

BOOK REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

EDITED BY NORMAN B. WILKINSON

Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America. By Carl N. Degler. (New York: Harper's, 1959. Pp. 484. \$6.00.)

Professor Degler has written a very interesting and exceedingly ambitious book. He has attempted nothing less than an analysis of the origins and development of the character of the American people from the founding of Jamestown to the re-election of President Eisenhower. This is then a work of synthesis in the general area of American social-cultural history, concerned not with the influence of individual American intellectuals but rather with the changing beliefs and values of an entire people.

Its individuality stems both from its attempt to combine the historical narrative and the interpretive essay, and from certain basic assumptions of the author. Degler believes that the past should be studied in the light of the present and that the historian has the right, indeed possibly the duty, to pass moral judgment on the events and personalities of the past. He is convinced, furthermore, that there is such a thing as an American Civilization, and that it is distinctive, even unique.

His analysis of this civilization and its cultural patterns and aspirations divides itself into four major chronological divisions. These divisions might be given such titles as: The Foundations of American Nationality (1607-1787); The Democratic Experiment in Peace and War (1815-1870); The Open Society Challenged and Re-affirmed (1870-1917); and The New Deal: Revolution Made Permanent (1929 to the present). For this reviewer the second of these divisions is the most successful; the last, the least satisfactory. At all times, however, the author proves a stimulating and enlightening guide, if occasionally a somewhat dogmatic one. He has made a broad study of the monographic material in his area of interest and possesses an unusual ability to correlate the findings of a half dozen scholarly researchers in a single, summary paragraph.

In this connection Professor Degler's most serious weaknesses are an occasional tendency to accept with too great readiness a wide variety of revisionist efforts, and a propensity, at times, to undermine the validity of his arguments by exaggerating their importance and application. It is possible, for example, to admire the author's analysis of the colonial roots of American nationality and social mobility, and yet doubt that later American historical development was already determined by the year, 1750. Some readers will probably feel that Degler dismisses too cavalierly the economic causes of the American Revolution; that he somewhat exaggerates the conservative quality of the American Revolution; and that he accepts too readily the "new" thesis that the economy of the ante-bellum South was a thing of expansive vitality and the institution of slavery economically profitable.

Certain Southern readers will surely feel that his attempt to salvage the reputation of Radical Reconstruction is somewhat extreme at points. There may be also some doubt as to whether it is necessary to go so far as to liken the political-economic situation of the 1890's to "some kind of social Black Mass" and compare the Progressive Movement to "a bright spring day after the bleak, depressing, soul-crushing days of February."

The list could be extended at some length, but to do so would give a false impression of the value and worth of this book. If the author may be charged with over-enthusiasm on occasion, he must also be credited with a lively style, keen analytical powers, and a truly remarkable ability to synthesize current scholarship on a myriad of subjects. His discussion of the nature of New England Puritanism is especially noteworthy. Other descriptions and analyses which this reviewer found particularly perceptive concerned such varied items as the cultural effects of the Transportation Revolution; the Turner thesis and its critics; the essential qualities of Jacksonian political and economic thought; the psychology of such Radicals as Thad Stevens; the social effects of the New Immigration; the conservative outlook of Modern Unionism; the dichotomy of the Populist Movement; the relationship of Progressivism and the Social Gospel doctrine; and the degree to which the New Deal was both a true revolution and a natural extension of a long-time liberal tradition.

No one will agree with all of Professor Degler's pronouncements on these and other topics, but few will be able to deny the smooth flow and pace of his narrative, his agreeable literary style, his industry, and his ability to insist on the unique quality of the American experience without lapsing into flag-waving eulogy.

Containing an excellent, forty-two page critical bibliography and an adequate index, *Out of Our Past* is a work of very real merit. Surely any serious student of American cultural history will wish to read this volume, if only to sprinkle its margins with comments, both of approval and of exasperation.

Lafayette College

RICHARD E. WELCH, JR.

Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History. Edited by James Morton Smith. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959. Pp. 238. \$5.00.)

Injecting a note of sober realism into the pageantry and press-agentry that marked the Jamestown commemorative celebration two years ago, the Institute of Early American History and Culture invited sixteen historians to a symposium on seventeenth century colonial America, and asked nine of them to prepare papers. The remaining seven participants in this erudite pow-wow, men of such stature as Welsey Craven and Max Savelle, are better known than the authors of the papers to which they listened, but there is little doubt that they listened with respect. The nine essays, "considerably revised," we are told frankly, "in the light of the symposium discussions," are herewith presented to a wider audience.

Oscar Handlin gets things underway with a clever generalization en-

titled "The Significance of the Seventeenth Century," which lends historical perspective to the somewhat unrelated essays which follow. Two of these deal with Indian problems, two with politics and society, and three with the colonial church. The ninth essay, misleadingly entitled "Seventeenth-century English Historians of America," analyzes the products of about a dozen selected writers from both sides of the Atlantic. Richard Dunn, of the University of Pennsylvania, finds plagiarism even more endemic three centuries ago than now, but shows that by 1700, such English writers as Oldmixon were patronizing "our empire," while Beverley and Mather had become self-conscious "Americans."

