

# New Mexico Historical Review

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Volume 21 | Number 3

Article 7

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7-1-1946

## Book Reviews

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### Recommended Citation

. "Book Reviews." *New Mexico Historical Review* 21, 3 (1946). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol21/iss3/7>

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## Book Reviews

River of the Sun. By Ross Calvin. (The University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1946, 153 pp, \$3.50).

Selected as one of the six best-looking trade books for May (*Publishers Weekly*, May 4, 1946, pp. 2477-2479), *River of the Sun* is beautifully designed by Carl Herzog, and delightfully written.

From an introductory chapter describing the flora and fauna of the Gila Valley, the author follows in chronological order the history of the area. First he tells of the fabled days of Coronado, a great Spanish explorer who led his men through the country, then of the days of the Americans, of trapper and trader, the forty-niners and the official scientific expeditions. When colonizers came to mine or farm, the Apaches raided, murdered, and continually warred against the invaders. This struggle down to the Geronimo episode and final removal of the Indians to government reservations is carefully related. The last chapter turns again to the river, its transformations and the changes in the country due to the overgrazed lands and the resultant erosion, droughts and floods.

Interestingly written, the book presents the history of a section of the Southwest that is filled with strange and fabulous tales of the remains of Indian ruins, ghost towns of the mining booms, deserted cattle ranches and abandoned farms. Yet, the beauty of the desert dominates all, the Indians still live on the reservations, the mines still produce vast amounts of copper and silver, cattle still range the area and farmers through control of water supplies have made the farm lands bloom again.

Without the usual impedimenta of the scholarly treatise, Mr. Calvin has written a convincing, entertaining and factual volume. But as it is a book designed for the general reader, one wishes that certain additions could have been made. Early in the volume the author refers to the Austrian Cartographer "Kino or Kuehn." Although

described at some length in a later discussion the reviewer feels confident that few readers will know Father Kino from this casual first reference (p. 1). When one cites numbers they are pretty definite and the ninety years of American control (p. 2) is actually ninety plus.

Although Mr. Calvin is an enthusiast for the Southwest, he would find it a bit difficult to defend his "nation's richest farm crops" (p. 5) when challenged by Iowa, Florida or the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

And the historian will take issue with the brief statement that after Texas became a part of the Union in 1845 "Mexico retaliated by declaring war." (p. 33). The events are far more complicated than this unqualified sentence would imply. Although the Gadsden Purchase was ratified in 1854 (p. 40), the far more familiar date is 1853, the year of the treaty. Robert McKnight (p. 64) was a trader on the Santa Fe Trail before the trade was legalized (1821), and was taken captive for his activities. This explains his ten-year period in the Mexican dungeon which otherwise might bring some questioning. Although the California Column (p. 65) did assist in holding New Mexico during the Civil War, to give it the unqualified glory is a little exuberant, since Colorado Volunteers plus New Mexican and Union troops had forced a Confederate retreat before the Californians arrived.

One, too, would question the expressions "such like" (p. 10) and "not in the cards" (p. 19) as not quite the standard English which characterizes the book as a whole.

Despite these criticisms the reviewer hails the book as delightfully written, beautifully illustrated with excellent photography of the region, and as an outstanding example of craftsmanship and art.

DOROTHY WOODWARD

*Memoirs of Elisha Oscar Crosby*, edited by Albro Barker, (The Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif., 1945, 119 pp., \$2.75).

This is another volume of the Huntington Library Publications, and a ms. of considerable interest. Beginning

with the author's background, the *Memoirs* record experiences on the early gold rush to California via the Isthmus of Panama.

Arrival at San Francisco is described, also the hardships of living there and the desire and determination of practically every one to push on to the gold fields. Crosby decided to follow his profession rather than mining, but he recounts the mining methods and the working and living conditions in the area of Sutter's Fort. Soon a citizen of the section, he accompanied Butler King of the Special U. S. Commission on his visit to investigate the general situation in California.

Delegate for the Sacramento district to the State Convention of 1849, Crosby relates the proceedings and work which resulted in drawing up California's constitution. Later appointed Land Commissioner to handle private claims the author roundly criticizes the litigation and delaying action which so unjustly deprived many original land owners of their rightful claims.

Crosby returned to New York in 1860 and after Lincoln's election was appointed Minister to Guatemala, then under dictator President Rafael Carrera. The experience in getting to the post, his visits to President and Bishop and other incidents during his mission, are certainly additions to the history of the period.

He tries unsuccessfully to further a plan for negro emigration from the U. S. A. to Honduras during his sojourn there. This was to be a partial solution of the then Union-splitting racial problem. Another question for considerable comment is the diplomatic service. His criticism is most aptly put.

There is little use in sending into a country as our representative one who has had a successful career in Congress and who is totally disqualified for such position by reason of his not understanding the language, habits and customs of the people he is to live among and who has perhaps never before travelled out of the limits of his own state and

who has no other ambition in representing his country abroad than an easy residence coupled with the emoluments incident to his office. Some of these men live for years in those countries . . . after they are superseded by some one equally ignorant and inefficient. . . . (p. 92).

Crosby traveled all over Guatemala and gives interesting comments upon people and conditions. His contacts with President Carrera were evidently quite pleasant and somewhat close for the reflections and stories of the dictator are very illuminating.

The Anecdotal Scraps which end the book give an insight into "high" society of early San Francisco.

The volume is adequately edited although some additions and explanations could be made that would make the book more valuable. The editor sets forth his policy in correction of the spelling of unfamiliar places and persons in the introduction, yet it would be helpful if the original text were specified at times, for example: Caribbean (p. 12), *buiscuit* (p. 19) spelled correctly on the following page, *frejoles* (p. 80), Nicaragua (p. 81). Mr. Crosby refers (p. 81) to the Vice Royal Palace and the viceregal government of Guatemala when the area was only a Captaincy-General under Spain. Occasionally the author seems to have coined his own words, *marquiset* (p. 18) for the usual marquisate and the editor makes no comment.

The volume is an addition to our information on California's statehood convention and the conditions in Central America. Three illustrations from contemporary prints add to the book. The *Memoirs* end abruptly and the subsequent events of the life of the author are supplied in the editor's introduction.

DOROTHY WOODWARD