

*The Journals of Lewis and Clark*. Edited by BERNARD DeVOTO. (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953. lii, 504 p. Maps. \$6.50.)

Reviewed by Walker D. Wyman

ONE OF THE principal problems in the transmission of our cultural heritage is that of having in convenient form the principal source materials bearing on our history. Every student reads about Marquette but few ever find time to read the seventy-three volumes of *Jesuit Relations*. Everybody knows about the explorations and discoveries of Cabot, Hudson, and DeSoto, but few ever read their diaries in the numerous volumes of the *Original Narratives of American History*. Most students have heard of some of the travelers who passed through the Mississippi Valley before the Civil War, but only a handful have ever read the contemporary accounts made available in the thirty-two volumes of *Early Western Travels* which Reuben Gold Thwaites put together years ago.

Doubtless most Americans are acquainted with the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-05, but few have ever perused the seven volumes entitled *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (1904-05). This failure to know the basic source materials of the nation's past is no fault of the young citizen in high school or college, but generally lies in the unmanageable nature of the materials themselves. Indeed, the student who reads the seven volumes of the *Original Journals* does not show great promise, since it would be a waste of time for him to cover the vast amount of duplication and overlapping contained in these books.

It is to remedy this situation in part that Bernard DeVoto, well known as the occupant

of "The Easy Chair" in *Harper's Magazine* and as the author of sixteen volumes of history and fiction, has reduced the *Original Journals* to one volume. He has produced a readable account of the great expedition, with no interruptions in the running narrative and no duplications of the same experience as recorded by the two captains. The volume also contains one entry taken from Sergeant John Ordway's diary published in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* in 1916, one taken from the first book about the expedition (Nicholas Biddle's *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark*, (1814), and one chapter lifted from Mr. DeVoto's book, *The Course of Empire* (1952).

The purists in the historical profession may take offense at Mr. DeVoto's editorial method, which stems from his purpose of producing a readable volume. The entries of the journalists for many days are omitted, and parts of sentences and whole paragraphs have been dropped—all without the use of ellipses. Original spellings and punctuation have been kept, but Mr. DeVoto has inserted commas to clarify meaning, made paragraphs at will, and otherwise changed the original to enhance the readability. Though the entries of Lewis and Clark are mixed indiscriminately, the better or the more explicit being used for a given situation, the author of each is listed in brackets at the heading. Thus, the editor has produced an excellent book—one that reads well and moves toward a magnificent conclusion. The volume is for the reader who wants to know Lewis and Clark, not the editor who needs the complete text on what the captains said about any given matter.

These journals stand high in the history of exploration. The first entry was made on May 14, 1804, as the party left for St. Charles, and the last on September 24, 1806, when Clark records in St. Louis: "I sleped but little last night however we rose early and commenced wrighting our letters Capt Lewis wrote one to the presidend." Apparently, Mr. DeVoto made

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MR. WYMAN, whose newest book, *Nothing but Prairie and Sky*, will soon be reviewed in these pages, is professor of history in the Wisconsin State College at River Falls.

no effort to include any part of the journals kept before the party left St. Louis, that being the part recently discovered by the Minnesota Historical Society.

The expedition was military in character with the two captains sharing command—an anomaly which does not seem to have caused any trouble. Its purpose, as outlined by Jefferson before the purchase of Louisiana, and given in one of the three appendixes, was to collect information on geography, Indians, and other nations, to win the allegiance of the tribes, and to find a water route to the Pacific. Mr. DeVoto in his excellent thirty-seven-page introduction points up the broader purpose of capturing the fur trade of the Louisiana country from the British, and backgrounds the expansion of the North West Company in that region. Certainly the two captains were competent to lead such an expedition, and they had the will power to lead it to a successful conclusion. Their choice of men among the four sergeants and twenty-four privates in the original command proved to be a happy one. En route there was only one death—that of Sergeant Charles Floyd, who probably died of a ruptured appendix; and there were two cases of insubordination sufficiently serious to drop those involved.

