

## BOOK REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

EDITED BY J. CUTLER ANDREWS  
Pennsylvania College for Women

*History of the Philadelphia National Bank, A Century and a Half of Philadelphia Banking, 1803-1953.* By Nicholas B. Wainwright. (Philadelphia: Privately printed, 1953. Pp. ix, 263. Illustrated. \$3.00.)

That institutions, like human beings, have lives, temperaments, failures, and successes is pleasantly demonstrated by Mr. Wainwright in his well-written book. Founded in 1803, the Philadelphia National Bank has, with only slight changes in the name, stood through a century and a half of Quaker City history. Its eleven presidents, in good days and bad, have managed to keep their house free not only of the shoals on which many others have wrecked but also, with very few exceptions, of personnel that could be tempted by the wealth that poured through their hands. Although a few of them had their uneasy hours in the course of a half-dozen wars and at least eight more or less major depressions, the doors have never swung to because of empty tills. Dividends have fluctuated with the economic ebb and flow of the nation; they have, however, always been relatively high, even in difficult times, and they were completely passed in only two years—1842 and 1843. But one would expect that, for through the board room of the bank flowed the bluest of financial blue blood and through its vaults the hardest of hard money. The initial capital stock was a million dollars, and on the account books through the years have been recorded the names of some of America's greatest and richest corporations and corporation officials. The institution has been a bulwark of strength in the business growth of the city, but related only indirectly to the people who have made up the sprawling metropolis.

Mr. Wainwright has deftly woven both local and national events into a background fabric for his story. He gives his readers quick glimpses of crowded wharves, of Conestoga wagons, of Solomon's Anti-Impetigenes, of fevers, of burdensome payments to the state and to state legislators for bank charters, of the immodest "Spirit of the Schuylkill" that commemorated the establishment of the city's pioneering water system, of wars and war financing, of Krueger and Insull, and of banks (twenty in the one month of October, 1931) in a great urban center crumbling one after another into ruin, carrying with them the money of rich and poor alike. He has, in fact, scanned a wide horizon in his two hundred and thirty-two pages, and it is worthy of note that throughout he keeps his subject well in the foreground.

Brevity is the greatest weakness of the study. There is room for little more than a general presentation, which leaves always many unanswered

questions. The primary purpose of the volume, published by the bank itself, is to present to "stockholders, depositors, and customers" a running history of the institution through its one hundred and fifty years. Many readers will probably not approve of all the ideas of the venerated presidents of the bank or with all the interpretations of the author, but all will agree that the *History of the Philadelphia National Bank* is an unusually substantial anniversary publication. President Potts and his associates are to be commended for turning to a trained historian to write their memorial.

Temple University

JAMES A. BARNES

*Valley of Democracy: The Frontier versus the Plantation in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1818.* By John D. Barnhart. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1953. Pp. x, 338. \$3.75.)

This well-conceived monograph is an examination of the pioneer history of the states in the Ohio Valley, undertaken as "a testing of the Turner interpretation by an application to a specific area and time." In general Professor Barnhart's work supports the Turner hypothesis. But it is far more than elaborate footnoting of "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." *Valley of Democracy* stands on its own feet as a contribution to our understanding of the forces operating in the trans-Appalachian west during the early national period and of the institutional, intellectual and social products of those forces.

Professor Barnhart sees the early history of the Ohio Valley as a struggle between the aristocratic planter ideals of the seaboard and the yeoman democracy that had already significantly modified political habits and philosophy in the eastern states during the revolutionary era. In the valley "the frontiersmen strove to achieve freedom from the states of the Atlantic coast, while manhood suffrage, equal representation according to numbers, and the right to seek elective office without meeting property qualifications. . . . These ideas constituted their conception of democracy. Whatever aided them in destroying the aristocracy inherited from colonial days, whatever helped them to increase the control of the majority, these changes were democratic advances."

