

BOOK REVIEWS

Conservatism in America. By CLINTON ROSSITER. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955. [viii], 328, xiv p. Bibliography, index. \$4.00.)

One of the ironies of current history may be the diminution of the ballooning Conservative literature that has borrowed so much of its gas free from the ascendancy of President Eisenhower. There will be some readers who would welcome such a development in the spirit of a recent article entitled "I'm Sick of Conservatism." But if we must have a "New Conservatism," Mr. Rossiter may become its most engaging representative, for he is distinguished from his overardent colleagues by two traits: an attitude of sweet reasonableness, and a firmer grasp of American history and political theory. Yet *Conservatism in America*, in its effort to create a Conservative ideology that is at once commonsensical and comfortably traditional, offers another example of politicalized writing rather than serious political theory or historical understanding.

The author's first trait of cautious and tempered judgment results in a failure to cut through to meaningful analysis and makes a Polonius-image hover over the book. His master strategy is "to steer a steady course down the middle"; his logic develops from one tautology to another to form a patchwork of moralistic postures. For example, the Conservative must (1) stand "midway between the indecent anti-statism of laissez-faire Conservatism and the credulous confidence of the new liberalism in the ability of government to set things right"; (2) "mediate between the outrageous demands of economic progressivism and outraged objections of economic standpattism"; (3) "guard our schools against extremists of the Right as well as of the Left"; (4) approach social problems so that "while he remains more 'practical' and 'realistic' than liberals and radicals, he cannot be ignoble and indifferent"; and (5) devote himself "to all our great values, traditions, and institutions; eager to defend them against self-seekers and spoilers of the Right, fools and marauders of the Left, and opportunists and indifferents of every stripe." At the same time, we are solemnly warned not to confuse Conservatism with "the middle of the road, or the conservative mission with the arts of compromise."

Mr. Rossiter's argument, where it does not verge on tautology or inconsistency, is to equate everything that is sane, sound, intelligent or profound with the only "true" or "genuine" Conservative position. This type of logic leads just as inflexibly to a finer type of liberalism—to a liberalism that is also not credulous but watchful. The author's semantic preoccupation with the language and tradition of Conservatism prevents him from realizing the

liberal consequences of his position. Therefore he is able to conclude his argument with the assertion that "the new Conservatism calls on its adherent to take whatever stand or course the situation demands, whether it be to hold fast, move ahead slowly under duress or strike out boldly toward firmer ground." Is it not fair to query whether such a call provides any firm definition of Conservatism or any other "ism"?

I have commended Mr. Rossiter for his knowledge of American history and political thought. However, his programmatic and semantic interest in Conservatism has resulted in distorting several significant aspects of American history and thought. He claims Madison as a Conservative and Jefferson as a Liberal without qualification, but cannot account for the fact that Jefferson and Madison were united in a fifty-year collaboration, agreeing in political principle as well as action. He brushes off Hamilton as an "ultra" and not a "genuine" Conservative, remarking: "If he was a Conservative in practical politics and in his concern for property, he was reactionary in his devotion to monarchy and hereditary aristocracy, visionary in his schemes for an industrial America, and who-knows-what—radical, reactionary or just plain opportunistic?—in his eagerness to reduce the states to an inferior position." Apart from the shortcomings of this as analysis, we must ask Mr. Rossiter how he can hail *The Federalist* as the great classic of American Conservatism without attempting to reconcile the substantial contribution made by Hamilton with his previous charge. "*The Federalist* is conservatism—we may fairly say Conservatism—at its finest and most constructive." How is it that Mr. Rossiter detects no trace of the critical differences between Hamilton and Madison in *The Federalist*, particularly when recent interpretations have found significant differences of emphasis?

In summary of America's history, Mr. Rossiter reads three great failures of American democracy as our failure as a nation to lead other nations toward a peaceful world; our failure as a race to extend justice to the Negro; our failure as a people to create an authentic, exciting popular culture. One wonders whether his Conservatism, however "new," can lead or propose methods to change these failures. Even more, to the extent that we have had a "democratic experiment" to which the author can repair for solace and pride, how large a part of that experiment must be assigned to the contribution of American liberals? It may be worth comment that the best horse in Mr. Rossiter's stable, John Adams, had at least two sides, one of which we might call "profoundly" or "truly" *liberal* (in Mr. Rossiter's fashion). Our own century, a time of crisis and danger such as has never before existed, is on realistic—not "abstract speculative" or "rationalist"—grounds, the least likely epoch to be approached with traditional methods, fearful of change and timid about experiment.

Despite the many intelligent and obviously moral arguments advanced in this book, the fault which mars it may be summarized as the author's confusion between conservatism as a psychological "mood" or temperamental habit of caution, and Conservatism as a political philosophy and

doctrine. Predominantly, it is the cautious and tempered judgment, patiently and responsibly formed after a survey of relevant facts, that Mr. Rossiter apostrophizes in this book. But he is trapped in the quicksand of "new Conservatism": he tries to maintain independence of its ideological program, but cannot meet the challenge of clarifying the pertinent political alternatives in America, yesterday or today.

University of California

ADRIENNE KOCH

American Political Thought. By ALAN P. GRIMES. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1955. xii, 500 p. Bibliography, index. \$6.00.)

Politics is a form of human behavior which man has developed partly to satisfy his desires and partly to meet his needs. As in most types of behavior he acts first and thinks about the reasons for it later. There were government and politics long before political theory, and historians sometimes fail to recognize this gap in time. Also, when formulating the theory of action a writer is very often only partly conscious of the realities of the situation, and historians, depending so exclusively on the written word, fail to recognize this gap in knowledge.

The author of this very convenient survey tries to fill these gaps. He realizes that "political thought does not exist in a vacuum," and he makes notable efforts to relate the thinking to the society in which it occurred and to give it a legitimate genealogy. As a result, he makes over the familiar story of our earlier thinking in more meaningful pattern and adds several cogent chapters on developments in the past two troubled decades.

