
BOOK REVIEWS

Joseph N. Nicollet on the Plains and Prairies: The Expeditions of 1838–39 with Journals, Letters, and Notes on the Dakota Indians. Translated from the French and edited by Edmund C. Bray and Martha Coleman Bray.

(St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1976. 294 p. Illustrations. \$14.50.)

WHEN Joseph N. Nicollet arrived in the United States in 1832, his modest hope was to contribute to the knowledge of the physical geography of North America through carefully planned field trips along the upper Mississippi River and its drainage basin. In the task he set for himself, the noted French scientist and cartographer succeeded admirably. Beginning in 1836, and during the next four field seasons, he surveyed much of the upper Midwest. The geographical data collected during these expeditions were published by the federal government shortly after Nicollet's death in 1843 in his monumental *Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River* and accompanying *Report Intended to Illustrate a Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River*. Both the map and the report have recently been reissued. In 1965 the Minnesota Historical Society reprinted the 1843 map from the original copperplate in the possession of the United States Lake Survey. (The 1843 copperplate apparently has been lost in a recent transfer of records from the former United States Lake Survey District Office in Detroit to the National Ocean Survey in Washington, D.C.). Nicollet's report is available from Xerox University Microfilm, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

With the publication of this volume, the largely unpublished journals and related documents of all four of Nicollet's expeditions are now also available in English translation. The papers of the Mississippi and St. Croix expeditions, along with Nicollet's observations on the Chippewa, were published by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1970 under the title, *The Journal of Joseph N. Nicollet: A Scientist on the Mississippi Headwaters with Notes on Indian Life, 1836–37*. The principal editor of both works is Martha Coleman Bray, who has written a number of shorter articles on Nicollet and is completing a full-length biography of the scientist.

The book under review is divided into three parts. An introduction of forty-one pages chronicles the events leading up to the 1838 and 1839 expeditions and places Nicollet in the political and scientific context of his time. The second part consists of the translated and judiciously edited journals of the various field trips that comprised these two expeditions.

For those periods that journals have not been found, the authors have skillfully supplemented or reconstructed events from surviving annotated sketch maps and astronomical and meteorological notebooks. In one case, the botanical journal of Charles A. Geyer was used to help piece together two trips to the Blue Earth River region. Where the record is too fragmentary, explanatory editorial paragraphs summarize daily occurrences. Nicollet's pertinent correspondence with the War

Department and with interested scientists has been reproduced in an appendix along with his important notes on the Sioux. The latter appear in print for the first time and provide new information on the various divisions and subdivisions of the Dakota Indians. These notes have been separately edited by Raymond J. DeMallie.

The journals themselves cover Nicollet's 1838 trips to survey and map the Minnesota River and its southern tributaries westward to "the valley of the famous red stone" and the Coteau des Prairies. The route for much of this expedition apparently had been inspired by George W. Featherstonhaugh, the English geologist, who had explored the region in 1825, and who had impressed Nicollet with "the importance of accurate topographical mapping to the new science of geology." The journals for the following year are less complete but cover Nicollet's important journey up the Missouri River to Fort Pierre and then northeastward to Devil's Lake and return by the Minnesota River to Fort Snelling.

The narratives are concerned primarily with the mundane duties of scientists — mapping, gathering geological samples, recording barometric measurements, determining latitude and longitude — but there are frequent insights into French and Indian place names, the Dakota language, the life and culture of the Plains Indians, and the flat, woodless prairies, all of which contrasted sharply with Nicollet's earlier observations of the Chippewa and their woodland environment on the headwaters of the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers. As in his earlier expeditions, Nicollet relied heavily upon local Indians for geographical information, but he found the Sioux lacking in general ability in comparison with the Chippewa. Perhaps this was because he had not become personally acquainted with the Sioux as he had with the Chippewa, particularly his guide on the Mississippi, Chagobay, "my friend and my teacher."

Unlike the earlier expeditions, the Minnesota and Missouri river trips were sponsored and supported by the War Department, whose goal of surveying and mapping unknown areas under Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett closely paralleled the French scientist's ambition. Nicollet's Minnesota and Missouri river expeditions were the first to be carried out under the auspices of the newly formed Corps of Topographical Engineers, the War Department office that undertook the major reconnaissance of the West up to the eve of the Civil War. Nicollet, through his young assistant, Lieutenant John Charles Frémont of the Topographical Engineers, greatly influenced the scientific tone of these later War Department expeditions and set the standard for mapping that guided topographical engineers until the late 1860s.

