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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

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AMERICA'S FRONTIER HERITAGE. By Ray Allen Billington. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966. Pp. xvi, 302. Notes, bibliog. \$5.95.

PROFESSOR BILLINGTON, the frequently acknowledged dean of American frontier historians, gives us in this heavily documented book as sophisticated a defense of Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier hypothesis" as we are likely ever to get. He no longer seems interested in quibbling with the strident Turnerian critics of the last forty years. He has performed this chore many times over in the past. Now he suggests that the moment has arrived to speak positively, albeit moderately and even modestly. And this is all to the good. Surely the debate over Turner's magisterial insight into the relation between the frontier experience and the uniqueness of American society will continue. But certain also that in this latest volume Billington has managed to shift the debate to new ground, to a much more useful realm of analysis than we have yet possessed. This book is, in short, the book that Turner himself should have written.

Professor Billington's methodology is clean and uncomplicated. First he combed the voluminous travel literature for attitudes and behavioral traits that European commentators deemed most distinctively "American," especially those overseas visitors who toured the frontier and gave particular notice to pioneer traits—usually in contrast to what they had seen in the East. Thus he highlights such items, for example, as Lord Bryce's statement that the West seems the most characteristically American section of the United States. The results, Billington concludes, "suggested, but by no means proved, that some connection existed between identifiable characteristics of the American people and their pioneering heritage."

Second, he asks the question: "How could the frontiering experience alter the behavior not only of frontiersmen, but of their descendants?" And for the answer he turns to the behavioral scientists: "I found the studies of sociologists, anthropologists, social psychologists, and demographers extremely valuable. . . . The findings of social scientists, particularly in the fields of motivation, personality, culture, and spatial mobility, do suggest logical means whereby three centuries of expansion did alter the behavioral patterns of the frontiersmen, and to a lessening degree of their descendants of the twentieth century."

There are doubtless those who will remain unconvinced; and this is not the kind of book a brief review can easily pass final judgment upon. Every curious scholar must judge for himself, and no competent student of American society can afford not to be curious. Altogether—in conception and execution—an admirable, a *necessary* book.

*The University of Nebraska*

ROBERT R. DYKSTRA

THE FRONTIER RE-EXAMINED. Ed. by John Francis McDermott. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1967. Pp. x, 192. Illus., maps, index. \$6.95.

THE ESSAYISTS represented in this volume, as John Francis McDermott points out in his introduction, "have adopted no thesis." Originally presented as papers at a conference on the frontier, held on the Edwardsville campus of Southern Illinois University, in November 1965, these essays are as varied in topic and approach as the number of authors included. Thus, this volume does not use any aspect of the frontier as a unifying theme, or deal theoretically with the frontier (as did, for example, a similar collection edited by Walker D. Wyman and Clifton D. Kroeber, *The Frontier in Perspective*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1956). Rather, it is a *potpourri* of essays on diverse facets of the frontier.

Refreshingly, editor McDermott eliminated one tired theme when he admonished his contributors "not to attack Turner but to discuss aspects of the frontier not accounted for by him [Oscar O. Winther quotes McDermott on p. 42]." The only writer who dared disobey the editor's injunction was the editor himself. McDermott argues, as others have before him (i.e. Louis B. Wright and Earl Pomeroy), that man did not revert to the primitive on the frontier, and provides evidence that early St. Louis attained an impressive level of civilization. When McDermott asserts that it was "the man of capital and enterprise who opened the western country," it seems to me that he is guilty of overstatement in the tradition of Turner.

Most of the essays view topics which Turner and his students, for various reasons, ignored. Most, then, are not "re-examinations" or re-assessments. Rather, they extend our knowledge by poking into dusty corners of Western history which our predecessors chose to avoid, or of which they were unaware. Thus, Merrill J. Mattes takes a look at the long neglected "jumping-off places" on the overland trails—such as Council Bluffs and Kansas City. Oscar O. Winther briefly describes past research on Western transportation, future needs, and Turner's slight interest in the topic. Ralph E.

