's sally into Red River history does serve to remind us of the historical unity of the valley before it was divided among three—really five—jurisdictions. It reminds us also that the broad valley of the Red has been a reconciler of the many peoples who took up its lands,

and that its political divisions are yet knit across by the great friendliness and good sense of its people. And it assures us, finally, that there is still a great study to be made of the northward sloping valley, a study, in its regard for historical truth, as austere as winter light on the valley snows.

W. L. MORTON

Iron Face: The Adventures of Jack Frazer, Frontier Warrior, Scout, and Hunter. A Narrative Recorded by "Walker-in-the-Pines" (HENRY HASTINGS SIBLEY). Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by THEODORE C. BLEGEN and SARAH A. DAVIDSON. Foreword by STANLEY VESTAL. (Chicago, The Caxton Club, 1950. xxiii, 206 p. Portrait. \$7.50.)

Almost twenty years have passed since Dean Blegen first drew the subject matter for a book from the writings of Henry H. Sibley. His edition of the pioneer Minnesotan's *Unfinished Autobiography*, printed earlier as an article in this magazine, appeared in 1932 with a "selection of [Sibley's] hitherto unpublished letters." Now, in collaboration with Miss Davidson, Dean Blegen has culled from the *St. Paul Pioneer* a serial by "Walker-in-the-Pines," which is only one of the several picturesque pseudonyms under which Sibley wrote.

The narrative tells the adventurous and often exciting story of Joseph Jack Frazer, a half-breed Sioux who was known to his Indian relatives as "Iron Face." In the words of the editors, this "is the biography of a man born and raised with the Sioux, who hunted for his food, who knew the hazard and wild thrill of the warpath." His first thirty-five years of life were spent with his mother's people—Red Wing's band of the Sioux. Dealing with this period are chapters to which the editors have given such colorful titles as "With War Paint and Eagle Feathers," "Dark and Bloody Ground," "Driving Elk into Camp," and "Jack Keeps His Scalp Lock."

The friendship that developed as the hero of these adventures shared with Sibley a deep "knowledge of wilderness life and wilderness ways" is the incentive for the present narrative. On winter evenings in 1857 and 1858, the Mendota pioneer wrote down stories of Jack's life as the warrior-scout himself related them. For various reasons, the manuscript remained unpublished for almost a decade, but eventually it appeared in installments in a St. Paul newspaper. And now, for the first time, the greater part of it appears between the covers of a book.

For his biographer, Frazer obviously typified the startling transformation from a wilderness frontier of traders and Indians to a commonwealth of prosperous farms and busy cities that Sibley himself had witnessed in the brief span of years following 1834. As the editors relate in their introduction, in a little more than three decades Sibley "had seen the Indians sell their land for a veritable mess of pottage and then rise in cruel retaliation. . . . He had watched the wilderness turn into a cultivated land. He had viewed a tide of immigrants from the East and from Europe sweep in and make farms in the wilderness he and Jack Frazer hunted over in an earlier day. And he even

saw Jack himself turn into a farmer." The latter transformation is the subject of a chapter entitled "Jack Leaves the Indians." By and large, however, Sibley's biography of Frazer is one of the few to "describe Indian life in the primordial stage."

In handsome format that well reflects the sturdy qualities of the hardy warrior, scout, and hunter whose adventures it perpetuates, *Iron Face* has been published by the Caxton Club of Chicago. Minnesotans may well regret that this delightful addition to their state's literature appeared in a very limited edition, for it is available to the average reader in libraries only.

BERTHA L. HEILBRON

The Far Side of Paradise: A Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald. By ARTHUR MIZENER. (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951. xx, 362 p. Illustrations. \$4.00.)

When F. Scott Fitzgerald died in 1940, he had reached almost the nadir of his fame. His public had forgotten him, his books were out of print, and his literary influence was rapidly waning almost to the point of extinction. Extravagance and intemperance had taken their usual toll, and sporadic attempts to stabilize his life met with failure. Yet to the end of his days his talent was impressive, and a small coterie of friends and admirers including Edmund Wilson, John Peale Bishop, John O'Hara, and Malcolm Cowley labored diligently to preserve his name. Ten years after Fitzgerald's death their work seems at last to be rewarded, for publishing firms are reissuing his books and Arthur Mizener in *The Far Side of Paradise* has written the first biography. A Fitzgerald revival is apparently under way.