Only two of the remaining essayists join Handlin and Dunn upon the broad platform provided by the title of this book. In the single paper presented by a non-American historian, Philip Hoffenden of the University of Aberdeen discusses "The Anglican Church in Restoration Colonial Policy" and finds more evidence for deliberate encouragement of the state church as an instrument of policy than is usually conceded to the later Stuarts. This is an interesting viewpoint, but, in the opinion of this reviewer, an insecure one. The effort to find a policy where none existed is more likely to reflect the opinions of the investigator than of the investigated.

Wilcomb E. Washburn, who has recently delved so expertly into Bacon's Rebellion, ranges all the way from Henry I to future space explorations in his essay on "The Moral and Legal Justifications for Dispossession of the Indians." Passage of the Indian Claims Commission Act in 1946 made this ancient issue a very lively one but did little to disentangle the legal complications of the conquest. As for moral considerations, the only answer to the troublesome questions raised long ago by Robert Gray and Roger Williams, still seems to be a bad joke about "giving the country back to the Indians."

Only one paper in this symposium on seventeenth-century America deals with New England. This, perhaps, is Jamestown's revenge upon Plymouth. Emil Oberholzer's essay on "The Church in New England Society" is actually taken pretty largely from his recent book, *Delinquent Saints*, which is especially interesting to historians as a brilliant exploitation of previously neglected source material—early church records. Oberholzer finds in the church trials of that inquisitorial period not only a mass of revealing social data, but a fascinating relationship between church and state. Indeed, in taking issue with Sir Frederick Pollock and Roscoe Pound, who insisted that the Puritans depended entirely upon the common law and rejected equity, Oberholzer leaves his subject entirely and looks for evidence in the courts of civil law. Anyone who has studied colonial court records knows that the judges paid little attention to any kind of law and usually decided that "every tub must stand on its own bottom."

The remaining four essays deal exclusively with Virginia history—an emphasis which seems justified in the light of their original inspiration. "Indian Cultural Adjustment to European Civilization," by Nancy Kurie of the University of Michigan, actually explores the downfall of the Powhatan Confederacy and presents the interesting thesis that in Virginia the tidewater Indians nourished the white interlopers in order to use them against their tribal enemies in the piedmont area. Unfortunately, this excel-

lent piece is written in a pseudo-scientific vocabulary which wraps simple ideas in deliberate obscurity; for example: "There are many data to indicate that in culture contact situations, generally regular processes of cultural acceptance and rejection can be traced to the formulation of analogies between innovations and existing phenomena on the part of the recipient culture."

Mounting their attacks from different salients, Bernard Bailyn (Harvard) in "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," and William Seiler (Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia) in "The Anglican Parish in Virginia" reach essentially the same conclusion—that the development of colonial Virginia was directed by a corps of self-made men who divorced political from social leadership, entrenched themselves in the county offices and church vestries, and adopted the House of Burgesses as their instrument against external control. The evolution of their techniques—rejection of primogeniture, separation of Burgesses from Council, co-optation to fill vacancies in the vestries, and many others, is a fascinating exhibition of the instinctive grasp for power.

Perhaps the most refreshing study in the book is that on "The Social Origins of Some Early Americans," which rejects both the fancy that the FFV sprang from the English aristocracy and the British assumption that the colonials were the offspring of transported criminals. Basing her conclusions on a careful analysis of some 21,000 indentures, copies of which are preserved in the London and Bristol port registers, Mildred Campbell of Vassar College finds that the "others"—the nameless masses which filled the emigrant shipholds while a handful of gentry or merchants rode the decks—largely came from substantial middle-class yeoman and artisan families in old England. The indenture was not so much a device for emptying the jails, or the last desperate resort of paupers, as it was a deliberate mechanism of escape into a better life by people who looked confidently to the future.

The scholarship undergirding these essays is excellent, although too much of it is buried in the footnotes rather than exposed in the text. The writing, with one or two exceptions, is solid if not brilliant. A bit of stretching is done to reach some of the conclusions, but on the whole the "new" theses hold up well. There is a good index and a satisfactory job of printing. Above all, there is an excellent introduction in which the editor, presumably James Morton Smith, extracts the juice from each essay with the skill and efficiency of a lemon squeezer. For the teacher of and the specialist in American colonial history, this is an extremely provocative book.

Otterbein College

LYNN W. TURNER

George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat. By Nicholas B. Wainwright. (Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg by the University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1959. Pp. 334. \$6.00.)

Without discredit to the late Albert T. Volwiler, his 1926 study of *George Croghan and the Westward Movement* is now replaced by that of

Wainwright in *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat*. Volwiler emphasized that Croghan was a "typical pioneer" (p. 335) who participated in and exerted considerable influence on the westward movement. It is from this context, spelled out in more specific terms, that Wainwright's "wilderness diplomat" clearly emerges. With much justification, "extraordinary" could be added to his subtitle.