Morrow explains organized religion's failure to take up the challenge of the frontier in the early part of the nineteenth century as a result of internal problems which were aggravated by the Great Revival. Richard Oglesby writes with understanding on "The Fur Trade as Business," an aspect that is only recently being scrutinized; anthropologist Preston Holder looks at the fur trader through the eyes of Indians in the Dakotas and finds the view unpleasant. Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in Donald Jackson's study of Spanish reaction to the expeditions of Lewis and Clark, Thomas Freeman and Zebulon Pike.

Happily, a few of the contributors are not historians. Thus, we learn from ethnologist John C. Ewers of recent interest in "documentary art of the American West," and of the need for greater and more critical use of this source. Cartographer Herman R. Friis exhorts historians to greater use of maps, while archivist Oliver W. Holmes identifies gaps in our knowledge of territorial period history and suggests that states begin to do their share to make documentary collections more accessible.

Frontier literature is not neglected. Jules Zanger explains why the frontiersman evolved into a heroic literary figure in the tradition of Davy Crockett rather than a Leatherstocking. George R. Brooks describes the generally idyllic picture that German novelists drew of the mid-nineteenth century West, and Joe Frantz writes engagingly of his search for a cowboy philosophy.

These essays illustrate the variety and quality of research that has become increasingly characteristic of frontier history. Few Western historians will fail to find something stimulating and useful in this handsomely printed volume.

*San Diego State College*

DAVID J. WEBER

THE FAR SOUTHWEST 1846-1912. A TERRITORIAL HISTORY. By Howard Roberts Lamar. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966. Pp. xii, 560. Maps, bibliog., index. \$10.00.

THIS BOOK is a valuable addition to the history of the "Four Corner States." Whether or not the reader agrees with their designation as "The Far Southwest" is not important; he will soon forget any quarrel with the author on this point. It is not rash, moreover, to predict that most readers will treasure this book not only for its insight into the political history of the four turbulent territories that eventually became the states of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona, but also for its abundant notes and bibliographical and archival references.

Most of the vast area covered by the four territories had once been under the jurisdiction of imperial Spain and was added to the United States by the Texas Annexation of 1845, the first Mexican Cession of 1848, and the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. Although Spain had not nurtured this northern salient of its American empire, its institutions and way of life left an imprint which would not allow future Anglo-American settlers to forget that they were on the borderlands of another culture. Issues such as the separation of Church and State and the maintenance of a public school system—as opposed to state-supported parochial schools—would, for example, complicate early Coloradan as well as New Mexican political behavior. And, as Professor Lamar notes, even the most progressive Anglo-American leaders could not resist dabbling in Spanish-Mexican land claims.

There were other determinants, at times even harsher than the cultural conflicts or the difficult mountains, broken plateaus, and arid climate common to much of the area, such as the permanent hostile Indian population, the need for settlers to look for outside help to survive in an untractable environment, and a federal spoils system which too often placed territorial destinies in the hands of political hacks, defeated congressmen, or jobless relatives of congressmen and cabinet officers. Other western territories, of course, shared these problems in varying degrees, but none were forced to endure the long territorial apprenticeship of New Mexico (1850-1912), Utah (1850-1896), and Arizona (1863-1912).

But why these three? Professor Lamar is not given to over-simplification: in an informative introduction on the history of territorial development from the early days of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 to the admission of Arizona to statehood in 1912 and in the several chapters dealing with each of the three territories, he describes the issues, the policies, the schemes, and the personalities that complicated their road to statehood. Nor does he slight the uniqueness of the Utah experience. It was, in his words, “perhaps the most turbulent and unusual one to occur in the history of the American territorial system, for nowhere else had the federal government ever faced the problem of turning a desert frontier theocracy into a standard democratic American state.” Four chapters on Colorado, a mining frontier which escaped the fate of its three neighbors, round out the volume.