The picture that Professor Mizener paints of St. Paul's most conspicuous man of letters is interesting and amusing rather than pleasant. For not all of the biographer's enthusiasm and admiration can disguise the fact that Fitzgerald was volatile, improvident, flamboyant, obsessed with the need for social and financial success. The tragedy of Fitzgerald's life, if one can call tragic a man's failure to secure the trappings of success, was that he never quite reached what he aspired to. All his life he was the poor little boy watching with heart-rending envy the fatuous goings on of the rich. During his youth in St. Paul his family's position was never sufficiently fixed to secure his entrance into the core of aristocratic society. At Princeton he never quite made the clubs on which he had set his heart, and never quite enjoyed the cheap social prominence which was more important to him than any intellectual stimulus the college might have given him. He was called the worst second lieutenant in the army. His marriage was delayed because he could not support in her accustomed style the daughter of an Alabama judge. And when, finally, he did win a substantial income (see his half-serious, half-sarcastic tale, "How to Live on \$36,000 a Year") he threw away a small fortune in sophomoric pranks and pleas for attention. The real fault in Fitzgerald's character, one feels, was not that he failed to win some of the social

and material success he craved, but that he constantly equated a superficial and senseless materialism with durable achievement. Only in early middle age did he begin to realize that life could offer the intelligent man more than glitter and excitement and periodic sprees. And then there was nothing to be done about it. The phrase "laureate of the jazz age," which Fitzgerald's admirers dislike to apply to him, is especially accurate because it defines the limitations of both the period and the man.

Professor Mizener skillfully interweaves biography and interpretation. The narrative is full and vivid, even though the plan of the book calls for the interruption of the chronicle at the proper times in order to explain and evaluate Fitzgerald's successive books. Proportion, however, is always maintained between the two segments of the volume. By drawing upon diaries, letters to and from Fitzgerald, oral and written reminiscences, and considerable autobiographical revelation by Fitzgerald himself, Professor Mizener has told a fascinating story. The anecdotes are particularly entertaining, although few of them reflect much credit on either Fitzgerald or his wife Zelda. Fitzgerald's penchant for buying expensive but secondhand automobiles, his exhibitionism in hotels and restaurants, his splurges and hangovers are almost the material of legend. His temperamental restlessness and instability not only made him the interpreter of the jazz age; at times he seems to have been the jazz age himself.

One suspects that in evaluating Fitzgerald's development, the author under-emphasizes the man's Irish-Catholic heritage, his early religious training, and his constant innate sense that, like Eugene O'Neill's Yank, he didn't "belong." If ever a writer compensated for a grating sense of inferiority by extravagant social behavior, that writer was Fitzgerald. Reacting violently against the creed and the environment of his youth, he never quite established himself on the level of a more pretentious social existence. Yet, as Willa Cather once argued, a writer's material and experience are generally fixed by the time adolescence has been reached; whatever develops in more mature life has already taken shape. In this sense the youthful years that Fitzgerald spent on the periphery of Summit Avenue in St. Paul become crucial, and they are the least fully developed section of the Mizener biography.

Professor Mizener's critical judgments on Fitzgerald's work are highly enthusiastic and not always well supported, although one must admit that such verdicts are naturally impressionistic. Fitzgerald had many virtues as a writer, such as reportorial exactitude, animation, a feeling for certain characters and scenes, a gift for dialogue, a sharp sense of humor, and some originality in style. Certain short stories such as "Absolution," "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," "Babylon Revisited," and "May Day" are memorable. In the future it is probable that his earliest successes, *The Beautiful and Damned* and *This Side of Paradise*, will attract social historians rather than readers of fiction, but undoubtedly *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night* will always find an audience. Yet one can say with assurance that whatever potential greatness

Fitzgerald may have had, his published work does not support the title to fame which his coterie of admirers claim for him.

This biography will undoubtedly find the large number of readers which it deserves. Professor Mizener's subject was definitely a personality, whose profile becomes sharp and clear in the book. The forty pages of notes and bibliographical material illustrate the author's diligent search for all pertinent data. Yet one must add that the writing is often hasty. Fitzgerald himself was a notoriously bad speller, and it may be that long proximity to the novelist has produced similar lapses in the biographer. At any rate, there are many careless slips. Glenway Wescott's name causes the most trouble, being spelled indifferently as Wescott and Westcott. There are also occasional errors in tense and agreement.

JOHN T. FLANAGAN

Lewis Cass: The Last Jeffersonian. By FRANK B. WOODFORD. (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1950. ix, 380 p. \$5.00.)

