
BOOK REVIEWS

The Red River Trails: Oxcart Routes Between St. Paul and the Selkirk Settlement, 1820–1870. By Rhoda R. Gilman, Carolyn Gilman, and Deborah M. Stultz. (St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society, 1979. 105 p. Maps, illustrations. Paper \$6.75.)

THIS ADMIRABLE BOOK makes the reader long to set out instantly to travel the old trails that for fifty years connected St. Paul and the Red River Settlement in what is now Manitoba. The product of meticulous scholarship, there is nothing dry-as-dust about it. The people who used the trails come alive, with the miseries, exertions, adventures, and delights that they experienced. The reader endures with them the attacks of hordes of voracious mosquitoes, struggles through almost impassable marshes and dense woods, fords treacherous rivers, and glories in the sudden sight of wide and beautiful prairies or lovely valleys whose clear brooks and shining lakes offered good camp sites. The screech of the ungreased axles of the trains of Red River carts echoes from the pages, along with the curses of voyageurs stuck fast in evil swamps, and the “polyglot jabber” and songs of cheerful métis tripmen. Their passion was horse racing. Camped at St. Cloud, on one occasion, they found that the new bridge across the Mississippi made a splendid race track and galloped over it in illiterate and blissful obliviousness of warning signs: “CAUTION” and “NO FASTER THAN A WALK.”

The trail that passed St. Cloud was only one of a complex network that was gradually developed over the years. To identify the route of each one of them meant immensely detailed and exacting research. The results of two years of intensive investigation are embodied in seventeen excellent two-color maps. These show the locations both of the trails for which the route has been solidly established and also, clearly distinguished, of the probable route of those for which the evidence is fragmentary and inconclusive. Sources are itemized in careful notes.

The detail required and the distances involved created problems that have been met by showing all the trails in one general map and the detail of each one in turn in larger scale sectional maps. Good as these are in themselves, they are frustrating to a reader who must be continually turning back and forth from one map, limited to a small, specific area, to others. It is to be hoped that the Minnesota Historical Society will put all the maps together in one big map that will combine detail with a comprehensive overview of the whole complex of trails, so that it will

be possible to compare alternative routes throughout the entire network. Such a map would be of great interest in itself and would be most helpful to all who use this book — and there is no doubt that many will use it, not merely reading it once but studying it and referring to it again and again. Tourists in the area will find that it greatly enriches their experience; travelers through the country will gain new interest in their journeys; local residents will see their present-day communities in enlightening historical perspective. Above all, scholars concerned with the identification of routes taken by early hunters, traders, missionaries, explorers, surveyors, journalists, military contingents, settlers, and other travelers will owe a debt of gratitude to Rhoda Gilman and her collaborators.

Acknowledging in her preface the contribution made by such earlier students of the trails as Alfred H. Hill, Gilman explains that a major difficulty was “the extremely scattered and fragmentary nature of the sources.” Happily, the authors did not allow the “length of many of the footnotes” to deter them from preserving, and making available to their readers, a complete record of their sources. This record is invaluable; the footnotes are neither too long nor too numerous. Indeed, more individual footnotes, instead of composite references which in some cases make it difficult to disentangle specific attributions, would have been helpful.

The range of the sources used is impressive, attesting to the richness of the Minnesota Historical Society collections as well as to the remarkable scope of the authors’ contacts and knowledge. Their enthusiastic work has given us not only a full and authoritative study of the precise routes of the Red River trails but also sheds new light on a number of important problems. These include the response of the Indian tribes to increasing traffic, the complementary relationship between river transport and overland routes, the changes resulting from stagecoach and wagon connections between the head of navigation on the Mississippi and on the Red River after steamboats began to ply its tortuous channel, and the impact of the progressively nearer approach of railroads. This book also adds to our knowledge of the economic development of St. Paul and the Red River colony, now Winnipeg, and the ultimate erosion of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s monopoly, which lost control of access to Rupert’s Land via Hudson Bay when regular and increasing travel developed between the Red River Settlement and St. Paul on the overland trails.

The subject matter of the book is the "ox cart routes," so it is concerned with summer travel. May we hope for a future companion study of the winter trails traveled by voyageurs on snowshoes with their dog trains? It would be interesting to know to what extent the cart trails, when they were covered with snow and ice, still served as links between St. Paul and the colony at the forks of the Assiniboine and Red rivers.

Reviewed by IRENE M. SPRY, *professor emeritus of economics at the University of Ottawa, Ontario, and editor of The Papers of the Palliser Expedition, 1857-1860, published in 1968 by the Champlain Society. She became interested in the Red River trails while working with noted Canadian fur-trade scholar and author Harold A. Innis.*

Louis "David" Riel: "Prophet of the New World." By Thomas Flanagan.

(Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1979. 216 p. \$15.00.)

EVIDENCE of our Western civilization's uneasiness with mystical leaders is nowhere more clear-cut than in Canada's reaction to the métis leader, Louis Riel, in the 1880s and history's treatment of him ever since. Scholars who have taken on the role of Riel apologists have studiously downplayed his religious views, for fear that a straightforward account of them would bring down on Riel renewed accusations of insanity. Those who wished to attack the insurgent leader had only to bring out some of the wilder accounts of his actions during 1885 to conjure up the picture of a psychotic cultist driving his innocent followers to rebellion and death. So the historians have treated him. The Canadians of his own time were more straightforward. Unable to decide whether he was sane or insane, they simply hung him and hoped that was that.