The colonists who made the first American Society brought over the ideas then current in the homeland and in their second century imported others also formulated in England. The first concepts were based on religious formulations of what an ideal community should be. During the second century, the political phrases of the Age of Reason were attractive to a society at the stage where it wished independence and needed justification for such a move.

When the Revolution was brought to a successful conclusion, the rational plan for making a government was to put in writing an outline of procedure which was suggested in part by desires of the authors, their experience, and the ideas then current. Having created a state, how should they conduct it? Their basic concepts were orderly liberty, security of life and property, and unlimited opportunity. How could these be harmonized, the enterprising encouraged, the rapacious curbed and the weak protected?

For more than a century and a half these problems of the limits of governmental function have been the subject of debate and varying action. When we were a scattered population in the midst of plenty, isolated from the world, the answers could be framed in terms of subsidy and *laissez faire*. But when population became huge, resources scarcer, automation ever

more widespread, and the nation placed squarely in the midst of a world in large part alien, ideas of controls and curbs became more prevalent.

Today we are facing grave questions, and there are some that doubt whether our democratic structure is adequate. There are those who talk in terms of Fascism, Communism, or more vaguely of some sort of an elite. On the side of our democratic system, in the intellectual world, stands a new phalanx of liberals, less of the *laissez-faire*, more of the pragmatic, variety. They have the confidence of those who have great faith in the strength of our well-trying system.

This book is very carefully contrived and lucidly presented. It has considerably more meaning than much of this type of chronological summary because it is not "presented in a vacuum." The last two chapters which discuss contemporary thinking are particularly informative. The bibliographies are comprehensive and very convenient. Any thoughtful citizen concerned with the nature of his government will find this a rewarding handbook.

University of Pennsylvania

ROY F. NICHOLS

Christopher Columbus, Mariner. By SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955. xiv, 224 p. Illustrations, maps, appendix, index. \$3.75.)

Thirteen years ago Admiral Morison published his great two-volume *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, the standard and definitive work on Columbus, based on a series of cruises in Columbus' wake, which took the author across the Atlantic and throughout the West Indies. Now *Admiral of the Ocean Sea* is out of print, and Admiral Morison has mysteriously enough found the time—in between turning out volumes of the official naval history of the last war—to write a splendid condensed version of the earlier book for the general reader. To this end he has written a wholly new book, not a rehash of excerpts, and has done so with his customary skill as a historian and his readability as a master of English prose. The result is a most delightful little volume, graphically written, which gives a splendid picture of the explorer and his career. Once again Admiral Morison has showed himself to be a real historian and not a mere historical technician—and there is a world of difference between the two.

Within the compass of less than two hundred pages, the author traces the genesis of Columbus' great idea of a seaway to the Orient, and narrates the wonderful story of the Four Voyages. Every aspect of the discoverer's life is touched on, pertinently if briefly, so that the book is perfectly balanced and complete in itself. It is further strengthened by the inclusion of some dozen maps, reproduced from the original two-volume work, as well as the fine end-paper map, which likewise appeared in *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*. And

as an appendix the author has included a translation of the famous Columbus *Letter*, originally printed in Barcelona in April, 1493, and now known from a unique copy in the New York Public Library.

In this little book as in its larger predecessor, Admiral Morison continues to emphasize the salient hypotheses of the explorer's life: theories which certainly have been controversial, but in all of which the present reviewer finds himself in complete agreement with Admiral Morison. These points include the authenticity of the Toscanelli letters; the pear-shaped theory of the earth, with an open seaway to the Orient; the absence of any Norse or Icelandic influences; and Columbus' lasting conviction that he had discovered offshore islands of the Asiatic continent. The author likewise stresses Columbus' curiously perverse medievalism as a geographer, and pays the highest tribute to his superb courage, his bulldog persistence, and his supreme talents as a navigator. Considering the present boom that such also-rans as Vespucci are enjoying, this emphasis appears very salutary indeed.

This is certainly a most attractive and most worth-while little book, which should be on the shelves of those who do not own its two-volume predecessor.

Devon

BOIES PENROSE

Early American Science: Needs and Opportunities for Study. By WHITFIELD J. BELL, JR. (Williamsburg, Va.: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1955. x, 85 p. Index. \$1.25.)

The present book consists of an essay by Mr. Bell and a bibliography, of which by far the most important part is an effort to draw attention to significant materials for the study of "Fifty Early American Scientists." With reference to this list, Mr. Bell disarms criticism by admitting that it contains some deservedly obscure figures and omits others of greater stature. He really does not make clear why the list could not have been extended to include all significant men. In that event, I think the total would still have fallen short of seventy-five. In general, Mr. Bell's annotations are highly intelligent, though I wish he had made clear that we do *not* have an adequate biography of Benjamin Rush despite all assumptions to the contrary.

There is nothing in Mr. Bell's essay to which anyone could take serious exception. He emphasizes quite properly that science is an international undertaking and that writing the history of science in America requires a grasp of scientific developments in Europe. I would merely add that he seems to be more sanguine than I am about the possibility of working up this grasp as a side line; I think that themes in the history of science in America ought only to be attacked by people capable of making significant

contributions to the history of world science. The number of such people will never be large, and I doubt frankly if they would be well advised to give much of their time to some of the lesser figures in the list of fifty.

Mr. Bell seems not to be aware of the fact that doctorates in the history of science can be acquired at Johns Hopkins and Brown as well as Wisconsin, Harvard, and Cornell. It might also be added as a point of information, of the kind which Mr. Bell is chiefly concerned to convey, that the present reviewer is currently writing a history of science in America from colonial times.

Brown University

DONALD FLEMING

The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1777-1799. Advertisements and News Items from New York City Newspapers. Compiled by RITA SUSSWEIN GOTTESMAN. (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1955. xx, 484 p. Illustrations, index. \$4.00.)