Among the members of the expedition were men who could find game to feed themselves, make clothes from the skins, create boats out of great trees, and make packsaddles for the portage across the Great Divide—abilities that attest to the quality of those who made the trip. At no time was the command in danger, unless it was when its members nearly starved on the Lolo Trail leading to the headwaters of the Snake, or when they had two brushes with the Indians. It is amazing to think that despite the weary, dismal months spent at Fort Clatsop at the mouth of the Columbia in 1805–06, no feuds or murders were reported by the captains, though they do record numerous items of white-Indian relationships during that winter. It is likewise amazing to think that the journals could be written and preserved for a three-and-a-half-year trip through a wilderness of water and Indians.

In the words of Mr. DeVoto, the Lewis and Clark journals were the “first report of the West, on the United States over the hill and beyond the sunset, on the province of the American future. There has never been another so excellent or so influential.” It can also be

said that there has never been so excellent a reduction of seven volumes to one as this, and it is hoped that it will be more influential than any other among the busy people of this generation.

## EXPLORING THE ARCTIC

*John Rae's Correspondence with the Hudson's Bay Company on Arctic Exploration, 1844–1855.* Edited by E. E. RICH and A. M. JOHNSON, with an introduction by J. M. WORDIE and R. J. CYRIAX. (London, The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1953. cvi, 401 p. Illustrations, maps.)

### Reviewed by Grace Lee Nute

IT IS JUST a hundred years since the fate of the Arctic explorer, Sir John Franklin, was learned. In 1847–48 his expedition found the long-sought Northwest Passage, but that fact, as well as the fate of the expedition and its leader, was not known for some years. Finally, after many persons and expeditions had tried to rescue the members of the expedition, or at least determine their fate, John Rae, in 1853–54 on his fourth and final trip to the top of the continent, discovered that Franklin had died in 1847. Rae also learned that the expedition had found the passage, and that all its members had perished.

Rae was a man of unbounded physical stamina and zest for living, who reveled in Arctic hardships. He was famous for his snowshoeing prowess and learned easily the tricks of making snow houses and living off the land. He therefore succeeded where other Arctic explorers failed. His selected letters in this volume were mostly written to Sir George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company, which more or less sponsored Rae's trips.

The letters will have great appeal for those who are fascinated by the Arctic and exhilarated by canoe travel and the memory of tramping over frozen wastes on snowshoes. On one occasion Rae journeyed on snowshoes from the Red River to Sault Ste. Marie in two months, a distance of twelve hundred miles—

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MISS NUTE has published numerous books and articles on the Canadian border country. She is research associate on the Minnesota Historical Society's staff.

and he gained two pounds! He frequently passed along Minnesota's northern boundary by canoe, and was often on Lake Superior. His nonchalant accounts of Arctic winters are almost beyond belief.

#### CIVIL WAR HISTORIOGRAPHY

*Americans Interpret their Civil War.* By THOMAS J. PRESSLY. (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1954. xvi, 347 p. \$5.00.)

Reviewed by Kenneth Carley

IN THE ninety years since the Blue and the Gray quit slaughtering each other on the battlefield, historians have taken up the slack by feuding over the causes and nature of the Civil War. In this perceptive study, marred only by too much repetition, Thomas J. Pressly of the University of Washington examines the widely divergent views that successive generations of scholars have held about the war and its causes.

The "primitives" of Civil War historiography—participants of the 1860s and other writers through the 1880s—sought to pin personal guilt for the conflict upon their foes while defending their own section. James Ford Rhodes, first important Civil War interpreter to attempt to be impartial, blamed slavery almost exclusively for the "irrepressible conflict." His was a transitional voice pointing toward the works of trained historians of the second generation after the Civil War, who developed new interpretations of the conflict in the period from 1890 to World War I.

Prominent in this group was Frederick Jackson Turner of Wisconsin, who won wide acceptance of his opinion that the Civil War was a sectional conflict involving the West as well as the North and South. His "multiple hypothesis" theory gave many and varied reasons for the sectional discord—slavery, influence of the West, economic factors, among others. Edward Channing, says Mr. Pressly, "broadened the Rhodesian concept of an irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery to include a struggle of different social orders and rival nationalisms."