In each of the new western communities some progress toward democracy was made. Peopled by pioneers from Pennsylvania and the upper seaboard South, Kentucky and Tennessee led in the attempt to break the hold of the parent states of Virginia and North Carolina on the vacant land and the administration of the west country. When the statehood movements in Kentucky and Tennessee succeeded in the 1790's, both the new commonwealths drew heavily on the democratic constitution of Pennsylvania in writing their own fundamental laws (chapter 5-8). In neither was emancipation from planter influences complete.

The states carved from the territory of the Old Northwest exemplified a more thorough-going formulation of the social order by frontiersmen. From the beginning of settlement conditions north of the Ohio were more

favorable to the assertion of democratic ideals. The area was part of the national domain rather than the property of any particular state. Fewer planters moved directly into the Northwest. The land system after 1800 afforded greater opportunities to impecunious land-seekers. During the territorial period the Northwest won democratic victories of significant proportions: extension of the franchise, repeal of acts that encouraged violation of the prohibition on slavery, and greater control over territorial government. When admitted as the states of Ohio (1802), Indiana (1816), and Illinois (1818), the Old Northwest had turned its back on the aristocratic ideal. Modelled in part on the Tennessee and Kentucky instruments that were in turn based on the fundamental law of Pennsylvania, liberal constitutions in the three states north of the river expressed frontier conceptions. In the author's words: "The achievement of separation from the South Atlantic states, the democratic action of the colonial system of the Northwest Ordinance, the establishment of majority rule in the new states, and the development of individualistic frontier democracy based upon faith in the common man are the notable accomplishments of the pioneers of the Ohio Valley."

To the literature of the trans-Appalachian west, Professor Barnhart's monograph is a welcome and substantial addition. Falling in the period just prior to Turner's *Rise of the New West*, it covers western developments over a larger area than those studied by Bond, Buley, and Abernathy. The critical apparatus—bibliographical notes and footnotes—is itself a contribution, both complete and accurate.

*Vanderbilt University*

AUBREY C. LAND

*The Great Wildcatter: The Story of Mike Benedum.* By Sam T. Mallison. (Charleston, West Virginia: Education Foundation of West Virginia, Inc., 1953. Pp. 528. Illustrated. \$6.00.)

"The Story of Mike Benedum" is professedly a labor of love, and "not an objective one." As such, it has the strength and the weaknesses characteristic of this genre. As the biography of one still living and now well into his eighties, it captures and conveys much of the sturdy quality of a man who rose from small beginnings in West Virginia to become for half a century a major figure in one of the more venturesome branches of the oil industry, the exploration and discovery of new fields. Its mellow and retrospective mood of material and social success derives to a considerable degree from the abundant use of oral reminiscences supplied by the subject himself and by his associates.

In this respect, the book departs from the traditional paths of scholarship, and is, indeed, offered to the reader as the first published example of the newly developed procedures for recording oral history. Credit is given to Allan Nevins, Director of the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University, and to his associate, Frank Ernest Hill, for their help and guidance. The merits of this method can, however, scarcely be judged by what is clearly an amateur rather than a professional performance. As employed

here, the new techniques of oral history leave much to be desired. The documentation appears to lean heavily, if not exclusively, upon this type of testimony; however accurate the record, it is still essentially recollection long after the event. There is a general reference to the available materials of the Benedum enterprises, but no bibliography to indicate the scope of the coverage or the extent of their use. Freely interspersed conversations help to swell the text to some 528 pages and lend a rambling and repetitious quality to the story. From West Virginia the career of Michael Late Benedum is traced to ever enlarging oil ventures in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, and Texas, then abroad to Mexico, Colombia, Rumania, and the Philippines, resulting for the most part in fantastic financial returns. Benedum's career is, moreover, closely interwoven with that of his principal associate, Joseph Trees, who becomes almost a second hero of the search for oil.

Only occasionally and incidentally is the procession to success interrupted for some random commentary upon the business methods of this almost model example of the entrepreneur in the great age of enterprise at the turn of the present century. There are frequent excursions into irrelevancy, as in the case of Benedum's German and Anglo-Norman ancestry, his adventures in the Philippines, and his accumulation of honorary degrees. Perhaps more appropriate to the theme of the self-made man are the extensive treatments of Benedum's political activities in war and depression, and his philanthropic interests, the latter following the familiar pattern of the modern foundation and the generous-spirited endowment of the boyhood home town church, among others.

