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Book Reviews

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REVIEWS

Obregon's History of 16th Century Explorations in Western America.—Translated, edited and annotated by George P. Hammond, University of Southern California, and Agapito Rey, Indiana University. Published by the Wetzel Publishing Company, Inc., Los Angeles, Calif. 1928, 351 p.p.

This translation of the Chronicle of Baltasar Obregon is a much wanted scholarly piece of work. As stated in the "Introduction" by the translators: "The Chronicle will always remain the standard contemporary account of Francisco de Ibarra and his times in the same manner that Castaneda's narrative is the principal record of the Coronado expedition. It is a historical record of real lasting value." The translators state further: "A faithful attempt has been made in this translation to adhere strictly to the thought and meaning of the original. Any translator must seek to convey to his audience the ideas that animated the author, rather than a mere rendering into English of his words in about the same order. Such practice cannot be condoned and has not been attempted. We have sought to make the translation as readable as a faithful adherence to the original permitted. The paragraphing, punctuation and capitalization are our own." For which the translators be praised. Special tribute is paid in the preface to Dr. F. W. Hodge of the Museum of the American Indian of New York City.

Obregon completed his Chronicle in April, 1584, in Mexico, the city of his birth. He was then only forty years of age. The account of happenings between 1564 and 1584, is firsthand and therefore of chief value. However, he begins his story with the story of the Deluge as it was told by the Aztecs and follows it with the legend that they had

of an earthquake and eclipse of the sun which occurred on the day of the Crucifixion on Mount Calvary in Jerusalem. However, the history of pre-Spanish times is very brief and is followed by an account of Cortez, Narvaez and Mendoza. He refers to the tradition that Cortez was born on the same day as the infernal, abominable, contagious and pernicious basilisk Martin Luther," "this perfidious opponent and enemy of our holy Catholic faith." In Chapter III Obregon plunges into the story of Cibola, Quivira and the Coronado Expedition. The Mizton War and other events from 1540 on are reviewed with some detail, especially the valiant achievements of Alvarado and Cristobal de Onate in subduing the rebellious Indians. It is with Chapter VI, that Obregon begins to tell of the events which he either witnessed or which were contemporary with his service under Francisco de Ibarra. It is a stirring tale interlarded with descriptions of country, people and customs. He does not spare the Spanish conquerors when their licentiousness brought disaster but also accepts as true miraculous stories brought to him and the exaggerations of the chroniclers of Spanish history. In Chapter XXIX, Obregon reverts to Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca and his companions and in the next chapter tells of the ruined city of Paquime and its seven story houses. In Chapter XXXIII New Mexico and the great Rio Salado are described. However, it is Book II "which deals with the discoveries and explorations in the lands and regions of San Felipe of New Mexico, Cibola, Ciquic, Tuzayana and nearby regions, by Francisco Sanchez Chamuscado and Antonio de Espejo and those who accompanied them." While, perhaps, nothing of material nature, is revealed of the history of these expeditions that has not been known heretofore, yet, excellent translation makes available to students of Southwestern history much that is interesting and amusing, and helps to give a clearer perspective of a period of American history that is of importance.

The Southwestern Frontier, 1865-1881. A History of the Coming of the Settlers, Indian Depredations, and Massacres, Ranching Activities, Operations of White Desperadoes and Thieves, Government Protection, Building of Railways, and the Disappearance of the Frontier. By Carl Coke Rister, Ph. D. With analytical index, bibliography, and specially prepared maps in color to illustrate the Indian campaigns, reservations, settlements, forts lines of defence, etc., and plates. Handsomely printed in large Caslon type and handmade deckle-edged paper. 8 vo, 350 p. p. cloth. \$6.00 The Arthur H. Clark Company, Publishers, Cleveland, Ohio.

The frontier moved steadily westward after the first colonies were planted on the Atlantic Seaboard. A counter movement eastward from that portion of the Far West colonized by the Spaniards never took place although there were Spanish expeditions which came in contact with forces from the east at a very early date. In fact, eighty years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Coronado was seeking the Quivira and in his quest penetrated almost to the Missouri.