The New Mexican story accounts for more than forty per cent of the book's five hundred and four text pages. The titles of the seven chapters dealing with the history of this territory summarize the main themes: *New Mexico: Feudal Frontier*; *Taos: Port of Entry*; *A Conquest by Merchants*; *In Hostile Array: Civil Government, 1851-1961*; *Civil War, 1861-1869*; *The Santa Fe Ring, 1865-1885*; and *New Mexico Comes of Age, 1880-1900*. Many pages later, in the final chapter of the book, Professor Lamar describes the last years of the final struggle to gain statehood for Arizona

and New Mexico. By then, the proponents of statehood had to thread their way past the heritage of the Spanish-American War, the conservation crusade and the Progressive movement within the Republican Party, before they could achieve their goal. At one point there was introduced a proposal to admit Arizona and New Mexico jointly as a single state, but it caused a storm of disapproval throughout the Southwest. Marcus Aurelius Smith, the slight, keen-eyed Kentuckian who dominated Arizona politics at the turn of the century, stated acidly that the bill proceeded on the argument "that one rotten egg is bad, but two rotten ones would make a fine omelet." The long and colorful but often painful era of political apprenticeship did come to an end in 1912 for the remaining two territories; in the process, however, "the unique qualities of the Far Southwest and the long persistence of the frontier period there had greatly affected and enriched the unfolding chronicle of American history."

This book affords a welcome treat to readers weary of accounts of cowboys and Indians, western bad men, and other subjects which emphasize the more sensational aspects of the much more significant story of the development of the West. Professor Lamar terms it "a modest excursion into the neglected area" of territorial history. This is perhaps the greatest understatement in the entire book. Rather than a modest excursion into an important, albeit neglected, field of American historiography, Professor Lamar has wedded the tools of history, political analysis, and social science to produce a highly readable book which will undoubtedly rank as a major contribution to the history of the Southwest.

*New York City*

JOSEPH P. PETERS

A NATION MOVING WEST. Ed. by Robert W. Richmond and Robert W. Murdock. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1966. Pp. x, 366. Bibliog., index. \$5.50, cloth; \$1.95, paper.

AT THIS STAGE in the history of western anthologies, the question must be raised of each new one, "Do we learn anything new from it?" Such a question can be answered in several different ways. The material contained in the anthology can be new, unique, or otherwise unavailable. It can be so organized as to shed new light or at the very least, additional light, on the westward movement or some aspects of the American frontier. It can be used to advance or buttress a particular thesis that contributes to our understanding of the westward movement.

In the preface to this volume, the authors state that their anthology is designed to "center, as much as possible, on people and things directly concerned with the *settlement* of the American West—the movement itself and the life that followed immediately in its train." With the exception of the chapter devoted to the Civil War west of the Mississippi, they have succeeded quite well in confining its scope along the lines they wished. In the process, they have prepared a well-designed work that turns out to be little more than a conventional anthology which adds another title to the shelves of Western Americana and perhaps offers another option for the dwindling number of courses in the history of the West.

The authors do their conventional job adequately and even admirably. They have created a well-integrated and at times even moving anthology. Unlike many such efforts, this volume clearly is not slapped together, but is, rather, the product of a great deal of considered effort. Its selections "flow" and the authors' introductions serve to properly connect them without disturbing the flow. Reading through it, one gets a sense of the liveliness and, indeed, the passion of the various "Wests," from the crossing of the Appalachians to the completion of legal settlement of Oklahoma in 1906.

The failures of *A Nation Moving West* are those of conventional anthologies of the frontier experience. They are important enough to warrant the question as to whether the book even achieves its stated purpose adequately. Omission of the spatial extensions of the land frontier to Alaska and Hawaii are commonplace in such works but one may well ask whether they are justified, particularly in the case of Alaska where the continuation of the original settlement process with twentieth-century variations is of no little significance, especially since that great land achieved statehood.