One illuminating episode reveals Theodore Roosevelt as President in the characteristic role of forceful but helpful intervention between Benedum, the independent producer, and obstructionist and designing corporations. But rarely does the biographer penetrate below the surface of the entrepreneurial oil cycle of venture, risk, and discovery to the basic core of economic and technical conditions and methods of the industry, nor does he analyze systematically the complex and ambivalent relations between the wildcatter and the large corporate interests, such as the Standard Oil group, save for occasional references to Benedum's normally friendly but skillful dealings with them. The complete lack of an index and the inadequately revealing Table of Contents render this lengthy text a virtually inaccessible maze of names and events, which might otherwise be useful to the student of the American oil industry, as represented here by one of its most significant pioneer explorers during a half century of dynamic growth.

*Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*

SAMUEL REZNECK

*Franklin's Wit and Folly, The Bagatelles.* Edited by Richard E. Amacher. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953. Pp. xiv, 188. \$4.00.)

The world of letters has long waited for an analytical compendium of Franklin's Bagatelles. Our patience has been well rewarded: the goal of a

completed summary has been attained in the scholarly work of Dr. Amacher which lies before us.

It seems long ago that Carl Van Doren sat in the library of this reviewer at Reading, sipped his glass of Madeira, and elaborated upon his plan for the masterly biography of Franklin, later so successfully accomplished. During that same visit Carl expressed the hope that some student would one day produce a book or monograph devoted entirely to the Bagatelles. This aspiration has now met with a happy fulfillment. While perusing the Amacher book, we can share in Mark Van Doren's expression in the graceful preface which he has given us. "It is a joy to imagine the eagerness with which Carl would have turned over each of its pages."

It was Ambassador Jusserand who first called attention to the Addisonian style of the Bagatelles. This statement, however, cannot be made with too much certainty for as Pennsylvanians we would like to claim that honor for our own J. G. Rosengarten.

It is at once apparent to the reviewer, as it will be to the reader, that Dr. Amacher is competently and fittingly immersed in his subject. *The mise en scene* of eighteenth century Passy is so well presented that we almost suspect that the writer has daringly penetrated into the boudoirs of Mme. Helvetius "Notre dame d'Antenil" and Mme. Brillion and the others of the crinolined ladies for whom the Bagatelles were written.

Dr. Amacher's introduction, all too short, is equally happy in its sketches of Franklin's men friends at Passy, the Abbe Morellet who corrected Franklin's halting French, Veillard, the Sage's landlord, LeRay de Chaumont, and the other amiable celebrities who made up that charmed circle in the village by the Seine. So, altogether, we can truthfully state that the job has been well done and the Bagatelles presented in a way and with a classical format which would have pleased their distinguished author. Rather a pity that the interesting manuscript volume in the Mason Collection at Yale Library, the main source for any dissertation upon the Bagatelles, was not reproduced and shown to us, the title page at least, in this volume.

Reading, Pa.

J. BENNETT NOLAN

*A History of The York County Academy, York, Pennsylvania*, Issued Jointly by the Trustees of the York County Academy And as a Year Book of the Historical Society of York County for the Years 1942-1952. (York, Pennsylvania: The York County Academy, 1952. Pp. 270. No price.)

The York Academy was founded in 1787, before George Washington had been elected as the nation's first President, and continued its work of secondary education for a period of 161 years, until Harry S. Truman was in the White House. One of the first classical schools to be established west of the Susquehanna, for almost a century the Academy was the only institution in the county of any continued reputation offering schooling beyond that of the common grades. . . . During the first one hundred and forty years of the Academy's existence, *no student was graduated*. Students "went to the Academy" and learned to *think* as well as to memorize under the strict discipline of the masters.

The above sentences taken from the first chapter indicate, at least in part, the significance of this book.