The building of the railroads obliterated the frontier. From the close of the Civil War to the time that the Santa Fe railroad system expanded into New Mexico, less than twenty years elapsed but that was sufficient to break down the last serious opposition of the Indians to white settlement and to make the Far West an integral part of the Nation. Those years were interesting ones, marked by complex political movements and social upheavals. The book by Dr. Carl Coke Rister, therefore, is a valuable contribution to the summing up of the events that marked the passing of the Frontier. In his opening chapter he tells how immigrants poured into the Southwest after the traders of the Santa Trail had broken the path and the Argonauts had taken possession of California. "There were many problems to be solved, and much work to be done, before

it (The Southwest) could become the land of prosperous communities and happy homes," writes the author, and in the 300 and more pages that follow he tells vividly and accurately how these problems were solved and difficulties overcome. The military and land policies of the federal government do not escape censure. "It is shown how the federal military policy lacked cohesion. Since the energetic campaign did not comprehend the whole of the Southwest, the Indians soon forgot the punishment inflicted at this time. . . . When summary punishment was inflicted on the Indians, and they were forced to give up their claims to the unoccupied portion of the Southwest, the ranchers and farmers occupied the land. Paving the way to this new era came the destruction of the buffaloes, the building of railways, and the abandonment of the frontier posts. These evidences of a changing order of things are discussed in the closing chapters of the book."

The Southwestern Frontier in 1865 covered the area now embraced in the states of Oklahoma, western Texas and New Mexico. The author describes at length conditions in that region at the close of the Civil War. The Indian tribes of that vast section are enumerated and their characteristics sketched. The building of forts and posts, the establishment of the Overland Mail, and other episodes of that day, are reviewed. "In respect to the New Mexico posts there was only one of these built before the Civil War (as protection against Indian raids). Fort Stanton was established May 4, 1855, for the purpose of controlling the Mescalero Apache and was situated on the Rio Bonito, rising in the White Mountains. It was abandoned on August 2, 1861, but was reoccupied after the Civil War. Fort Bascom, the other post in this region, was located on the east bank of the Canadian River in San Miguel county."

"Indian Traders and Thieves," is one chapter heading. "The Defensive Policy," is the next chapter, telling of sudden Indian attacks on settlers and settlements and the slow-

ness of the federal authorities to provide adequate protection. The passage of a frontier defense act by the Texas legislature in 1866 and the raising of battalions of Texas Rangers to protect the frontier, aroused suspicion and bitter comment in the north and east. The appeals of the Governor of Texas for federal aid drew the comment of General Sheridan: "During the last six months, Indian depredations have taken place on the remote frontier. Their extent is not defined as yet, but they are not very alarming, and I think that the Governor, to some extent has been influenced by exaggerated reports gotten up, in some instances by frontier people, to get a market for their products and in other instances by army contractors to make money." But it wasn't long before General Sheridan perceived that he had been misinformed concerning the conditions on the frontier, and there followed the succession of Indian campaigns that after much loss of life and treasure finally brought the unruly Indians into subjection. An entire chapter is given to "The Jacksboro Indian Affair of 1871;" there follows an outline of the Indian Campaigns of 1874 to 1875 and the Indian warfare along the Rio Grande frontier from 1865 to 1881. The war with Victorio is given a chapter, possibly the most vivid one in the book. "The Buffalo as a Factor in the Development of the Southwest," "Problems of Frontier Life," "Influence of the Cattle Industry on the Frontier," "Building of Railways" and "Bibliography" are the remaining chapter headings that present some inkling of the interest between the covers of this excellently printed book.

This volume is prepared almost entirely from hitherto unpublished documentary material preserved in the Records divisions of the various departments of the Federal government, and from manuscript sources in the Library of Congress and elsewhere, from the unpublished records of commissioners, department commanders, officers at frontier posts, manuscript journals, official and semi-official

letters, contemporary newspapers, etc. The Author is one of the leading authorities and students of Southwestern history — a contributor to various historical publications including the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Southwestern Political Science Proceedings, etc., professor of history, Simmons University; secretary West Texas Historical Association. The author has spent a large amount of time in studying available material from which to compile original maps that will present to the reader a clear understanding of the territory and conditions. These maps present the topographical features necessary to an interpretation of the difficulties of defence, the frontier settlements, the Indian campaigns, the trails and forts.

NOTES AND COMMENT

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Election of Dr. James Harvey Robinson of New York, former professor of history at Columbia University, as president of the American Historical Association for 1929, has been announced. He took office at the forty-third annual meeting of the association held in Indianapolis and succeeds Professor Breasted of the University of Chicago. Ivy Lee of New York was named chairman of the national endowment committee which is to seek an endowment of \$1,000,000 for historical research. The chairmanship was formerly held by the late Albert J. Beveridge. Other officers include: Vice-presidents, Prof. Evarts R. Greene of Columbia and Prof. Ephraim Douglass Adams of Stanford; secretary, Prof. Dexter Perkins of Rochester, N. Y.; treasurer, Charles Moore of Washington, chairman of the National Fine Arts Commission.