But that was not the end of Louis Riel. In fact, he emerges stronger than ever from Thomas Flanagan's new biography, *Louis "David" Riel: "Prophet of the New World"*. This book sets the stage for a wholesale reinterpretation of Riel's life and thought. It does Riel the immense favor of describing his religious concepts clearly, seriously, and without prejudice or preconception. There is more to describe than previous biographies would have one think. Starting with Riel's early education in Montreal (about which some interesting new information is introduced) and tracing him through his exile after Manitoba's struggle for independence, the years in insane asylums at Longue Pointe and Beauport, both in Quebec, and life with the métis in Montana, Flanagan shows how Riel evolved a millenarian philosophy which came to flower during the years of his final rebellion in Saskatchewan. The book reveals how these highly individual concepts grew out of a series of visions Riel experienced in 1875, yet also sets them against their proper background of the reactionary Catholicism of the time.

What emerges is a portrait of Riel as he saw himself — a prophet in direct communication with God, sometimes incognito and sometimes revealed, yet always waiting for the final

miracle that would vindicate him in the sight of all mankind. A crushing sense of responsibility seems to have dogged him. He was entrusted with a mission to regenerate mankind, yet could never be certain whether the inception of this program was to be left to his initiative or God's. His most heartfelt attempt to set the mission going in 1875 catapulted him into an insane asylum. In 1885 again he concluded that God's plan to transform the world would begin with a miraculous military victory of the métis against the Canadian army. In the aftermath of God's failure to produce the needed miracle, Riel alternated between deep remorse at his mistaken timing and hope that the true miracle was just around the corner. He went to the gallows expecting to be resurrected on the third day.

All this seems much less odd today than it would have ten years ago. Our modifying views toward visions, trances, and other paranormal phenomena has put the sane-versus-insane question on more shaky footing. Similarly, a knowledge of anthropology will tell us that Riel's experiences were by no means unique, and in some cultures they would have earned him a favored status as the shaman or prophet he claimed to be. But Christian shamans, though not hard to find in the sixteenth century, were a dying breed by the nineteenth. If Riel had lived 300 years earlier, he might have earned an accepted place in the religions (or heresies) of the day. As it was, he was beyond nineteenth-century definitions of reality.

Flanagan is to be praised for tracking down Riel's trains of thought through a wilderness of confused reports, obscure references, and arcane numerology. He is even more to be praised for his objectivity. It is to be hoped that this attractive little book will prove the basis for numerous revisions of thought about Riel.

Reviewed by CAROLYN GILMAN, *an exhibits researcher in the Minnesota Historical Society's education division. A student of Riel, she is co-author, with Deborah Stultz and Rhoda R. Gilman, of The Red River Trails: Oxcart Routes Between St. Paul and the Selkirk Settlement, 1820-1870, published by the MHS Press and reviewed in this issue.*

Minnesota Farmer-Laborism: The Third-Party Alternative. By Millard L. Gieske.

(Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1979. 389 p. Illustrations. \$15.00.)

THIRD-PARTY movements have been neither unusual nor very successful in the United States. Despite initial optimism, most have been torn by factional struggle and weakened by the absence of party structures in other states or on the national level. Born of disillusionment with the old parties, nearly all third parties have died without realizing their expectations. In the end, they are recognized as having served as a catalyst for significant change within the two-party system.

What is true of third parties in general was true of the Farmer-Labor party of Minnesota in particular. From its origins during World War I to its merger with the Democrats in 1944, the Farmer-Labor party provided Minnesota Republicans with most of their opposition and finally impelled Repub-

licans to change. For brief periods in the 1930s the party appeared to dominate politics in the state. In *Minnesota Farmer-Laborism, The Third-Party Alternative*, Millard Gieske, who now teaches at the University of Minnesota at Morris, meticulously traces the history of Minnesota's experiment with a third party.

The work is a product of careful research. Manuscript collections in the Minnesota Historical Society have been used extensively, as has the Minnesota press. Gieske pays particular attention to the origins of the party, the evolution of its several organizational structures, and the attempts to build on Farmer-Labor success in Minnesota by developing a viable national third party on the left.

Despite these obvious strengths, though, Gieske's work is not without several faults. In both style and organization it is repetitious. For example, Henrik Shipstead time and again is characterized as cautious, moderate, and independent. Frequently Gieske notes that he was not a radical and that he sat on the Republican side of the aisle in the Senate. Other examples abound. The analysis of all primary and general election results is organizationally repetitive. Nearly every chapter includes a detailed account of at least one biennial election. More space devoted to character sketches of key Farmer-Laborites and to their political views and less given to election results would have enhanced understanding and readability.

Despite these faults, this is solid political history. Shipstead's nonpartisan approach to politics was a constant irritant to the party, an irritant compounded because of his consistent ability to win and win handily. Nor did it lessen the irritation when the party's premier politician of the 1930s, Governor Floyd B. Olson, essentially exploited similar political tactics. To the party's idealistic leftists it was unthinkable that the "co-operative commonwealth" could be built by appeals to independents and moderate Republicans.

Much of what Gieske has written will be familiar to those acquainted with George Mayer's biography of Olson and Arthur Naftalin's unpublished history of the Farmer-Labor party. Yet, there is much that is new. Gieske carefully documents that the disastrous defeats incurred in 1924 and 1938 were in large measure attributable to in-fighting over the issue of communists within the organization. Before Republicans adopted red-baiting as a campaign tactic, Farmer-Laborites had shown the way.

Governor Olson, portrayed as a developing radical by Mayer, is here viewed as an extraordinarily talented politician who in the context of the emerging welfare state was not radical at all. The character of Governor Elmer A. Benson is presented more judiciously than is often the case. Ordinarily, either Benson's inclination to social justice or his political ineptitude are stressed. Here, Benson is depicted not just as an intransigent reformer but also as a practical politician who moderated his campaign in 1938 in the hope of retaining office.