Mr. Woodford's biography of Lewis Cass is a brightly written, well-proportioned book, based, so the author says, upon an examination of the Cass Papers and other related manuscript collections. The story of Cass's life is told in seventeen brisk chapters. Born and educated in New Hampshire, Cass learned law and politicking in Ohio, served under Hull in the disastrous campaign at Detroit, and attained a kind of national fame for his hostile report on Hull's surrender. In 1813 he was made governor of Michigan Territory. He held this post for eighteen years and during this period probably performed his greatest public service. Thereafter he served in Jackson's cabinet, was ambassador to France, senator from Michigan, and secretary of state under Buchanan. He sought the presidential nomination of his party three times, won it once, but lost the election to Taylor.

The best part of this book, roughly the first half, deals with Cass's career before he went to Washington in 1831. As territorial governor and superintendent of Indian affairs, Cass devoted himself wholeheartedly to the interests of Michigan as he understood them. He was vigorous and untiring in promoting the settlement of the territory and, if his influence was not as large as Mr. Woodford would have us believe, these chapters do present a good picture of Cass's work and methods.

As a work of scholarship, however, this book has several pronounced weaknesses. It contains a number of inaccurate or quite misleading statements. We are told that the Ordinance of 1787 "at first contained no provision for self rule" (p. 148) that a territorial delegate was "a functionary customarily allotted a territory" (p. 153), that "after Jackson failed, in 1832, to prevent Congress from rechartering the Bank, he saw another way to deal it a death blow" (p. 179), that after the admission of Texas to the Union "the North began demanding the 'reoccupation of Oregon' as the arena in which it could

exercise its Manifest Destiny" (p. 230), and so on. Observations on national politics are often superficial, sometimes downright inaccurate, as, for example, the comment on the issues involved in the Oregon boundary dispute.

Moreover, the author's desire to write a dramatic story seems to have been stronger than his desire to present an accurate account. Chapter 16, "Cass Breaks Another Sword," is a case in point. This chapter deals with Cass as secretary of state under Buchanan. The climax of the chapter is reached with Cass's resignation in protest against Buchanan's refusal to strengthen the Charleston forts. The available evidence is pretty clear — it is presented in some of the volumes cited in Mr. Woodford's lengthy bibliography — that Cass sent messengers to tell the president that he was willing to withdraw his resignation, but Buchanan preferred to let it stand. Mr. Woodford merely says at this point that a rumor was started that Cass would like to withdraw his resignation. "It was a story those closest to him indignantly rejected." By ignoring the evidence of Cass's almost pathetic indecision, the author shows Cass bowing out of public life with a firm, decisive act to match that bold act of over forty years before when he broke his sword rather than surrender it to the British. It makes an attractive picture. The trouble is that the picture is not of Cass. Thus, although this is a pleasant enough book, it does not fill the need for a careful, critical, and judicious life of Lewis Cass.

VERNON CARSTENSEN

Andrew Boss, Agricultural Pioneer and Builder, 1867-1947. As remembered by OSCAR B. JESNESS, WILLIAM P. KIRKWOOD, HERBERT K. HAYES, WILLIAM H. TOMHAVE, FRANK W. PECK, WALTER C. COFFEY, ARTHUR H. GILMORE. (St. Paul, The Itasca Press, 1950. ix, 113 p. Illustrations. \$2.50.)

The life memorialized in this volume was truly epic in character. Born on a farm in Wabasha County, Minnesota, on June 3, 1867, Andrew Boss was the eldest son in a family of eleven children. When he was twenty-two, a thunder storm compelled a member of the board of regents of the University of Minnesota who was campaigning for re-election to the legislature to seek shelter for a night at the Boss farmstead. This chance meeting resulted in arrangements that enabled young Boss to enter the recently organized Minnesota School of Agriculture in the fall of 1889. On leaving home, his father said, "Now, Andrew, make yourself indispensable," and assuredly this admonition, if needed, did not go unheeded. Within two days of his arrival at the school, he was husking corn for the state at ten cents an hour, and he remained on the payroll of the University of Minnesota for the remainder of his active life. From this humble beginning, he gradually rose to eminent leadership, despite the lack of academic degrees, at Minnesota's College of Agriculture and its agricultural experiment stations. A pioneer in crop improvement, animal husbandry, and farm management, he became an agricultural statesman, known far beyond his focus of action.

When Boss passed away on January 13, 1947, his friends resolved to effect a memorial that would serve to remind them of his character, his contributions to the agricultural sciences, and his outstanding public services. They also wished to present and preserve his record as an inspiration to posterity. The result is this highly suitable volume.

The initial essay tells of Boss's "Beginnings." The second is entitled "On the Way Up." Then follow three outstanding evaluations of his contributions in the fields of crop improvement, animal husbandry, and farm management. Another essay is concerned with his achievements as a teacher and administrator. A final essay records his activities as a church and civic leader. There is a short section of "Citations and Tributes" and a partial bibliography of Boss's writings. The volume is a fitting memorial to the man who, by virtue of character, native ability, practicability, and industry, became "the truly grand old man of Minnesota agriculture."