This volume is suitably illustrated with several sketch maps, drawings, and pages from the journals of Nicollet and Geyer. A small but adequate index map shows the routes of the major expeditions. Copies of the 1965 printing of Nicollet's 1843 map are available separately (for \$3.50 and, in hard-cover case, \$4.50). The serious researcher will find it indispensable.

The editors are to be commended for the special care that has been taken to identify archaic spellings of personal names

and place names. Extensive footnotes clarify and supplement the narratives and generally provide excellent biographical and bibliographical data, although this reviewer noted on page 136 one incomplete citation to material in the National Archives.

Anthropologists, historical geographers, and historians will find this book useful and, in some cases, indispensable. The authors, by assembling and translating Nicollet's journals in a convenient format, have made a significant contribution to scholarship.

Reviewed by RALPH E. EHRENBURG, *director of the Cartographic Archives Division, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.*

Kristofer Janson in America. By Nina Draxten.

(Boston, Twayne Publishers for the Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1976. xiii, 401 p. Illustrations. \$10.95.)

NINA DRAXTEN'S long-awaited biography of Kristofer Nagel Janson (1841–1917) recalls an almost completely forgotten temporary Minnesotan. When he arrived in the United States from Norway in 1881, he had a reputation as a writer of *landsmaal* (a synthetic form of Norwegian based on the existing dialects, intended as a nationalistic alternative to the Danish-influenced *riksmaal*). He had been a teacher in a folk high school for nine years. After ordination in Chicago, he settled in Minneapolis as a Unitarian missionary to his compatriots in "the Scandinavian wilderness of the Northwest," and throughout his eleven years in Minneapolis he had constantly to appeal to the American Unitarians for financial aid. Although the Lutherans refused to see Janson as anything but a heretic, he had friends in liberal Norwegian middle-class circles in the city, and consequently *Budstikken*, a Norwegian weekly, and *The North*, an English-language paper of Scandinavian interest, paid favorable attention to his work.

At Nazareth Free Christian Church, which Janson started in 1882, his ministry to the Norwegian immigrants who were flooding into and through Minneapolis at this period included readings of his own and other Norwegian literary works, concerts, and debates, and large numbers, especially of young workingmen, were attracted to the church. In 1887 he founded the periodical, *Saamanden* (*The Sower*), to circulate his ideas, which became increasingly influenced by Edward Bellamy, Henry George, and the Christian Socialists, and by spiritualism. Indeed, spiritualism was in good part responsible for the debacle of both Janson and Nazareth Church. His wife, Drude Krog Janson, became alienated from him by his absorption in his secretary, Louise Bentzen (or Benson), who, Drude believed, attained domination over him during séances at which she was the medium. In 1893 Drude left her husband and returned to Norway. Kristofer returned later in the same year, allowed Drude to divorce him, and married Louise Bentzen after the divorce became final in 1897. He spent the rest of his working life in the workers' education movement in Norway.

After its minister's departure from Minneapolis, Nazareth Church declined quite rapidly. In 1894 Louise Bentzen led a spiritualist faction out of the congregation, and the building was sold in 1906. After a further couple of years in rented halls,

the church went out of existence, and most of its surviving members joined the First Unitarian Society. The short, brilliant, sad history of Nazareth contrasts tellingly with that of Nora Free Christian Church in Hanska, Minnesota. Here Janson persuaded the original body of seceders from Lake Hanska Norwegian Lutheran Church to define their position as Unitarian, but the congregation continued on its way, consistently self-supporting and happily free of the atmosphere of high drama which seems to have been usual at Nazareth. The Hanska church still flourishes.

Although Nazareth came into existence at a time when some of the young, unsettled Scandinavian immigrants (the author notes the Swedish Unitarians and Universalists each had a Minneapolis congregation) could be drawn to liberal religion, the church could not hold them. As the Swedish Unitarian minister, Axel Lundeberg, wrote, his Norwegian colleague had, against his own will, raised a cult of "Janson worship." Sven Oftedal, professor at Augsburg Seminary and editor of *Folkebladet*, made another shrewd point which exposed a real weakness in Janson's position when he alluded in his paper to Janson's reliance on Yankee money for missionary work among his countrymen.

Drude Krog Janson, herself a talented Norwegian writer, seems to have suffered greatly during the eleven Minneapolis years. Not only were her own achievements eclipsed by the personality cult which centered upon Kristofer, but she hated city life and had much to endure because of her husband's obvious tendency to live beyond his means (about which Miss Draxten charitably leaves us to our own conclusions). Drude was involved in a ceaseless round of drudgery in homes too large for the family, hard to run, and at one point filled with eight boarders. It is little wonder that, feeling her best years wasting away, she twice fell in love with much younger men. One of them was Knut Hamsun, who worked as Kristofer's secretary for a time and won fame as a novelist after his final return to Norway.