The school's history epitomizes the story of hundreds of other private academies which served their constituencies despite continuous financial handicaps and sooner or later succumbed to the tax-supported public high school. Indeed York Academy had been in existence hardly more than a decade before it had to go to the public trough for financial aid because the Episcopal Church, its founder, could not support the school. In 1799, therefore, the legislature changed the charter from that of a church instrumentality to that of a semi-public institution which received \$2,000 of tax money from York County. In return it had to educate a maximum of seven poor children whose parents could not pay tuition.

The unequal fight for life continued until 1929 when a "Reciprocal Teaching Agreement" was made with York Collegiate Institute because "the York County Academy has been unable in late years to attract students." In 1948 both Academy and Institute closed their doors and became York Junior College. "The corporations of both schools, however, continue to exist; and whether the secondary school of either or both will some day be revived is a matter which only time can tell."

The one hundred and sixty-one years of the Academy's history are given in this volume. In general the task is well done. One could ask for several favors, however: first, that the English and typography had been improved in a number of places; second, that an author or editor had been placed on the title page for cataloguing and bibliographical purposes; and third, that those who put the work together had been able to decide among themselves in the interest of consistency whether the Academy was the first or the third classical school west of the Susquehanna. The Introduction says one thing; the end papers another.

*Susquehanna University*

WILLIAM A. RUSS, JR.

*Elias Boudinot: Patriot and Statesman, 1740-1821.* By George Adams Boyd. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952. Pp. xiii, 321. \$5.00.)

"My desire is to be usefull," wrote Elias Boudinot to his wife in 1778. George Adams Boyd's biography of Boudinot is an impressive account of how completely that wish was fulfilled in the life of an early American who hitherto has received little attention from historians. Boyd has rescued from obscurity and presented to us a figure well worth our attention.

Coming to manhood on the eve of the American Revolution, experiencing maturity during the early days of the Republic, and moving into old age when the slavery issue was beginning to take shape, Elias Boudinot enjoyed a varied, if not a brilliant, career. At different times he was squire-farmer, lawyer, land speculator, industrialist, politician, civil servant, and author. Like many others of Huguenot extraction, he served his country well in a variety of important posts. As commissary-general of prisoners during the

Revolution, one-time President of the Continental Congress, Representative from New Jersey in the first three Congresses, director of the United States Mint, trustee of the College of New Jersey (Princeton), and as the first president of the American Bible Society, to mention only some of the positions he held, Boudinot gained a solid reputation for ability and devotion.

Few will read Boyd's biography without coming to like, if not always admire, Elias Boudinot. He was a devoted husband, a thoughtful parent, a loyal friend. His essential humanitarianism led him to oppose slavery and to organize efforts for the better treatment of Jews and Indians. In religious concerns, he was a conservative and as such he thoroughly disapproved the use of organs in churches, the new Unitarian sect, and the ideas of Tom Paine against whom he took up literary cudgels. Yet Boudinot was not a religious bigot, for he was content to work with other denominations in the American Bible Society, and he hoped for increasing coöperation among all Christian groups. In politics, he was a staunch and active Federalist. So alarmed was Elias over the election of Jefferson in 1800 that he urged the defeated John Adams to assume the office of Chief Justice! It was his enthusiasm for the Federalist way of life that led him to provide Hamilton with heresay evidence for use in the famous epistolary war against Madison and to undertake to discredit a Republican Society in New Jersey by an unfair parliamentary maneuver.

On the whole, George Boyd has written a successful biography of Boudinot. The research has been extensive and careful. The bibliography, footnotes, and general mechanics are in the tradition of good craftsmanship. Every once in a while, however, the author interrupts the flow of his account to make comments such as "This is a world of relativity" (p. 78), or "But man proposes and God disposes" (p. 222), or "Boudinot should have been around after World War II!" (p. 202), which in a work of this type can be annoying. The only serious blunder this reviewer noticed in the book is the reference to the tenth amendment to the Constitution as an enshrinement of the principle of implied powers. Despite these few shortcomings, *Elias Boudinot* is a biography which not only presents an arresting account of its subject, but also increases knowledge and understanding of the Revolution and the early national period of American history.

