BOOK REVIEWS


The contributions of the late Frederick J. Turner to the interpretation of American history, now generally recognized as more influential than those of any other single individual, were made mainly through his teaching and through his numerous essays, which were usually read at meetings of societies and issued in their publications. In 1920 he brought together a number of these essays in a volume entitled *The Frontier in American History,* and before his death in 1932 he made plans for reprinting other essays in a companion volume. These plans have now been carried out by Dr. Farrand with the assistance of Professor Avery Craven. The twelve essays in this volume range in date of original publication from 1895 to 1922. Five of them appeared before the author's translation from Wisconsin to Harvard and the remainder after that event.

First place in the volume is given appropriately to a paper on "Problems in American History," which was presented at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. This is in effect a plea for "the conception of history as the study designed to enable a people to understand itself, by understanding its origins and development in all the main departments of human life." Stress is laid at the outset on the necessity of "garnering the scattered material" for American history and making it available by means of bibliographies and indexes. The special opportunity offered by American history for contributing to an "understanding of the processes of social development" is pointed out, and many fields in need of cultivation are indicated. Despite the large amount of work that has been done in some of these fields since the paper was written, students in search of topics for theses can still profit by its suggestions.

The first essay in point of time is the one on "Western State-making in the Revolutionary Era" (1895). This followed naturally after "The Significance of the Frontier," in which stress was laid upon the influence of the frontier on American institutional development, and tells the stories of Vandalia, Transylvania, Westsylvania, Franklin, and other projects for colonies or states in the Appalachian Plateau. Many details have been added to these stories by later investigators but Turner's interpretations and conclusions are
still valid. The only other narrative essays in the volume are two in the field of diplomacy: "The Origin of Genet's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas" (1898) and "The Policy of France toward the Mississippi Valley in the Period of Washington and Adams" (1905), both of which are based largely on extensive bodies of documents edited by Turner for the American Historical Association. These detailed studies are still valuable, but they should be checked with the later works of other scholars, such as Dr. Paul C. Phillips, who have had access to additional documents and who in some cases have arrived at different conclusions.

Four of the essays deal specifically with sectionalism and one with geographic influences. In them is developed the thesis that sectionalism has been from the outset and will continue to be a major force in American history. Its origin is to be sought in differences in physical environment, in the racial and institutional background of the settlers, and in stages of development. The influence of the last of these causes is diminishing with the passage of time, but the other two continue to operate with full vigor despite the forces of nationalism and standardization. In general it may be said that the nation and the sections tend to increase in importance at the expense of the states and the localities. The same forces that divided Europe into independent nations have operated in the great physiographic provinces of the United States, though less violently, but the nation has been held together by the national political parties, which have to adjust their programs to the interests of different sections; by the compromises of the national government, which are compared to European treaties; and by the influence of minority elements and diverse regions within the larger sections. Turner recognizes the tendency of industrialization to develop economic classes with diverse interests within the section and allied with similar classes in other sections, but he does not give this tendency as much consideration as its importance would seem to warrant.

Two of the essays deal with recent American history. An address delivered at Clark University in 1924 sketches the transformation of the American scene in the quarter century "Since the Foundation" of that institution. Emphasis is laid upon urbanization, immigration and the changing composition of the population, inventions and their results, the exhaustion of natural resources, the concentration of wealth, labor organization, the advance of education, progressive leadership in politics, and the prospect of overpopulation. Another essay, published in 1926, deals with the development of the trans-Mississippi West in the preceding half century. No one who reads
these two chapters can doubt that Turner was aware of vital forces other than the frontier and sectionalism in American history.

The concept of the section as an important factor in American history has special value for western Pennsylvania, which has much more significance as the heart of a great physiographic province—the Allegheny Plateau—than as the western end of an eastern state. The early recognition of the natural unity of this section is clearly indicated in the essay on western state-making. That western Pennsylvania was involved in the early diplomatic problems concerning the Mississippi Valley is implied in the essays on French policy, and attention is called to the interest of the French minister in the Whiskey Insurrection (p. 161). In the discussion of the streams of settlers that colonized the West prior to the Civil War (p. 295–297) the flood of Pennsylvanians and especially western Pennsylvanians that poured down the Ohio Valley is not recognized. The distinction between the New England-New York and the southern zones of settlement in the Old Northwest is somewhat blurred by the fact that Pennsylvanians settled in large numbers in both zones and were the predominant element in considerable areas. Here as elsewhere their rôle was probably that of the mediator between the other elements.

The publication of these scattered essays in an attractive volume is a distinct service to teachers, students, and general readers, to many of whom they would otherwise be unavailable. Even the research scholar will find the volume a great convenience, but he will look forward with even greater interest to the publication of the volume to which Turner devoted his last years—"The United States, 1830–1850: The Nation and Its Sections."

*Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey*  
*SOLON J. BUCK*


Three fundamental attributes of a valuable biography are an interesting and worthy subject, satisfactory documentary materials, and the proper kind of authorship. There may be other aspects, but these three are essential. Jeffery, Lord Amherst, is beyond doubt an excellent subject for a good biography, as this book amply reveals. His rôle in America from 1758 to 1763 and in England during the American Revolution has long been familiar from widely scattered documents already in print and often used in American and English historiography. But the discovery of seventeen chests of Jeffery