Even more difficult to justify is the downgrading of the role played by government in the settlement of the West by omitting any reference to the really crucial activities of government in the post-exploration stages of the conquest of the continent. Reading through the selections in this volume, one would have little notion that government on any level, aside from the governments of the mining camps or the U. S. Army, had a role to play. While this omission might have been acceptable in a conventional work before 1955, there is no excuse for such oversight today. Indeed, considering the volume of literature published in the last decade revealing the extensive role of government in the opening of the West, omission of any discussion of the impact of land grants, federal land surveys, the construction of roads and railroads (other than the transcontinental ones), and the founding of public institutions effectively robs the book of much of its utility, not to mention the fact that it reinforces certain myths about "rugged individualists" who conquered the continent unaided; myths that

are made doubly difficult to live with when one knows that they are not true.

It is too bad that such a well-constructed work is marred by this major frailty. Even so, students and other people seeking a relatively easy means of penetration into the life of the frontier could do much worse than to pick up this volume.

*Temple University*

DANIEL J. ELAZAR

**THE WAGONMASTERS.** By Henry Pickering Walker. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1966. Pp. xii, 348. Illus., maps, bibliog., index. \$5.95.

**THE WAGONMASTERS** is a thoroughly researched and well written book on a phase and area of transportation history that, although not entirely neglected, needed the present treatment. The book is, in the main, a doctoral dissertation prepared and submitted at the University of Colorado. But dissertations need not be dull and this one, while not scintillating, possesses finesse and considerable charm.

The subject is dealt with more topically than chronologically, although the opening chapter presents an historical sketch of transportation on the Plains. The major topics dealt with in meaningful succession are trails, Missouri river port towns, the wagonmasters themselves, the draft animals and vehicles of the trade, and, in considerable detail, the trade with Salt Lake City, Denver, and the Montana mines. No attempt is made to deal in any depth with West coast freighting even though the two areas—the Plains and the Pacific slope—were not entirely separate and distinct commercial domains during the period embraced by this study. The role of the United States government, discussed in the chapter entitled "Uncle Sam: Customer," is dealt with, albeit in a much too cursory manner. Finally come the "Shortening Haul" and the "End of the Trail," brought on in both situations by the railroad.

The heavily documented character of this book, in addition to an impressive bibliography of major collections and items consulted in widely scattered libraries, bears witness to the author's thoroughness.

The weakest feature of the book is the maps. One, a two-page spread entitled "Principal Routes of Wagon-Freighting," suffers from both important omissions and from misrepresentations. Routes to the Black Hills are, for example, omitted even though the freighting to Deadwood and environs is discussed at considerable length, and the Central Overland Route (the

main artery across the Plains) is shown from Fort Kearny westward as on the south side of the Platte only. Then for some unexplained reason a principal wagon route is shown extending down the Columbia River Gorge to the mouth of the Willamette, and although the map encompasses the entire trans-Mississippi west, the major north-south wagon roads on the West coast are omitted.

Similarly, the map showing routes of water-borne commerce indicate only the Missouri, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Arkansas, Red, and Rio Grande rivers west of the Mississippi as being water-borne. How about the Columbia, the Willamette, the lower Colorado, and the Minnesota? And the third and remaining map, showing "Principal Ports of the Prairie Sea," shows but one lonely railroad connection—the Hannibal & St. Joseph—when, in fact, by 1865 there were many lines totaling 3,272 miles of tracks west of the Mississippi, many of which served Missouri River ports. The illustrations are numerous and superb.

*Indiana University*

OSCAR OSBURN WINTHER

**SOLDIERS ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL.** By Leo E. Oliva. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1967. Pp. xii, 228. Illus., maps, bibliog., index. \$4.50.

OF the enormous volume of literature related to it, published or archival manuscript, no work until now has been devoted solely to the military history of the Santa Fe Trail. That is why, Leo Oliva says in a preface to this book, he was moved to undertake an inclusive, integrated history of the trail from 1829 to 1880.