*Carnegie Institute of Technology*

NORMAN H. DAWES

*Three Centuries of New Haven, 1638-1938.* By Rollin G. Osterweis. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953. Pp. xv, 541. \$6.00.)

In *Three Centuries of New Haven* Professor Rollin G. Osterweis has undertaken an enormous task. In a single volume he tries to cover the whole story of this Connecticut city, from its founding in the seventeenth century to its tercentennial celebration in 1938. His strokes are broad, sketching the economic, political and cultural experience of the townspeople and always relating it to the larger movements in the state and nation. The pace is fast, especially after 1800, but the author holds the city still for quick portraits

about every half century to give the reader a few fixed points from which to measure growth and development.

To compress the varied life of a city into less than five hundred pages is a difficult job, and it is not surprising that the product is somewhat uneven. The first part of this book, embracing the colonial period and the initial decades of independence, is the most successful. Here Professor Osterweis is most at home. He describes the founding of New Haven, the establishment of its institutions, its deep religious and educational impulses, and the community's contribution to the Revolution and the young republic.

In this section the author's research is more exhaustive, his insights keener, and his literary style more graceful than in the latter portion of the volume. In addition, there is a surer handling of urban problems. Working from municipal records, he traces the widening competence of local government, the extension of fire and police protection and the broadening of New Haven's economic base. Especially satisfying is the treatment of social stratification in this early period. Since the town was founded by commercial and religious interests, merchants and clergymen immediately appropriated the preferred places in urban society. Underneath them came several other groups. "The various strata possessed clearly defined rights and duties," the author observes, "and a man's position was readily recognizable by the clothes he wore." Hence old world distinctions were very quickly planted in the new world.

The latter half of the book, covering the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, does not maintain the same high standard. In many ways this is understandable. Source material for the modern period is staggering—newspapers become dailies, city records are more bulky, and municipal problems get extremely complex. Rather than piecing together scattered items, the historian now has to be rigorously selective. Tools appropriate for the study of a community of 5,000 are inadequate for an analysis of a metropolis of 150,000.

Unfortunately, Professor Osterweis does not get much beneath the surface in his treatment of New Haven after the Jacksonian epoch. Too much space is given to detailing the national backdrop, and not enough on the internal history of the city. Though some mention is made of immigrants, there is no investigation of their housing, employment problems, or adjustment to American life. The desire to keep the city beautiful gets comprehensive attention, but the corrosive forces which threatened the town's development and appearance do not. While he traces the movement of better homes away from the core, he says little of the tenements which grew in the areas left behind.

In short, the last portion of *Three Centuries of New Haven* is genteel history. The preservation of the trees—the campaign to "save the elms," the development of parks, the relation of town and gown, the coming of new enterprises, the names of prominent professional people, the services of New Haven's sons in war are all noted. Yet these things constitute only one dimension of the city's life. Another is to be found among its lower

classes, in its tenements, in its settlement houses, and, indeed, on its police dockets. This is a face of New Haven the author never draws. The omission gives the latter part of the book a shallow cast, leaving the reader with the feeling that another volume is still to come. Nothing could be more unfortunate because Professor Osterweis has performed a real service in giving us a rounded portrait of a young city getting started.

*University of Rochester*

RICHARD C. WADE

*Charles Brockden Brown, Pioneer Voice of America.* By David Lee Clark. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1952. Pp. xi, 363. \$6.00.)

It is the contention of David Lee Clark that Charles Brockden Brown's fame as America's first serious novelist and her first "professional man of letters" has unjustly overshadowed other aspects of his importance in American intellectual history. Mr. Clark in this critical biography has sought to present Brown not merely as a pioneer writer of fiction, but also as a social philosopher, a literary critic of high rank, and a political observer and historian "in the modern manner." In short, Mr. Clark says that he has attempted to present Brown "for the first time . . . in his full dimensions."