EVERETT E. EDWARDS

A Tale of Two Valleys: An Autobiography. By CONRAD G. SELVIG. (Los Angeles, Grover Jones Press, 1951. 144 p. Illustrations.)

Mr. Selvig, in an intimate, concise, and unaffected style, traces the story of his life from his birth at Rushford, Minnesota, in the valley of the Root River to the days of his retirement in Santa Monica, California. It was a full life in what many people would regard as the best American tradition.

One of four children of Norwegian immigrant parents, the author remembers his boyhood as being "not all work and no play." He had chores to do, of course, but he also had wonderful opportunities for fishing, hunting, berrying, sleighing, skating, going to parties, and playing games of various sorts—especially baseball. Fortunately for his future and that of education in Minnesota, his father and mother, like so many immigrants, placed a high premium on schooling; thus it was only natural that Mr. Selvig should complete the grades and continue on into high school, where during his junior and senior years he came under the spell of Henry Johnson, later a distinguished history professor at Columbia University.

Then followed rural schoolteaching, an abortive attempt to attend West Point, service in Company F, Twelfth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry in 1898, more rural school teaching, five years as principal of the Harmony schools, and four years of study at the University of Minnesota. In 1907 Selvig became principal of the high school at Glencoe, where he was instrumental in starting courses in manual training, home economics, and agriculture—all more or less novelties at the time.

After three successful years at Glencoe, he took up his duties as superintendent of the Crookston School of Agriculture, where for the next decade and a half he devoted himself to three main tasks: building up the school, promoting agricultural diversification, and singing the praises of the Red River Valley. The famed Red River Valley Winter Shows grew out of the

school's early short courses, the first of which was held in December, 1910, during Selvig's first year at Crookston. These shows did much to advance all phases of agriculture in the Red River area, as did the speeches, writings, and organizational activity of Mr. Selvig. In the list of leaders of farm improvement groups in the valley between 1910 and 1926 his name is prominent. It was not surprising then in 1926, when agriculture was in the doldrums, that Selvig was elected to Congress to champion the cause of the farmer. He served faithfully for three terms, losing out in the election of 1932 when Minnesota's nine representatives were elected at large.

Although primarily a personal reminiscence, *A Tale of Two Valleys* contains interesting and important material on the history of education and agriculture in Minnesota. It is a welcome addition to the literature of the North Star State.

MERRILL E. JARCHOW

Lady in Law: A Biography of Mabeth Hurd Paige, Sketching Seventy-five Picturesque and Dramatic Years as Seen through Her Eyes. By DARRAGH ALDRICH. (Chicago, Ralph Fletcher Seymour, 1950. 347 p. Illustrations. \$3.50.)

A biography is rarely published which will meet the interests and revive the memories of more groups of readers than this story of one of Minnesota's most distinguished women. Merely to survey the audiences shows the scope of the book. It is the story of seventy-five years of the life of Mabeth Hurd Paige, whose fortunes and talents and loves brought her from an old historic town in Massachusetts, where she spent her childhood among deeply rooted traditions, to the largest city in Minnesota at a time when its traditions were only being planted. So this is a book for those interested in spans of time and space, contrasts in living, and the progress of events. It is good historical reading because the biographer has deftly related the periods of Mabeth Paige's personal and political life to national events, world politics, and emergent personalities.

The men and women who have been identified with Minnesota politics will find in the book great reminiscent interest, and perhaps may discover explanations of political efforts and alliances which have been clouded or vague. Nothing like this has been done previously for politics in Minnesota. The records are available, of course. But this commentary on those records is enlightening and in some ways invaluable.

Also it serves as a record of the efforts of many women as well as of one, for Mabeth Paige identified herself with the projects which preoccupied not only the women of Minnesota and of America but of the whole world. These were the women who obtained suffrage; who fought for temperance; who set up some of the first international conferences for women; who entered politics and spoke in quiet, ladylike, but very firm tones; who realized how little

they knew of the science or the practices of government, and organized to teach themselves and spread the knowledge.

Students of history, politicians, women interested in other women have a new book to read. But they will not make up the full potential audience. For any person, man or woman, who finds the fluctuation of destiny interesting should take pleasure in this story. It is the story of a lady with a fine mind and a brave conscience, who went through most of her life without dodging an issue, rarely losing her temper and never forgetting her own place in society. Her values were sound, if tempered by belief in gentility. Her friendships, whether with Hannah Kempfer, whom this reviewer remembers as one of the finest women she ever met, and who was Mrs. Paige's colleague in the Minnesota house of representatives, or with her fashionable friend, Mrs. Cyrus McCormick, were based on appreciation of character.