Benson's moderation was not enough to save the party in 1938. The rift between the Farmer-Labor right and left went too deep, compounded as it was by the political ambitions of Benson and Hjalmar Petersen. A youthful Harold E. Stassen seized the opportunity and realigned Minnesota politics, steering a middle course between the visionaries in the Farmer-Labor party and the Republican old guard. For six years more the party lingered on, continually torn by factionalism and edg-

ing ever closer to merger. When merger came, it was ironic, Gieske notes, that it was consummated by the Farmer-Labor left. The left had opposed merger traditionally and moved toward it largely because of the Soviet Union's dissolution of the Comintern in 1943.

Before relinquishing its independent existence, the Farmer-Labor party had fulfilled one of the functions of the third party. It helped produce the environment out of which a moderate Republican party in Minnesota emerged. It is not this accomplishment, however, that Gieske finds most worthwhile in assessing the historical importance of the party. Rather, Gieske states, it was the party's ability to preserve Minnesota's "tradition of effective leadership" during years of economic stagnation. For that, both the party and Minnesota owed a debt to Floyd B. Olson.

Reviewed by GEORGE W. GARLID, *professor of history at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls.*

The Other Minneapolis or the Rise and Fall of the Gateway, the Old Minneapolis Skid Row. By David L. Rosheim

(Maquoketa, Iowa, Andromeda Press, 1978. Illustrations. 237 p. Paper \$6.95)

THE OLD GATEWAY district in Minneapolis was *the* city in the 1870s and 1880s. As the city's center moved south, it metamorphosed into Skid Row, a general shape it retained for years. When urban renewal swept through in the 1950s, Skid Row disappeared. Its inhabitants were scattered and its buildings, of varying degrees of respectability, solidity, and architectural excellence, were brought down, to be replaced by parking lots and an occasional outstanding building.

This is the story told with enthusiasm, humor, compassion, color, sadness, and, in the end, anger, by David L. Rosheim, in *The Other Minneapolis*. Rosheim begins at the beginning with obligatory nods to early travelers Nicollet, Long *et al.*, and first settler John H. Stevens, who owned much of the area at one time. But for the most part his book is filled with the lost and forgotten: pensioners, the unemployed, transients, prostitutes, barkeepers, migratory workers, hotel owners, radicals, policemen, bootleggers, and an occasional mayor, chief of police, and reformer.

Rosheim has painted his mural with both broad sweeps — wars, depressions, political repression, prohibition, repeal — and vivid, day-by-day detail. He provides a description of an 1880s "blind pig" underneath the street near Nicollet at Washington, about where the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis now stands. He tells of the Skid Row inhabitant who in the 1920s was carefully cultivating a marijuana plant around the Memorial flagpole (shades of Steinbeck) until someone tipped off authorities. Levi Stewart clung to his plot of land and the little cottage that sat on it at Fourth and Hennepin (no land speculator, he!), by then in the shadow of such structures as the Kasota Building. For a short time, the old Gateway Building was headquarters for a radical literary publication, *Midwest*, which featured writers such as Meridel Le Sueur, Ruth Suck-

ow, Kenneth Rexroth, and Frank Lloyd Wright. He repeats a funny account of the trials and tribulations encountered by a census taker in the area in 1940.

The Gateway district never was the exclusive province of the derelict and the drunk, as Rosheim sometimes makes clear. Many of the people who lived there were retired, simply looking for the best bargain in housing, food, and clothing. In 1958, when urban renewal studies proliferated, one revealed that of the some 3,000 inhabitants, over 28 per cent were nondrinkers and another one-third were moderate drinkers.

In addition, there were the nonresidents who came into the area, particularly on weekends, looking for entertainment in the bars, strip joints, and various other Gateway recreational spots. Again, according to one study, 65 per cent of the patrons in saloons on Washington Avenue on weekends were from outside the area.

Periodic attempts at cleaning up vice and prostitution were made almost from the moment that the Gateway district began to skid. The "final solution" was reached in the 1950s when building after building came down in great clouds of dust and debris. Rosheim calls the roll of some of the buildings, a motley parade led by the Metropolitan Building, whose demise is still mourned by many. In its company were the Gayety Theater, the original Schiek's, the old Court Bar, the Covered Wagon, Oudal's Books, Nate's Clothing, the Minnesotan Hotel, and, since this book was published, the Great Northern Union Depot. Everything went. "The destruction need not have been so complete," says Rosheim. He takes a few well-aimed swipes at the philosophy of tearing down buildings to revive men's (and women's) souls: "Just because the two great American middle class achievements of this century, prohibition and urban renewal, did not eliminate drunks and paupers is no reason to become vindictive." And he quotes Jane Jacobs, author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1961): "To approach a city, or even a city neighborhood, as if it were a large architectural problem, capable of being given order by converting it into a disciplined work of art, is to make the mistake of attempting to substitute art for life." Ambitious plans for urban renewal have only recently begun to be implemented more fully. One has the impression that the good old, "out of sight, out of mind," mentality was at work, as well.

Rosheim has done a great service in writing this book. He has delved into early histories and, most importantly, old newspapers, and uncovered news accounts, anecdotes, legends, stories, poems, and songs. He has talked to former inhabitants of Skid Row. He has turned up some fine old photographs which are reproduced in the book. He has reminded us for a moment of the life that teemed so anarchistically in the Gateway.

But the book has its flaws. Perhaps most serious was the sense of something missing that kept eluding me until nearly the end of the book: the author lacks firsthand knowledge of Skid Row. Rosheim visited the city for a week in 1957, and the Gateway made an indelible impression on him. He did not see it again until 1966. That helps explain his failure to describe the "slave market," for example, that line of men stretching across the Hennepin Avenue bridge in the mornings, waiting for a few hours' of day labor. Or, perhaps the most serious omission of all, the remark that has since entered the city's folklore, made by a chief of police in the early 1960s after yet another clean-up

campaign: "You could shoot a cannonball down Hennepin Avenue and not hit a whore."