A sequel to *The Arts and Crafts of New York, 1726-1776*, the present volume follows the format and plan of the earlier book. From New York City newspapers for the years 1777-1799, Mrs. Gottesman has gathered advertisements and newspaper items dealing with eighty-five trades, crafts, and occupations. In her preface, Mrs. Gottesman skillfully sketches the historical background of the period covered, and notes that

While each advertisement may have its separate interest to an antiquarian or research worker, the compilation viewed in its entirety presents rich materials about the events and problems of the times—the economic and industrial situation, the cultural status, the changing character and personality of the inhabitants, the struggles and growth of New York City as it developed during the first decades of national independence.

The first major work of this kind was *The Arts and Crafts in New England, 1704-1775*, gleanings from Boston newspapers compiled by George Francis Dow in 1927. Thanks to the work of Alfred Coxe Prime, similar material is available for Philadelphia and the South. *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland and South Carolina, 1721-1785* was published in 1929 and the second part of the same series for the years 1786-1800 in 1932.

The presentation of such information in readily available form is a service of inestimable value to the scholar, saving not only his time, but the infinite patience required for the actual scanning of the old newspapers. However, the compilation of the advertisements themselves, essential though such work may be, is but a part of the job that must be done if the prime objective, ready accessibility, is to be achieved. The final time-saving step in the process of presenting the advertisements to the busy scholar is the logical and detailed indexing of the material. David H. Wallace has provided the

finest index to be found in any book of this kind, covering 1,312 newspaper items by direct reference and cross reference. In seventy-one pages (almost fifteen per cent of the book), he lists the names of the craftsmen and their crafts, along with innumerable notations of every conceivable kind, from "Amusements" through "Yankee Doodle" by way of "Balloon: ascents and construction . . . Bathing: healthfulness of, shower baths . . . Beauty of women: in the shape not the face . . . Books . . . Bookbinders ads . . . Bookplates . . . Carriages . . . Carpenters . . . Carpeting . . . Churches in New York City . . . England: artists and craftsmen from . . . Fashions . . . Food and drink . . . Gentlemen's Magazine, copies wanted . . . Iron workers . . . Kitchen utensils . . . Kettles: dye, fish, hatters' plank, potash, steam, sugar, for export, wash, whaling . . . Manufacturies: blinds . . . lace . . . leather, etc. . . . Taste: the gay London and neat American . . . Treaties: of Amity and Commerce, published . . . Taverns and tavern-keepers . . . Teachers of drawing and painting . . . Timepieces: for astronomical observations (See also: Clocks and Watches) . . . Underclothing: ladies' and gentlemen's . . . tuckers . . . girdles . . . false rumps . . . Wagons: made and mended . . . Wood: as fuel and types of . . . Women: worship of no breach of Second Commandment," etc., etc., etc.

This superb publication of the New-York Historical Society, with its tremendous fund of information, is richest grist for the mill of the historian. This book is far more than artisans' offerings and prices charged. In it, the fresh, direct prose of the eighteenth-century merchant, editor, and craftsman reveals an intimate firsthand picture of life as it was lived in New York City during the first twenty years of independence.

A similar study covering the early years of the nineteenth century is much needed. I hope that Mrs. Gottesman will continue her fine work, finally presenting in a trilogy: *The Arts and Crafts of New York, 1726-1826*.

Winterthur Museum

CHARLES F. MONTGOMERY

America Takes the Stage. Romanticism in American Drama and Theatre, 1750-1900. By RICHARD MOODY. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1955. [xii], 322 p. Illustrations, bibliography, play list, index. \$5.00.)

As the Romantic Movement developed in America, it affected all forms of artistic expression. In *America Takes the Stage*, Richard Moody has examined the activities of the American playwrights and people of the theater from 1750 to 1900 in an effort to find what use they made of native themes and material as a result of the Romantic impulse. He has discovered that the trend of these years resulted in the growth of the Negro minstrel show, and the use of the Negro, the Indian, the Yankee and the frontiersman

and of American wars in many plays of the period. The body of his book is concerned with analyses of the plays that display these tendencies.

In his chapter on the minstrel shows, he discusses the various explanations of the origin of this kind of entertainment, the first companies to be formed, the evolution of the various parts of the minstrel show—the opening, the walk around, the olio, the afterpiece that usually burlesqued a popular drama or satirized a current event. It is interesting to be reminded that many of our best-loved American songs were written for the minstrel companies: “My Old Kentucky Home,” “Marching Through Georgia,” “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp,” and even “Dixie”!

The Negro was treated as a minor figure in the dramas of these years. He was revealed as the eccentric, humorous family servant. Often the Negro character actors entertained the audience in the intermissions with songs and dances. “No realistic investigation of the Negro and his problems concerned the nineteenth century playwright.” But *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was an exception; in that play Negroes were presented for the first time as the central figures in an American drama. Most of the critics of the day were opposed to such a use of Negro characters. And even here, the Negroes, with the exception of Topsy, were “built on the conventional, sentimental pattern.”

The Romantic concept of the Indian as the child of nature, the nobleman of the forest, was the basis of most Indian characters in early drama. But there were also some of the opposite type—rum-loving, fierce, vengeful. By the 1850’s serious Indian drama had become infrequent, and it dwindled away before the growing force of Realism.

The stage Yankee evolved gradually. At first related to his real-life prototype, he developed into a conventionalized comic figure, his eccentricities exaggerated beyond reality. In those plays that used war as a part of the plot, “Heroic battles, adventurous forays of scouting parties, lovers’ meetings behind enemy lines, high-spirited young Rebels defying the commands of Tory fathers, or the sheltered and delicate young Southern belle deserting the Confederate home fire for love of a Yankee soldier” were the themes that were used over and over again. Dramas of frontier life turned to the exploits of Nimrod Wildfire, Kit the Arkansas traveler, Davy Crockett, and similar figures.