There is something old-fashioned about this biography. We are coarser and less careful of our manners today. Some may be so modernized that the hand-woven texture of this life will not interest them. But others will feel the delicate charm and strength of a lady in law and politics. The author evidently fell under the spell of her own material. The historical prefaces are colorful and costumed sketches of novels. In the biographical part, Mrs. Aldrich writes sometimes with a Louisa May Alcott touch which is the perfect mood. But the roughness of political struggle, the deceits of politicians, the greatness of moral efforts are never smothered, either by the lady in law or by the synchronized prose of Darragh Aldrich.

MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

Frontier Mother: The Letters of Gro Svendsen. Translated and edited by PAULINE FARSETH and THEODORE C. BLEGEN. (Northfield, The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1950. xix, 153 p. Portrait. \$2.50.)

Gro Svendsen's letters from Iowa to her family in Norway open with her experiences as a young wife and mother in Civil War days. She proudly assured her relatives that her husband provided all the necessities. Her optimism was not dimmed by the difficulties of pioneer life even though they might say she "had not sailed very far down the fjord yet." Her sincere expression of her problems in rearing her brood makes a moving narrative and her death during the grasshopper days of 1878 at the age of thirty-seven when her tenth baby was born will touch the reader.

The introduction to the letters by Dean Blegen gives a sensitive sketch of Mrs. Svendsen's personality, with details drawn from the letters and many other sources. One interesting bit, still perpetuated in local tradition, concerns her skill in playing the alpenhorn. The letters are not a choppy record of day-by-day events, for they build a picture of mounting burdens: more children to educate, more bills for expensive farm machinery, and more grasshoppers to devour the crops. Throughout the record of difficult experiences

runs the note of happiness in her family life which sustained this Norwegian woman while making a living at farming under pioneer conditions.

The editor deftly fits this "bundle" of letters into the literature of Norwegian-American immigration. The appropriate titles for the letters chosen from her own words, the logical chapter arrangement, and the clear, simple translation make this volume a delightful addition to the *Travel and Description Series* of the Norwegian-American Historical Association. Editor and translator have collaborated well.

EVADENE BURRIS SWANSON

The Grand Portage. A novel by WALTER O'MEARA. (Indianapolis and New York, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1951. 349 p. \$3.00.)

Those who enjoyed Walter O'Meara's "Adventure in Local History," recounted in the March, 1950, issue of this magazine, will turn with more than ordinary interest and anticipation to this recent novel by the same writer. Like his "Adventure" in the Vermont hinterland, Mr. O'Meara's fictional work was inspired by the journal of Daniel Williams Harmon, in which this Yankee trader recorded his experiences while conducting fur-trading operations for the North West Company from 1800 to 1819.

The narrative opens with a great rendezvous at Grand Portage on the North Shore of Lake Superior, and, as the title suggests, the Minnesota trading post casts its long shadow over most of the events that follow. The voyageurs who guided through the intricate waterways of northern Minnesota and the Canadian Northwest their heavily laden north canoes come to life in these pages, which provide a vivid picture of the *pays d'en haut* and its remote and lonely posts. The almost incredible endurance of the voyageur has perhaps never been more convincingly described than in Mr. O'Meara's account of a race between two brigades stretching out over a total of forty-nine hours and involving no fewer than sixty canoes.

A feature of the book that will have special usefulness for those unfamiliar with the terminology of the fur trade is a glossary of "words they used" in this woodland industry. Mr. O'Meara, incidentally, is a native of north-eastern Minnesota who knows the Grand Portage country at firsthand.

History Here and There

AN IMPORTANT SOURCE "for the tracing of political, social and cultural history" is to be found in "the broad field of art in all its variety — painting, sculpture, architecture, applied and decorative art, furniture, prints, illustrations, caricature, advertising art, music." Thus writes Frank Weitenkampf, retired curator of prints of the New York Public Library, in the April number of *New York History*, to which he contributes a short article entitled "Bypaths in Documentation: Added Material for United States History." The writer points out, too, that "changing trends and styles in art and the expression of the artist's personality are also factors that play their part in the mirroring of human life, its aims and accomplishments." Mr. Weitenkampf emphasizes especially the value of prints as historical records — the separate prints which served as "pictorial news reporting" until the middle of the last century, engravings designed for use on paper money, sheet music covers, caricatures, valentines, holiday cards, trade cards, and similar pictorial items. He notes also that "other forms of art — architecture, building, engineering structures such as bridges, furniture, household goods and decoration — offer a wealth of information about wants and tastes of our people in various conditions and periods." To the user of such materials for purposes of illustration, however, Mr. Weitenkampf offers a wise warning; they should be "subjected to the same critical scrutiny that is brought to bear on printed and manuscript sources."

