BOOK REVIEWS

With Rifle & Plow; Stories of the Western Pennsylvania Frontier. By J. E. Wright, Elisabeth M. Sellers, and Jeanette C. Shirk. (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1938. 212 p. Illustrations, map.)

This book, written for readers of junior high-school age, should serve admirably the purpose of popularizing the history of western Pennsylvania. Though the stories are cast in fictionalized form, with the characters holding conversations that no shorthand writer took down, the facts and most of the characters are historical, and the fictionalized aspects will serve to make the factual material more vivid and interesting to young readers. Thus the treatment of the fur trade is not a discussion but a story about the “King of the Traders,” George Croghan; and information on settlement and land problems is centered around a celebrated fist-fight to determine the ownership of a tract of land in Greene County.

Though stories in the book cover the period from the beginning of white penetration to 1794, the main emphasis is on warlike events—the French and Indian War, Pontiac’s War, the Revolution, Indian raids, and the Whiskey Rebellion. In fact, the reader may feel that there is too much rifle and too little plow to justify the co-ordination in the title. When the companion volume, Pioneer Life in Western Pennsylvania, has been published, the two together should give a more balanced picture of frontier existence than does With Rifle and Plow alone. Spirited illustrations by Alexander Ross and end-paper-maps showing the trails into the region as well as its geographic features add much to the interest and value of the book.

Washington, D. C.  
Elizabeth Hawthorn Buck


From Promethean dawn to air-raid blackouts, the story of man’s awe-full then familiar trafficking with the gods of light and power has been so inti-