One can sincerely praise the diligent research that has gone into the assembling of these examples. The field seems to have been covered completely, and it would perhaps be impossible to discover any relevant play that has been neglected. But about the conclusions Mr. Moody has reached concerning these plays one cannot always be in agreement. He frequently makes sweeping generalizations that exclude any possible exceptions, and then *he* cites exceptions. For instance, he says the Negro never was given a principal role in American drama (p. 60), and then, a few pages farther on, says, “the Negro was a principal figure in the *dramatis personae*” in *three* plays: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, *The Octoroon*, and *Dred*. He often makes broad

statements that he may intend to qualify by limiting them to the years under discussion, but one cannot tell. For instance, he writes, "American dramatic literature can boast no playwrights comparable to such writers as Cooper, Poe, Emerson, Whitman or Melville." Does he exclude Eugene O'Neill, or does he mean to include the words "before 1900"? There are signs of hasty editing: in his description of the "Jump Jim Crow" dance he gives a note which advises the reader to see the illustration in Laurence Hutton's *Curiosities of the American Stage*; in the plates following page 52 in his own book one finds a duplicate of the same plate that Hutton used.

As an introduction, Mr. Moody has provided a sketchy history of the Romantic Movement in American literature and art, but the material is only indirectly related to the main subject of his book. He has also included a chapter on "Romanticism in Stage Design" in which he offers numerous quotations from the texts of the plays in which the settings are described. But surely it is a rather naïve attitude to assume that these elaborate visions of the playwrights' imagination were carried out with any marked degree of verisimilitude.

University of Pennsylvania

EDGAR L. POTTS

Andrew Jackson, Symbol for an Age. By JOHN WILLIAM WARD. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955. xii, 274 p. Illustrations, index. \$4.75.)

This is an important book. The author, an assistant professor of English at Princeton (where he also teaches in the field of American Civilization), has shown how Andrew Jackson embodied many of the most important attitudes and ideas of the America of the years 1815-1845 and so, in many ways, became a symbol for his generation. "The symbol [Ward concludes] was not the creation of Andrew Jackson from Tennessee, or of the Democratic party. The symbol was the creation of the times. To describe the early nineteenth century as the age of Jackson misstates the matter. The age was not his. He was the age's" (p. 213). To support this thesis the author probes many of the ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and myths which were embodied in Jackson's career and thus produces a unique treatment of this popular figure and of the age in which he lived. The volume is important because it goes to some of the wellsprings of the behavior of that generation to show through their symbol, Andrew Jackson, the forces which made that generation "tick."

Ward's analysis begins, appropriately, with an extensive discussion of the Battle of New Orleans, since, as he writes, "contemporary estimates of the Battle of New Orleans . . . present in embryo the dominant conceptual strains which later characterize the fully developed symbol of Jackson" (p. 8). He then suggests the basic outline of his study: how America's

national pride apparently rested on "three main concepts . . . 'Nature,' 'Providence,' and 'Will.'" He writes that the purpose of this volume is "to show that these general concepts are the structural underpinnings of the ideology of the society of early nineteenth-century America, for which Andrew Jackson is *one* symbol" (p. 10). The study is divided into three main parts—headed "Nature," "Providence," and "Will"—in which contemporary attitudes on these subjects are explored, attitudes which the America of that day saw embodied in the life and work of Jackson.

No adequate explanation of these attitudes is possible in this review. Ward handles them with thoroughness and care. Jackson is shown as the symbol of the growing American nationalism, the symbol of a golden mean between the extremes of Indian savagery and the decadence of European civilization. He also typified the activist temper of that age, with its emphasis on the practical and its distrust of the academic. This popular attitude, it may be noted, goes far to explain Jackson's political success. (The author's discussion reveals popular attitudes with which political leaders today still must reckon and suggests that eggheadism was an issue then as it is now.) Ward shows the power of Jackson's appeal when the Whigs, forced to adopt the symbols of the Democrats, "[in 1840] stamped Q.E.D. on the formula first discovered by the Jacksonians" (p. 97).

The author develops also the "chosen people" theme, demonstrating how Jackson embodied the idea that God, with Old Hickory as the divine agent, directed the destiny of that generation of Americans. Jackson also symbolized the idea of manifest destiny. "Andrew Jackson [the author notes] symbolized the philosophy of nature which sanctioned the rejection of Europe. He also stands for the special favor of God which consecrated American expansion. . . . [And] he further represents the ideal of self-sufficient individualism which was the inevitable rationalization of America's disorganized development" (p. 149). Jackson symbolized the man who could be the architect of his own fortune, but one who, subject to more sentimental, softening influences and operating under the will of God, was no antisocial military dictator.

In a brief final chapter Professor Ward admirably sums up his argument. Here he underscores the fact that Jackson "was the age's hero in a wider sense than has commonly been recognized" (p. 207). Furthermore, "the symbolic Andrew Jackson is the creation of his time. Through the age's leading figure were projected the age's leading ideas" (p. 208). Also he stresses that "historical actuality imposed little restriction on the creation of the symbolic role the people demanded Andrew Jackson to play" (p. 208).

These comments do not do justice to the breadth and the depth of the author's treatment of his subject, presented as it is with clarity and with much good humor. The volume certainly throws much light on the life of Jackson, and, especially, on the age in which he lived. It shows in many ways what we, the American people, then were and how our beliefs were

symbolized by the most popular leader of the day. It is an important contribution to the understanding of our past behavior and hence of our present.

Muhlenberg College

JOHN J. REED

Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892. By W. DEAN BURNHAM. (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955. xx, 956 p. Appendix, index. \$10.00.)

For many generations students of American political behavior have been under the severe handicap of possessing no convenient compilation of Presidential election returns. Eugene Edgar Robinson in 1934 went part of the way toward supplying a long-felt deficiency with *The Presidential Vote, 1896-1932*. Now W. Dean Burnham, with the present excellent volume, has supplied the data on the fifteen Presidential elections prior to 1896. For his enormous industry in bringing these returns together from many scattered sources he has placed in his debt all scholars who may hereafter be concerned with understanding the working of American democracy.

