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## Book Reviews

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## *Book Reviews*

*Forty years in El Paso.* Original manuscript by W. W. Mills, first published in 1901. Introduction and notes by Rex W. Strickland. Illustrations from drawings by Tom Lea. Design by Carl Hertzog, publisher. El Paso, 1962. \$7.00.

In the original edition W. W. Mills inserted, in place of an introduction, the following warning: "These writings are meant to be truthful but they are too rambling and egotistical to possess much historical value. . . . Much that he (the author) was tempted to write has been omitted out of consideration for the living and the dead and their relations. The book will have little interest except for those who know something of El Paso. . . . For such only it is written."

That this warning is still valid detracts not at all from the value of the book. Everyone interested in the history of the Southwest knows something of El Paso. His reminiscences furnish a source from which history is built and are of especial value since they include a period previous to the establishment of news media in an area extending hundreds of miles in all directions from El Paso. Mills was truthful but far too opinionated and self-centered to report events objectively. He was a confirmed Unionist and Republican; both minority parties. His enemies (and he had many) had few redeeming qualities; his friends could do no wrong. A personally ambitious politician, he expected those for whom he had been influential in obtaining governmental employment to become his adherents and supporters forever and complains bitterly when they joined or furnished the opposition to his aspirations.

Reminiscences written late in life offer an opportunity for self-glorification which few authors are able to resist but, in this respect, Mills was extremely moderate. Intense partizanship sometimes produced overstatement of fact. His description of the nondescript soldiery commanded by Major

Lynde at Fort Fillmore as "The flower of the United States army" is certainly open to question.

His book consists of some forty articles, loosely connected. The general tone is autobiographical. At least some of the omissions made out of respect for the living and the dead also benefitted the author himself. He makes no mention of the Chamizal dispute, which was an international issue at the time, although he certainly had first-hand information. Perhaps, being in the diplomatic service at the time, he wisely refrained.

The value of the original edition has been greatly enhanced by the introduction, appendix and profuse notes prepared by Rex Strickland, the present editor. The numerous errors in dates and the mis-spelled names have also been corrected.

In addition to its historical value, this is a beautifully prepared and printed volume and a distinct ornament to any library.

Mesilla Park, N. M.

ADLAI FEATHER

*The Mountain Meadows Massacre.* By Juanita Brooks. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1962. Pp. xiii, 316, index. \$5.95.

The Stanford University Press in 1950 published the first edition of Mrs. Brooks' excellent study of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Now that the first edition is out of print the University of Oklahoma Press has brought out a revised edition of the work.

The new edition has been spread over more pages but embodies only a few more words. There has been no change in the argument or in the conclusions. Acknowledgments have been added with an explanation for their omission in the first edition: ". . . because I felt I must bear full responsibility for the first edition . . ." Only a small amount of evidence has been added. The occasional re-wording has

been stylistic and of minor importance. Chapter headings have been inserted. Notes have been moved from the end of the chapter to the foot of the page. A few illustrations have been added. Seventeen items have been added to the bibliography, and one item has been dropped. The index has been improved. The new edition reports a few post-1950 developments, such as "more and more visitors each year" at the massacre site, and the reinstatement in 1961 of John D. Lee to "membership and former blessings" by the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve Apostles of the L.D.S. Church.

While the second edition is better than the first, the changes are not sufficiently substantial to make it necessary for most owners of the first edition to acquire the second.

LeRoy Hafen correctly has called the 1857 massacre of an emigrant party from Arkansas and Missouri "the worst stain on Utah history." Mrs. Brooks, "a loyal and active member" of the L.D.S. Church, believes that she has done her church a service by telling how and why Mormons assisted by Indians slaughtered more than 120 men, women and children whom they had first persuaded to give up their arms under a promise of protection. Mrs. Brooks makes a great effort to analyze Mormon psychology of 1857, yet states bluntly that "when the facts are marshaled, there is not justification enough for the death of a single individual."

Hard for some Mormons to accept is Mrs. Brooks' unavoidable conclusion that "Brigham Young was accessory after the fact. . . ." Young, who did not know of the massacre until after it had happened, tried to cover up the facts and to blame the Indians. After many years of mounting pressure he permitted John D. Lee, not the most blameworthy, to be convicted by an all-Mormon jury and to be put to death as the sole scapegoat.