Oliva compresses into this slim volume what normally might be expected to require a book three times its size: a review of commercial trade in the early years, establishment of military escorts to afford protection, effects of the war with Mexico, subsequent military campaigns, and finally, a discussion of military posts and soldier life along the trail. Granting that the book accomplishes a certain loose integration, it must be said that very little new material is found and much of what Oliva does relate has been told frequently and often better by others in the past.

One of the problems, apart from this, is the author's one-dimensional use of historical materials and seeming failure to recognize that history is a matter of cause and effect. A series of occurrences in the past may provide a series of historical facts, but they are facts of no meaning unless related to the circumstances that caused them to happen. Oliva, unfortunately, has

no apparent interest in causative circumstance. It is in this area that his book could have turned up valuable new insights, and it is in this area where his book mainly fails. His treatment of the Adobe Walls campaign of 1864—here referred to as Adobe Fort and dismissed in one paragraph—illustrates the problem. The campaign, conceived and ordered by Brigadier General James H. Carleton, is presented simply as one of a number of measures taken that summer and fall to compel the Plains Tribes to abandon their attacks on the Santa Fe Trail. This is a one-dimensional historical fact, in one sense true, but in its dangling implications untrue. As far as the reader knows, Carleton's motivation was an automatic military response—a concern to save American lives from the savagery of Comanches and Kiowas. Not at all. Confronted simultaneously with devastating crop failures in New Mexico and imperative need to feed 7,384 Navajos and 430 Apaches at his Bosque Redondo reservation, Carleton had overpowering personal reasons for keeping freight wagons moving over the trail. He did not want his Indians to starve; he knew that if they did his own neck was on the block. That is why he ordered Kit Carson to make the campaign of Adobe Walls.

With some few exceptions Oliva avoids analysis and judgment as scrupulously as he avoids the underlying cause of events. In instances where judgment is offered one wishes he might have just stayed with the facts—as, in relating a capsulated version of the Confederate defeat at Glorieta Pass, he concludes that the decisive but small engagement might be termed the “Gettysburg of the West.” Or again, considering in the space of one paragraph the fate that befell Black Kettle's band at Sand Creek, he decides that this was not a massacre but a “fierce battle, which is still the subject of controversy.”

Another of the problems is a result of the author's determination of the framework within which he would work. Facts have a vicious way of turning in the hand and biting back—as no one has learned better than this reviewer. A book that attempts no more than to offer fact upon fact can be dreadfully vulnerable. Thus, in what begins promisingly as a good exposition of the organization and movement of General Kearny's Army of the West, little cogs and wheels start to fly about, until the vehicle of facts Oliva has put together loses the reader's confidence. Capt. Hancock Jackson is confused with Capt. Congreve Jackson; the Army of the West had eighteen pieces of ordnance, not sixteen; when the Laclede Rangers left Fort Leavenworth they numbered ninety-nine men, not one hundred and seven; Kearny made his departure June 30, not June 29; and Captain Angney's two companies of infantry did not leave Bent's Fort on August 1, but with the main column of the army next day.

In one important area, the book succeeds well. Oliva has gone to obvious pains to document, from primary source materials, the establishment and operational period of every military post on the Santa Fe Trail. They are all here: Forts Atkinson, Aubrey, and Mann—with especial consideration given to Forts Zarah, Larned, Dodge, Lyon, and Union. No matter that his account of the selection of Fort Union's site repeats a common error—the material otherwise is good and includes revealing new information about the forts themselves and, of equal interest, details of the daily life of soldiers garrisoning them. One learns, for example, that Col. Edwin Vose Sumner's inept selection of the site for Fort Defiance had, in the year before, an interesting precedent. This was his order directing that Fort Atkinson be located twenty-six miles east of the Cimarron Crossing and be built of stone. From the standpoint of affording protection to the trail, Oliva says, the choice was good. Otherwise it was lamentable. There was no stone within ten miles of the site, and no timber. So, contrary to orders, the fort was built of Kansas sod and soon was dubbed Fort Sod, or Fort Sodom. Cats were imported to fight off invading armies of field mice but the post was impossible to maintain and was abandoned in 1853.

