

New Mexico Historical Review

Volume 9 | Number 3

Article 5

7-1-1934

Book Reviews

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Recommended Citation

. "Book Reviews." *New Mexico Historical Review* 9, 3 (1934). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol9/iss3/5>

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Irrepressible Conflict, 1850-1865. By Arthur Charles Cole. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1934. Pp. xv-468. (vol. VII, A History of American Life). Illustrations, critical bibliography, and index. \$4.00.

This book is a healthy antidote to the post-World War pessimism and realism. If America could survive the trials of the 1850's there is hope for the future. Amidst the hustle and bustle of a rapidly expanding state, with the growing pains of a developing society, the shadow of civil war intruded. Not that the shadow is emphasized, however. Chapters XII-XV are devoted to the war period, but they do not substantiate Sherman's famous dictum unless we include in its category profiteering, graft in government, pro-war propaganda, stimulus to prostitution, and a forgotten idealism.

Professor Cole finds the basic cause of the Civil War in a divergent nationalism due to different social and economic structures separated by the Mason-Dixon line. A booming industrial North with faith in Democracy pitted against a static Southern agrarian society, resting on chattel slavery, struggling, too late, for economic self-sufficiency; "Cotton is King" had done its work too well. The pre-War years witnessed a gradual severing of the economic, social, and intellectual bonds, with the Southern society acquiring a "coherence, if not unity, on the eve of a struggle that was to determine its very right to exist." (p. 57.)

Chapters I-XI present a cross section of American life in the social and economic phases. The unity of the frontier disappeared in the Mississippi Valley. The northern half was bound to the North by railroads and industry and the Union was saved. Free homesteads were demanded; the merchant marine experienced its golden age with the fast sailing clipper; speculation was rife, only to be sobered

by a short-lived depression. The farmer prospered and labor was becoming class conscious.

The 1850's were a period of "isms" and reforms, largely confined to the North. Prohibition was tried. "It seemed to many . . . 'to deteriorate the quality of the liquor drunk under it, and to double its cost . . .'" (p. 162). Lager beer, popularized by the German immigrants, was a powerful opponent. "The outstanding fact in the anti-slavery cause of the fifties was the awakened conscience of the masses of the free states." (p. 262.)

Chapter XVI consists of an excellent critical bibliography of forty-two pages. The footnotes are interesting for their frequent citations to contemporary newspapers and periodicals.

FRANK D. REEVE.

University of New Mexico.

Colorado: The Story of a Western Commonwealth. By LeRoy R. Hafen. (The Peerless Publishing Company, Denver, 1933; 328 pages. Illustrated; index. \$4.00.)

Every so often it becomes necessary to rewrite history. Especially is this true as to the history of Western commonwealths. The march of events is apt to be not only rapid, but revolutionary. Fortunate are states such as Colorado in possessing a historian like Dr. LeRoy R. Hafen, a graduate of the University of California, and since 1924, historian of the State Historical Society of Colorado. His early volumes, *The Overland Mail*, *Broken Hand* and *Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region* are treasured in schools and libraries in all parts of the United States, but especially in the Rocky Mountain region.

Dr. Hafen has taught history in high school, was a teaching fellow at the University of California, has taught in Denver University and the University of Colorado, and is editor of the *Colorado Magazine*, published by the State Historical Society of Colorado.

Much more condensed than the three-volume history of Colorado which he compiled with James H. Baker in 1927, the newest history of Colorado is comparable in size with that by Lansing Bloom of the State of New Mexico, lately published for high school use.

Colorado looks back upon the same ancestry as New Mexico, not only in prehistoric times, but also more modern days. In southwestern Colorado are the monumental evidences of the early peoples who built the great terraced houses in the Chaco Canyon before they spread out to the San Juan country and the Mesa Verde further north.

It is fitting therefore that Dr. Hafen devotes a chapter to the results of the late archaeological research among the cliff-dwellers of that section. The Indians of the slopes and plains were of the same race, and Dr. Hafen in his chapter on "The Nomad Lords of Mountain and Plain," repeats the tribute of Chauncey Thomas: "Greek art and culture did not affect the Roman more than the Indian has affected the American, and in due time History will so record the fact."

In natural sequence is the chapter on discovery, beginning with Colorado and ending with Major Stephen H. Long's expedition up the Platte River in the summer of 1820. It was Major Long, who in his report labeled the entire plains region east of the Rockies "The Great American Desert," and who declared it was "uninhabitable by people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence."

