

American Jewish History, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati. His book on Lopez makes interesting reading.

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Joseph Ellicott and the Holland Land Company. By WILLIAM CHAZANOFF. (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1970. Pp. 235. Maps, index, bibliography. \$9.)

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, western New York was a wilderness owned by the Holland Land Company, a corporation formed by six Dutch banking houses. The rapidity with which the company disposed of its vast holding of 3.3 million acres would determine the rate at which New York would develop from a frontier to a settled community. The story of the Holland Land Company during these two crucial decades is synonymous with the career of its devoted Resident — Agent Joseph Ellicott who almost single-handedly determined the policy of the company in western New York. Technically, Ellicott was a subordinate of Agent-General Paul Busti, whose office was in Philadelphia, but Busti consistently followed Ellicott's advice.

As told by Professor Chazanoff, the story of the Holland Land Company and its Resident-Agent becomes inextricably entwined with the convolutions of the factious politics of New York State. Ellicott and the Holland Land Company were also involved with the Erie Canal Project, and with the development of banking on the frontier.

Joseph Ellicott and the Holland Land Company is not a parochial work. As Professor Chazanoff comments, Ellicott's life "represents a case study of how one section of the West grew." Ellicott, a bachelor, was unswerving in his loyalty to the Holland Land Company, and all of his political, social, and economic activities revolved around the company's interests. By virtue of the vast track of land which Ellicott controlled, he became a political figure. Initially he entered politics to further the interests of the company in the building of roads and in matters of taxation. Ultimately, he was to become the dominant Republican leader of western New York. Long aligned with De Witt Clinton, he split with Clinton in 1819 and joined Martin Van Buren's Bucktails, an unwise move which would help cost him his position as Resident-Agent.

Chazanoff portrays Ellicott as a highly industrious man of driving

ambition and mercurial personality. He credits Ellicott with surveying western New York and with beginning the campaign to create additional counties in western New York.

In his admiration for Ellicott, Chazanoff reports, but does not comment, on two serious character defects: nepotism and bribery. In an entire chapter devoted to "The Big Family" Chazanoff shows how important positions in the company were filled with members of Ellicott's family. Similarly, his brother Benjamin, and his nephew David Ellicott Evans found their political careers advanced by Joseph Ellicott's control of the Holland Land Company purchase. It must be admitted that these activities were not contrary to the norm of New York politics in the early nineteenth century when major families such as the Livingstons and Clintons dominated the scene. However, the bribery to which Ellicott resorted to achieve the creation of Genessee county deserves more than passing mention. Similarly, Ellicott's melancholia, hypochondria, and intemperate behavior towards customers also receives only passing mention until the last chapter. These factors together with the loss of Ellicott's political influence and the rising tide of nationalist sentiment against a foreign company led Agent-General Busti to request that Ellicott resign in 1821.

While Ellicott's career was instrumental in opening up western New York, a more balanced biography would have questioned the legitimacy of the tactics used and the sale policies of the Holland Land Company. Chazanoff comments that Ellicott's policy of selling small parcels of land to responsible settlers helped open up western New York to the small farmer. However, the price of company land, which is mentioned several times as a complaint of settlers, is not objectively analyzed. A comparison of the prices of the Holland Land Company's holdings with that of neighboring holdings such as W & J Willink, the Morriss Reserve, and the Phelps and Gordon Purchase would give the reader a more balanced view than the comparison with Canada where land sold at twelve cents an acre. The implication appears in several places that the prices of the Holland Land Company were high. If this is the case, then the company's policies also helped to hinder the settlement of western New York, a point contrary to the Chazanoff thesis.

Joseph Ellicott and the Holland Land Company is drawn from an impressive array of primary sources. Foremost among these are the Holland Land Company Papers housed in the City Archives of Amsterdam, and the Joseph Ellicott Collection and the Peter B. Porter Papers and Dr. Cyrenius Chapin Papers at the Buffalo and

Erie County Historical Society. The De Witt Clinton Papers at Columbia University, contemporary newspapers, and documents of the State of New York were also consulted.

While unduly favorable to Joseph Ellicott and the Holland Land Company, Dr. Chazanoff's work is an outstanding research job and a readable account of that critical early national period when New York surged ahead to become the Empire State. Chazanoff's work is skillfully organized and places the history of the Holland Land Company and the politics of western New York within the larger context of national trends.

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The Troubled Farmer. By EARL W. HAYTER. (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1968. Pp. 263. Illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index.)

Dr. Hayter is in the unique position of having, in some measure, lived the part of the troubled farmer as well as having the opportunity to do scholarly research on rural adjustment to industrialism. The book covers the period from 1850 to 1900 in America. Dr. Hayter observed the transitory period around the turn of the century as a child in the Dakota area.

The book is a moving, compassionate narrative which throws a ray of light on the complexities of the farmers' idealism in conflict with the realities of self-subsistence. Between the individual and his God stood many happenings to which the farmer had to put his own interpretation. In the light of present-day scientific advancements, the man of today can look back and say the farmer was stupid, superstitious, gullible, and grasping. Dr. Hayter plants a doubt in the mind of the reader, causing him to wonder if, given the same circumstances, he would have acted any differently.

For instance, did you know a major controversy was waged over whether or not cattle should be permitted to retain their horns, and why or why not? Just as big an issue for the farmer in favor of removing the horns, was how to do it. This section reads like science fiction, but it is all too true, and in horrible detail. The acts these gentle farmers perpetrated on their animals in the event of illness, would today be prosecuted by the humane society. If, perchance, the animal