children." But so many of these children were the fathers and mothers of our first families that the record becomes a fascinating backward glance at the days when the first Negleys, Roelings, Masseys, Boyds, Craigs, Guthries, Hecks, Harbisons, and others whose names are familiar, came here as pilgrims and strangers. Accounts of savage foray and fury, of land frauds and political chicanery, of church trials for the sin of getting drunk, of oil that spouted as liquid treasure richer than gold, fill the pages of the nostalgic historian who becomes volubly vituperative as he thinks of the sad decline since Bryan with his silver cross heralded the horrors of the New Deal. One feels that Mr. Harbison actually sees the shadow of the guillotine falling across his placid path.

The value of his book is in its review of time past, of days that should not be forgotten, when the Little Buffalo Creek flowed into the Big Buffalo, and that flowed into the Allegheny, and all flowed through or past the Depreciation Lands of an Old Deal that has now become part of a heroic past. Though the Allegheny Valley "had no Chaucer," Mr. Harbison has valiantly striven to make up for the deficiency.

_Carnegie Free Library of Allegheny_  

George Seibel


This is the second of the six-volume History of the State of Ohio being produced under the editorship of Dr. Carl Wittke and the sponsorship of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society. The author is associate professor of history at Ohio State University and is widely known for his published biographies of the Ohioans, Charles Hammond and John McLean, as well as for his coauthorship with Eugene H. Roseboom of _A History of Ohio_. The book is based on sound scholarship and is amply footnoted throughout. The period covered is rich in source material, including the magnificent newspaper collection at the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, dozens of travel books and memoirs, manuscript collections of such prominent Ohioans as Duncan McArthur, William Renick, Ethan A. Brown, John McLean, Joshua R. Giddings, Thomas Ewing, Charles Hammond, William Allen, and Edwin M. Stanton. Moreover the papers of such national figures as Henry Clay, Martin Van Buren, Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, and James K. Polk have been included by the author in his search for Ohio material. The book is copiously illustrated. Notable are the selections from the photographs by Professor Frank J. Roos, Jr., of early Ohio architecture.
The theme of the book, the passing of the frontier, is set off by the fact, as the editor points out, that 1825 marked the last killing of a white settler in Ohio by an Indian, and 1851 marked the creation of the last new county. In the first seven chapters this theme is carried out in various nonpolitical phases of life. The first chapter, on “The Ohio Scene,” surveys the peopling of Ohio through the settlement of the last frontier, or bog country of northwestern Ohio, the founding of the state’s main cities, and the development of the Queen City of the West, Cincinnati. In the second chapter, on “The People of Ohio,” the Indians are ushered out, the whites and negroes are ushered in, and the state is demonstrated as having arrived at real Ohio status by 1850, when 61.5% of its inhabitants were Ohio-born. The transition of agriculture from the frontier emphasis of 1825 to the settled farming of 1850 is symbolized by Ohio’s attainment in 1850 of first place as a corn-raising state, the improvement in methods of cultivation and grain acreage, the great variety of marketable crops, the disappearance of plentiful game, the appearance of large-scale cattle raising, droving, and breeding, stimulation of orchard and berry cultivation, the destruction of the forests, and the expansion of such industrial arts as salt manufacture, milling of all kinds, brickmaking, tanning, blast furnaces, coal mining, quarrying, meat packing, and factory building. The chapter on transportation traces commercial growth from the turnpike, flatboat, and keelboat stage through the canal era to the beginning of the railroad era, with specific emphasis on Cincinnati’s railroad connections with the South. The author has missed a splendid opportunity to develop fully the theme of the passing of the frontier in commerce by his failure to acquaint himself with the Ohio shallow-water keelboat life as described by western Pennsylvania’s Baldwin, and by ignoring the equally lusty life of the teamsters and “Canawlers,” whose brawling, lumbering course through Ohio’s history has left an indelible mark on Ohio folklore.