The most recent of the *Bulletins* of the American Association for State and Local History contains the papers in a symposium held in connection with the organization's annual meeting at Portland, Oregon, in August, 1950. It presents the remarks of four speakers who discussed the question *Where Are the Historical Manuscripts?* Some brief introductory comments by Herbert A. Kellar, director of the McCormick Library of Chicago, are followed by discussions of "Tracing Manuscript Sources" by William N. Bishoff of Gonzaga University, Spokane, on "Where Manuscripts Should Be" by Harry C. Bauer of the University of Washington, Seattle, and on "The Use of Microfilm" by S. K. Stevens of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Advocated by these writers are the preparation of adequate union lists of historical manuscripts and the preservation and distribution of such materials by means of microfilm.

The words of many of the songs of the American Indians when "properly translated, contain poetry, humor, historical references and mention of achievements of leaders, as well as an appreciation of the beauty of nature and mention of contacts with the supernatural." Thus writes Frances Dens-

more in a discussion of "The Words of Indian Songs as Unwritten Literature," which appears in the October-December *Journal of American Folklore*. A Minnesotan who makes her home in Red Wing, Miss Densmore has long been familiar with the music of Minnesota Indians, and she draws many of her examples from the songs of the Sioux and the Chippewa. An announcement of her recordings of Chippewa music, recently issued by the Library of Congress, appears above, p. 58.

A chapter treating "Of the Sioux," from a hitherto unpublished manuscript owned by the Missouri Historical Society, appears in its January *Bulletin*. The author, Edwin T. Denig, was a trader at Fort Pierre and Fort Union from 1833 to 1856, and there, on the upper Missouri, he came to know the Sioux at firsthand. Much of the information included in his narrative relates to the Teton Sioux, with whom he was in constant contact, but he tells also of bands located on the upper Minnesota River and even as far east as the Mississippi. That he understood these warlike people is evident, for in 1855 he predicted that "Although in the end the Sioux will be conquered yet they will give the troops some trouble. . . . Unless a line of military posts are established along the Missouri as high up as the mouth of the Yellowstone, and these well garrisoned, the Government cannot expect to subdue effectively this fierce and powerful nation."

Many of the characteristics of the "Canadian Voyageurs" described by S. C. Ells in the *Canadian Geographical Journal* for February were shared by the boatmen of the fur trade who plied the waters of Minnesota. They met similar transportation problems, traveled in identical craft, organized in the same types of brigades, used the same colorful language, and even followed some of the same routes. In fact, some of Minnesota's border waters appear on a map accompanying the present article. Among the valuable contributions made by Mr. Ells is a list of transportation rates commonly charged from 1831 to 1851. He describes in some detail the construction of a York boat, many of which were built at Red River. In Minnesota, as in the remote corners of western Canada, it was largely on the voyageurs' "superb skill and almost incredible endurance, at times carried well-nigh to the point of fanaticism, that operations of the fur trade rested."

The story of Pierre Radisson and his companion, the Sieur des Groseilliers, is retold for youthful readers by Ronald Syme in a little book entitled *Bay of the North* (New York, William Morrow and Company, 1950). Radisson's journeys in the Lake Superior country are described somewhat vaguely in a chapter on "The Winter of Death," which tells also of the meeting with the Sioux by the two explorers. No attempt is made, however, to trace the course of their travels, and the time element is almost entirely disregarded.

A detailed study of "J. C. Wild, Western Painter and Lithographer" whose view of Fort Snelling in 1844 was recently acquired by the Minnesota Historical Society, is the leading article in the *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* for April. The author, Professor John Francis McDermott of Washington University, St. Louis, prepared for *Minnesota History* the short account of Wild and his visit to Fort Snelling which appeared in the March issue (p. 12-14). In his present article Professor McDermott incorporates a wealth of information about the Swiss artist culled from contemporary newspapers, especially those issued in St. Louis, published works, and manuscript sources; and he provides a complete catalogue of all Wild's known prints and paintings. A dozen of the latter, including the Minnesota Historical Society's gouache and pastel of Fort Snelling, are reproduced with the article. Here, too, is a complete study of the rare volume which Wild illustrated and Lewis F. Thomas wrote—*The Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated*. The steps by which the work evolved, its publication in parts, and the prints included are fully explained and listed. All in all, this is among the most useful and informing of Professor McDermott's contributions on the subject of Midwest artists. Wild's Mississippi Valley book is the subject also of an interesting comment in the April number of *The Month at Goodspeed's Book Shop* of Boston. The writer, probably the publication's editor, Norman L. Dodge, quotes J. Christian Bay's evaluation of the work as the "all-around most desirable mid-western book in existence" from the standpoint of the collector. It is of interest to Minnesotans that Bay's statement was made in response to an inquiry from Herschel V. Jones, the famed Minneapolis bibliophile. According to this report, only four complete copies of *The Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated* are known, and one of them formerly was owned by Jones.