Mr. Burnham has followed closely the plan devised by Robinson in presenting his data. The bulk of the volume, more than six hundred pages, contains the detailed vote by counties for each state. From this basic raw material he has compiled five other tabulations designed to facilitate various types of analyses. These show the distribution of party control by counties, the counties held by each party within each section and state, the distribution of the popular vote by section and state, and the distribution of the electoral vote. In view of this wealth of considerably arranged data one should properly hesitate to ask more of Mr. Burnham, but one does note with regret the absence of charts mapping the votes by counties in the manner of Robinson and of Paullin's *Atlas*.

In a valuable appendix Mr. Burnham lists for each state the sources of the returns he has used, the composition of the "other" vote for minor parties, the dates of organization of counties subsequent to 1836, and notes on "special cases." Wherever possible he has used official figures, but because such figures are unavailable for a remarkable number of states, he has of necessity had to resort to the *Whig Almanac*, the *Tribune Almanac*, and newspapers to make his compilation complete. In a substantial introduction he has provided a generalized survey of the politics of the years under review, summarizing some of the main observations that result from his analyses of vote patterns.

The most striking conclusion suggested by this massive documentation of American political behavior is that we were characteristically indecisive in our political preferences throughout most of the nineteenth century. The nice equilibrium that was maintained between the two major parties, especially from 1836 through 1848 and from 1868 to 1892, must always present

difficulties to those who would attempt to interpret American politics in "realistic" terms of issues, economic and social groupings, or environmental influences. This equilibrium must stand as the supreme achievement of two intensively organized political parties that competed so vigorously for dominance that in fifteen Presidential elections the triumphant party was able to garner a majority of the popular vote on only six occasions.

Mr. Burnham's book should stimulate a host of studies in the little-explored field of American political behavior. It may even encourage some equally dedicated servant of scholarship to undertake the worthy but onerous project of compiling voting data for the years before 1836, or at least back to 1824. Mr. Burnham has done his part, and done it exceedingly well. We thank him.

Rutgers University

RICHARD P. McCORMICK

Phrenology: Fad and Science. A 19th-Century American Crusade. By JOHN D. DAVIES. [Yale Historical Publications.] (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1955. xvi, 208 p. Illustrations, bibliographical note, index. \$3.75.)

In this title the words "fad" and "science" might well be reversed, for all that became phrenology originated with a sound German anatomist, Franz Joseph Gall, toward the end of the eighteenth century. He advanced the theory which today is well accepted as cerebral localization, but chose to assign psychologic functions to these various areas, even labelling one Murder. This conception was important in that it suggested that mental phenomena could be studied objectively and be explained by natural causes. Davies quotes Boring: "It is almost correct to say that scientific psychology was born of phrenology, out of wedlock with science."

It was a pupil of Gall's named Spurzheim who coined the name phrenology, ignoring the fact that the Greek *phren-* referred to the diaphragm and was only transferred to the brain when the seat of the emotions moved upward from the pit of the stomach. Gall never accepted the word nor Spurzheim's extensions of his theory into metaphysics. It was these extensions that opened the door to much of the ensuing nonsense in fields of insanity, penology, education, religion, and even architecture. When the third theorem was added—that the areas in the brain could be recognized on the exterior of the skull—the fat was truly in the fire. It was, however, only after the new "science" came to America that the great conflagration arose, although the queen of England had readings made of her children's heads. In Part I Davies details these steps in chapters headed: "A New Science is Born," "Transit of the Atlantic," "Phrenology Made Practical," "The Phrenological Fowlers," and "Controversy."

No review can describe the absurdities which were seen; the book itself must be read. Phrenology appealed to intellectuals as well as to the credulous, and it is often hard to distinguish one from the other. It is even more difficult to be sure what phrenology meant to different individuals at that time: to some a promise of advances to a better knowledge of the brain, to others the birth of anthropometry, to still others, under the mercenary guidance of the full-bearded Fowler brothers, the science of reading the bumps on the skull and of advising on marriage, choice of profession, and so on. (One of the brothers remarried at the age of seventy-three and then had three children—perhaps he should have watched his own frontal bosses.)

Davies lists an impressive group of intellectuals who accepted phrenology in one form or another, but the reader must be careful not to assume that they swallowed it all. Professors lectured in our leading universities, societies were formed, journals and books were written. The reader today is tempted to feel a condescending superiority toward these deluded folk, but let us be sure we hold no belief that there may be something in spiritualism, hypnotism, or telepathy. These, too, have had their "intellectual" adherents; indeed, by a coincidence, a serious book on telepathy is advertised on the dust cover of Davies' book.

There is a twelve-page bibliographical note giving an extensive list of source material. Perhaps George Combe, "the leading Phrenologist in the world," does state somewhere that on his visit to Philadelphia in 1838 he was elected to the American Philosophical Society. Davies on page 22 accepts this, but the records of the Society do not support the claim.

Another slip occurs on pages 13 and 24, where references are made to a Dr. William Physick, "the foremost medical figure of his generation" and president of the Central Phrenological Society in Philadelphia. It was, of course, Philip Syng Physick, not William. It is interesting to think of this eminent physician subscribing to phrenology.

The eight chapters in Part II detail the influence of phrenology in the fields of education, insanity, penology, health, literature, phrenomagnetism, medicine and religion. In Part III there is an interesting critique on phrenology and the American spirit.

The book is well worth reading; it gives a true picture of how far such a craze may go. By analogy it offers a warning against the fads which are, and always will be, with us.

Ithan

O. H. PERRY PEPPER

Culture on the Moving Frontier. By LOUIS B. WRIGHT. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1955. 273 p. Index. \$3.50.)