Then came the days of the fur trade and of the Santa Fé Trail, with such heroes as Jedediah Smith, Kit Carson, Charles Bent and others who belong as much to New Mexico as they do to Colorado. In fact, the sovereignty which had its home in the Palace of the Governors at Santa Fé included all of Colorado, and even up to 1861 the southern portion of the later "Centennial State" still lay in New Mexico. It was the Spaniards from New Mexico who essayed the first expeditions into the Pike's Peak region and who made the first permanent settlements in parts now Colorado. It was as late as 1851 when San Luís on the Culebra River was

founded, to be followed by settlements at San Pedro and San Acacio. In 1854, the first permanent settlement west of the Rio Grande in the San Luis valley was made on the Conejos River and named Guadalupe, the settlers looking to Santa Fé for guidance and authority.

It was not until then that rumors of gold in the Colorado Rockies began to reach the East and brought adventurers and prospectors from that direction. Denver dates back only to 1860, and from that time on, the development of Colorado began to diverge from that of New Mexico, rapidly surpassing the older settled commonwealth in population and wealth.

Dr. Hafen's narrative maintains its interest up to and including the last chapter, which is devoted to the Colorado of today and recent changes and innovations. It might have proved valuable if the statistics given had been compared with those of New Mexico and other states of the West.

There is still to be written a philosophic history which will give reasons for the differences in culture and material advancement which seem to be determined by artificial rather than natural boundaries. State histories rest more or less on the work done by predecessors in research. Dr. Hafen has made full use of these and his bibliographic references will be valued by those who come after him.

P. A. F. W.

The Background of the Revolution for Mexican Independence. By Lillian E. Fisher. (Boston, The Christopher Publishing House, 1934. 512 pp., including 38 pp. of bibliography; index; no illustrations or maps. \$4.00.)

After three hundred years of Spanish rule, why did Mexico revolt from the mother country? Dr. Fisher answers the question in this voluminous study which may be characterized as a digest. Nearly every page is annotated with references to the numerous sources which, for some years past, she has been gathering from the archives in

Seville, Mexico City, at Berkeley and at Austin. Every statement which she makes rests directly upon her authorities. Even when she endorses the old invidious comparison between Spanish and English colonization (which has become so wearisome by its reiteration and superficiality) she immediately quotes Abad y Queipo, bishop of Michoacán; "Spain treated the people well, compared with other nations . . . giving all the conquered natives the rights which the conquerors enjoyed. . . ." (p.15)

And yet the book as a whole portrays the failure of the Spanish colonial system. Essentially it is a study of Spanish administration—as viewed by the *creole Spaniards* of New Spain. There is nothing to indicate what the native people thought of it; they were to be inarticulate for another century. "Mexican Independence" in 1821 meant merely separation from the mother country, and it was the concern and achievement of those born in New Spain who claimed Spanish descent. It was the triumph of *criollos* and *mes-tizos* over the *gachupín* class and *gachupín* administration.

Dr. Fisher's study does not alter any of the main lines of the picture, as they have long been recognized, but it is an excellent analysis of her subject and a filling-in of the picture with almost a plethora of detail. Perhaps in no other way could the reader be so impressed with the complex problems and difficulties under which the Spanish monarchy of that time was staggering. He is not apt to read this mass of evidence without feeling a new respect and astonishment for the Spanish people.

In eight chapters the author analyzes and criticizes (with the aid of her contemporary creole sources) "Social Conditions," "The Intellectual Background," "Commerce," "Industry," "Finance," "The Church," "Political Administration Attempts at Reform." In the last two chapters she discusses "Foreign Influences" and the "Influence of Events in Spain."

At p. 188, line 22, the date 1810 should read 1820; and when had the mint of Guanajuato been *opened*? Most of

the slips noticed in the text are simply omitted or transposed letters, but a few words are misspelled: indigenes, guild, intolerance (e. g., pp. 45, 49, 157, 167, 190, 249). "From whence" (p. 362) is jarring. Morelos suffers a slight indignity (p. 256) and the name of Croix is partly Frenchified (125, 433, 460, and index)—simply because one of his writings was published in Nantes (editor not named). The good, noble, public-spirited (etc., etc., etc.) "Abad y Queipo" is correctly indexed; but in the bibliography his writings must be sought under "Queipo" (448, 457). These are all slips of minor importance; the fact that there are not far more of them in a book of this kind is evidence of very commendable work on the part of the author.

L. B. B.