The book would have been helped by an index. It could also have used a good editor. The misspellings and inconsistencies are occasionally disconcerting, as is the erratic word division. Also, his explanation of the etymology of the term Skid Row (which does not appear until page 56) seems off the mark. He says it derives from the words, "skid road," a technique used to slide logs; when that method was supplanted by a faster method, the older loggers who could not keep up were displaced, forced to retire, and headed toward cheap environments. More likely it derives instead from the analogy between men and logs, skidding inexorably downward.

Virginia L. Martin, is a former editor in the publications and research division of the Minnesota Historical Society, an ex-Minneapolis who now lives in St. Paul, and a subscriber to the Emerson axiom that "There is properly no history: only biography." This book, she thinks, helps redress the balance in favor of the nonmovers and nonshakers in our history.

***Hanta Yo: An American Saga.* By Ruth Beebe Hill.**

(Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1979. 834 p. \$14.95.)

AS A. B. GUTHRIE has noted, writers of historical fiction assume certain responsibilities over and above those faced by authors who deal with contemporary life. The reader demands not only historical authenticity itself but also the *flavor* of authenticity. Novelists incur further risks if they treat alien cultures, in that they must make their characters credible human beings and yet portray them as products of their own time and place. The greatest hazards of all are run by authors who choose a society that is in a period of rapid change.

Ruth Beebe Hill has run all these risks in *Hanta Yo* and has done a surprisingly good job despite her self-imposed handicaps. Her subject is Teton Sioux society from 1794 to 1835. At the beginning of this time span the move from the woodlands onto the Great Plains is still recent history, and during much of the novel the Sioux are still learning to adapt themselves and their culture to a radically different environment. Since most ethnographic studies that Hill might have used are of cultures perceived, for convenience, as essentially static, she must depend heavily on imagination for her picture of how individuals respond to cultural change.

The central character in *Hanta Yo* is Ahbleza, son of a tribal leader, who succeeds to his father's position despite some peculiarities that render him suspect to many of his people. We follow him from childhood to death and come to know him well, together with nearly all the people around him — his relatives, his friends, his enemies, even a couple of white traders whose paths cross his. If he remains a somewhat hazy figure, it may be that the author has endowed him with a degree of saintliness and intellectuality that fails to correspond to our stereotype of a Plains Indian warrior.

To the extent that the novel has a plot, it is the story of Ahbleza's effort to discover who he is. (In an interview, however, Hill said, "The Indian never strives to find himself.") In this lifelong search for his identity, he has a compan-

ion, Tonweya, his "brother-friend" and his companion on the vision quest that he undertakes in his youth. Different from Ahbleza, less complex, Tonweya is perhaps a more fully realized character. The lives of these two are acted out against a background of Teton society in a state of flux. Almost as soon as these people have accommodated themselves to the Plains environment, they face a greater challenge, the onset of white civilization. Through most of the novel the Mahto band, which Ahbleza leads, remains untouched by white influence. Near the end, however, a harbinger of the future appears in a horrific picture of what happens when unsophisticated Indians get their first massive dose of whisky.

So *Hanta Yo* is really the story of a society on the verge of disintegration, though the collapse does not occur in the course of the novel, and the people are quite unaware of its approach. It is not a primitivistic idyll, however; the world of the Mahto is no paradise. It contains ambitious, unscrupulous men who use every device to gain power — and succeed. Hill makes no attempt to down-play the cruelties of savage life, particularly those associated with warfare. Significantly, Ahbleza renounces war, just as he backs off at the last minute from the self-torture features of the sun dance.

Any book of more than 800 pages, twenty-five years in the making, necessarily commands respect on those grounds alone. But sheer bulk is no virtue in itself. The length of time it takes to read *Hanta Yo* provides opportunities to lose the thread of the narrative and to forget the relationships among the fifty or more major characters, some of whom have as many as three names during their lives.

The book's dust jacket refers to it as a "linguistic tour de force," written in modern English, then translated into a "now-archaic Dakota-Lakota dialect," and finally retranslated into an English based on an 1806 grammar. Whatever the purpose of this monumental effort, the result is a quaint, often cumbersome style at odds with any recognized English idiom. When we first read of a character that "he not yet knew" something or other, we pass it by. But when the same awkward construction crops up again and again, it grows tiresome. The language of *Hanta Yo*, clearly intended as one of its greatest triumphs, will strike many readers as its most serious fault.

An impressive performance, *Hanta Yo* is nonetheless seriously flawed. Perhaps the task the author set herself is impossible of achievement. In any event, the novel's measure of success could probably have been attained in shorter compass and without the linguistic experimentation. The author's research into Teton customs and traditions is evident on every page — perhaps too evident for a work of fiction. As with so many other books, the claims made for *Hanta Yo* on the dust jacket ("a major achievement in the exploration of American Indian culture . . . a hauntingly beautiful, powerfully dramatic narrative") are not fully realized in the text. Hence many readers are likely to be disappointed by a novel that without such puffery might create a stronger impression.

Reviewed by ROY W. MEYER, professor of English at Mankato State University. Readers of Minnesota History are familiar with his numerous articles and book reviews and with his book, *History of the Santee Sioux: United States Indian Policy on Trial*.

The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934-1968. By Donald R. McCoy.

(Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1978. 437 p. Illustrations. \$19.00.)

SOLON J. BUCK, second archivist of the United States, once likened the federal records situation to keeping a pet elephant: "its bulk cannot be ignored, its upkeep is terrific, and, although it can be utilized, uncontrolled it is potentially a menace." This was in 1943, nine years after the establishment of the National Archives.