In this volume Mr. Wright presents to the general public six lectures which he originally delivered on The Patten Foundation at Indiana University in the spring of 1953. The title of the first lecture, "The Colonial

Struggle Against Barbarism," might well have served for the entire book, which has as its central theme the persistent effort of the American colonizer on successive frontiers of settlement "to reproduce the best of an older culture." Much that is said in this first lecture will seem familiar to many of his readers, because Mr. Wright has developed the theme for the colonial period in more than one earlier publication. What holds attention is a successful attempt to link together the stories of several different frontiers in a discussion that reaches from Jamestown to San Francisco. After describing cultural developments in the Kentucky Borderland, the old Northwest, and the youthful state of California, the author devotes two concluding chapters to a general discussion of the "Instruments of Civilization," with separate attention directed to the spiritual and secular agencies.

The story Mr. Wright has to tell is one of godly men and women and of law-abiding and literate folk, who undertook on each frontier to establish and preserve the standards of a civilized society. It is a story of books, newspapers, libraries, churches, schools, colleges, and other such—a story that presents the westward movement of the American people in terms primarily of an advancing civilization. But it is more than that. Mr. Wright is not content merely to add new documentation for the view that the major forces which have molded our western states migrated with the people or followed hard upon their migration as a result of the many ties binding the people to older centers of settlement. He also lays heavy emphasis upon the evidence that on each frontier the dominant influence continued to be a British, and more especially an English, cultural tradition. And in this dominance he finds the answer to one of the fundamental problems of American history, which is to explain the remarkable homogeneity of a remarkably diverse population.

Let it be said at once that one finds here no nonsense about Anglo-Saxon supremacy and no filio-pietistic claim to special virtue in the original stock of settlers. The argument depends rather upon the strength and adaptability of the English cultural tradition, which was "responsible for the American's language, his basic laws, his fundamental liberties, and much of his manners, customs, and social attitudes." Other influences that have helped to shape modern America are not ignored, but the author insists that the key to the problem of our homogeneity must be found in the "incredible power of assimilation and transmutation" belonging to the English cultural tradition. His proposition, in short, is that a British culture has "assimilated all others."

This is a proposition, of course, that invites debate, but it also demands respectful attention. Not only has Mr. Wright devoted many years to close study of the English cultural tradition, and especially to its influence on American history, but his lively and readable text repeatedly testifies to the many advantages to be gained from taking, as he does, the long view of our history.

Princeton University

WESLEY FRANK CRAVEN

The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time. By CHARLES A. JOHNSON. (Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955. xiv, 325 p. Illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. \$5.00.)

Frontier manifestations of religious feeling have always received due attention from regional historians and others, partly, perhaps, because of the fascination which the frontier proper has always had for the American imagination, and partly because of the steady streams of writing which the several churches involved have themselves generated. Frontier religion was earnest and picturesque, and engrossed the energies of numerous talented individuals and sects. Although the camp meeting was recognized as a powerful and controversial instrument of social and religious development on the frontier, peculiarly adapted to Methodist policy, it has never heretofore been systematically studied.

Dr. Johnson properly pays tribute to Professor William W. Sweet, whose work has done so much to give form and proportion to American church history. He discusses the origins of the camp meeting in the careless conditions of the frontier and its lack of established churches and church buildings. He reviews the year of the Great Awakening, 1800, with its waves of reports of agitated revival meetings, and gives particular attention to the famous six-day camp meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, which, in August, 1801, attracted anywhere from ten thousand to twenty-five thousand persons in what must have been a most extraordinary session. The revivals roll on through the decade, in its earliest years often bringing together Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists in "Union" meetings, but, increasingly, falling to the circuit riders of Methodism, and attracting the growing criticism (and, possibly, on occasion, envy) of partisans of a more rational approach to salvation. Needless to say, the camp meeting did not wholly die, even when the frontier melted into more formal communities. The message of redemption preached by the evangelists was too stirring, the desire for emotional self-expression too deep in Americans for the camp meeting to be wholly abandoned. But the great moments of the opening years of the century were to remain high points in American religious experience.

Dr. Johnson examines the roles of the several sects in the West, the differences and schisms among church leaders which reflected the dissatisfaction of dissidents with rigid Calvinistic doctrine and conservative church administration. In this climate of opinion, the camp meeting flourished and matured. There were more than a thousand earthquakes recorded in the Mississippi Valley region, in a few months of 1811 and 1812. It is not surprising that the dedicated preachers of Methodism, ready to impart, as Rev. Lorenzo Dow once did, the latest news from Hell, or to depict and irradiate the glories of salvation, as the great Bishop of Methodism, Francis Asbury, and many of his disciples so vividly did, would have listeners and attendants in abundance. In due course, the camp meeting acquired form and even ground rules. Dr. Johnson carefully examines the notorious charges

which have tended to be identified with the lore of the camp meeting: immorality, erratic behavior, cynical exploitation of emotional frenzy. He seems to feel that the camp meeting probably lost its popularity, as much from the fact that it became stereotyped in character as from its emphasis on emotional excess. Maturity lessened the excitement which it ordinarily conjured up, and with more sedate and decorous behavior, the camp meeting lost one of its strategic reasons for being.

Dr. Johnson does not minimize the gaudy aspects of revivalism and its results. Transported communicants fell, jerked, danced, ran, rolled, and sang. At the same time, the camp meeting was, obviously, a means for bringing people together, as well as an avenue to grace. Tribute is paid to the great evangelists, usually self-educated and democratic in temperament, who placed great burdens of work upon their own backs, and with sermons, books, and neighborly concern brought the message of their church to the frontier. Whether their followers were as regenerated in spirit as their emotions often led them to believe may be and is questioned; but the camp meeting played its role as a civilizing force on the frontier, as well as a social cathartic.