The book contains three maps, one of them a fold-out diagram of the trail which is legible, comprehensive, and accurate. Of seventeen halftone plates, ten are of military posts and are of superior interest. In addition, Oliva has provided a most helpful index.

*Santa Fe, N.M.*

FRANK McNITT

FAREWELL TO TEXAS: A VANISHING WILDERNESS. By William O. Douglas. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967. Pp. xiv, 242. Illus., maps, app., index. \$6.95.

JUSTICE WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS begins his twenty-first book—number one in The American Wilderness Series—with the story of Naboth's vineyard, which King Ahab coveted. Said Naboth to the King, "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." In Justice Douglas' view the Ahabs, a small army of them, are robbing us of our patrimony of pure water, unspoiled earth, and the right to enjoy the natural areas which remain to us. The spoilers include predatory stockmen, lumber barons, vandals, hunters, public utilities, Federal agencies, the Corps of Engineers (who build useless dams), and the Park Service, which doesn't know the difference between a State Park and an amusement center.

Although he lives in the Pacific Northwest, Mr. Douglas has interested himself in the special problems of Texas for a long time, returning periodically to camp in the woods, run the rapids of the Rio Grande, or explore the deserts and mountains of far West Texas. He loves the state, mourns the rape which it has endured, and is doing all he can to stem the tide of destruction, waste, and pollution.

He begins with the Big Thicket between the Sabine and Brazos rivers, originally 3,000,000 acres of woodlands so thick and wild that a man could hardly find a way in. Only 300,000 acres remain, and lumber companies, oil companies, and even home builders are reducing these by fifty acres every day. Thanks to five thousand members of the Big Thicket Association, Congress is considering a bill to make a national park of the area, but since it takes six or eight years to get such a bill approved, the Big Thicket will have been whittled down to less than 200,000 acres when it finally becomes the property of all the people.

Mr. Douglas turns next to the Big Bend, where overgrazing has almost destroyed the land. The Big Bend National Park has salvaged some of it, but the Park was set up only when ranchers who could no longer make a living from their ruined pastures allowed the government to "bail them out." The Davis Mountains have not been ruined yet, but they are in danger. Only one enlightened owner, who controls a lovely canyon in the Guadalupe in far West Texas, is willing and able to present an unimpaired wilderness as a heritage for all the people to enjoy. Mr. Douglas hopes that McKittrick Canyon will not be open to everybody. "Those who find their pleasure in dancing and drinking beer can be entertained along the skirts of these great mountains," he says.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Douglas is a great crusader and a competent writer. The present volume, however, could and should have been better done. There are signs of haste. Pages seem to have been transcribed from field notes without much change. The unconnected paragraph, starting a new thought without transition or excuse, is almost a trademark. Mr. Douglas needs help with his Spanish, and his editor should have kept him from writing such sentences as this: "When depicted throwing darts at game, a religious ceremony is being depicted."

These are small matters, of course. More important is his urge to write three books at once. He wants to write a travel diary—a play-by-play account of his trips to Texas, the wonderful people he met, the little poems they gave him, their pet recipes, their little jokes—and this he does quite charmingly. At the same time he wants to explore the temporal and natural history of each region, getting his information from competent authorities on library shelves. Here he sometimes finds himself in trouble. For instance he lets Jim Gillett (*Six Years with the Texas Rangers*) tell the

story of the El Paso Salt War of 1877, apparently because Gillett limited his account to exactly one page. Brevity is no substitute for accuracy, however, and the great Ranger leads Mr. Douglas into a number of factual errors. For example, salt was not taken from the Guadalupe lakes "from time immemorial." On account of the Apache menace these lakes were not exploited until Civil War times. They came into use only when the supply in New Mexico was cut off. Furthermore, nobody named McKittrick was killed in the Salt War, and there could not be a connection between this event and the naming of McKittrick Canyon.