Notably missing from the acknowledgments is any reference to the L.D.S. Church Historian's Office. And after twelve years the following comment, with respect to Mormon Church officials, stands unchanged on page 217: "In

their concern to let the matter die, they do not see that it can never be finally settled until it is accepted as any other historical incident, with a view only to finding the facts. To shrink from it, to discredit any who try to inquire into it, to refuse to discuss it, or to hesitate to accept all the evidence fearlessly is not only to keep it a matter of controversy, but to make the most loyal followers doubt the veracity of their leaders in presenting other matters of history."

Mrs. Brooks is to be commended for remarkable resourcefulness in running down evidence, a passion for justice, and rare objectivity.

University of Wyoming

T. A. LARSON

*Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay.* By Don Rickey, Jr. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963. Pp. xiv, 381. Illust., bibliog., index. \$5.95.

This is a well-researched book that seeks to synthesize the thoughts and emotions of the enlisted man of the United States regular army on the post-Civil War frontier. The author, Don Rickey, Jr., rejects the stereotype of the frontier soldier as either a "knight errant of the West" or as a "brutalized and degraded oppressor of noble red men," then proceeds to de-romanticize his "routinely-warped" subject.

After a brief but competent summary of the Indian conflicts of the post-Civil War frontier, Dr. Rickey presents fifteen chapters that range from the processes and traumas of enlistment to the behavior of men under fire. Other chapters deal with such topics as "Privates, Noncoms, and Officers," "Recreation, Relaxation, and Outside Interests," "Campaign Preparation, Equipment, and the Hostiles." In short, the book surveys practically every aspect of enlisted life in the frontier army from 1865 until the 1890's.

Such an enterprise posed considerable problems, both in organization and in the election of expository material. The problem of organization should be kept in mind by the

reader who becomes annoyed by what often seems a pot-pourri of quotations and anecdotes. More valid grounds for criticism lie in the presentation of expository material because, in dealing with a great mass of detail, the author seems unwilling to discard a single note. His desire for clarity leads him to clog his prose with superfluous names and dates. But, despite repetition and a sometimes didactic tone, the book is readable and certainly informative.

The volume is adequately indexed and illustrated. Twelve interesting photographs of frontier troops (mostly from the 1880's and 90's) were extracted from archival collections. The maps are of acceptable quality although of questionable value in a study of this type. One map, bearing only tribal names and the dates of Indian wars, is so general as to be almost useless. Another shows prominent sites of the Sioux War, 1876-1881. Some readers will wonder why the Sioux War was singled out for cartography. A third map, on the other hand, that depicts major forts, towns, and battlesites of the trans-Mississippi West, is worthwhile.

Of much more significance is an annotated bibliography. Here the reader discovers that Dr. Rickey used primary materials almost exclusively—most of them unpublished documents from important collections. The value of the book is further enhanced by the author's effort to fill a literary void left by a near-illiterate frontier soldiery. That is, Rickey sent questionnaires to over three hundred veterans of the Indian Wars. Some of them also furnished accounts of their experiences in the army. On the negative side, the bibliography and footnotes reveal perhaps too heavy a reliance on materials drawn from the wars of the northern plains. Moreover, the volume might have benefited from the writings of civilians and a broader use of government documents from the serial set (reports of the Secretary of War are cited only for 1876 and 1891). Nor does the bibliography include the books of Generals Nelson A. Miles, Oliver O. Howard, or James Parker. Also absent are John C.

Bourke's invaluable *Diary* and *On the Border with Crook*, as well as *On the Border with Mackenzie* by Robert G. Carter. The observations of such officers might be of value. But their omission does not undermine the soundness of a bibliography that rests on a firm foundation of unpublished materials.

Both "popular" reader and scholar will find that *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay* provides many insights into the character of the regulars who served in the post-Civil War West. Certainly it is a book that any Indian Wars buff will want on his bookshelf.

Citrus Heights, California

LESSING NOHL

*Military Governments in California, 1846-1850.* By Theodore Grivas. Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963. Pp. 247. Bibliog., illust., index.

Military government is no new experience for the United States in the second half of the 20th century, but it was a century ago when the country established a three-and-a-half-year period of military occupation in California based, in part, on experiences in Florida, Louisiana, and New Mexico. Professor Grivas takes us into two principal aspects of the problem: the extent and manner of the occupation and its theoretical or legal-theoretical side.

Instead of giving us first the facts of the occupation in the light of policy directives from Washington, if there were any, and their application by the military governors so that one might judge their success or failure, the author starts with theoretical definitions of military government—and martial law—drawn from writers of the 1860's and 1890's (William Whiting, William E. Birkhimer, George W. Davis), then correlates the history of California's occupation to them for the purpose of determining whether or not it was true to form. This creates certain difficulties for

a reader in terms of existential history, which had, to this reviewer's mind, better been left out.