Croghan's obsession in life was to further his own material position, and he was quite Machiavellian in pursuit of this goal. Happily, his personal well-being coincided with the British cause against the French and later with the American struggle against the British. The cross winds of inter-colonial jealousies, especially those between Pennsylvania and Virginia, complicated the picture, but also furnished an interesting setting in which the devious and enigmatic Croghan operated. It is curious to observe, as so well detailed by this volume, that the degree of success which he attained as a wilderness diplomat was as great as the degree of failure which he met in furthering his own personal fortunes. (He died an obscure pauper.)

Croghan is generally referred to as the chief of the Pennsylvania fur traders, or, more correctly, Indian traders. His operations, in this as in everything, were carried out on a vast scale. His trading activities and business carried him from London to Philadelphia, to the Great Lakes, and to the Illinois country. Ubiquitous and inured to hardship, Croghan traversed the western Indian wilderness as few men of his times dared. Frustrated by the well meaning (?) but unrealistic Quakers who controlled the legislature, and pursued by his creditors, Croghan fled from Pennsylvania to accept the position of deputy under Sir William Johnson. He served in that official capacity for fifteen years. It was often hard to separate public and private matters; Croghan had no scruples about using his power and position as a public servant to further his personal position. He was such an asset to the public cause that any extravagance in executing his office or any personal gain were well worth what it cost the government; this was reluctantly recognized by the officials.

The common motivation for most frontiersmen was land hunger. But Croghan was bitten unusually hard by the speculation bug and he never got over it. He became associated with some of the biggest speculators and schemes of the day which involved tremendous chunks of New York, western Pennsylvania, Illinois, and other western lands. He was a prime figure, for example, in the Vandalia project, which almost achieved royal approval and might have resulted in the founding of a fourteenth American colony.

From a dim Irish background and fleeing a potato famine Croghan came to the Pennsylvania frontier in 1741. Ere long he envisioned a future for the West and a role for himself. This shrewd Irishman was a complex man—dishonest but generous, capable of raising money by "outrageous misrepresentations," and also of cheating himself as well as his closest friends—an inveterate liar who was believed by intelligent and influential men.

Croghan witnessed and participated in many of the important incidents in the conquest of the frontier. A partial listing of these is impressive, and when his role in each is recalled, Croghan's niche in history is more firmly

secured. At the opening of the French and Indian War he was with young George Washington at Fort Necessity, and he was present at Braddock's defeat the next year. He pacified the hostile Indians at Detroit so that Rogers' Rangers could occupy it after the war. His influence made it possible for the British to take over the Illinois country.

These and countless other incidents involved the Indians. This was his forte. Croghan's contribution to American frontier history was in his eminently successful work with the Indians. He was "a superlative peacemaker" and was regarded by his contemporaries, friend and foe alike, as peerless. His knowledge of Indian languages, his understanding of their way of life, and his ability to sway their opinions and gain their respect, made Croghan perhaps the leading diplomat of pre-Revolutionary America. He was better known and trusted by the Indians than almost any other white man. Croghan's participation in the negotiations often made the difference between a successful outcome and a failure.

Volwiler's biography was the first study of any consequence of Croghan's career. In the more than thirty years since its appearance much other material has come to light, but a considerable amount of it has remained untapped. Much new contemporary source material has also been published. Volwiler reported that a large amount of Croghan's personal papers had "disappeared" (p. 349). But the lost was found, and this important cache of manuscripts became the chief impetus for Wainwright's study. As he explains in his bibliographical essay these papers are rich in Indian trade records, land speculation documents, dreams for founding new colonies, correspondence with prominent men of the day, as well as many Croghan diaries and journals. These reveal the details of Croghan's fabulous career and bring much of the history of the period into sharper focus.

This tightly and tersely written biography secures Croghan his deserved place in colonial history. It further explains the significance of the West in American history. Its interpretations make fresh monographic studies on frontier problems a necessity. It is an excellent example of scholarship at its best.

Miami University

DWIGHT L. SMITH

The Ohio Company: Its Inner History. By Alfred P. James. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1959. Pp. 375. \$6.00.)

This is a labor of love by an "old pro" who has devoted years to the search for material on the Ohio Company. Little or nothing documentary can have escaped his dragnet which has covered all the libraries of the United States and England that might have relevant material, and it may be presumed that we now have readily accessible everything that has survived about this land company.

Historians have long known that it was the lust for land that provided a major impulse to the colonization of America and the development of the West. A long line of historians including Clarence Alvord, Thomas Perkins Abernethy, and Helen Cowan have shown how groups of capitalists with hopes of making large profits organized companies to acquire and colonize

great tracts of virgin land in the wilderness. Inevitably, it seemed, these companies became involved in imperial politics, intercolonial bickerings and rivalry with other groups. Some never got beyond the organization stage, others lost their rights in the various wars, and few were able to obtain the expected profits.