Mr. Clark has had access to a considerable body of unpublished material by Brown and has thus been able to include new biographical data. Notable are letters by the youthful Brown to a friend and fellow law student, W. W. Wilkins. These reveal how Brown's increasing dislike of what he thought were the intellectually narrowing effects of legal studies drove him to desert the law after six years of preparation. Mr. Clark quotes extensively from Brown's letters to his fiancée Elizabeth Linn. He devotes an entire chapter to extracts from a private journal containing correspondence with one "Henrietta G.," a beautiful and evidently intellectual Connecticut girl. Mr. Clark believes these journal letters to be the record of Brown's first serious love affair. Whether or not they are, the letters are interesting because they reveal Brown's youthful views on a variety of subjects, and, in their verbal extravagance, gives evidence of his being steeped, as a young man, in the conventions of the eighteenth-century novel of sentiment. Henrietta may well have been the model for some of Brown's later fictional heroines.

Mr. Clark's chapter on Brown as a novelist analyzes in detail his major pieces of fiction. To dismiss Brown as a Gothic romancer is, Mr. Clark believes, to be inaccurate. Along with his use of American settings, Brown sought to achieve his effects of mystery and terror not through haunted castles and threatening brigands, as did Horace Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe; instead, he used real, if unusual, phenomena such as ventriloquism, somnambulism, and yellow fever. Mr. Clark calls Brown a novelist with a purpose, which purpose he rather vaguely defines as "the dissemination of the radicalism then stirring the people of two continents." As such, Brown belongs with novelists like Thomas Holcroft, Robert Bage, and the more famous William Godwin.

Of particular interest to students of American history are the extensive excerpts from Brown's magazine essays. As editor first of a periodical in New York and later of one in Philadelphia, Brown was his own chief contributor. His literary reviews show his eagerness to see emerge a distinctively American literature. His political and historical articles demonstrate the importance he attached to primary sources and original documents. Interesting, too, are Mr. Clark's quotations from three political pamphlets in which Brown attacked policies of the Jefferson administration. Brown's last publishing venture before his untimely death in 1810 was *The American Register*, a semiannual publication "designed to be a repository of American history and politics." It is evidence of Brown's increasing preoccupation with historical writing.

Because of the new material by Brown which Mr. Clark has assembled and because he reprints much material from relatively inaccessible early periodicals, this biography should prove of value to students of American literary and cultural history. Two appendices, a selected bibliography, and two indexes, one entitled "General Index," the other, "Charles Brockden Brown," complete the work.

*Duquesne University*

ROBERT E. MITCHELL

*This Is New Jersey, from High Point to Cape May.* By John T. Cunningham. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953. Pp. xi, 229. \$5.00.)

The author of *This Is New Jersey*, a book that develops convincingly the thesis that diversity is the distinguishing characteristic of the state of New Jersey, has shown how journalistic enterprise can produce an enduring effect. Here, in attractive and permanent form, is made available to interested readers much useful information that otherwise would lie buried in the files of the *Newark News*, the newspaper in which was first published much of the material brought together in this book. Unhappily, however, the author gives support to trends in present-day American journalism that the reviewer believes to be deplorable. Not only is the writing in this book heavily charged with the spirit of promotion; it also is marred by the use of words that neurotically punch the jaw of the English idiom and by the use of sentences that ungraciously thumb their noses at the rules of English syntax.

Nevertheless, readers of every sort, whether they approve or disapprove of such literary gadgetry, will find in this book some things to delight them and more things to instruct them. In pleasing illustrations they will see some of the historic buildings and some of the historic places that have made New Jersey famous, as they also will see in equally pleasing illustrations many cities, industrial plants, and scenic places that make New Jersey today as important as it is beautiful. They will read in the text that accompanies these illustrations numerous interesting episodes of the history of New Jersey, and they will be brought up by many statements of fact with respect to industry, agriculture, geography, education, and recreation—state-

ments that may well cause them to marvel that a state as small as is New Jersey could play so significant a part in the life of the American people. Before they come to the end of the book, they will be sharing the author's enthusiasm for his native state.

