acquiring new blast furnaces, a major interest in the coal and coke industry, natural gas, and the tin plate industry, he decided to enter upon his greatest pioneer move—that of acquiring ore from the Lake Superior fields. He, more than any other individual, was responsible for opening up this virgin field of ore deposits just at the time the supply of ore in other parts of the country was disappearing. In chronological sequence, yet dramatic style, the author reviews the great industrial struggle that attended this pioneer move into the Great Lakes Country. The names of Rockefeller, Morgan, Carnegie, Frick, and others pass in review. One of the great epics of America's industrial history, the formation of the giant United States Steel Corporation, and Oliver's dramatic move in having his attorney follow Carnegie to Scotland and obtain secret information on the price paid by Morgan to Carnegie for his five-sixths interest in the Oliver Iron and Mining Company, is a revealing chapter of the way in which business deals were negotiated.

But Oliver's interests were not confined solely to iron and steel. He brought two new railroad routes, east and west, through Pittsburgh. Here one reads the first full account of the South Penn Railroad and its modern sequel, the Pennsylvania Turnpike. He developed the steel freight car to replace the old wooden cars. He also branched out into other fields. At the time of his death, he owned more shares of stock in the Calumet and Arizona Copper Company, and more stock in the Pittsburgh Coal Company, than any other individual. He was a pioneer in providing "slack-watering" in the Ohio River, which led to an all-year-round system of transportation. As a civic leader, he was a member of the board of the old Homeopathic Hospital, trustee of the Dollar Savings Bank, president of the Common Council of Pittsburgh, president of the Chamber of Commerce, a member and director of many social clubs. Although his business interests reached across the nation, he was always devoted to Pittsburgh and its people. This led him to become one of the largest (perhaps the largest) owner of downtown Pittsburgh property.

Mr. Evans has given us the life history of a colorful, forceful, and resourceful personality, as well as an excellent review of Pittsburgh's rise to her present industrial leadership of the world. And this the reviewer is the freer to say because he is not related to either the author or subject of this biography.  

University of Pittsburgh

John W. Oliver


This book might better have been called Henry Shreve and His Times, for
perhaps as much as half of it is connected with Shreve only by the most tenuous thread. It is a panoramic view of the Mississippi Valley in the first half of the nineteenth century, interesting and valuable in a way even though sometimes written down. But somehow Shreve fails to loom across the scene as the giant that the author tries to portray him. The fact of the matter is that the westward movement was too big to be hung on Henry Shreve as a peg.

Shreve, nevertheless, was important. He first went down the river as a youthful keelboat captain taking a flier in the fur and lead trades, though the skeptic may well doubt if he really revolutionized those businesses. An undoubted and sufficient claim to importance was his invention of the peculiar type of steamboat which displaced the Fulton type. Shreve built a hull which was essentially a barge floating on the surface and which carried its engine on the deck. In the shallow western waters its superiority to the deep-plowing Fulton steamers soon became evident.

Shreve was thus the man who made possible the tremendous development of western steamboating. It was to his credit also that he valiantly fought and won the battle to break the Fulton-Livingstone monopoly to close the Mississippi to boats other than its own. After this he invented a snag-pulling apparatus which he built into a steamboat and with this slowly and patiently pulled apart the great raft of driftwood which had been gathering in the Red River for centuries and which choked the stream for hundreds of miles. Shreveport is a well-deserved memorial to his name.

This reviewer cannot but wish that more attention had been paid to Shreve the man and his activities rather than to an attempt to illuminate the westward movement. The method adopted makes one wonder if there was really at hand more than enough material on Shreve himself to have made more than a magazine article.

University of Pittsburgh

LELAND D. BALDWIN

A Short History of Westmoreland County, the First County West of the Appalachians. By C. M. Bomberger. (Jeannette, Pa., Jeannette Publishing Co., 1941. 100 p. Maps, illustrations.)

In these days increasing emphasis is being placed on the teaching of local history in the public schools, as well as on stimulating the interest of older people in the origin and character of the American way of life as revealed in the history of their own communities. But such history has hitherto been largely limited to "cumbersome volumes," as the author of this work puts it, forbidding to young student and busy adult alike.

In place of the latter Mr. Bomberger offers a highly condensed, stimulating