The Ohio Company of Virginia, consisting of a group of English and colonial gentry, sought a grant from Virginia in the vast area it claimed west of the mountains. The application was made in 1747 and approved, and a grant of 200,000 to 500,000 acres was made in the potentially rich blue-grass country of present Kentucky. The company expended considerable money on constructing roads to the area and began trading operations with the Indians, investing altogether some £10,000 in its operations, but the primary concern of its members was with the profits anticipated from the sale of land to settlers. Unfortunately for their expectations, numerous issues intervened to prevent the company from establishing firm control of its grant. Among these intervening factors were conflicting claims in the Ohio Valley, the British proclamation of 1763, and the opposition of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and English interests and officials to the confirmation of the grant. As an economic enterprise the company was anything but a success, in line with the not uncommon pattern of land company experience in the eighteenth century.

In a 180-page "inner history" of the Ohio Company, preceded by a bibliographical essay in which the author alludes too modestly to his own extensive coverage of his topic, the company is given an appropriate setting and its business, its litigation, of which there was much, and the numerous involvements that prevented it from gaining title are traced in specific relation to the documents included in this volume and in other collections. This is a concise, well organized, meticulous, and altogether satisfactory account that is most illuminating. Although many of the issues that come out in this treatment are left up in the air, with no statement as to the way they were ultimately resolved, this lack is owing to the absence of documents and it is not because the author has not tried to provide the whole story.

Professor James has edited a group of miscellaneous but significant documents that have survived the vicissitudes of two centuries of haphazard treatment and which have not appeared in print in other places. Included are warrants for land, descriptions of surveys, invoices and accounts of the sale of goods, articles of agreement of the company, writs of attachment, a detailed account of the status of the company's investments and request for confirmation of its grant in 1767, miscellaneous land claims that cut into the larger grant, and some additional Mercer family correspondence beyond that already published in the *George Mercer Papers*. All this and the table of commercial and land transactions of the Ohio Company will be welcomed by students of economic and land history, despite the fragmentary character of some of the material. The 53-page "Calendar of Ohio Company Documents" will provide speedy aid to anyone interested in amplifying upon the work of Professor James and his predecessors.

Land companies and individual speculations in land had a marked effect on the development of ownership and use patterns and on the appearance

of agrarian movements and reform activities. Some, like the Ohio Company, have had significance far beyond the economic and social. Consequently, studies and documentary collections like this of Professor James are doubly welcome and should be put to good use.

Cornell University

PAUL W. GATES

The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six: The Story of the American Revolution as Told by Participants. 2 vols. Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1958. Pp. 1348. \$15.00.)

It would be the height of extravagance to recommend the purchase of this handsome set merely for the magnificence of the editorial introduction; yet this reviewer is so tempted. Rarely does one come upon such felicity of style in combination with such shrewd insights into the founding of this nation. However, in the brief space of less than ten pages, Professors Commager and Morris have not only justified and introduced their selections with considerable grace, but they have also supplied a fresh, stimulating, and scholarly perspective on the American Revolution.

Well aware that the Revolution was both a war for independence and a civil war, the editors of *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six* would endorse David Ramsay's 1789 comment that this was a war fought as much with the pen as with the sword. Americans had to be convinced before they would rebel and fight; and it was a struggle not for American rights, but for a trans-Atlantic concept of English rights. "Men like Chatham, Burke and Fox asserted, at the time, that the Americans were the champions of English liberties," and men like Jefferson and Dickinson resisted encroachments on their idea of constitutionally guaranteed rights. The legalism of the American Revolution is only superficially a paradox: most revolutionary leaders were also trained lawyers whose radicalism was frequently confined to their stalwart opposition to British misrule.

However, if colonial lawyers stirred up revolt for legal claims, and if educated men of property also molded the constitutional destiny of the Revolution, they did not personally dominate the fighting which discouraged the British sufficiently to persuade them to concede American independence by 1782. And to grasp at least some of the complexities of the Revolution demands a sampling of every possible variety of contemporary comment; it is in furnishing this so ably that the editors have further justified their two volumes. In other words, Professors Commager and Morris have happily relieved this reviewer of the responsibility of urging readers to secure this set for the sake of its brilliant introductory essay. The breadth and the divergence of the materials marshalled within the covers of *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six* generously meets the high hopes raised by these delightfully literate editors.

Indeed, the range and the type of source material included is nearly all-encompassing. There are sections covering the intellectual background to resistance; there are enormously comprehensive selections on the fighting of the war; there are perceptive comments covering the negotiations leading

to an entangling alliance on the one hand, and independent nationhood on the other; and the whole anthology is suitably rounded off with a highly practical bibliography and a very useful index (for example, this reviewer could quickly turn to page 197, and learn how "Capt. Colbourn's company of artificers" brought up the rear in the miserable march on Quebec in 1775). There is a flavor of actuality in these selections missing in the most artful of literary reconstructions.