As a proper means of emphasizing his theme of diversity, the author has divided his book into four parts, each of which deals with an area comprising four or more counties. Thus in the area called "hill country" there are six counties; in the area called "city belt," seven counties; in the area called "garden spot," four counties; and in the area called "Jersey Shore," four counties. Since each county is given separate treatment, the book is a convenient work of reference.

Despite everything that he says in praise of the other three areas, the author realizes that it is the "city belt" that makes New Jersey important today. In this area are concentrated people, industry, and wealth; through this area run the routes of travel that join New York and Philadelphia; and at each end of this area are the homes of thousands of people who live either in New York or in Philadelphia. As has been the case from the beginning, New Jersey today is heavily "tapped" at both ends; but in this fact lies the peculiar significance of the state. It is interesting to observe, however, that the author sees the probability of further significant economic development in those parts of New Jersey that lie outside the "city belt."

It is a pleasure to compliment the Rutgers University Press on having brought out a book as attractive as is this one.

*Bucknell University*

J. ORIN OLIPHANT

*The American Revolution, 1775-1783.* [Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris, eds., The New American Nation Series.] By John Richard Alden. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954. Pp. xviii, 294. Maps. \$3.75.)

Dr. Alden's book is one of the first volumes of the "New American Nation Series" to appear in print. It will replace Claude H. VanTyne's *The American Revolution, 1776-1783* which appeared in 1905 as one of the volumes of the original "American Nation" series. Professor VanTyne's book was undoubtedly the best one-volume history of the American Revolution available in its day; however, it is clear that Dr. Alden's book supersedes that of his distinguished predecessor completely. Dr. Alden is in position to know far more about the reasons for the British march on Lexington and Concord than VanTyne knew. Likewise, Dr. Alden has been able to give a more complete account of the campaigns of Sir William Howe and of General John Burgoyne than was given by VanTyne. The superiority of the 1954 over the 1905 book on the American Revolution is so decisive that one is tempted to inquire into the reasons why the recent work is so much better than its predecessor of a half-century ago. The reasons for the improvement are not hard to find. Dr. Alden has been able to use collections of published source materials and important archival collections which were not available

to scholars of Professor VanTyne's generation. Moreover, Dr. Alden has been able to profit from the findings of Samuel Flagg Bemis, Douglas S. Freeman, Louis Gottschalk, Merrill Jensen, William B. Willcox, and many other scholars who have written books or articles about the men and events of the Revolution. Professor Alden himself is an outstanding authority on the American Revolution and has written excellent biographies of Generals Thomas Gage (British) and Charles Lee (American).

Dr. Alden's book is undoubtedly the best one-volume history of the American Revolution now available. It is far more complete and accurate than Dr. VanTyne's book. It gives a more careful and accurate account of purely military events than is to be found in the pages of John C. Miller's *Triumph of Freedom*. It gives attention to politics, diplomacy, and financial administration whereas Lynn Montross' *Rag, Tag and Bobtail* and Willard Wallace's *Appeal to Arms* are strictly military histories. However, there are important failings in Professor Alden's book. For one thing, too little space and attention was given by Professor Alden to naval maneuvers and battles which affected the land campaigns in North America. For another thing, several of the chapters are too short, too severely compressed, to give the reader the full benefit of Dr. Alden's tremendous background of knowledge about his subject. One has the feeling that the book is excellent but that it could have been made even better if only its author had been given 50 or 60 more pages of literary "elbow room" in which to tell his story. The absence of the extra 50 or 60 pages is almost certainly no fault of the author's; rather, the publisher or the editors (Henry S. Commager and Richard B. Morris) have imposed upon the author a drastic limitation of space. In doing so, they have made it possible to market Dr. Alden's book at a price of \$3.75. But they have also confined Dr. Alden to a literary strait jacket which has prevented him from giving his readers the full benefit of his knowledge about the American Revolution. The present reviewer feels strongly that it would have been good policy on the part of the publisher and the editors if they had charged perhaps another dollar per volume in order to give Dr. Alden 350 pages instead of 294 in which to tell his story.

*Lehigh University*

GEORGE W. KYTE