

*Indiana County 175th Anniversary History. Volume 3: The Indiana County Reader.* By CLARENCE D. STEPHENSON. (Indiana, Pennsylvania: The A. G. Halldin Publishing Company, 1979. Pp. xiv, 650. Illustrations. \$25.00.)

Volume 3 is the second of Stephenson's projected five-volume history of Indiana County to be published. Although the title of this volume leads the reader to expect selections culled from the wide range of sources consulted during the author's long work on his subject, the bulk of what he presents is taken from Indiana County newspapers. Of the more than 200 items and 650 pages in Volume 3, well over half are excerpts from newspapers, and his selections from the twentieth century are almost entirely taken from them. One can wonder about the economy as well as the wisdom of reprinting so many items from this source.

It is not entirely clear what Stephenson intended to accomplish with this "compilation" of materials, but clearly it was not intended for professional historians. There are, however, several audiences which might find the book useful and entertaining. An enterprising teacher of American history could mine Stephenson's selections for a variety of assignments. Antiquarians and those interested in the anecdotal will also find Volume 3 rewarding. There are plenty of "firsts" and "lasts." "Indiana County's First Radio Broadcast" and "Last Passenger Mail Train on Indiana Branch of PRR" are among the offerings.

But this book lacks balance. The author includes, for example, some interesting material on the antislavery movement in Indiana County, a solid enough topic, but almost nothing on immigration or the organization of labor. Historians commonly have trouble in bringing more recent events into perspective, and Stephenson has not escaped this problem. In his selections to illustrate Indiana County in the twentieth century, Stephenson seems especially to lose his vision of what is historically significant, and he offers items such as "IUP Fraternity Praised" and "Jim Nance, Wrestling Champ, Returns Home."

Perhaps the greatest problem with Stephenson's Volume 3 is that his editing, most often absent, is inconsistent and not especially helpful. He does give the reader some aid with unfamiliar names and places with his earlier selections, but almost none with more recent materials, and he seldom suggests anything about the importance of a selection. One can praise his audacious undertaking and his diligent digging for data, but one can also wish that he had given us some explanation

of the significance of his materials and their relationship to Volume 1 (already published) and Volume 2 (to be published next) which provide the chronological narrative for the history of Indiana County. One could also speculate that part of Stephenson's problem in handling the more recent materials results from his having completed Volume 3 before having written Volume 2.

Nonetheless, the book does have some strong points. Stephenson has included over 150 illustrations, mainly photographs. The reproductions are not always of high quality, but they are among the most interesting documents in the book. Moreover, some of his selections do an excellent job of presenting the "flavor" of the times. The layout is the same as for Volume 1. It is a sturdy book, but because so much is squeezed into only 650 pages, it is neither very attractive nor very easy to read, and major divisions within the book are not clearly set off. Again, much of this is understandable because the author is financing his own publication.

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