Of course, as befits all humanly edited anthologies, there are areas which appear inadequately treated. Possibly Dr. Commager sought to do here for the American Revolution what he had already done for the Civil War with his *The Blue and the Gray*—that is, amplify the role of the common man, and particularly the fighting man, in this decade of crisis. Certainly the space accorded intellectual and political developments between 1773 and 1776 seems rather meager. It is further regretted that some attention could not have been given to the more wholehearted English admirers of the American cause, like John Cartwright and the popular James Burgh. And it would be nice one day to have another viewpoint publicized than that of the irascible John Adams on John Dickinson's conscientious search for the *via media* (or rather a nation united in its rebellion).

But despite reservations of this sort, *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six* constitutes the most convenient collection of vividly colorful source materials now available for students of America's national delivery. While the pending centennial celebrations for the 1861 Civil War currently tend to overshadow in popularity the civil war that created this nation eighty years earlier, Revolutionary War buffs can take heart from the knowledge that they will have a bicentennial of their own in less than twenty years' time. And *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six* is really about as fine an opening salvo as one could wish for.

Indiana University

H. TREVOR COLBOURN

Religion and American Democracy. By Roy F. Nichols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959. Pp. 108. \$2.50.)

Contemporary world tensions have engendered a new emphasis upon the widespread understanding of the ideological sources of democracy, and an eminently readable contribution to such understanding is *Religion and American Democracy*, originally delivered as the Rockwell Lectures at The Rice Institute. Dean Nichols sets forth his concise "definition of the relationship between religion and American democracy" in two lectures, placing primary emphasis upon the period from the founding of the colonies to 1865 and making only summary allusions to the post-Civil War era.

The first chapter, "The Democracy of American Religion," surveys the roles which Calvinist, Arminian, Quaker, Roman Catholic, and deist groups played in the evolution of the institutions of the English colonies to 1790. At the close of the first century of colonization, Nichols finds, there existed along the Atlantic seaboard "a series of entrenched religious elites." But the migration of Huguenots, Germans, and Scots-Irish and their settlement in the back country in the early eighteenth century made dynamic changes in American society inevitable. The two religious movements which "vigor-

ously influenced the course of American democracy" in that century were the Great Awakening and the diffusion of rationalistic deism. The former instilled a new sense of individualism and equality, and these characteristics associated with the evangelical churches contributed to the desire for American independence. "The evolution of rationalism and deism," on the other hand, "instilled concepts of planning and orderly procedure" and Newton and Locke furnished doctrines of natural law and natural rights which profoundly influenced the leaders of the Revolution. The analysis of the deist contribution is a salutary antidote for some recent popular attempts to transform all of the founding fathers into orthodox Trinitarians. Citing the Declaration of Independence, Nichols observes that this document

showed an obvious religious conceptualization. But it was a different one from that which had so influenced the colonial directives. The Jehovah of Israel and the Christ of the Trinity were gone. Here was the Deity of Rationalism who was not appealed to for guidance or protection, but who was called in to witness that His creatures were working under His laws.

Both deism and orthodox Calvinism were rejected, according to Nichols, in the years following the establishment of the United States. In the chapter entitled "The Religion of American Democracy," the "Arminian Revolution" and the religious revivals which extended from the early 1790's to the late 1850's are stressed. The replacement of the aristocratic, Calvinist doctrine of salvation for the elect only by the democratic, Arminian doctrine of salvation for all had a tremendous effect upon the national ethos. The nature and consequences of this revolution, the author asserts, have not been given due consideration in the writing of American history. "This emotional transformation," he comments, "had a terrific impact upon American society and the young democracy. It provided an equality such as no Declaration or Constitution, no statute, no law or decree could ever prescribe."

In the course of this revolution Americans completed the achievement of a "voluntary" system of church-state relations. Under it, "though official connection between church and state had ceased, religion was so consuming an interest of such a large section of the population that its influence was manifest everywhere." A religious interpretation of existence and an avowedly Christian ethic permeated national life and created "an intense moral imperative" which played a major part in motivating such reform movements as the anti-bank, anti-liquor, and anti-slavery crusades. "This moral imperative has become a part of American culture, a directive which inspires faith and promotes right conduct. It may well insure American salvation in that it resembles religion."

Turning from the past to the present, Dean Nichols concludes with a plea for the renewal of Americans' faith in democracy, asserting that

belief in democracy, if maintained with religious fervor, may be the saving agent which will keep [man] still an individual, strong in his faith, in his dignity and in his power derived from his religious insight. Man's belief in his capacity for self-government

under divine guidance may well be the salvation of the American Way.

As one reflects upon this exhortation and the lucid analysis of the relations of religion and American democracy set forth in this volume, one must nevertheless ask whether faith in democracy and a dynamic, national, moral imperative can be sustained if the religious roots which have nourished them dry up.