After World War I, Charles A. Beard ex-

plained the Civil War in terms of a "second American Revolution," the basis of which was a struggle between two conflicting economies. In the 1930s, Southerners like Charles W. Ramsdell and Frank L. Owsley returned to a more pro-Confederate approach. Ramsdell, in 1937, blamed Abraham Lincoln for the immediate outbreak of hostilities, claiming he maneuvered the Confederates into firing the first shot at Fort Sumter.

To "revisionists" like George Fort Milton, Avery Craven, and James G. Randall the Civil War was a "needless" one brought on by extremists on both sides who intentionally stirred up an emotional climate. In his brilliant "Ordeal of the Union," now in progress, Allan Nevins combines the ideas of several groups of scholars in his complicated analysis of the causes and meaning of the Civil War.

Mr. Pressly concludes that the further the Civil War recedes in the past, the sharper the disagreements among twentieth-century historians over its causes. He says they still find vital such issues involved in the war as the role of the Negro, the interrelationship between majority will and minority rights, and "the question of how to secure peaceful settlement of intersectional and international disputes."

#### SOUTHERNERS AND YANKEES

*Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of the Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indiana Historical Society, Publications, vol. 17). By RICHARD LYLE POWER. (Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1953. xvi, 196 p. Illustrations, maps. Paper, \$2.00.)

Reviewed by George B. Engberg

THE SUBTITLE of Mr. Power's book is more accurate and informing than the main title. He is concerned primarily with the cultural growth of the Indiana-Illinois area, where migrants from New England and the Southern states sought to perpetuate the language, religion, politics, farming methods, and business practices which they and their fathers had used for generations.

The story of the clash and of the mingling

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MR. CARLEY is a feature writer on the staff of the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune.

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MR. ENGBERG is associate professor of history in the University of Cincinnati.

of the two cultures is told in detail, often in the words of the individuals who described the new and raw life of the frontier for their friends back east. The author relies heavily on letters of settlers and of the more literate circuit-riding ministers; thus his frequent citations often refer to men and women who would otherwise be all but nameless in the historical record. This is predominately the story of the common man, for although it deals with the period between 1800 and 1860, William Henry Harrison and Abraham Lincoln, for example, are not among the actors who come on stage.

The culture which is described has many facets, and in nearly all its phases the author finds differences in belief and practice between Yankee and Southerner. New England Puritanism vied with fervent Southern evangelism, the former aided by the colleges which struggled under its guidance. The Yankees' insistence on written business receipts, cheese to eat, and frame houses in which to live often brought argument with Upland Southerners. The emphasis placed on dissimilarities in speech, cooking, and manners illustrates the way in which differences in opinion about non-essentials are often magnified into great issues. From his detailed study of the lives of ordinary men in their day-to-day existence, Mr. Power concludes that the initial friction was usually followed by a blending of two cultures into a new Western culture that became typical of the Old Northwest and was in turn passed on to the trans-Mississippi West.

### FRONTIER DEMOCRACY

*Valley of Democracy: The Frontier versus the Plantation in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1818.*

By JOHN D. BARNHART. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1953. x, 338 p. Map. \$3.75.)

**Reviewed by William D. Overman**

THIS IS a regional history dealing with the settlement of the territories and the formation of the constitutions and governments of the states of Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. It is the story of a struggle between

aristocratic and democratic forces in the formation of these states. Aristocracy was largely represented by planters, slaveowners, and large land speculators—men who were or who aspired to become large landowners and masters of slaves. Their ideas did not include democracy or faith in the common people. In the East this group tried to preserve the Colonial aristocracy and keep the western lands under their control. In the West they endeavored to establish an economic, social, and political order like that of the Plantation South.

The frontiersmen, on the other hand, sought to establish a government in which there would be no class distinction—a democratic form of government in which all citizens would be properly represented. They were successful in their efforts in varying degrees in these five states, more so, however, north of the Ohio River than south of it. This success, the author states, supports Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis that the frontier exerted dominant forces in the growth of American democracy, as opposed to the earlier contention that American democratic ideals were of European origin transplanted to the colonies and then westward by pioneer settlers.