The book which the Justice really wants to write, of course, is a documented horror story about what is happening to our plants and wild life, our streams and cattle ranges. He could make his point more cogently if there were less of his genial autobiography and his informal history. His book, however, is an important one and the country owes him a debt of gratitude for battling so valiantly and persistently to keep the Ahabs out of the vineyard.

*University of Texas at El Paso*

C. L. SONNICHSEN

PEDRO VIAL AND THE ROADS TO SANTA FE. By Noel M. Loomis and Abraham P. Nasatir. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1967. Pp. xxx, 570. Illus., maps, bibliog., index. \$8.95.

SANTA FE, the capital of the frontier province of New Mexico, held a peculiar fascination for nationals of Spain's rivals in North America. For more than a century its promise of a rich market for European goods and of access to even more rewarding opportunities farther south attracted foreign adventurers from varying distances and by differing avenues of approach. A few succeeded in reaching the town, but none reaped the expected rewards. To thwart these intruders and to adjust to fresh strategic situations resulting in rapid sequence from the Seven Years' War, the revolution of the thirteen English Atlantic seaboard colonies, and the purchase of western Louisiana by the United States, Spain adopted a variety of defensive expedients. During the latter years of the eighteenth century and the first few years of the next she reversed the policy of isolation followed while the west bank of the Mississippi River was in foreign hands and attempted to open communications between Santa Fe and other principal Spanish outposts to the northeast and the southwest. In consequence, frontier officials commissioned Pedro Vial and several of his contemporaries to explore and chart the possible routes between the New Mex-

ican capital and San Antonio, Natchitoches, and St. Louis. Circumstances deprived Spain of any profit from the effort, but the roads thus proved feasible were soon used in the reverse direction by a rush of Santa Fe traders.

This view of the roads leading to and from Santa Fe is the work of an historian and a writer of western novels, faculty colleagues at San Diego State College. It appears to be the product of two independent accomplishments rather than of a collaboration. Professor Nasatir provided copies of the diaries from his personal collection and supervised their reduction to print; Professor Loomis accepts responsibility for everything else in the volume.

The diaries recording the explorations of Vial and his companions are the ostensible focus of the book. Individually they differ in fullness of detail and quality of content, but collectively they reveal much about conditions in Spain's borderlands provinces as the eighteenth century gave way to the nineteenth. Beyond the direct data they contain on aspects of Spanish frontier administration, they record information on the habitats of Indian tribes, their activities and movements, and their relations among themselves; evidence of intensified efforts by rival governments to win and maintain the loyalty of the Plains Indian tribes and to control their trade; and precise detail on conditions of cross-country travel by small groups and large bodies of men of European extraction, some using wheeled vehicles. The accompanying text supplies considerable related material including sketches and specific information on activities of many individuals operating at the time among the Indians of the area.

The major defect of the work, in the opinion of this reviewer, is that the setting for the diaries is misconceived. Loomis devotes ten chapters, no less than half the volume, to historical background in which he attempts an extensive survey, often related in copious detail, of international rivalries in the borderlands east of Santa Fe from the last years of the seventeenth century to the end of the second decade of the nineteenth. He cites much documentary material and numerous secondary works, but the exposition does not qualify in thoroughness, accuracy, and understanding for acceptance as an authoritative resumé for specialists in the field, and it lacks perspective and clarity that would make it useful and attractive to a general reader. It establishes no peculiarly relevant context for the diaries; to the contrary, they are out of focus by the time the narrative reaches them.

A corollary of the major defect is that the book is mistitled. Pedro Vial is not the dominant figure. He appears in the introductory material only after some two hundred pages, and although he traversed more of the routes and produced a larger number of the diaries published than did any

of the other individuals, his are neither the fullest nor the most informative accounts. He perhaps deserves top billing for his contributions to exploration of the roads to Santa Fe, but his shortcomings as a diarist, to which his difficulty with French (his native tongue) and his early inability to use Spanish contributed, prevent his own writings from making the case for him. His diaries establish him as a capable and resourceful explorer and Indian agent, but it may be questioned whether the evidence sustains the claim asserted in his behalf to distinction as a frontiersman over some of his own companions or such a roughly contemporary figure as Juan Bautista de Anza.