Muhlenberg College

WILLIAM C. WILBUR

The Anglo-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century. By Frank Thistlethwaite. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959. Pp. 222. \$4.50.)

It is pleasant and encouraging to find that the author of the *Anglo-American Connection* is deeply involved in furthering the Anglo-American connection of his own times. Mr. Thistlethwaite, a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and a university lecturer in economic history at Cambridge, has for some time been a perceptive and sympathetic student of American history. He has written numerous articles on American economic history and he is the author of a fine book, *The Great Experiment: An Introduction to the History of the American People*. He has visited the United States frequently and has been a visiting lecturer at the University of Rochester and a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. His most recent book is based upon a series of lectures which he delivered at the University of Pennsylvania in the fall of 1956 as the first visiting professor of American Civilization.

Mr. Thistlethwaite's book deals with the interplay between peoples rather than the formal relations of governments. It is concerned with trade, financial relationships, immigration, and the exchange of ideas. It is particularly concerned with Anglo-American humanitarian endeavors, and it makes it clear that Britons and Americans exchanged ideas and worked closely together in crusades for temperance, abolition of slavery, free trade, educational reforms, and women's rights.

The first chapter of *Anglo-American Connection* calls our attention to the economic interdependence of the United States and Great Britain during the years from 1815 to 1860. A number of broad generalizations are made in the chapter, but they are based on sound scholarship and the reader is obliged to agree with them. The broadest generalization of all is that it is best to think of a single North Atlantic economy rather than separate British and American economies in the period under consideration. Ships that plied between New York and Liverpool carried the cotton which supplied the factories of Manchester. The same ships carried to the United States the finished textiles, machinery, and skilled technicians which provided nourishment for a growing economy. Canals in New York and railroads in Illinois were built with credit derived from the London money market. Wheat, lumber, and minerals then flowed back from the American frontier to New York and thence across the Atlantic to Liverpool. Thus, through trade

and financial interdependence, Britain helped to strengthen an underdeveloped America, and the latter, in her turn, contributed mightily to prosperity and economic growth in London, Manchester, and Sheffield.

Several of Mr. Thistlethwaite's chapters deal with the world of Anglo-American humanitarian endeavor. The ideas of reformers were exchanged regularly through the mails and through visits of Britons to America and of Americans to the British Isles. American and British humanitarian leaders held "world conventions" including a World Anti-Slavery Convention (London, 1840) and two World Temperance Conventions (London, 1846; New York, 1853).

It is interesting to note that humanitarian movements which were similar in inception sometimes had divergent results in the two English-speaking countries. For instance, British temperance leaders succeeded in imposing fairly stringent restrictions upon the sale of alcoholic beverages, but American reformers departed from a drive for temperance to one for the far sterner measure of outright prohibition.

The author has pointed out numerous examples of Anglo-American interdependence and co-operation. However, he has wisely tried to assess the limits of Anglo-American collaboration. For one thing, the connection between the two peoples was very largely limited to exchanges of goods and ideas between Britain and the northern states of the United States. Secondly, even the groups which shared a common outlook on many humanitarian matters could disagree sharply along nationalistic lines. Thus, even Richard Cobden, who admired American ways, feared the competition of America's growing industries. Finally, and this seems to the reviewer to be a most important point, the United States became less dependent upon Britain after the Civil War than had been the case from 1815 to 1860. Industrialization, the growth of the New York money market, and a new preoccupation with domestic markets and resources produced a distinctly American economy.

Lehigh University

GEORGE W. KYTE

Risk and Technological Innovation: American Manufacturing Methods during the Nineteenth Century. By W. Paul Strassmann. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959. Pp. 249. \$4.00.)

Students of the American economy have variously assessed the nature of the relationship between business enterprise and technological innovation. Schumpeter believed entrepreneurial activity to be "the fundamental factor . . . in booms and depressions." The entrepreneur's bold assumption of risks, while generating a "perennial gale of creative destruction," led in the long run to higher levels of real welfare. For Veblen, on the other hand, the businessman was far from a heroic, creative figure; his attitude toward technological innovation ranged from permissive indifference to acute hostility, the latter born of a desire to preserve extant capital values. In the volume under review Professor Strassmann examines both positions in the light of technological change in four major areas of manufacturing in nineteenth century America: iron and steel, textiles, machine tools, and electric power. Both

Schumpeter and Veblen, he finds, were partly right and partly wrong. His main conclusion is that businessmen, while undeniably creative, usually displayed an extreme caution with respect to technological change, which reduced to negligible proportions their chances of loss.

This conclusion is of unusual interest in view of Schumpeter's conviction that not only the mechanism of economic development but the character of capitalist social structure hinged particularly on the entrepreneur as the most "vital figure" of the business class. For the essence of Strassmann's conclusion is that the entrepreneur often did not perceive new opportunities for change in the social environment; did not, as a rule, act upon "flashes and hunches"; did not, finally, boldly push the lamp of innovation into the darkness of a resisting environment. If this conclusion is valid, it follows that there is less reason to share Schumpeter's fear that the bureaucratic automatization of business would contribute to the eclipse of capitalism.

