

thor sustains his thesis that "the first permanent white settlements established in 1788 in the Northwest Territory were merely extensions further west, at various points, of the frontier white settlement already existing in Pennsylvania and Virginia." Although the leaders of these settlements were easterners, Dr. Downes proves that in each case settlement sites were chosen with reference to existing frontier communities and that the agrarian, religious, and commercial practices of the new frontier were drawn largely from the old frontier. The Monongahela boat yards were favorite setting off points, and more than might be suspected, Ohio's first settlers were already experienced frontiersmen.

According to the author, settlers were not the only contribution of contiguous and near-by frontiers to the Ohio frontier. Already schooled in the ways of the frontier, pioneer Ohio settlers demanded cheap lands and were not averse to isolated settlements. Existing frontier influences were largely responsible for the credit system in the sale of public lands. In a large measure the success of early Ohio residents in defending themselves against Indian attacks is also rightly attributed to the presence among them of seasoned scouts from Pennsylvania and Kentucky. Moreover, the liberalizing influences of the old frontier extended to the new and tended to make more liberal its institutions, particularly the church.

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CHARLES HENRY AMBLER

*Oliver Hazard Perry.* By CHARLES J. DUTTON. (New York and Toronto, Longmans, Green and Co., 1935. xi, 308 p. Illustrations.)

FEW readers of American history and all too few school and college teachers and students realize the tremendous significance to the United States of the spectacular American victory on Lake Erie on September 10, 1813; nor do they give proper value to the influence upon the outcome of that battle of Lieutenant Perry's personal magnetism and his enthusiastic handling of his fleet and men. Most readers and students but dimly perceive the galling relations between England and the United States that followed the Revolution. That war had been fought and won, but the American people were very far from enjoying the expected freedom from what were then feelingly regarded as the ambitious greed and pernicious activities of Great Britain. During the succeeding period the United States was harassed upon the sea, and even in its harbors by Britain's sea-going crews. In the course of these depredations and of the war that followed in 1812, much of the country's attention was con-

centrated upon casualties occurring upon the sea, but the frontier settlements were keenly alive to the atrocities suffered in the frequent raids upon their defenseless homes and villages made by British troops and their Indian allies from the West and the lake regions. American frontiersmen had suffered severely in those raids, and Hull's surrender of Detroit had greatly encouraged Chief Tecumseh's ambition to found a great Indian empire that would sweep the whites from the land. The English had also confidently expected to organize the vast trans-Allegheny region into an English empire, and the British fleet on Lake Erie was the force relied upon, in conjunction with Proctor's army at Malden, to achieve this result.

At a time when the British did actually control Lake Erie and much of the old Northwest, Lieutenant Perry quietly journeyed to Erietown, took command of the building of a fleet from the green oaks growing on the harbor banks, rushed it to completion, and sailed in search of his foe at the upper end of the lake. The contest that ensued centered around Perry and his ship. His second-in-command left him unsupported. After one of the hottest naval engagements on record, the victorious Perry was gratified to be able to advise General Harrison, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." His victory was universally hailed by the populace with heartening enthusiasm. Eventually it brought to the United States the undisputed sovereignty over the vast "Trans-Allegheny empire," and it inspired the successful consummation of a war that brought complete independence to the American people, as well as a lasting peace with the mother country.

The story of this period and the stirring events on Lake Erie, as well as of the later battle of the Thames, is well and vividly told by Mr. Dutton. He is in error as to the date when the French first entered Presque Isle harbor and built a fort, which was April, 1753, not 1749, but his statements seem otherwise accurate. Vivid details are interestingly described in short, crisp sentences, and the reader's attention is closely held to the end. The author emphasizes Perry's charming personality and also the driving and magnetic power of his friendly enthusiasm. The results of the conflict are clearly shown. The reader is, however, impressed with the author's exposition of what was often spoken of at the time as "Perry's Luck"; and also with his relation of the ill-founded feeling of assurance among the British, which runs throughout the story. The author very cleverly shows the tremendous advantages that accrued to the United States from this world-famous battle far away from the haunts of civilized industry, in the defeat of British plans for an American empire, and in the

complete collapse of Tecumseh's dream of sweeping the whites from the land. Mr. Dutton has presented a readable book; it is a fine addition to "Perryana."

*Erie County Historical Society*

JOHN ELMER REED

*Ethelbert Nevin*. By JOHN TASKER HOWARD. (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1935. xiv, 423 p. Illustrations.)

UNLIKE Mr. Howard's recent work on Stephen Foster, this book is compiled from a wide variety of source materials: Ethelbert Nevin's widow and many of his relatives and friends were able to furnish the author with a quantity of information, as well as diaries, letters, and documents pertaining to the life of the composer. From the resultant welter of facts and ideas emerges a biography somewhat overburdened with trivialities and sentimental detail but nevertheless of considerable human interest. To those concerned with Nevin's compositions and with his place in the musical sun, the book has a specific appeal; to loyal Pittsburghers alert to discover the ways of life of the more-than-ordinary mortals who derived from the vicinity, it will also have special meaning; and for the lay reader it will convey a picture, not devoid of charm, of American family life in the late nineteenth century and of a man whose manner of thinking and feeling was somewhat typical of his day.

Ethelbert Nevin was born in 1862 at "Vineacre," in Edgeworth, Pennsylvania, about fifteen miles down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh. Although a great part of his life, both before and after his marriage, was lived abroad and in Boston and New York, this family homestead exerted a strong influence on him and strikes a keynote in the background against which he moved. This background is presented mostly through the medium of excerpts from letters and diaries, from which a sketchy picture of the life and conditions of the period emerges. Events in western Pennsylvania during the past two centuries are touched on in the discussion of Nevin's ancestry and the activities of his parents and grandparents. His father, Robert Peebles Nevin, was engaged from 1842 to 1870 in merchandising in Pittsburgh and later purchased an interest in and edited the Pittsburgh *Weekly Leader* and founded the *Pittsburgh Times*. Glimpses of the social and musical life of Pittsburgh and of Edgeworth, "a small residential community that was part of Sewickley," during the 1900's are afforded in the chapters on "Family," "Youth," "Musician," and "Vineacre," and the details of Nevin's wedding to Anne Paul of Edgewater, "a major social event in Pittsburgh," are set forth in the chapter entitled "Marriage." Particulars of family life and personal matters together with the com-