The sections of the book that describe historical events are very good. The personalities of the officers acting as military governors are properly drawn—General Stephen Watts Kearny, General Bennett Riley, Colonel Richard B. Mason, and the more famous William C. C. Claiborne, Governor of the Louisiana Territory. The rivalries among commanders and their problems with various factions of the public are of considerable interest and the author has highlighted their place in their day to day workings of a military occupation. Yet what escapes a reader is the sense of a comprehensive military government policy in either its directive or applied form.

Less successful as history is the author's attempt to integrate systematically California's history from 1846 to 1850 into a theoretico-legal construct of the type now popular in American political science. It leads the author to assert what is not. Although Davis' 1898 treatise on American military law is Professor Grivas' authority, this in no way alters the fact that to call all military government arbitrary government and government by fiat is untenable, especially where parliamentary democratic governments are concerned. Supreme Court Justice R. B. Curtis has stated the position, and the fact, more accurately, in his work of 1862 on the executive power in the United States, when he said that the military commander possesses and exercises his powers, not in spite of the Constitution and laws of the United States, but in virtue of it and in strict subordination to it. A military governor who uses arbitrary force may, by the practice of military government, be held to account for his acts before a judicial tribunal. Except when governments, as a matter of national policy, conduct their affairs on complete behaviorist principles, military government cannot be despotic, or arbitrary.

William Whiting gives perhaps the true rendering of the

making of American military government in his *Military Government of Hostile Territory in Time of War* (1864), of which Professor Grivas seems to take no account, when he says that military government rests not alone on the President's powers as Commander-in-Chief, but upon the war powers of Congress, which includes the power to terminate as well as to regulate military government. Professor Grivas' view that military government per se is arbitrary and in its extreme form omnipotent (p. 15) is historically invalid, although undoubtedly acceptable on certain given theoretical definitions.

Because this book is of some importance to both historians and students of military government, as well as to its practitioners, it is this reviewer's opinion that the author's ideas might have been better clarified by a careful editing job.

Norwich University

ALBERT NORMAN

*Bernal Díaz; Historian of the Conquest.* By Herbert Cerwin.

Pp. xii, 239. Bibliog., illust., map, index. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963. \$4.95.

For his perceptive writing in *These Are the Mexicans*, author Cerwin is well known. His new work, although it removes him from the twentieth to the sixteenth century, demonstrates that a bit of his heart still lies south of the Rio Grande. Instead of another generalized view of a people, the present volume portrays an individual.

Bernal Díaz entered Mexico as a footsoldier with Cortés. Because of his account of that action, the long-lived conquistador is now remembered as a historian. When he penned his *historia verdadera*, his "little man's" account of the conquest, he had several purposes in mind: deflating the emphasis on the great Cortés, giving credit to the almost anonymous rank-and-file campaigners, and carving a niche for himself. Because Díaz' account of the conquest is so rich with references to its author, it logically serves as point of departure,

indeed warm invitation, to undertake a biographical study of the garrulous old warrior himself.

Cerwin's life of Díaz is the better of the two biographies in English, the other being that by Cunningham-Graham (1915). However, despite the author's willingness to study the major editions of Díaz' history (and many of those who have edited that history have shed light on Díaz), despite Cerwin's willingness to prowl in the archives of Mexico, Guatemala and Spain, despite every effort aimed at revealing Díaz, the doughty conquistador remains a shadowy person. Only in brief snatches does that glow which permeates Díaz' history come to permeate Díaz' biography.

In his evocation of the man and his times, the author is forced, as is any biographer of sixteenth-century figures in Latin America, to fashion an uneven and incomplete mosaic. He is encouraged to speculate quite often. To his credit, it may be said that most of his speculations, generally labeled as such with their "must haves," "probabilities" and "perhaps," result from that disciplined imagination which can be a proper tool of the historian. Sometimes the subject-matter is extraneous, even for a "man-and-times" treatment, e.g. the introduction of the marimba into Guatemala (p. 151). The citations, on occasion, are too skeletal and devoid of precise system. The scaffolding of the historian is too often exhibited to the reader, e.g. "we come across another document" (p. 136), "I have already described how" (p. 171), and "We have proof of this" (p. 196).

The perspective-establishing details, as well as the quotations which add a breathe-of-life air to the text, enrich the volume, as do numerous illustrations. In sum, in matters of style, Cerwin's work falls between two stools, the popular and the scholarly, completely satisfactory to neither, worthy of the attention of both.

The format of the volume bespeaks that excellence long associated with the University of Oklahoma Press.

Nottingham University

C. Harvey Gardiner