Men, Mills and Timber is the title of a handsomely illustrated pamphlet issued by the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company to commemorate "Fifty Years of Progress in the Forest Industry" (1951. 50 p.). Although the narrative is localized largely in the Pacific Northwest, in the opening section George S. Long, Jr., traces the firm's beginnings to Frederick Weyerhaeuser's work in the Mississippi Valley and Minnesota. His life, Mr. Long records, "overlapped the company's first fourteen years of corporate history," and the firm "still bears the imprint of his personality, and of those who followed him." Weyerhaeuser's youthful ventures at Rock Island following the panic of 1858 and his organization in 1871 of the Mississippi River Logging Company are recalled. Into the latter he drew many prominent lumber concerns of the area. The writer notes that Weyerhaeuser "built not one great foundation but many smaller ones," for he believed in "decentralizing authority through a system of unit control." It was his friendship for James J. Hill, which grew after he made his home in St. Paul, that aroused Weyerhaeuser's interest in the timber resources of the Pacific Northwest and resulted in the organization of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company at the turn of the century.

A former member of the staff of the Minnesota Historical Society's Forest Products History Foundation, Robert C. Johnson, is the author of an article appearing in the September, 1950, issue of *Michigan History* under the title "Logs for Saginaw: An Episode in Canadian-American Tariff Relations." The paper was read before a session of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association at Madison, Wisconsin, on April 16, 1949.

TELLING THE MINNESOTA STORY

THAT THE MAJORITY of the emigrants who moved westward in "Migration from Ontario to Manitoba in 1871" passed through Minnesota en route is revealed by James J. Talman in an interesting article appearing in *Ontario History* for January. Members of the first group to arrive in what now is Winnipeg after the opening of navigation in the spring of 1871 "travelled by the Grand Trunk Railway to St. Cloud, Minnesota, each paying \$20 rail fare. At St. Cloud they hired a double wagon for \$50 which took them to Fort Abercrombie . . . from where it was possible to sail down the Red River to Fort Garry. They acquired a flat boat and left Fort Abercrombie on the 10th [of April] and arrived at their destination on the 26th." The trip cost each of the settlers "about \$27." Many of those who went later in the season traveled down the Red River on the "Selkirk," taking with them farm implements, cattle, and horses. Among the routes to Manitoba recommended by the North West Emigration Society of Huron, Ontario, were those by steamer to Duluth or Milwaukee, thence by rail to St. Paul, and by stage or wagon to some point on the Red River which was connected by steamboat with Fort Garry. Much of the information in Mr. Talman's article is drawn from Canadian newspapers.

In a massive *Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong* (New York, 1951. 1292 p.), Charles Haywood devotes two and a half pages to Minnesota — its folk tales, customs and beliefs, speech, and place names. General studies are listed, too, and some of the publications of the Minnesota Historical Society are noted. The arrangement is by regions and states, ethnic groups, occupations, and Indians; thus, many Minnesota items are to be found in sections devoted to the Finns and the Norwegians, the lumberjack, and the Sioux and Chippewa Indians. Overlooked by the compiler, however, are scores of articles and documents of folklore interest published in this magazine.

The detailed story of "W. B. Laughead's Great Advertisement" of 1914 which launched Paul Bunyan on the road to folklore fame is recounted by Max Gartenberg in the *Journal of American Folklore* for October-December, 1950. "At a time when commercial publishers would not have given the tales of Paul Bunyan a second look," writes Mr. Gartenberg, "an imaginative lumberman dabbled with the idea of using them to advertise his wood."