Errors and misstatement account for some of the deficiencies in the exposition previously noted. After recounting St. Denis' sallies to the Rio Grande, Loomis remarks (pp. 36-37), "Until 1717 the Spaniards spent most of their competitive energies against the Indians, but perhaps St. Denis' brash crossing with goods steeled them to act, and to send the expedition under Ramón to establish six missions and the presidio of Dolores between the Neches and the Red River in Texas [he appears not to identify this expedition of 1716 as the one he earlier says St. Denis led to East Texas "to establish a mission there"] and the presidio of Los Adaes east of the Sabine River [established not by Ramón, but by the Marqués de Aguayo in 1721], to hold back the French." Only complete reliance on French sources, or works derived from them, it seems, could explain the comment (p. 36) in reference to Manuela Sánchez, the girl St. Denis married at the Rio Grande presidio, "Her name was Emanuelle—hardly a Spanish name." His confession of inability to locate the town of Revilla (p. 218, n. 13) suggests that he overlooked the reproduction of the map of Nuevo Santander in Herbert E. Bolton's *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century* (following p. 302), which he cites in other contexts. His own map of Vial's three principal journeys (p. 266) does not show the course of the Arkansas River above the mouth of the Canadian, but the Canadian shares with the lower course of the Arkansas the legend "Arkansas River."

A careful proofreader would surely have discovered the second identical description of the situation of Michilimackinac (p. 84, n. 24), and the line of type repeated on p. 288, and such typographical errors as Phillip II (p. 3), Nueva Santander (p. 211), all-fated for ill-fated (p. 250), and Can Ygnacio for San Ygnacio (p. 310).

*Tulane University*

WILLIAM J. GRIFFITH

PRINT IN A WILD LAND. By John Myers Myers. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967. Pp. xii, 274. Bibliog., index. \$5.95.

DURING AN AFFRAY in a dance hall at Calico, California, in 1884, a nameless stranger was shot to death. The editor of the Calico *Print* reported the incident in exactly nine words:

"Joe Doe was killed at the Pastime. Good ridance."

Mr. Myers uses the incident to illustrate the irreverent cynicism of the newspapers of the Western frontier. His handling of it serves equally well to illustrate his own approach to his subject. The author uses only seventy-two words to dispose of this topic, including his conclusion that the frontier editor "was no man to take his hat off just because somebody had been demoted to corpse," and is instantly off in another direction.

The nomadic printer-writers who followed the expanding American frontier in the nineteenth century have been the subject of scores of books. None with which this reviewer is familiar pretends to be a definitive treatment of the wild journalism of the Wild West. Nor does *Print in a Wild Land*. Generally the authors have narrowed the subject, dealing either with a single state or region, one publication, one editor, or with one peculiarity (such as the tendency of Western editors to fight among themselves). Mr. Myers avoids this narrowness at some sacrifice of depth. In twenty short chapters he provides a quick look at all sides of the subject. The result is of small value to scholars, but it puts frontier journalism in an ideal package for the layman.

Several other things commend this book to the general reader. It is the author's fifth volume on the Western frontier and it reflects impressive research. Mr. Myers knows his subject well enough to tell it briefly—always with the right anecdote and the proper quotation. The author's style is as racy as was that of the editors he describes—and he takes these cantankerous iconoclasts no more seriously than they took each other. Best of all, Mr. Myers has a fine taste for the grotesque, the incongruous, and the absurd, which makes his book fun to read.

*Print in a Wild Land* is not an important volume, but it is a pleasant one.  
*The University of New Mexico*

ANTHONY G. HILLERMAN