Was Kristofer Janson's life in Minneapolis a complete failure? The evidence offered by the author from her abundant familiarity with the written sources and with the traditions of the city's Norwegian community suggests otherwise. His own nobility of character was never, it seems, questioned by his orthodox opponents, and he brought an emollient, irenic spirit into the acrid atmosphere of theological debate. He acted as an informal adult educator through his church, through *Saamanden*, and in other ways, in political and social questions, literature, and the visual arts, and he attracted men of intellect to Nazareth. Although the half-dozen upper Midwest congregations he started were short-lived, he drew a number of young Norwegians to the American Unitarian ministry.

We owe Nina Draxten a debt of gratitude for illuminating an aspect of immigrant life which is too little known: There has been a tendency to overlook the secular, liberal, urban intelligentsia which provided an alternative voice to that of the Lutheran ministers and farmers whom we generally regard as having set the tone of the Norwegian-American community. The book is blessed with a generous bibliography and a full array of notes and references, and it is produced in the style to which the Norwegian-American Historical Association has accustomed us. This reviewer has only one small criticism; namely, that three minor characters in the Janson story might

have been identified: Julius B. Baumann, poet, Cloquet; Lauritz Stavnheim, socialist and secretary of Sons of Norway, Minneapolis; and Peder Ydstie, unknown.

Nina Draxten discusses the literary work of both Jansons and suggests that of Kristofer's books *Amerikanske forhold* (American conditions) (1881) alone would bear translation today. This reviewer would also much like to read *Bag gardinet* (*Behind the curtain*) (1889), a labor novel set in Minneapolis, and the autobiography, *Hvad jeg har oplevet* (*What I have experienced*) (1913), together with Drude's feminist novel, *En saloonkeepers datter* (*A saloonkeeper's daughter*) (1889).

Reviewed by MICHAEL BROOK, former reference librarian of the Minnesota Historical Society who has a deep interest in Scandinavian-American literature. He now lives in England.

***The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction.* Edited by Dorothy Sterling.**

(Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1976. 491 p. Illustrations. \$7.95.)

***Black Migration: Movement North, 1900-1920.* By Florette Henri.**

(Garden City, N.Y., Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976. 419 p. Paper \$3.95.)

***Black America: Geographic Perspective.* Edited by Robert T. Ernst and Lawrence Hugg.**

(Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1976. 438 p. Paper \$5.95.)

DURING THE YEARS of urban racial unrest from 1965 to 1969, historians were awakened to the reality that Black Americans constituted an ever-increasing proportion of the national urban population. Although the rural-to-urban migration of the Black population has been ongoing since Reconstruction, the migratory patterns and their implications were largely ignored and not fully appreciated until the riots of the 1960s.

In the last ten years a number of doctoral dissertations concerning Black urban studies have been published. Among them are Allan Spear's *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto*, Kenneth L. Kusmer's *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930*, and David M. Katzman's *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century*. The three books reviewed here are among the newer ones relating to aspects of the Black urban experience from 1865 to the present.

Touching only tangentially on the Black urban experience, *The Trouble They Seen* depicts the problems that confronted rural and urban Blacks in the South following the Civil War. It is the story of Reconstruction from 1865 to 1877 as seen from the Black perspective. Editor Sterling has used accounts of Black participants that she found in state archives, congressional records, newspapers, diaries, interviews, congressional committee testimonies, letters, and personal papers. What emerges is a story of strength and determination in the face of adversity, terror, coercion, and attempted re-enslavement of the newly emancipated. The editor does little editorializing, preferring instead to let the documents speak for themselves. However, it is evident that she sees Reconstruction in the same light as did W. E. B. DuBois — that is, as a triumph for Black citizens in spite of the obstacles placed before them.

The Trouble They Seen is divided into six chapters and embraces such subjects as the initial reaction to emancipation, the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, Black participation in reconstructed state governments, agricultural and industrial reorganization, education, and Democratic party resurgence, culminating in the nullification of Reconstruction achievements. Although not suited as a text, the book is an excellent pictorial documentary history that could be used as a supplementary source to more scholarly works. It is well edited and entertaining, and a lay reader will find it informative.

According to Dorothy Sterling, the Compromise of 1877 negated the gains by Black people during Reconstruction. The years following witnessed the diminution of the Black vote, Black participation in government, and civil rights. Between 1877 and 1896, the dreams and aspirations of the Black masses were betrayed. As oppression mounted in the South, Blacks began to migrate to other regions in search of personal and political freedom. Unable to participate in electoral politics, southern Blacks in effect voted with their feet. They moved northward, their migration beginning as a trickle in the late nineteenth century and then growing until it reached its apogee in 1916. Approximately 10 per cent of the national Black population had relocated itself out of the South by 1920.