The lumberman was Archie D. Walker of Minneapolis, then secretary of the Red River Lumber Company, who "employed his cousin, W. B. Laughead, a former lumberjack turned free-lance advertising man, to compose a hand-out pamphlet using the Bunyan material." Under the title *Introducing Mr. Paul Bunyan of Westwood Cal.*, a thirty-page advertising pamphlet, which has long since become a collector's prize, was published in 1914. This and a second booklet issued two years later drew little attention at the time. It was not until 1922, when the Red River Lumber Company issued *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan*, that the tales became popular. "In due time, poetry, plays, music — the medium of almost every art — explored the themes that had been made world-known by the great advertisement" of a Minneapolis lumberman, according to Mr. Gartenberg. He points out that "thus did a lumberman's advertising scheme become American folklore."

To the *American-German Review* for February, Hermann E. Rothfuss, author of an article in the present issue of this magazine, contributes an interesting account of the career of "Theodor Steidle, German Theater Pioneer" in Minnesota in the 1860's. For six years after his arrival in St. Paul in the summer of 1861, Steidle organized companies and produced the standard German repertory not only in St. Paul, St. Anthony, and Minneapolis, but in such centers of German settlement as New Ulm, Mankato, and Winona. The writer has drawn much of the material for this chapter in the state's early cultural history from its German-language newspapers. He relates that wherever Steidle appeared in Minnesota, "he was the first professional actor to make his bow on the German stage, and in more than one community he was the first man to present German plays to the public."

Student life, particularly among the women, on a pioneer Minnesota campus — that of St. Olaf College in Northfield — is pictured by Georgina Dieson-Hegland in a little book entitled *As It Was in the Beginning* (Northfield, The St. Olaf College Press, 1950. 163 p.). The writer sketches the background for her story in the Big Woods area and tells of the founding of a Norwegian-Lutheran school "On the Banks of the Cannon" in 1875. From the center of Northfield the school was removed "Up to Manitou Heights" after the erection of a substantial brick building there in 1878, and a year later a frame Ladies' Hall was built in the woods near by. This hall is the setting for much of the narrative that follows. Its furnishings and equipment and the activities of the girls who lived there while attending college are described in intimate detail. The author provides an unusual and little-known chapter in the history of Minnesota education. A group of illustrations adds to its interest.

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

TO COMMEMORATE the Sioux treaties of 1851, MISS LUCILE M. KANE, curator of manuscripts on the society's staff, has prepared for this issue of *Minnesota*

History an article stressing the importance of these treaties to the fur traders. Much new material on this phase of the treaty story was drawn from the society's microfilm copies of the Ewing Papers. Miss Kane is editor and translator of a newly published book, the journal of Philippe Régis de Trobriand, issued under the title *Military Life in Dakota* by the Alvord Memorial Commission of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. She has contributed articles and book reviews to this and other historical journals.

A member of the society's editorial staff, JUNE DRENNING HOLMQUIST, has edited for this number a hitherto unpublished narrative picturing the vacation attractions of the Minnesota country in pre-territorial days. The fact that the writer, Joseph Le Conte, was a scientist of note adds to its interest. Last year Mrs. Holmquist published an article on George Bonga in the *Negro Digest*, and she is a frequent contributor to the *Gopher Historian*.

Dr. HERMANN E. ROTHFUSS is associate professor of German in Western Michigan College of Education at Kalamazoo. His article on "The Early German Theater in Minnesota" is based upon his doctoral dissertation, which was submitted at the University of Minnesota in 1949. The first installment, which appears in the present issue, deals only with St. Paul; in a later section the author will discuss the history of the German stage in St. Anthony, Minneapolis, and New Ulm.

Miss ELSA R. NORDIN, who prepared for this issue a translation of the Minnesota section in a current book published in Sweden, is head cataloguer on the society's library staff.

The review section opens with an evaluation, by Dr. HAROLD DEAN CATER, director of the Minnesota Historical Society since 1948, of an important contribution to the cultural history of the Northwest. Other books in the fields of Midwest and Minnesota history have been reviewed for this issue by MARGARET CULKIN BANNING, well-known Duluth author; E. MAURICE BLOCH, keeper of drawings and prints at the Cooper Union in New York; Professor VERNON CARSTENSEN of the history faculty in the University of Wisconsin at Madison; EVERETT E. EDWARDS, agricultural historian for the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington and editor of *Agricultural History*; Dr. JOHN T. FLANAGAN, professor of American literature in the University of Illinois at Urbana; BERTHA L. HEILBRON, editor of this magazine; Dr. MERRILL E. JARCHOW, dean of men in Carleton College, Northfield; JEANNETTE MIRSKY of Princeton, New Jersey, author of *The Westward Crossings* and other books on American exploration; Dr. W. L. MORTON, professor of Canadian history in the University of Manitoba at Winnipeg; and EVADENE BURRIS SWANSON of Ithaca, New York, author of several articles on pioneer women and their homes.



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