While Strassmann's sources would appear largely secondary in nature, it must be emphasized that he displays an apparent mastery of technological processes. Abundantly, and in clear detail, he exhibits the interrelationships between major innovations in metals, power equipment, and engineering tools, an association which he suggests formed the essence of the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, his fundamental criticism of Schumpeter is that the latter did not "adequately explore the process of technological change as a series of complementary, mutually reinforcing developments" (p. 218). Like nineteenth century businessmen, whose complaints he may have echoed, Schumpeter therefore saw more risk, more chance of failure and loss, than really inhered in the conditions and possibilities of the proliferating American economy.

Strassmann by no means denies the existence of risks, or real losses, but he maintains that their amount and frequency were far smaller than one would suppose. What kept losses small in the pre-1860 years was the fact that "technological illiteracy discouraged original innovations almost entirely . . . whenever the initial expense amounted to several thousand dollars" (p. 202). With the later growth of scientific and technical knowledge, trained engineers made it possible to enhance vastly the predictability of results. In sum, the expansion of science and the exercise of extreme caution, in conjunction with an unforeseen but nevertheless frequent dovetailing of innovations in differing industries, kept real risks low.

These findings involve important hypotheses, but they are robbed of conclusiveness by the absence of supporting data. As Professor Strassmann recognizes, the processes of historical attrition give a "success bias" to surviving firm records. We cannot know the number of failures or losses arising from unsuccessful innovations. Moreover, where small capital requirements or other conditions made it easy for a firm to enter an industry, many no doubt did, and of these many may have failed and carried their records into oblivion. But surviving records reveal a major difficulty in obtaining information about losses. We can rarely feel certain that the adoption of an innovation was a clear and direct cause of subsequent loss or business failure, for failure may result from poor business judgment

in an unrelated area (marketing, for example), as well as reflect unanticipated cyclical changes. Fundamentally, the problem of loss is a problem in cost accounting, and Professor Strassmann is aware of how slight is the aid given in this area by the shoddily kept accounts of extant firms.

These problems aside, Strassmann's book is a model of clear and persuasive writing, beautifully composed. Its succinct summaries of major technological changes add to its unusual value. Proofreading, unfortunately, has been careless. In one place (p. 225) the word "country" appears when it is evidently the word "century" that is meant.

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Quartermaster General of the Union Army, A Biography of M. C. Meigs.

By Russell F. Weigley. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1959. Pp. 396. \$7.50.)

It is an accepted dictum that wars are won by adversaries with the greatest economic resources, provided these resources are properly mobilized and used. At the outset of the American Civil War, the Union admittedly was in a favored position economically, for its productive strength far exceeded that which the Confederacy could muster. But sheer strength is of no avail unless it is adequately controlled and directed. Again the Union was fortunate. Out of the crucible of strife emerged men who directed the nation's power with a sureness of touch that made victory inevitable. Among these men was Montgomery C. Meigs, the quartermaster general of the Union army, and the subject of the volume under review.

Prior to the appearance of this book, Montgomery C. Meigs was one of the few remaining prominent Civil War figures who had not received adequate treatment at the hands of historians. This lack has now been satisfactorily remedied; Mr. Weigley has given us a thorough and perceptive analysis of the man and of the department of the army he headed during the Civil War. But as the title of the study indicates, this work is more than an account of the administration of the quartermaster department; it is a full-scale biography of General Meigs himself. This is a happy circumstance for, as the author demonstrates, an understanding of Meigs' direction of the quartermaster department rests upon a knowledge of his early life and training.

Mr. Weigley divides his study into four parts. The first two parts are devoted to Meigs' life as a youth in Philadelphia, his student days at West Point, and his development after graduation as an army construction engineer. The third part, and by far the longest, is the story of his career during the Civil War. Meigs survived the war by twenty-seven years, continuing to direct the quartermaster department until relieved of his duties in 1882. The last section of the study is devoted to this period of service as a supply officer, and to his final years in official retirement.

When one ponders the extent to which the success of any army is dependent upon its sources of supply, the importance of a study such as this is immediately apparent. No analysis of the strategical aspects of the Civil War can be complete without a companion study which embraces the details

of transport, quartering, and the supply of troops. Mr. Weigley's work provides us with the means of putting the movements of troops in their proper perspective. We have been amazed by the fact that Sherman's forces lived off the land during their famous march through Georgia to the sea, but how many have been aware of the planning that enabled the quartermaster department to provide every soldier with a much-needed complete new outfit when the army, 70,000 to 100,000 strong, reached Savannah late in 1864? Again, General Grant's hammer blows that forced Lee's army into submission could succeed only because of the masterful system of supply supporting them. When Grant was before Richmond and Petersburg, on an average day forty steamers, seventy-five sailing vessels, and one hundred barges unloaded supplies for his forces at City Point. Indeed, by the end of 1864 Meigs was the proprietor of a fleet of 206,973 tons, 48,279 tons of which represented vessels owned outright by the quartermaster department. The magnitude of the performance is underscored by a reminder that Meigs' responsibilities extended to troops scattered from Texas to Virginia.