Three “social” chapters deal with the subjects of “Recreation and Sociability,” “Religion and Education,” and “Literature, Science and the Arts.” It is good to observe the author dipping a little into the “insides” of these subjects, as for examples by his citing of sample subjects of the debating societies, by exposing some of the contents of the physician’s medicine bag, and by giving something of the flavor of Lyman Beecher’s ministry in Cincinnati. The Western Reserve straight-lacedness of a Giddings is placed beside the more cosmopolitan conviviality of Cincinnati. The religious structure of Ohio absorbs the parochial organization of the Roman Catholics and throws off the unwanted Mormons. William Holmes McGuffey teaches at Miami University and writes his Eclectic Series. Samuel Lewis becomes a prophet of Ohio’s
public-school system as well as its first and last state school superintendent. Ohio’s many small colleges emerge. Timothy Flint begins the publication of the *Western Monthly Review* at Cincinnati; the religious sects all get out their journals; Jacob Barnet writes his *Notes* and Henry Howe his *Historical Collections of Ohio*; Stephen Foster lingers in Cincinnati long enough to compose “Oh! Susanna”; Nicholas Longworth becomes a patron of the arts. But the folk are not there. For instance, the fact that Foster caught something of the heart and song of the Negro while in Cincinnati is not apparent. Haydn societies are formed, churches get organs, Cincinnati’s annual “Sangerfest” begins, and favorite dance tunes are said to be the “Devil’s Dream” and “Fisher’s Hornpipe,” but never once does one catch the spirit of Ohio from a beery voice singing “She’s my freckle-faced, consumptive Mary Jane.” The book says that there were cockfights and horse races, but nobody will ever know what an early Ohio cockfight or horse race was like from such a matter-of-fact announcement. Once in a while the author gives us a glimpse, as when he permits us to read that on New Year’s eve “it was common for a party of masked men to go from house to house waking up the occupants by a volley from their guns. Then they would cry, ‘Happy New Year!’ and generally receive an invitation to enter the house for refreshments.”

The nine political chapters are done largely in the old tradition of campaign treatment. They open in 1825 with the Ohio Congressmen voting for Clay when the people of Ohio wanted Jackson, and close in 1849 with the Democrats, Whigs, and Free-soilers in the state legislature wrangling over the gerrymandering of the state and finally agreeing to submerge politics in the calling of a constitutional convention to make much needed amendments to the Ohio constitution of 1802. After wading through nine chapters of party campaigning, electioneering, and intrigue it is surprising to discover that Ohioans could view matters of public policy in any other light than that of party politics. The main subjects dealt with are the rise of the Whig and the Jackson Democratic parties, banking as a political issue (not as a commercial complex of the period), the panic of 1837 and its aftermath, the rise of the Ohio antislavery and abolition movement (the best political chapter of the nine), the election of a president, William Henry Harrison, from Ohio, and the growing conservatism of the Democratic party. The reviewer has read every word of this welter of politics, and has survived with little more than a knowledge of a lot of names properly labeled as to partisan preference, and a definite feeling that the author has concealed more of the political history of Ohio than he has revealed. An example of the author’s unbalanced treatment of politics is the fact that the erection of the state capitol is treated entirely in terms of the
political bickering concerning its location and construction without a word about it as a piece of architecture. The absurdity of the omission of this outstanding example of the Greek Revival style is heightened by the fact that the author has a section on architecture in which he actually refers to the "so-called Classic Revival" without mentioning the capitol.

The story of the actual political growth of Ohio between 1825 and 1850 is not in this book. There are plenty of election campaigns but no electoral law or custom, nothing of the psychology of the voter or of the candidate who became highly exercised over whether or not to have a United States Bank or to require bank stockholders to be liable for defaulted notes. The arts and devices of grooming the average run of candidates, the techniques of conventions and caucuses, the growth of courthouse politics, and an evaluation of campaign oratory are all subjects that the reader of history wants to know about. One of the most important forces which is part of Ohio politics today is the so-called "municipal interest of the counties," which was forming during the period of 1825-1851, when all the "old" counties were young and over twenty new ones were created. During this same period the offices of county recorder, surveyor, prosecutor, and treasurer were made elective instead of appointive. These facts and their significance are ignored. The expansion of the powers and responsibilities of the county officers, especially of the sheriff, is omitted. The service of justice in the courts from justice of the peace to the supreme court is missing, and the vast amount of source material in the Ohio Reports is untouched. The evolution of divorce proceedings from legislative to judicial status took place in this period. A great development took place in the practice of the administration of the law of equity. Neither of these subjects is treated. State finance and taxation are dealt with to some degree, as for instance in the introduction of the general property tax, but there is nothing on the problem of tax equalization which entered into a distinctive phase in 1825 with the establishment of county boards of revision. There is nothing of assessment, which was changed from a county to a township basis in the 1840's. The author mentions that there were 2,513 paupers receiving state aid in 1850, but says nothing about the policy and standards of the poorhouses, whose names were changed to county homes in 1850. In fulfillment of the editor's promise that the question of prison reform is to be treated (p. xii), the author mentions that ill-starred Ohio reformer, James Handasyd Perkins, as "an active leader in the cause of prison reform." There is nothing further on prisons or county jails. City government and the law of corporations are not adequately presented. It is to be hoped that the remaining volumes of this series will correct these and other deficiencies in the periods yet to be treated.

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