The stirring drama of this mass exodus is in part recaptured in Florette Henri's *Black Migration*. Although the title suggests a narrow discussion of the Great Migration, the greater portion of the work concerns the sociopolitical conditions in the South following Reconstruction and white reaction to Black migrants in northern cities. Henri does deal with the factors responsible for the migration, but this material is secondary to her consideration of white America's effect upon Black migrants. There was more discussion in this period about the adverse effects of social Darwinism, the theories of race eugenics, and boxer Jack Johnson's title defense than on new insights into the lives of those experiencing estrangement in northern urban centers. In this respect, the work is more about the history of race relations than migration.

In spite of this shortcoming, Florette Henri's book is about the best work on Black migration. It is meticulously researched and in organization, content, and literary style lends itself well to a text on Black social history in the United States from 1877 to 1920. The book is indexed and has a substantial bibliography. In spite of its length, it is recommended as a supplementary text for college-level courses. The lay reader also will find the book informative and entertaining.

Henri presents an upbeat message. Although the northern reception of Blacks was as hostile in many respects as the oppression they experienced in the South, the author concludes that the migrants had reason to hope for a new tomorrow. They could vote, and they had limited protection of civil rights under the law. In addition, their children had access to education, the key to social mobility. The despair and pathos experienced in urban centers, combined with hope for the future, helped to forge a new race consciousness. This not only extolled the virtues of being Black in verse and song but generated a political coalition along racial lines, as demonstrated by the nationalism of Marcus Garvey.

The impact made upon the urban ecology by incoming migrants was great. The result was congestion of already well-established Black neighborhoods. Discrimination in housing

was responsible for containing Black residences and commercial expansion in selected areas of the cities. Within these ghettoized areas, Black religious and social institutions arose to meet the cultural needs of the people. Over the years Black urban communities developed a dynamic of their own while remaining isolated from the mainstream of American life. Many historians have likened these ghettos to captive internal colonies of the United States. According to them, these colonies were brought into being and nurtured by white racists for the sole purpose of exploiting Black labor while minimizing the social impact of Black people upon American life. According to some, this policy of containment was in part responsible for the outbreak of racial violence in the 1960s.

Historians and sociologists were among the first of the social scientists to realize the research potential of Black urban communities, according to Ernst and Hugg, editors of *Black America: Geographic Perspective*. They suggest that ethnocentrism and racist attitudes held by many urban geographers have prevented them from recognizing the investigative potential of the inner city. *Black America* was conceived to "orient the reader to the nature, extent and applicability of geographic research to Black America."

The book is a compilation of twenty-three articles organized into seven chapters. Subjects range from "Locational Aspects of Black Population and Black Ghetto Space" to "Race, Economics and the City, and Changing Black Settlement Patterns." Black political activity and urban rebellion are also discussed. The book is indexed and has an extensive bibliography and an appendix. As with most collections, the quality and style of the articles vary with each other. In spite of the explanatory notes that introduce each chapter, the articles are often detailed and heavily interspersed with field jargon and references to studies. The book is oriented toward professionals in the field rather than lay readers. Although informative, it is too technical for casual reading.

Reviewed by DAVID V. TAYLOR, chairman of the Department of Black Studies, State University of New York at New Paltz. He received his Ph.D. in Afro-American history at the University of Minnesota.

Growing Up in Minnesota: Ten Writers Remember Their Childhoods. Edited by Chester G. Anderson. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1976. 250 p. \$7.95).

EVERY PERSON has a work of fiction in them, and that is to remember one's childhood. Each childhood, of course, is unique and of consuming interest to its owner. Even the plainest of stories gives off a certain glow: *I was once a child myself — I remember this so well — now, after all these years, I sometimes feel like that child again.* It is too bad that most stories begin and end with a moral. This defeats the memory, which is powerful beyond comprehension and which, unhindered by convention, can hear the teacher's voice and see the writing on the blackboard and count every speck on the ceiling of the schoolroom when we were seven.

The best of the stories in this collection have the excitement of that discovery about them, of writers working at the very dim edges of memory and, then, of whole landscapes lighting

up suddenly. "Minnesota Black, Minnesota Blue," Toyse Kyle's memoir of growing up Black in north Minneapolis, is powerful in that respect and free of literary pretense (it is her first published work). "We lived, before coming North, in Kansas City, Missouri, in a black ghetto that stretched for days," she writes, but in Minneapolis, "We were surrounded everywhere by white people — human beings without color whose speech was strange. I remember asking Mama if it hurt to be without color."