At the outset the archives was an independent agency with responsibility only for the permanently valuable records of the nation — the cream of the crop. In laying the cornerstone for the National Archives building in Washington, D.C., in 1933, President Herbert Hoover said: "The romance of our history will have living habitation here in the writings of statesmen, soldiers, and all the others, both men and women, who have builded the great structure of our national life." The National Archives, indeed, has served as such a "temple of history." But in 1949, in a government reorganization, it became part of a new agency, the General Services Administration (mainly responsible for government buildings and supplies) and acquired a new title: National Archives and Records Service (NARS). "Records Service" reflected a new responsibility for managing the records of the federal government through their life cycle from creation to destruction or to preservation in the archives. Thus the National Archives acquired the elephantine problem to which Buck had alluded. In the years from 1934 to 1949, two new professions took hold in America. The first was the archival profession, not unique to America but quickly becoming in this country distinctly different than it was in the European countries where it had been practiced for centuries. The second, records management, was an American invention growing out of necessity: World War II had caused an astounding paper explosion accompanied by peculiar wartime need for access to, and management of, information.

Donald R. McCoy, university distinguished professor of history at the University of Kansas, has written a careful and readable history of NARS. He is well qualified, having been an archivist at the National Archives in the 1950s, having been associated with the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library (an adjunct of NARS), and having extensively used primary sources housed in archives and manuscripts repositories across the country. Timing of publication is interesting: it coincides with a newly revived debate about the appropriate organizational placement and autonomy of NARS and with visibility stemming from a disaster — the loss of millions of feet of irreplaceable movie film in a fire in a NARS facility. More public attention to the institution has resulted from subsequent criticism appearing in the press (and in Congress) of the archives program and exposé of scandal in GSA, the parent agency.

The autonomy question is not new. It was the genesis of a similar book, *The Records of a Nation: Their Management, Preservation and Use*, written in 1969 by H. G. Jones, then president of the Society of American Archivists. Jones's book, an eloquent plea for restoration of the National Archives to independent status, was the outgrowth of a study he did for the Joint Committee [of the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the SAA] on the

Status of the National Archives. Jones and McCoy cover much of the same ground, albeit with different emphases. McCoy lacks an official charge and the imprimatur of the major professional associations, but he, too, concludes that:

It is essential from the standpoints of archival thought, public administration theory, and historical analysis that NARS be protected from the arbitrary interference of either well-meaning or predatory bureaucrats and politicians on professional archival matters. With appropriate statutory protection, NARS is now a large enough and sufficiently visible entity with enough of a clientele to be able to stand on its own as an agency of government. Only thus can it best carry out its mission of professionally ministering to the creation, management, preservation or disposal, and research use of federal records.

The National Archives, despite its redundancy in some areas, still is a valuable contribution. McCoy has given us a much more detailed history of the first three or four decades than Jones. (Jones, however, is more enlightening about the nation's records and attention, or inattention, to their care prior to 1934.) McCoy appears to be objective and fairly frank about the politics and personalities that influenced the development of the institution. It is the latter point, the description of both halos and warts, that makes the book especially enjoyable.

Minnesotans will find in the work several familiar names. Two of the first four archivists — Buck (no. 2) and Robert H. Bahmer (no. 4) are among them. (Buck was superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society from 1914 to 1931. Bahmer is a graduate of the University of Minnesota.) Other Minnesotans prominent in the story are archivists Oliver Wendell Holmes and the late Herman Kahn. Too, Theodore C. Blegen, Buck's successor as superintendent of MHS, was proposed (unsuccessfully) as his successor as chief archivist.

Nevertheless, the story of the National Archives is not the stuff of which high drama is made. Even for the archivist, who will know much of this story firsthand (or at least secondhand), and who may have known many of the central characters, the descriptions of reorganization after reorganization, or the regular recitations of figures to detail growth (or occasional reduction) of the archives' holdings, staff, and budget, become tedious. The book's strangely European title (informative but dull) and its dreary cover will not do much to lure any but the most closely involved or dedicated to read it. It should be required reading, though, for archivists, records managers, researchers, administrators, and elected officials. It should be part of any archives training program, serving as a historical introduction and a thoughtful summary of the challenges ahead for the profession.

The role of the National Archives in setting the course of modern archives throughout the world cannot be overestimated. The large questions are dramatic. What records shall we save from the mass? After all, these choices will determine the histories that can be written. How can we save the information we have in media (that is, paper, film) that is impermanent? How can we capture data that flow through computers? How can we reconcile personal privacy with our need to study our past and to oversee the workings of the government? Ah, well, archivists can dream! If the general public and elected officials read this book and heed its message, it could be the

beginning of a new era — an era when archives and records management programs are more valued and more adequately supported. This is vital if we are simultaneously to preserve the rich and essential records of our national experience and yet prevent ourselves from being totally immobilized by paper.

Reviewed by SUE E. HOLBERT, who recently succeeded Lucile M. Kane as state archivist of Minnesota.

***Growing Up in Iowa: Reminiscences of 14 Iowa Authors.* Edited by Clarence A. Andrews.**

(Ames, Iowa State University Press, 1978. viii, 155 p. Illustrations. \$8.95.)

THE WINDS of nostalgia sweeping the country in the 1970s have brought forth a rich harvest of "growing up in" anthologies from various states. One such book, for Minnesota, edited by Chester G. Anderson, appeared three years ago. The most recent addition is this slender volume, *Growing Up in Iowa*, edited by Clarence A. Andrews. Fourteen literary flashbacks are included, beginning with Hamlin Garland's nighttime ride in 1875 to fetch a doctor for his ailing father to Robert Boston's transatlantic return from Germany to Webster City, Iowa, in 1955.

Joining them are Frank Luther Mott's account of a small town newspaper, James Hearst's description of central Iowa farm life, James Stevens' portrayal of a southern Iowa coal-mining community, Phil Stong's story of first school days in a small southeast Iowa town, Frederick Manfred's poetic interpretation of rural life in the far northwestern corner of the state, and Paul Engle's reminiscence of a newsboy's Christmas in Cedar Rapids.