Readers will take their own notes, during their examination of Dr. Johnson's study, of more or less significance to others. Some of the preachers mentioned in passing might have been more extensively identified. It seems hardly sufficient to note John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Oneida Community, as a "nineteenth-century eccentric philosopher" (p. 94). Deserved tribute is paid to the work of the late Professor George P. Jackson in the field of white spirituals (p. 206), but Dr. Johnson does not notice that Jackson's work did not adequately estimate the meaning of the Negro spirituals. Such points are not central to the substance of *The Frontier Camp Meeting*, which traces most satisfactorily the history of the institution.

Antioch College

LOUIS FILLER

Booker T. Washington and the Negro's Place in American Life. By SAMUEL R. SPENCER, JR. [Library of American Biography.] Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955. xii, 212 p. Bibliography, index. \$3.00.)

This reviewer agrees with Oscar Handlin that Professor Spencer's study of Booker Washington is a superbly told story. Though it is evident that the author has a profound respect for his subject and is ever willing to give him the benefit of the doubt in any historical situation, he has, nevertheless, cast Washington in a more accurate social setting than have most of the previous biographical studies with which the reviewer is familiar. It is gratifying to find a venture in the history of American minority groups that does not revolve around the great man theory. Washington was in and of his times. He was the medial slide on the racial relations slide rule of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Professor Spencer's study deals with two distinct aspects of Washington, aspects that do not necessarily meld. First, there is the simply, naïvely, and at times delicately told life history. Perhaps the limited length of the biography required this sort of telling. Yet, one is loath to accept some generalizations that attend this simple telling: the "irrelevancy of the parentage of slave children"; the statement that Washington's mother "*though only a slave woman . . .* was to him the 'noblest embodiment of womanhood'"; or the statement that "since segregation practices had not by that time crystallized into law or even into tradition, Negroes and *dis-solute* whites lived together." (Italics are the reviewer's.) In a generally good biography we should like to eliminate such uncritical generalizations as the foregoing and this one in addition—"the sense of values which Washington possessed was molded from the Puritan strain in his background."

But these generalizations are of much less importance than the discerning analysis Spencer has made of Washington as a social force in the United States during and since his lifetime. This is the second major aspect of the study.

Several factors developed in the Booker Washington story seem to have great meaning for our times. It is evident, as Spencer has pointed out, that Washington was devoid of racial prejudice and racial antipathies. He was ever advocating accord as if it were easy to achieve if folks would only put their minds and hands to it, especially their hands. He was the friend and the mouthpiece of the wealthiest socially-minded while serving as the Great God Brown of the Negro masses. Only ideologically was he a foe to any group within or without the race with which he was identified. It is only within this framework of ideological differences that the true meaning of Washington can be interpreted. He was a contrast conception. He was safe and secure in his middle-of-the-road approach to social adjustment; those who opposed him, ideologically, were not. All people needed him—some as leader, some as mediator, some as foil.

Washington should be remembered for a few things other than those for which he is so well known. Certainly, he gave to American education the Negro's first major secular secondary school. From Tuskegee and Washington came a new force in behalf of vocational education, a force that neither organized labor nor industry was supplying at that time. Beyond these is a sheaf of traits that typify the successful free enterpriser. Washington ever took the calculated risk in his social and professional affairs; no step or measure seemed to be taken without deliberate choice. Furthermore, Washington seems to have antedated the modern corporation when he remarked about his second wife-to-be, "What an institution I could make with her help."

History cannot make a "great brain" out of Booker Washington. In contemporary language, he was a "big-time-operator." Though homely of mien and of speech, he got things done by people who had never done them before and in ways of which many had not even dreamed. Whether his

contemporaries liked him or not is relatively unimportant. He got things done. Professor Spencer says that "to criticize his methods is to make the facile assumption that he had some choice in the matter." Well, being Booker Washington, he did have some choice, and within that choice "he did what was possible . . . and did it to the utmost." Scholars may well continue to study and define the social situation of which Washington was a part with the insights and incisiveness that this author unfolds.

Haverford College

IRA DE A. REID

Henry George. By CHARLES ALBRO BARKER. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955. xviii, 696 p. Frontispiece, bibliographical note, index. \$9.50.)

"I propose to seek the law which associates poverty with progress, and increases want with advancing wealth," Henry George wrote in 1879 in *Progress and Poverty*. The present state of political economy, he continued forthrightly, "does not explain the persistence of poverty amid advancing wealth in a manner which accords with the deep-seated perceptions of men."

Whatever else might be said, Henry George, whose Philadelphia birthplace lay almost within the shadow of Independence Hall, had indeed put his finger on a major enigma of industrial society. In his indelibly alliterative and paradoxical fashion, he directed attention to America's unemployment, poverty, and suffering, which in his experience was too often surrounded by gilded splendor. More dramatically than anyone else, in *Progress and Poverty* and subsequently in *Social Problems, Protection or Free Trade, and The Condition of Labor*, he articulated those nagging questions which underlay the popular discontents of his age. As his son rephrased them later on: "Why in a land so bountifully blest, with enough and more than enough for all, should there be such inequality of conditions? . . . Was this intended in the order of things?" Or was there not somewhere either explanation or solution, perhaps even, as George himself urged, "some simple yet sovereign remedy." Indeed, George's own explanation was simple enough: "Poverty deepens as wealth increases, and wages are forced down while productive power grows, because land, which is the source of all wealth and the field of all labor is monopolized." So was his solution: "We must make land common property." And also the means he proffered, the scheme which in time would evolve into the memorable "single tax." For George's fundamental premise was rooted in an entirely monopolistic definition of rent, with the result that private ownership of land inevitably led to the expropriation by the few of wealth which was created by the many and which rightfully belonged to society. Therefore, his solution was simply to abolish all taxes save those on land values. He would by one means or another "appropriate rent by taxation," and employ the proceeds for the welfare of society. Essentially, this was the message of *Progress and Poverty* and the

gospel according to Henry George, which spread so quickly far and wide that its author became one of the foremost lay evangels of modern times. But strangely for so influential a figure, no biography has existed until now of anything like definitive proportions.