Meridel Le Sueur furnishes another landscape: "My grandmother homesteaded a piece of land and built a house on it which was a simple pure expression of the Protestant needs of her severe religion, her graceless intensity of the good, thrifty, work-for-the-night-is-coming, dutiful labor."

And again: "It was a New England farmhouse with a summer kitchen, a birthing room on ground level, and a closed front parlor where one did not let the sun come. She probably did not consider that the house was squared off on an ancient land of mounds and pyramids and cones, on land that had not been plowed in a million years. Neither did she think the land had been monstrously taken from its native people. If she thought of it at all, she undoubtedly felt the Christian purposes of her Anglo-puritan world would bring only benefit and salvation to them.

"The design and beauty of this house moved me then, and when I see its abandoned replica on the plains, I weep. It was a haven against the wild menace of the time, a structural intensity promising only barest warmth, a Doric hearth, and a rigid, austere, expectant growth."

Landscapes and territories loom up and are illuminated here that lie outside the official written histories of Minnesota life. There, St. Paul is the capital, Minneapolis is the home of the university, and the governor is the governor. In this history, a Black woman struggles with her young daughter on the Third Avenue Bridge late at night, trying to leap; a few miles away, at 3142 Lyndale Avenue South, a little boy invents a game in which he pretends to be a worm and slides along the floor and can look up girls' dresses. The square farmhouse sits perched on the prairie, frail and luminous, encircled by spring. A Finnish girl dashes from the sauna onto the frozen lake, dives into a hole in the ice, and swims under the ice to another hole a hundred yards away; and, in a Victorian mansion now gone, a boy pores over an atlas, admiring the expanse of the British Empire, marked in red on the map. It is a history written by outsiders, as children are, wary of the adult world, living by the spirit, as in this paragraph about growing up on a farm near Madison written by Robert Bly:

"We always had some suspicion of men from the town, who did not work with their hands. In town, they thought themselves better, but my father did not share that view, and he shielded us from its destructive radiation. He ran a threshing rig, and stood on it, respecting a number of grown men and even horses who worked with their hands, shoulders, and hooves all day. At times if we were threshing a field that the bank owned, having foreclosed during the late disastrous thirties — perhaps six or seven years before we were threshing — then the bank, to make sure the grain was divided properly, would send a cashier or teller out to watch. How we pitied these creatures! Getting

out of the car with a white shirt and a necktie, stepping over the stubble like a cat so as not to get too much chaff in his black oxfords, how weak and feeble! What a poor model of a human being! It was clear the teller was incapable of any boisterous joy, and was nothing but a small zoo animal of some sort that locked the doors on itself, pale from the reflected light off the zoo walls, light as salt in a shaker, clearly obsessed with money — you could see greed all over him. How ignoble! How sordid and ignoble! What ignobility!"

A note in conclusion: No book of this sort could be "representative" of Minnesota life, but the editor has sought to make it diverse, and that is commendable. Of the eight stories, four are set in the cities and four outside; and, of the ten writers (three are collaborators), five are women and five are not.

Reviewed by GARRISON KEILLOR *who grew up in Anoka. Keillor, who appears on the "Prairie Home Companion" show on Minnesota Public Radio, is also a frequent writer for the New Yorker magazine.*

A History of the Lewis and Clark Journals. By Paul Russell Cutright.

(Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1976. 311 p. Illustrations. \$17.50.)

THE TITLE of this work is meant in a broad sense, for the volume includes coverage of the diaries and journals of all members of the famous expedition to the Pacific Ocean in 1804–06. In addition to co-leaders William Clark and Meriwether Lewis, the chroniclers were Charles Floyd, John Ordway, Patrick Gass, Nathaniel Pryor, Joseph Whitehouse, and Robert Frazer. Cutright tells the story of the journals through chapters on major editors such as Nicholas Biddle, well known in American history for his presidency of the Second Bank of the United States, who first worked with the Lewis and Clark journals, Elliot Coues, who three-quarters of a century later revised the Biddle edition; and Reuben Gold Thwaites, Thwaites, superintendent of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin early in the present century, edited the multivolumed *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. Later, Milo Milton Quaife, like Thwaites a superintendent at Wisconsin, edited the *Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway*, published in 1916. Most recently, Donald Jackson edited the *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, published in 1962. In each chapter, Cutright includes extensive biographical sketches of the editors and well-documented coverage of their interest and work with the journals.

Cutright's chapter on Ernest Staples Osgood will be of particular interest to Minnesotans because it deals with the discovery of William Clark's field notes in a St. Paul attic in 1953. The notes were found by Lucile M. Kane, then curator of manuscripts of the Minnesota Historical Society, in the course of pursuing a routine lead. When it appeared that these were previously unknown William Clark manuscripts, Miss Kane enlisted the services of Osgood of the University of Minnesota history faculty. Osgood meticulously transcribed the notes and edited them for publication by Yale University Press in 1964.