The detailed description of source materials used, together with the bibliography and notes, constitute a third of the volume and attest to the thoroughness of the research which preceded the writing of the book. Mr. Barnhart studied the origin and background of the individuals who were delegates to the constitutional conventions in the five states. Some of the material in this book appears in individual state histories. But here a mass of detailed information is integrated into a story of the region as a whole. One important feature of the work is an analysis of the state constitutions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois indicating the number of sections of each constitution which were taken from other state constitutions and the number which were original.

In the final chapter Mr. Barnhart discusses the writings of other American historians on the westward movement in support of and in opposition to the Turner thesis. The author builds a strong case in favor of this controversial thesis; and he suggests that other regional studies, similar to his own, be undertaken. If they are written, they will support Turner, Mr. Barnhart believes.

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MR. OVERMAN is head of the Firestone Library and Archives at Akron, Ohio.



## MIDWEST RAILROAD

*Iron Road to Empire: The History of 100 Years of the Progress and Achievements of the Rock Island Lines.* By WILLIAM EDWARD HAYES. (New York, Simmons-Boardman Publishing Corporation, 1953. xiii, 306 p. Illustrations. \$5.00.)

Reviewed by Frank P. Donovan, Jr.

THIS IS an informal history of an eight-thousand-mile railroad serving fourteen states. On the whole it gives a rather good over-all picture of the road from the 1840s to the present. It is an accurate work, with well-planned chronological balance.

The first half of the book presents accounts of such events as the pushing of a cold locomotive by hand over newly laid track into Iowa City just in time to beat a deadline and get a fifty-thousand-dollar bonus; and of how Abraham Lincoln defeated steamboat interests and won for the Rock Island the right to keep its pioneer bridge across the Mississippi. It is to the author's credit, however, that he does not overdo the dramatic episodes. To be sure, Jesse James comes into the story to enact what is said to be the West's first holdup of a railroad train. The event occurred near Adair, Iowa, in 1873. Some three pages are devoted to the stickup.

The latter half of the volume tends to drag, due to much more emphasis on financial and legal matters. The author pulls no punches in describing the mismanagement of the Reid-Moore Syndicate leading to receivership in 1915. Nor does he gloss over the trusteeship during depression years. After protracted court fights, the Rock Island's fifteen-year trusteeship ended in 1948. Meanwhile, the road had been rehabilitated physically. Considerable attention is given to the rebuilding of the system under John D. Farrington, entailing much grade and line revision, stronger bridges, centralized traffic control, dieselization, and the inauguration of the famous streamlined Rockets.

The space given to Minnesota's role in the Rock Island's history is disappointingly brief. Although considerable space is devoted to the long regime of Ransom R. Cable, no mention is

made of the fact that he was president of the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway while he also headed the Rock Island. Nor is anything said of the fact that the M&StL was once virtually controlled by the Rock Island and that the latter road for many years used the M&StL tracks from Albert Lea to Minneapolis.

Occasionally the author apparently puts words into the mouths of his leading characters to keep the story moving. Fortunately this practice is held to a minimum and is limited to the road's earlier years. Probably the most obvious shortcoming of the work is the lack of a detailed map. The small map indicating the "Route of the Rockets" is totally inadequate, and it fails to aid the reader in tracing the growth of the system. Several representative illustrations, a brief bibliography, and an adequate index round out the volume. All in all, *Iron Road to Empire* is one of the better popular railroad histories, and it is a definite contribution to the field of railroadana.

## NEWSPAPER HISTORY

*Highlights in the History of the American Press.*

A book of readings edited by EDWIN H. FORD and EDWIN EMERY. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1953. xi, 398 p. \$6.50.)

Reviewed by Quintus C. Wilson

MR. FORD and Mr. Emery, both teachers of journalism history at the University of Minnesota, here present an interesting collection of readings in their field. They quickly note in their foreword that the "story of the American newspaper is a mosaic of myriad fragments." Their book, then, can be only a collection of a few fragments.

In 1939, Mr. Ford brought out a similar collection of readings which were highly valued by this reviewer. The printing, limited to about a hundred copies, was soon exhausted. A revision or even a new collection was urged. This volume is the result—an attempt to preserve "the most rewarding of periodical articles."