Others are Paul Corey's tale of a wolf hunt in the far southwestern corner of Iowa, Richard Bissell's amusing account of his lifelong love of boating on the Mississippi, Clarence Andrews' memory of the movies in the 1930s in Cedar Rapids, Julie McDonald's portrait of farm and small-town life in a western Iowa Danish settlement, Richard Lloyd-Jones's reminiscence of childhood in Mason City, and Winifred Mayne Van Etten's overview of her life in Iowa from World War I to the present.

The book amply demonstrates that Iowa possesses a distinguished literary tradition and is more than a state of "pigs and poets," as described by Paul Engle. The reader will not be disappointed by this broad and deep mix of graceful literary interpretations in prose and poetry. Andrews' biographical sketches of each author are permed with humor and affection. What the volume lacks is a common thread along which to string an anthology. Iowans will readily relate to the book, but the outsider is disoriented without some background about the state. The accounts vary from single incidents to Van Etten's philosophical view of "growing up" in Iowa as a lifelong adventure. It would have benefited from an introductory essay like the one written by Chester G. Anderson in the Minnesota volume which gives an interpretation of the state, its tradition, ethnic composition, and geography. Notable omissions of major literary figures also mar the quality of what the book purports to do and be. MacKinlay Kantor, Ruth Suckow, and

James Norman Hall are examples. The editor acknowledges the first two. But there is no mention of Hall's autobiography, *My Island Home*, whose powerful interpretation about childhood in Colfax, Iowa, surpasses any of the selections in this anthology. Of Minnesota interest is the association of two of the writers with their state. Frederick Manfred has spent most of his writing career in Minnesota, and Phil Stong briefly taught school in Biwabik. A major typographical error appears on page viii. Robert Boone should read Robert Boston.

Reviewed by RUSSELL W. FRIDLEY, director of the Minnesota Historical Society, who was born in Iowa, grew up in the state, and was educated there.

Perspectives on Swedish Immigration: Proceedings of the International Conference on the Swedish Heritage in the Upper Midwest, April 1-3, 1976, University of Duluth. Edited by Nils Hasselmo.

(Chicago, Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, and Duluth, University of Minnesota, 1978. 349 p. \$15.00.)

IN HIS editor's preface, Professor Nils Hasselmo comments that "this volume can be regarded as a status and progress report on research in the fields of Swedish emigration and Swedish-American immigration studies." The claim is well-founded. Originally presented as papers at the International Conference on the Swedish Heritage in the Upper Midwest held at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, the articles comprising the book cover such basic aspects of the emigration-immigration story as motives for emigration from Sweden, the formation of ethnic Swedish communities in the United States, Swedish-American cultural activity (religious, social, political, and journalistic), and available resources for further research.

The panel of twenty-one participating scholars is a talented group. Seven are Swedes, all of them contributors to the impressive output of Swedish emigration-immigration studies in recent years (Sune Akerman, Ulf Beijbom, Sten Carlsson, Ann-Sofie Källemark, Lars Ljungmark, Hans Norman, and Lars-Göran Tedebrand). The others are Americans, four of

them historians (Franklin D. Scott, H. Arnold Barton, Bruce Larson, and Byron Nordstrom); one an archivist (Joel Lundeen); two are geographers (Matti Kaups and John G. Rice); one a journalist (Janet Nyberg); and three are in literature and/or language and linguistics (Nils Hasselmo, Göran Stockenström, and Alan Swanson). The remaining three are not easy to classify. Roger McKnight holds an advanced degree in Scandinavian and teaches Scandinavian studies. Nils William Olsson has published several notable works in Swedish-American history but has committed his career primarily to journalism and the foreign service. Wesley Westerberg is a onetime college president (and, like Olsson, a former director of the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis) who has played a leading role in Swedish cultural affairs.

From a methodological standpoint, the most interesting feature of the volume is the prominence of the "computerized" approach to historical truth. In his summation essay, Professor Scott remarks that "probably at no previous conference on Swedish immigration has such a large proportion of the contributions been based on quantitative measurements." To Scott, this methodology has "an unchallenged value." Researchers employing it "have asked significant questions of the evidence and have come up with valuable answers — or at least interesting hypotheses." Sometimes "these statistics-based studies merely confirm previously held opinions," but "they also help to put to rest old arguments and . . . bring in fresh insights."

The point is well taken. So is Scott's defense of what he calls "subjective treatment" of the historical past, a methodology "that can deal with matters of emotion and philosophy" and those dimensions of human experience which "no one has yet been able to put into a sexless computer." The location, collection, and computerization of all available statistical data relating to the emigration-immigration story will add a great deal to our knowledge but will not produce a final "definitive" interpretation of all aspects of this dramatic human process. One may therefore hope that both methodologies — the so-called traditional and the quantitative — will continue to play complementary roles in emigration-immigration studies as well as the general area of historical investigation.

Reviewed by CARL H. CHRISLOCK, professor of history at Augsburg College.

news & notes

R. NEWELL SEARLE is the winner of the second Forest History Society Book Award for his *Saving Quetico-Superior: A Land Set Apart*, published in 1977 by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. The award, which includes a cash prize of \$500, was announced October 27 at the society's annual meeting in Santa Cruz, California, where the nonprofit educational institution is headquartered. An independent panel of three judges —

Harold T. Pinkett, Charles S. Peterson, and Charles E. Twining — selected Searle's book over nine others as the best work in North American forest and conservation history to appear in 1977 and 1978. Searle, now assistant director of the Minnesota Humanities Commission, shows, among other things, how the history of the vast canoe country of northern Minnesota and western Ontario provides an illuminating case study of the

wilderness preservation movements in the United States and Canada. He chronicles and interprets the conflicting aspirations regarding the proper use of the unsurpassed wilderness area.