The discovery and publication of the field notes was

noteworthy in its own right, but the legal controversy over their ownership makes their story doubly fascinating. The dispute was principally between the heirs of General John Henry Hammond, among whose papers the notes were found, and the government of the United States, which contended that all writings by members of the expedition were public property. In a classic case which had ramifications far beyond the immediate issue, Gunnar H. Nordbye, federal district judge of Minneapolis, ruled in favor of the heirs.

Cutright is to be especially commended for his exhaustive coverage, thorough documentation, and the excellent bibliography of books and magazine articles about Lewis and Clark. Many readers will be bothered by the overuse of the editorial "we" which Cutright relies on to introduce his own views and redundancies such as "as we will see" and "as we have seen." However, despite these failings, this is a fine book and a major contribution to the historiography of the nation's most celebrated explorers.

Reviewed by WILLIAM E. LASS, *chairman of the Department of History, Mankato State University. Lass is author of many articles, reviews, and books, including the award-winning From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake: An Account of Overland Freighting (1972). He also is author of a bicentennial history of Minnesota, scheduled for publication later this year.*

The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925. By Herbert G. Gutman.

(New York, Pantheon Books, 1976. 11viii, 664 p. \$15.95.)

UNTIL RECENTLY, the role of Blacks in history was of little interest to American historians. At least one writer (Howard Odum) argued that Blacks were "as destitute of morals as many of the lower animals . . . [and with] little knowledge of the sanctity of home or marital relations." However, when the civil rights movement gained momentum in the 1960s, Black history was popularized as historians and sociologists endeavored to discover and understand the Black past and its relationship to the present. The publication of Daniel P. Moynihan's *The Negro Family in America: The Case for National Action* (1965) was one of the more controversial attempts to determine the historical cause of the social ills that plagued Black Americans.

Moynihan drew upon the work of sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, whose classic study, *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939), argued that the degradation and dehumanization of slavery produced an emasculated, docile, and physically impotent Black male. Family responsibility passed to the female by default, producing a distinctly matrilineal and probably matriarchal family structure. This view went unchallenged and influenced the works of Kenneth Stampp and Stanley Elkins as well as Moynihan. Picking up Frazier's thesis and building on the works of Stampp and Elkins, Moynihan asserted that "at the center of the tangle of pathology is the weakness of the family structure."

It was by destroying the Negro family under slavery that white Americans broke the will of the Negro people," The weak Black family, he argued, was at the root of the contemporary social problems afflicting Black people. Despite these internal weaknesses, the family could be nurtured back to health by resolute government action.

This report brought an immediate outcry from the academic community. Many scholars questioned the assump-

tions and methodology used by Moynihan to support his conclusions. Adding fuel to the fire was the publication of William Styron's novel, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1966), which described this Black rebel as a twisted and crippled personality.

Responding to this debate, a host of scholars undertook studies which refuted the thesis of a "tangle of pathology." John Blasingame's *The Slave Community* (1972) concluded that despite extreme oppression under slavery, the Black family was able to maintain some sense of cohesiveness and structure. In *Time on the Cross* (1973), whose questionable methodology renewed the debate, Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman credited the efficiency of the plantation economy to the slaves alone. In his popular study, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1974), Eugene D. Genovese argued that because of the master-slave relationship the Black family survived, intact, the horrors of slavery.

Herbert G. Gutman's latest study also seeks to right the wrongs of previous scholarship. Gutman holds that a "tangle of pathology" never existed. He says that previous studies misperceived the adaptive capacities of Black slaves. They were never totally at the mercy of their white masters and did not exist in a cultural void. There was enough space to allow for the creation of a culture that was neither African nor American but distinctly African-American.

Working carefully and thoroughly, Gutman examined several structurally diverse plantations in Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Virginia. Using slave registers, Freedmen's Bureau records, and the like, he attempts to show how a common slave culture developed despite these diverse settings. The study suggests that kinship ties among slaves were powerful and extensive. Slaves practiced an exogamous culture, and, although prenuptial intercourse was common, there was no evidence of casual relations or licentiousness. Though pregnancy often occurred, it was usually followed by marriage. The data suggest that few Black mothers headed single parent households. On the contrary, whenever permitted, slaves sought enduring relationships inside of marriage. If Black households were disrupted, as they often were, kinfolk took over the necessary functions, Gutman maintains. Children who were orphaned by the sale or removal of parents to distant parts received the care needed for proper growth from grandparents, elder siblings, uncles and aunts, or blood cousins. When these kinspeople were not present, infants and youngsters, orphaned or sold away, were adopted and raised by other slaves.

