

of "the land of the free and the home of the brave" had been given more than lip service.

After all, all Americans are part of a nation of immigrants!

*Executive Editor*

ALBERT W. BLOOM

*The Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh*

*The Land Office Business.* By MALCOLM J. ROHRBOUGH. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968. Pp. 331. \$2.50.)

Despite the pedestrian style of *The Land Office Business*, this *tour de force* of historical scholarship treats the problems of the government in disposing of the public domain between the 1780s and the Jacksonian period. While discussing the impact on the Land Office of major historic events such as the panic of 1819 and Jackson's Specie Circular, the narrative generally discusses the Land Office as though it were in an isolation booth from the mainstream of American history. Rohrbough's extensive research is impressive. The principal sources include: the correspondence of the Land Office in the National Archives, the correspondence of the Treasury Department, newspapers and periodicals, the correspondence of land agents, and numerous secondary works.

The principal drawback of this book is pedantry. Rohrbough's literary style is a straitjacket tied by slavish dependence on the primary sources. This is made all the more tedious by adherence to a DNA-like string of quotations often containing archaic verbiage which hinders the flow of the narrative. A striking example of Rohrbough's pedantry is his reference on page 294 to the fact that "Few Curtii are to be found in the present age." Hopefully, Rohrbough's resurrection of an unexplained archaism will be no more successful than President Truman's rehabilitation of "snollygosters."

One wishes that Rohrbough would have been more successful in meshing the great trends of American history with his recital of Land Office policy and practice. As a case in point, Rohrbough mentions in passing the favored treatment of the rich and powerful by Land Office agents during the Jacksonian period. The significance of this treatment, together with the entrepreneurial fever of speculators, including Land Office agents, might have received fuller and more colorful development, especially as Rohrbough interprets this period as a water-

shed in the history of the Land Office. Although describing the 1830s as a period of "changing ethical standards," Rohrbough fails to adequately analyze those standards in a manner which would shed further light on the vexingly enigmatic Jacksonian period. The Specie Circular and the ensuing panic of 1837 marked the decline of Land Office business as a dominant force in American life. After 1841, sales of public land sank to a low of \$1,500,000 from a high of \$7,000,000 in 1837. Thereafter, "a new world was emerging" which was urban and industrial. Responding to the changing American environment, Congress paid less heed to the "colorful defenses" of the squatters in the halls of the Capitol and listened with growing infatuation to the whistles of industry. Unfortunately, Rohrbough fails to graphically portray the "colorful defenses" of those squatters.

Those interested in administrative history will find *The Land Office Business* to be an indispensable reference work for the history of the Land Office legislation and the details of procedures used during the heyday of the Land Office. Scholars of the early national period and scholars of social history will find this book lacking in insightful presentation of the role of the Land Office in the daily lives of the average settler.

*West Liberty State College*  
*West Virginia*

KENNETH R. NODYNE

*Viewing Pennsylvania Trolleys.* By KENNETH C. SPRINGIRTH. (4720 Cliff Drive, Erie, Pa. Privately printed. Pp. 177. Illustrations. \$7.50.)

Today there is only one trolley line remaining in all of southwestern Pennsylvania, yet, surprisingly, only about forty years ago the area was served with a network of interurban trolley connections. A little before the beginning of the Great Depression you could go almost anywhere by trolley. Lines ran into and through Beaver County and into Ohio; through Washington County to Wheeling and Moundsville in West Virginia; through Fayette County almost to Morgantown, West Virginia; and all over Westmoreland County.

There were connections in Butler and New Castle that would take you to Detroit, Chicago, and into Wisconsin, or down through Ohio and Kentucky, beyond Louisville. If you went east instead of south or