

BOOK REVIEWS

Travels in America, 1816-1817. By EDOUARD DE MONTULÉ. Translated from the French by EDWARD D. SEEBER. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1951. 197 p.)

This work represents the faithful observations made by a French traveler on a trip of three thousand miles through the eastern United States just after the War of 1812. Montulé, a chevalier of the Legion of Honor, had a curiosity and eagerness to learn the characteristics of new localities, which he described in twenty-four letters dealing with the modes of travel, agriculture, the fauna and flora, the geology, and the industry of the localities visited, interspersed with charming and accurate observations on the characteristics of the American people, whom, for the most part, he learned to admire. His trip took him from "New-Yorck" (the spelling of proper names is usually preserved by the translator) to Philadelphia, thence by ship to the West Indies and New Orleans. From New Orleans he ascended the Mississippi and the Ohio to Louisville in the "Vesuvius," the third steamboat to ply these rivers. Built by Robert Fulton at Pittsburgh in 1814, and rebuilt after a fire in 1816 by Jasper Lynch, it burned wood as fuel. Its structure, new to the traveler, was described with great detail and wonder. This part of the trip required four weeks, during which frequent stops were made to refuel the boat, and an opportunity was given the author to go ashore for hunting and observation of the forests, homes and geology of the region, as well as the characteristics of the natives. He found the women of the midwest "much more attractive than in the region bordering the coast."

From the Falls of the Ohio at Louisville, Montulé continued his trip by stagecoach and horseback to Chillicothe, Frankfort, Lexington, along the Ohio (where he theorized on the origin, use and contents of the Indian mounds), through "New-Lancastre," across the Ohio to Wheeling, a city "by no means as wealthy as its position on the Ohio promised." On July 14, 1817, he reached Washington, Pennsylvania, "a pretty town situated on a well-cleared hill" but whose "accommodations were of the worst."

"I hurried on among rounded hills . . . and came in site of 'Pitzburg,' located on a strip of land at the confluence of two rivers. I then descended over a frightful, terrifying road . . . arrived at the banks of the Monongahela. I found a ferry which took me (and horse) across."

"Pitzburg, the oldest and, I believe the largest city of the western states, is admirably situated." He then describes shipbuilding, boats that reach the Atlantic, barges, and flat boats; the city's commerce; and in considerable detail, the manufacture of iron products and cut glass "that for finish and delicacy are almost the equal of those I have seen in Europe." To him the city had "a rather gloomy air" but the plan of the city was ingenious. "The streets are straight and perpendicular to the two rivers, without being so in relation to one another."

Leaving "Pitzburg," Montulé crossed the "Alleghany" and took the course of the Perry Highway (Route 19). At Harmony he found a "settlement beyond a doubt the finest of its kind that I have seen in the interior of America, the only one in which individual enterprise has been directed toward the common good." Passing through "delightful groves" he reached Mercer where he had "the finest view that I have ever beheld." Through swampy ground he made his way on horseback, alone, with little knowledge of English, past maple-sugar groves, along French Creek to Meadville, where the people "seemed much gayer" than elsewhere; on through Waterford over a "Suberb" turnpike to Erie, where he reviewed Presque Isle, the "Blok-House" (which he sketched), and Lake Erie, where he "admired the sunset on the lovely horizon."

From Erie Montulé traveled along the lake shore to "Buffaloe" and Niagara Falls, meeting many Indians. His description and drawings of the Falls are accurate and detailed. From Buffalo he rode on to Albany, sailed down to New York, and embarked for Leghorn on October 6, 1817.

Anyone interested in the development of the Ohio-Mississippi valley and especially of Western Pennsylvania will enjoy this charming translation made by Edward D. Seeber, professor of French at Indiana University.

Pittsburgh

CORTLANDT W. W. ELKIN

The Republicans and Federalists in Pennsylvania, 1790-1801: A Study in National Stimulus and Local Response. By HARRY MARLIN TINKCOM. (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg 1950. viii, 354 p.)

Professor Tinkcom's study traces the development of early political parties in the Keystone State during the crucial decade following the year 1790. The well documented, compact volume may appropriately