Gutman contends that the Black family in this country has always been an effective means for transmitting cultural heritage and satisfying basic human needs. Slave kinfolk were more intensely loyal to one another than whites were. Instead of finding the antebellum arrangement pathologically divisive, Gutman found family units capable of adjusting to the stress of an oppressive slave institution.

This monumental study, researched for ten years, is indeed impressive. Gutman provides valuable charts and tables throughout the text as well as annotated footnotes and elaborate appendixes. Yet this needed and important work is not without weaknesses in structure and methodology. Gutman, for example, states that the purpose of the study is not only to identify an adaptive slave culture but to determine the sources

of slave behavior and beliefs and how these beliefs are maintained. Yet he ignores religion, one of the most basic institutions in Black life. There is little discussion of the importance of religion in West Africa and the survival and transformation of religious values in slavery. Religion was a crucial means of transmitting cultural values as well as maintaining unity in the family structure.

Another important point that Gutman fails to analyze fully is the sexual exploitation of Black women by white men in the North and South. The sexual control of the Black woman has serious implications for the Black family in slavery and freedom which are not addressed by Gutman.

There are several questions, too, raised by the study that have not been answered. To what extent were whites dehumanized through their dehumanization of Blacks? Did this erode the stability of the white family? If so, how? Gutman argues that cultural formations among the slaves in the eighteenth century and before slavery spread to the lower South was a syncretism of African and Anglo-American beliefs and social practices. What were those beliefs and practices and how were they transmitted? The question of the Africanization of white culture needs to be approached. These questions have not been considered by any of the recent studies of the Black family.

The reason may lie in the fact that the research in this area often develops in much the same way as wars are fought — attack and counterattack. The strategy changes, but the questions remain the same. Though Moynihan's study needs refuting, none of the recent works, including Gutman's, goes beyond Moynihan to ask new questions. If the debate continues on this basis, there will be little progress beyond the scope of the present study.

There are also structural difficulties in Gutman's work. The organization is confusing, and the writing style difficult. The book suffers from too much data, making it boring in places and frustrating in others. An economy of words would have made the book more readable. As a research source, this study is without a doubt valuable, but more studies are needed to answer the questions raised above and to ask new questions. Herbert Gutman has not had the last word.

Reviewed by TIFFANY R. L. PATTERSON, visiting professor in the Department of History, Carleton College, Northfield.

Reflections from the North Country. By Sigurd F. Olson.

(New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1976. xvii, 172 p. Illustrations. \$7.95.)

GEOLOGY, evolution, subconscious memories, history — the past — are themes that have always fascinated Sigurd Olson. In his latest book, *Reflections from the North Country*, he looks down the long sweep of human history with the same keen eyes that read planetary geology from a vein of rose quartz in *Listening Point*, gauged the swelling waves of Lake Ile à la Crosse in *The Lonely Land*, and surveyed the unfolding landscape of the universe in *Open Horizons*. *Reflections* is a book of essays, strung like pearls on the theme of wilderness.

Thoughtfully and joyfully, the author explores mankind's evolution and the human traits shaped by solitude, migration,

and the seasons. He follows our age-old search for meaning in harmony, beauty, simplicity, and freedom and then turns his attention to the great questions of every age — love of the land, self-knowledge, immortality, and the nature of God.

Although Olson has always been concerned with the relationships between contemporary men and the wilderness, he bypasses the subject of recreation and focuses on *re-creation*. He seems to say that what we *do* in the wilderness is not as important as what our subconscious mind *remembers*. And by remembering, the author means moving harmoniously with the rhythms of sunrise and sunset, snowfall and rainfall, listening for the music of the place, melting once again into the wilderness that produced and nurtured the human race. As he succinctly puts it: "It is when we forget and divorce ourselves

entirely from what man once knew that our lives may spin off without meaning."

Not many people can live entirely in the wilderness, nor does Olson think this is desirable. Man, the social animal, is at his best when polished by contacts with others. Those who can, and do, visit the wilderness are privileged, the author writes, and: "Unless we can contribute something from wilderness experience, derive some solace or peace to share with others, then the real purpose [of wilderness] is defeated."