CENTRAL MINNESOTA briefly had a thriving tobacco industry that has virtually disappeared in the last fifty years. The industry is described by Ingolf Vegeler of the University of Wisconsin at

Eau Claire and Thomas Dockendorff of St. Cloud State University in an article entitled "Relic Tobacco Shed Region," published in the December 1, 1978, issue of *Pioneer America: The Journal of Historic American Material Culture*.

The eight-page article, which includes maps and tables, briefly outlines the dimensions, location, and demise of the industry. Stearns County was the state's greatest producer of tobacco, and what remains of the industry is still centered in the region south of St. Cloud near St. Nicholas and in Eden Valley and Watkins in Meeker County. Cigar factories were established in several towns, including St. Cloud and Foley, soon after tobacco was introduced in the state. Tobacco sheds, both used and unused, may still be seen in some places.

HOUSE HISTORIANS and restorers will be interested in two new paperbacks, one a source book, the other a description of the renovation of old neighborhoods in many American cities, including St. Paul.

Barbara Bezat and Alan K. Lathrop of the University of Minnesota Northwest Architectural Archives have compiled a handsomely designed, dozen-page pamphlet, *Drafting A House History* (Minneapolis, 1979, \$1.50), that is a practical guide to where to go to get information. A brief introduction provides some useful advice and also notes that the guide can be used for buildings other than private residences and in regions of the United States other than the Twin Cities, since the kinds of records listed here are typical of those found elsewhere. The authors list them — plat maps, atlases, abstracts of titles, previous owners — as well as places for additional research along with addresses. They also give a reading list that ranges from city directories to *Common Ground*, a Twin Cities magazine.

The purpose of Richard Ernie Reed's book, *Return to the City: How to Restore Our Buildings and Ourselves in America's Historic Urban Neighborhoods* (Garden City, N.Y., 1979, \$8.95) is different from that of Bezat and Lathrop. In the St. Paul chapter, Reed has selected several houses and their restorers to illustrate the extensive renovation proceeding apace in the Historic Hill District and in Irvine Park. They are interesting vignettes, but they do not contain much practical advice or information. That may be just as well. In the chapter on the renovation in Chicago's Near North Side, there are such gross errors as a caption switch on a Louis Sul-

livan modern row house and a full-page photograph of an elaborate Catholic church, and such hard-to-miss typographical errors as "bizarrer transformation."

In the last half of the book, Reed focuses on neighborhoods rather than on single houses, as so many other books do. He discusses how to evaluate an area, present the findings and to whom, become politically active, and retain a healthy mix of people in a neighborhood. Reed, who is a former executive director of the Historic Hill District Preservation Program in St. Paul, believes that, as we restore our old neighborhoods, "we may also renew ourselves."

VIRGINIA MARTIN
and SALLY RUBINSTEIN

A CALL FOR PAPERS has been made for the fifteenth annual Northern Plains History Conference to be held October 23-25, 1980, at the Radisson Duluth Hotel in Duluth. Sessions will also be held at the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center. The University of Minnesota at Duluth will be host for the conference, with the St. Louis County Historical Society serving as co-host for some events. The conference welcomes proposals for papers in all fields of history. Titles and short summaries should be sent by the March 15, 1980, deadline to Neil T. Storch, Conference Chairman, Department of History, 269 A. B. Anderson Hall, University of Minnesota, Duluth, Minn. 55812.

Storch and fellow historian Roy Hoover at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, have announced an annual publication with a regional focus — *Upper Midwest History* — and invite scholars to submit manuscripts by January 15, 1981 (deadline for the first issue), on regional history, including historical geography, literary history, anthropology, archaeology, and archival and bibliographical topics. Communications should be sent to either Storch or Hoover at the address given above.

SIOUX INDIAN bands long have recorded time by appointing a "historian" to draw one pictograph of an important event on a buffalo or deer skin at the end of each winter season. These "winter counts" thus are historical calendars. In *The Big Missouri Winter Count* (Happy Camp, Calif., Naturegraph Publishers, 1979, 63 p., illustrations, cloth \$7.00, paper \$3.00), Roberta Carkeek Cheney tells the story of "one of the most extensive and best preserved of all these Indian calendars." Housed in the Sioux Indian Museum in Rapid City, S.D., it

"commemorates 131 years of events in the life of one division along the big Missouri, beginning in 1796 (by the white man's system of reckoning) and ending in 1926." Events included in the winter count are fifteen pertaining to deaths of chiefs and twenty-one to deaths of other individuals. Nine refer to battles with other tribes, five to family troubles resulting in deaths, and three to the scourge of smallpox. Eight entries are concerned with buffalo and ten relate to white men in various ways.

The author has written informative short essays on winter counts in general and the Big Missouri one in particular, as well as on winter count patterns, pictographs, and the Dakota (or Sioux) nation itself. Each year of the Big Missouri winter count is dealt with separately. A Sioux medicine man named Kills Two wrote down the interpretations, and artists Diane Slickers and Ralph Shane made special drawings from those on the original winter count, which also is reproduced.

MANY OF THE eulogies that poured from congressional colleagues and others and from the press following the death of the late Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota on January 13, 1978, have been conveniently assembled in one volume for the public record. It is *Memorial Services for Hubert H. Humphrey* (95 Congress, 2 session, Senate Document no. 95-105, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978, 561 p.).

The various tributes printed pertain particularly to the memorial services in the rotunda of the United States Capitol, January 15, 1978; the funeral services at House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, January 16; and proceedings in the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, January 19. The record also includes resolutions from several state legislatures and sundry newspaper and magazine articles and editorials from Minnesota and throughout the nation. There is also a very brief biography and a listing of highlights of Humphrey's legislative record.