Charles Albro Barker has now supplied much of what has been lacking. His biography of Henry George is considerably more than its title alone might suggest. Not only are the details of George's life accounted for meticulously, together with the painstakingly assembled record of his intellectual development and maturation, but the eventful history of *Progress and Poverty* itself as well as of George's other writings is included. Although *Henry George* is neither a literary classic nor great biography, it is nevertheless an important book because of its thoroughness, its critical balance, and its discursive passages of cool analysis. At last, the world has a scholarly summing-up in impressive proportions of the life and work of this self-trained thinker who forced a belated recognition of wealth's "unearned increment" upon professional economists, and prepared the way for a great many modern reform movements.

Thus, instead of the familiar stereotype of a utopian rebel preaching a hypnotic panacea, Professor Barker's Henry George stands forth in the mainstream of middle-class reform, rooted in Christianity and natural rights, devoted to free trade, land reform, antimonopolism, and democracy. His single tax is shown for what it was after all, largely "a derivation from him, . . . less his concern than the concern of his followers." We are reminded that free trade was George's first major plank of economic dogma. The destruction of land monopoly was next, yet for a long time he regarded land-value taxation as only one possible means to that end. He was also aware of the peculiar properties of certain natural monopolies, even before he wrote *Progress and Poverty*, and favored public ownership for them. But whenever business was competitive, he defended private enterprise as essential to liberty itself. Even his onslaughts against policies of church or state were intrinsically conservative, and designed to correct abuses rather than to turn institutions upside down. His personal courage was remarkable; he delighted in public controversy for its educational effects. "At last I am famous," he once exulted, after reading denunciations hurled at him by *The Times*. Now, thanks to Professor Barker's diligence, Henry George's fame will be better understood by his posterity.

Bryn Mawr College

ARTHUR P. DUDDEN

A Goodly Heritage. Earliest Wills on an American Frontier. By ELLA CHALFANT. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1955. xiv, 242 p. Illustrations, bibliography, appendices, index. \$3.00.)

For the historian, as well as the genealogist, wills are revealing documents, particularly when they constitute much of the written legacy of a

frontier region. In her compilation and analysis of the earliest wills of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (covering in general the years 1789-1820), Miss Chalfant has provided researchers in many fields with source material on the social, economic, and even on the cultural life of this area. Of equal importance is the biographical data contained in these wills and in the author's discussion of them.

The arrangement of wills is more than a mere listing: they are presented by type (dictated and holograph) and by particular emphasis (slavery, indenture, and apprenticeship, religion and education, women in wills and women's wills, Pittsburgh as a western frontier, and the fabric of Pittsburgh). There is also a chapter on four early intestates. All are brought into a whole by Miss Chalfant's running comments on the wills themselves, their authors, and their significance. In addition, Miss Chalfant has provided in an appendix an alphabetical index of names in the first three will books of Allegheny County.

Particular mention should be made of the unique dust jacket of this book. Not only is it attractive, displaying the signatures of the testators, but on the inside of its double fold it contains a reproduction of a 1784 map of the Manor of Pittsburgh, a plan of lots made for the Penns by Colonel George Woods. It is to be hoped that libraries, in stripping the book for shelving, will not overlook this map.

Counterfeiting in Colonial Pennsylvania. By KENNETH SCOTT. [Numismatic Notes and Monographs No. 132.] (New York: The American Numismatic Society, 1955. xi, 168 p. Illustrations, index. \$4.00.)

This book, based on a commendable amount of original research in manuscript collections, court records, newspapers, and other primary and secondary sources, is a compendium of instances of counterfeiting, their detection and punishment in colonial Pennsylvania. While it might be suspected that the records of counterfeiting would center around the metropolis of Philadelphia, it is interesting to learn that the outlying counties of Bucks, Lancaster, York, and Chester, as well as the Lower Counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex, were similarly infected. Mr. Scott's study indicates, in fact, that the incidence of the crime was widespread and frequent.

Mr. Scott points out that the amount of money counterfeited during the colonial period can never be precisely ascertained, but that enough bad money was passed to create a serious situation with evil effects on the credit of the provincial paper currency. To a great extent, counterfeit money was imported from Ireland and Europe, although some was manufactured locally. Those who "uttered" counterfeit money in Pennsylvania were subject to a variety of punishments. Four were executed, but many received no punishment at all because of their ability to break jail and flee. *Counter-*

feiting in Colonial Pennsylvania, dedicated to the United States Secret Service, is a factual work, apparently encyclopedic in coverage.

Twenty-five Years of Service, 1930-1955. By EUGENE E. DOLL. (Philadelphia: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Inc., 1955. 28 p. Illustrations.)

The Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, whose home was originally built for the historic Second Bank of the United States on lower Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, was born in 1930, an expression of the humanitarian and philanthropic upsurge following the First World War. Its purpose is to foster American-German friendship and cultural exchange.

Through generous grants of money, notably the Oberlaender Trust, the Foundation has carried on a varied program of activities in America and Germany. Persons of reputation in the broad field of public welfare have been sent to Germany to observe foreign methods; there have been exchanges of professors and students; much has been done with film libraries, publications, art exhibits, and music programs. During the war, the curtailment of foreign activity turned the Foundation's emphasis to America's German heritage. Outstanding among its efforts was the compilation of the Union Catalogue of Americana Germanica, a valuable index to any study of German Americans and also to the study of general American history. Since the war, many of the original aspects of the Foundation's program have been resumed in the interests of peace, understanding, and cooperation between Germany and the United States.

Eugene Doll has written an absorbing brief history of the first twenty-five years of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation.

THE PAPERS OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Columbia University is preparing for publication a new and complete edition of the papers of Alexander Hamilton. The editors wish to locate any letters to or from Hamilton and any other Hamilton documents that are in private hands. If anyone possesses such documents, the editors would greatly appreciate any information on their whereabouts and availability. Correspondence should be directed to Harold C. Syrett, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, Columbia University, New York 27, N. Y.