Reviewed by NEWELL SEARLE, who received his doctorate from the University of Minnesota in forest history. His book, *Saving Quetico-Superior: A Land Set Apart, on the efforts to protect the wilderness character of that country, is being published later this year by the Minnesota Historical Society Press.*

news & notes

TWO AUTHORS have been named co-winners of the Minnesota Historical Society's Solon J. Buck Award for the best articles to be published in *Minnesota History* during 1976. Chosen to receive \$150 each were Barbara T. Newcombe, whose "'A Portion of the American People': The Sioux Sign a Treaty in Washington in 1858" appeared in the Fall issue, and David Paul Nord, whose "Minneapolis and the Pragmatic Socialism of Thomas Van Lear" was published in the Spring issue. Ms. Newcombe, a librarian for the *Chicago Tribune*, was associated with its Washington, D.C., office when she wrote the article but later moved to its Chicago headquarters. Nord, who received his master's degree in American business and labor history at the University of Minnesota, teaches journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Winner of part (\$75) of the \$125 Theodore C. Blegen Award money (for staff members) for 1976 is Bruce M. White, coauthor with Edwin C. Bearss of "George Brackett's Wagon Road: Minnesota Enterprise on a New Frontier," published in the Summer issue. Bearss is not eligible for the Blegen Award. White is a research assistant in the MHS publications and research division. The Buck Award committee this year was made up of Andrea Hinding, curator of the Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota; Roy W. Meyer, professor of English at Mankato State University; and Kenneth Carley, editor of this magazine.

THE MINNESOTA Historical Society's annual meeting and history conference will be held Saturday, October 15, at the Marriott Inn in Bloomington, Min-

nesota. The noon luncheon will feature the principal speaker, Harrison E. Salisbury, who for many years was an editor and foreign correspondent for the *New York Times*. Born in Minneapolis and a 1930 graduate of the University of Minnesota, Salisbury has written several books, mainly on Russia and the Far East. His latest, however, is *Travels Around America*, which has chapters on the Salisbury family's life in Wisconsin and Minnesota and includes comments on the "Minnesota spirit." Since the conference does not have a single theme, sessions will be held on a variety of subjects.

On Friday evening, October 14, a reception for members and others will be held at the State Capitol, where the MHS annual business meeting will be conducted in the house chamber. There will be tours of the Capitol building.

MORE THAN 100 issues have accumulated during the twenty-six years the Minnesota Historical Society published *Gopher Historian*, a magazine for young readers. The issues are available throughout the state and beyond its borders in schools, libraries, and other collections. Readers familiar with the two anthologies of materials taken from the magazine — *Gopher Reader* (1958) and *Gopher Reader II* (1975) — know that the complete file is jammed with interesting, reliable, well-written information on a broad range of subjects. These volumes were edited by A. Hermina Poatgieter, who also edited the magazine and wrote most of it, and James Taylor Dunn.

Now we have a key to this treasury. The society has just published *A Complete Index to the Gopher Historian, 1946–*

1972 (73 p. Paper \$7.50). With this reference aid, the files of the magazine become a kind of encyclopedia of Minnesota history offering concise information on topics ranging from Mrs. Samuel Abbe, a painter, and carriage-maker Stephen Abbott through the remainder of the alphabet to legislator-congressman John Zwach and a recipe for zwieback. For the first time, all of *Gopher Historian* is accessible to readers, researchers, teachers, and everyone curious about aspects of Minnesota's past.

NORMAN W. MOEN

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY of Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr.'s New York-to-Paris flight on May 20–21, 1927, was commemorated by articles in numerous national, regional, and local publications. We wish to call attention to just three here. The *Minneapolis Tribune's* Sunday supplement, *Picture* magazine, devoted its entire issue to various aspects of the flight, its antecedents and results, and to the man and his family. The issue included a thoughtful article, entitled "A life marked by continued growth," by Russell W. Fridley, director of the Minnesota Historical Society and a friend of Lindbergh.

The April, 1977, issue of the Missouri Historical Society's *Bulletin* included articles on that society's Lindbergh collection (with numerous pictures), on Kurt Weill's musical tribute to the flier, and on the myth of Lindbergh and Munich.

"Two Generations of Heroism" was the lead article in the May, 1977, issue of *American Opinion*, which featured Lindbergh, Sr., the congressman, as well as his flier-conservationist-writer son.

Since 1849, when it was chartered by the first territorial legislature, the Minnesota Historical Society has been preserving a record of the state's history. Its outstanding library and its vast collection of manuscripts, newspapers, pictures, and museum objects reflect this activity. The society also interprets Minnesota's past, telling the story of the state and region through publications, museum displays, tours, institutes, and restoration of historic sites. The work of the society is supported in part by the state and in part by private contributions, grants, and membership dues. It is a chartered public institution governed by an executive council of interested citizens and belonging to all who support it through membership and participation in its programs. You are cordially invited to use its resources and to join in its efforts to make Minnesota a community with a sense of strength from the past and purpose for the future.

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