BOOK REVIEWS


Textbooks on the history of the American Frontier continue to roll from the presses. Since the pioneer text appeared some thirty-five years ago, Frederic L. Paxson's *History of the American Frontier* (1924), the texts now number more than a dozen. And generally speaking they are good texts, with each author treating the American frontier in a slightly different manner. Professor Clark not only attempts to incorporate most of the basic views, as well as the philosophy of the previous authors, but he ventures a step further. Considerable emphasis is given to the human factors, often tragic, sometimes humorous. In chapters such as "A Pioneer Way of Life," "Peopling the Great Frontier," "The Road to Santa Fé," "The Cattle Trail Frontier," and "The Indians' Last Stand," the reader relives the tragedies, hardships, sacrifices, and a surprising number of happy experiences that accompanied each succeeding wave of frontier settlements.

Beginning with Chapter Two, "The Allegheny Frontier" (Chapter One, "The Frontier in Motion," spreads over a number of events, some of which could be postponed until the concluding chapter), the author devotes the five following chapters to the expanding frontier until the settlements had reached the Ohio and the Mississippi Valleys. The clash of the British and French interests in the Ohio Valley, frontier wars, and the part played by the frontier in the American Revolution are reviewed in an interesting—at times, dramatic style. The author next demonstrates his pedagogical training. Having traced the frontier's geographical movement a thousand miles inland, he then looks at their way of life, their political, social, economic and religious practices. In these chapters the student relives again their experiences and gains a new insight into the daily lives of the early settlers.

Next follows a series of chapters that deal with the planting of the frontier settlements in the Mississippi Valley and beyond. This marked the period when the political forces of the frontier had to be reckoned with. Internal improvements, liberalized land laws, further protection from the Indians and their removal to more remote areas became yearly demands.
Beginning with Chapter Sixteen, "Beyond the Sabine," the author adopts a bolder, more sweeping style. With splashing strokes, he hurries the frontier waves across the plains and prairies over the Rockies into the Oregon country and into the Spanish Southwest. Chapters dealing with the "Santa Fé Trail," "Men Against the Mountains," "The Frontier in Oregon," and "The Long Arm of Manifest Destiny" recapture the actual happenings in all their naked, stark tragedy. "The Indians' Last Stand" and "Rounding Out a Continent" conclude the text.

Few authors—if any—have made use of such a vast amount of material. A glance at Clark's list of references reveals the extent of the collection of data dealing with Frontier History that have been assembled over the last half century. Textbooks, reference books, monographs, diaries, journals, memoirs, legal documents, personal correspondence, biographies and autobiographies, have appeared in such profusion that it is no longer possible for one individual to examine all of them. And yet, one has the feeling that Professor Clark, through a lifetime of research, has examined and used the most important of these collections. His illustrations will add much to the students' interest. If this reviewer were still teaching a course in "The History of the American Frontier" he would adopt this text.

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Back in 1926, the Lincoln Centennial Association made a pioneer effort to establish the events of Abraham Lincoln's life day by day by publishing a slim pamphlet entitled Lincoln in the Year 1858. Six other pamphlets setting forth in chronological order the events of Lincoln's life in the eighteen-fifties appeared subsequently at regular intervals: 1859 and 1860 in 1927, and 1854 in 1928, 1855 in 1929, 1856 and 1857 in 1930. These pamphlets represented a cooperative effort on the part of Lincoln scholars. In 1933, Paul