THE SCIENTISTS who first investigated plant life in the previously unexplored Great Lakes country above Lake Erie are the subjects of Edward G. Voss's *Botanical Beachcombers and Explorers: Pioneers of the 19th Century in the Upper Great Lakes* (University of Michigan Herbarium, Collections, vol. 13 — Ann Arbor, 1978, 100 p., \$4.00). Familiar names such as Thomas Nuttall, Asa Gray, and Louis Agassiz figure prominently in the study, but there are

also biographical vignettes of many lesser-known botanists who contributed to knowledge of flora in the region. Familiar to Minnesota readers is the work of David B. Douglass on the Lewis Cass expedition of 1820; Douglass Houghton, scientific observer on Henry Schoolcraft's expeditions; Increase A. Lapham of Wisconsin; Thomas Say, botanist with Stephen Long in 1823; and Newton H. Winchell, Minnesota state geologist. Thomas Clark, one of the first landowners at Beaver Bay and assistant state geologist in 1864, published an annotated list of 100 plant species of north-eastern Minnesota from Pigeon Point to Duluth in 1865. Thomas S. Roberts, later renowned for his work on the birds of the state, published a list of 290 species in 1880. Warren Upham, better known for his work at the Minnesota Historical Society, compiled a catalog of state flora, including all vascular plants, in 1884. The botanizing of Henry David Thoreau who spent his last summer in Minnesota is described briefly. Voss has intentionally emphasized Michigan in this pleasant mixture of history and botany. The book is annotated and illustrated and contains a helpful bibliography and a name index.

MARY D. CANNON

STUDENTS AND FACULTY who want to escape "the sense of futile exercise that accompanies too much student research" should welcome James Hoopes' *Oral History: An Introduction for Students* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1979, 155 p., hardbound, \$10.00, paper, \$5.00). This is a historian's persuasive endorsement of oral history. Hoopes builds a thoughtful, scholarly case for the interview tape and transcript as a primary source, a historical document that has as much or more validity than often-biased, or inaccurate, news reportage, minutes of meetings, diaries, and autobiographies. He repeatedly cautions his student readers, however, that interviews cannot be "thick" with information and meaning unless the interviewer begins with research on the culture, history, and society which have created and influenced the interviewee's personality, thoughts, and actions.

In his how-to chapters, he briefly and clearly explains how to interview, with particular emphasis on the way to write questions and to ask them. He also offers practical advice on arranging interviews,

preparing for them by doing background research and constructing question guides rather than questionnaires, conducting them while tape-recording and taking written notes, and analyzing and presenting the resulting data.

He also explains how to take the necessary legal and ethical steps to deposit the historical documents (interviews) the student has thus created in libraries, state and county historical societies, or other archives, for use by other scholars. If Hoopes has a shortcoming, it is that he fails to explore the ways in which actual quotations from the tapes become part of the written manuscript—a skill which should be taught in composition or freshman English classes, but usually is not. In all, though, this is a how-to manual of substance. In fact, it is much more, for it shows why oral history is an integral part of research in cultural and social history, and it may help college and high school faculty accomplish Hoopes' secondary goal of luring students back to history courses they too often consider dry and dull.

RHODA G. LEWIN

WOMEN'S HISTORY gets a big boost on a local scene with a booklet by Gretchen Beito called *Women of Thief River Falls at the Turn of the Century: A Study of Life in a Boom Town* (Pennington County Historical Society, 1977, 40 p., \$3.00, plus 50-cent mailing fee). Beito presents the demographics, occupations, community work, and leisure-time activities of some 682 female residents of the rapidly growing frontier town. Based largely on an analysis of the 1905 census, the study also makes good use of local histories, church records, newspapers, published reminiscences, and personal interviews. Direct quotes and good illustrations provide a sense of the community, and Beito's observations are illuminating. The booklet is available from the Pennington County Historical Society, Thief River Falls. ANN REGAN

THE SO-CALLED serial set of United States government documents is a treasure trove of information on all aspects of American and Minnesota life. In this ever-expanding collection of reports and documents submitted to Congress by the various branches of government to fulfill legislative mandates can be found valuable and often very specific information on Indian affairs, business and industry, transportation, domestic life, and other

subjects from 1789 to the present time. Despite the range of data available in the over 14,000 volumes of the set, access has been until now a real problem because of the lack of a good general index. Now, however, with the appearance of the Congressional Information Service's *CIS US Serial Set Index* this problem will be solved. In twelve parts (36 volumes in all), each covering a particular span of dates, the index, which was published between 1975 and 1979, will allow researchers to find what they are looking for with a minimum of effort. Although the cost of the index (over \$4,300) will allow few researchers to obtain their own copies, many libraries, including the MHS reference library, own the index. It should also be noted that the Congressional Information Service is also issuing a complete microfiche edition of the serial set for libraries that have gaps in their collections. BRUCE WHITE

CANOEISTS are not the only ones who will be intrigued by C.E.S. Franks' *The Canoe and White Water: From Essential to Sport* (University of Toronto Press, 1977, 237 p., paper \$7.95). The book is much more than merely a detailed technical manual on canoeing through rapids. Franks gives a perfect example of the usefulness of a historical perspective in approaching his subject. He believes that modern canoeists can learn a great deal from the experiences of the first users of canoes—the Indians and the fur traders. Therefore, Franks has studied the available records for references to the early techniques used in canoe making and canoe travel and applied them in useful ways for the modern sport canoeists.

The book will be especially interesting to historians because of its heavy use and analysis of quotations from narratives of fur traders and early travelers. Also included in the book are many early drawings, paintings, and photographs that illustrate the techniques the author describes. In particular, Franks refers frequently to the paintings of Frances Ann Hopkins (many of which are reproduced in the book), reaffirming the richness and accuracy of their portrayals of canoeing in the fur-trade era. Historians will also be interested in Franks' reconstruction of the diet of the average fur-trade voyageur, who, he says, consumed and expended in one day of travel the astounding total of 6,900 calories.

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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