After starting with the rise in importance of

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MR. DONOVAN has written widely in the field of railroad history, and he is the author of a full-length study of the M&StL.

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PROFESSOR WILSON, who is chairman of the department of journalism in the University of Utah, is now in Tokyo, where he is engaged in journalism research under a Fulbright grant.

the press in England, the authors continue with articles from five journalistic eras: Colonial, Revolutionary, Jacksonian, post-Civil War, and "Mass Circulation," thus covering the six periods usually accepted by journalism historians. The authors explain their starting point as valid since the pattern of American journalism is closely associated with English methods.

Several questions arise concerning the articles collected for these periods. Only one article gives the color of rugged journalism that grew in the area between the Mississippi and the Pacific. Furthermore, for a book published by the University of Minnesota Press, could not a significant article be found to portray the newspapers or editors of the North Star State?

The journalism of the Civil War period was significant, but this is ignored except for mentions in the articles on James Gordon Bennett, Horace Greeley, and Samuel Bowles. Again, was Bowles more important in the post-Civil War, the Civil War, or the close of the Jacksonian period? He began work as an editor in 1844.

A collection of readings gains value as the number of significant items are preserved. If the number is too limited, danger arises in repetition of certain outstanding characters.

All the articles selected are enjoyable reading. The writers and editors live anew. Their contributions to American history are described. This is especially true of the articles on Daniel Defoe and Francis P. Blair. In the case of Blair, Andrew Jackson's press policies are described. Few persons realize how fully Jackson used the press in presenting his ideas to the public. Perhaps one of Blair's newspaper policies would apply today, for he was accused of attempting to wreck the political future of rebellious Democrats by omitting their names from his paper.

To single out certain articles in the readings only invites more citations. Certainly this volume is an answer to those who charge that newspaper and magazine reporters and editors write only on water.

### LINDBERGH'S FLIGHT

MEMORIES of Charles A. Lindbergh's boyhood on a farm near Little Falls enrich his recent book, *The Spirit of St. Louis*, in which he presents an account of his historic Atlantic flight of 1926 (New York, 1953. 562 p.). He recalls that mental pictures of the state in which he

grew up, its blizzards and its rolling fields, and memories of lessons learned from his father, a United States Senator from Minnesota, helped keep him awake on his long flight from New York to Paris. A partial autobiography of a famous Minnesotan, the book is also the articulate statement of a pioneer in the field of aviation, since it tells the story of the author's great adventure from the time the idea first flashed into his mind to the successful completion of his mission at Le Bourget Aerodrome in Paris. A useful appendix contains the complete log of the "Spirit of St. Louis," engineering data on the plane and its engine, a list of decorations and awards received by Lindbergh, and an excellent series of photographs. The book is a comprehensive and dramatic personal record of an important event in the history of aviation. J.D.H.

### ELECTRICITY ON THE FARM

AN EARLY experimental project "established at Red Wing, Minnesota, to demonstrate how electricity could better farm life" is mentioned by Marquis Childs in *The Farmer Takes a Hand* (New York, 1953. 256 p.). Devoted largely to a favorable view of the work of the Rural Electrification Administration, the book contains a brief chapter on power co-operatives in the Midwest.

### BORDER COUNTRY

AN INFORMING *History of Rolette County, North Dakota*, by Laura Thompson Law (Minneapolis, 1953. 276 p.), contains a wealth of material on the backgrounds of a region that was once part of Minnesota Territory. The book gives emphasis to the early development of this northeastern section of North Dakota, and figuring in its pages are explorers, fur traders, and missionaries well known to Minnesota. Not the least of those treated at some length are Father George A. Belcourt, pioneer missionary, and Joe Rolette, fur trader, settler, and representative in the Minnesota legislature of 1853.

### HILL'S BIRTHPLACE

THE Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has announced the erection, near Rockwood, Ontario, of a bronze tablet marking the birthplace of James J. Hill. The text gives the dates of Hill's birth and death and characterizes him as a "Pioneer railway promoter and builder in Canada and the United States."



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