Although after 1861 no major operation failed because of inadequate supplies, the successful operation of the quartermaster department was not achieved without difficulty. Within a matter of four months early in the war the army was expanded from approximately 17,000 to nearly 500,000 men without the aid of any plan of mobilization whatever. Moreover, insufficient appropriations by Congress during the first year forced the quartermaster department to rely upon credit to an extent that threatened disaster. Thereafter, heroic measures improved conditions greatly, but graft, speculation, and political partisanship were factors requiring continuing attention. Over it all Montgomery C. Meigs presided as quartermaster general with a firm, steady hand reinforced by a strong sense of integrity inculcated by family teaching and West Point indoctrination. Not always diplomatic in his personal contacts, often blunt to the point of asperity, he was nevertheless honest to the core and completely dependable. Meigs labored unceasingly and at length successfully to reduce all forms of irresponsibility and to achieve greater efficiency of administration. The adoption by Congress in 1864 of a plan for the reorganization of his department is a measure of his steadfastness in pursuit of a desired goal. Indeed, as the author suggests, the success enjoyed by the quartermaster department was in no small degree a personal triumph for the quartermaster general himself.

Mr. Weigley's study is based soundly upon a wide reading in the sources and in the current Civil War literature. Moreover, he enjoys the facility of presenting his findings in a manner that attracts and holds the attention of the reader. The volume merits a large audience.

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The Oil Century: From the Drake Well to the Conservation Era. By J. Stanley Clark. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958. Pp. 280. \$3.95.)

Of the many "oily" books published during 1958, the year before the centennial year of oil, and 1959, the centennial year, this one has the most

intriguing title, leading prospective readers to expect an interesting and thought-provoking analysis of conservation along with a readable history of early oil development. But the volume falls far short of its promise.

The text consists of 254 pages, and the first 123 of these are devoted to a history of the days before Edwin Drake's discovery well, and the days following his success up through 1887. We are informed the author spent five weeks at Titusville gathering material for this part of the book, but unfortunately he has added nothing new; indeed, this reviewer believes he could have gathered the information he used from the comfortable depths of an easy chair—and perhaps have gained greater accuracy. There are a host of small errors, perhaps in themselves of little import, but suggesting to the reader that the entire book could be honeycombed in the same manner.

A few of the errors are these: in 1855 it was Yale College and not Yale University (p. 11); Mr. Haven's first name was Rensselaer and not Rensseland (p. 13); Edwin Drake took his drilling tools to the forge of Andrew Hertzel and not to John Gilfillen who was Hertzel's young apprentice (p. 28); and it is Tidioute rather than Tideoute.

More important are factual historical errors. The first flowing well was not on the McElhenny or Funk Farm struck in June, 1861, but was on the William Cohell Farm, near Tidioute, which commenced flowing August, 1860. The photograph of the Drake Well showing Edwin Drake and his good friend Peter Wilson is dated 1861, but this is from one of John Mather's famous plates and was actually taken in 1866.

Mr. Clark leaned heavily on Edmund Morris' *Derrick and Drill* (New York, 1865) for some of his lengthy quotations (pp. 49-61) and has, therefore, been unable in many cases to give the exact sources of the material. In the instance cited, we learn that, "A correspondent from the *London Morning Post* visited the oil regions in 1863 and the following January wrote a detailed description from Oil City. . . ." The true oil history aficionado will want to know the name of this correspondent and in what issues of the paper his report appeared, but the Morris book seldom provides definite sources.

If secondary sources were deemed suitable for the purpose, one cannot help wondering why Easton's *Petroleum* (1866), Cone and John's *Petrolia* (1870), Harris's *History of the Venango Oil Regions* (1866), and William Wright's book, *The Oil Regions of Pennsylvania* (1865), were not used, as these are excellent reports and more definitive than the Morris book.

Chapter 8 is titled "Expansion of the Oil Industry 1900-50," and here a quick survey of the advancement of the petroleum business is quite adequately presented. It is the best brief survey of this period that I have ever read. Chapter 9 on "Economic Waste" carefully points out that overproduction became a problem and that attempts at control by voluntary methods resulted in failure, thus setting the stage for controlled conservation.

The balance of the volume is devoted to giving a comprehensive picture of steps up the conservation ladder and ends with a discussion of the problem of imported crude oil. This section is rather heavily larded with

statistics, but it is difficult to discuss conservation and imports without a reliance on the figures.

Overall, the volume adds nothing to the early history of oil but does present a clear picture of conservation and what has brought it into sharper focus. The Foreword contains a good resumé of the conservation section of the book.

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