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Book Reviews

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IS THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION DEAD? By Stanley R. Ross. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966. Pp. ix, 225. \$2.50.

THIS BOOK is a valuable pedagogical tool. It is a selection of polemical essays concerning the contemporary vitality of the great Mexican Revolution. It is introduced, compiled, and edited by a recognized authority in the field of studies on the Mexican Revolution. Editor Stanley R. Ross, currently Chairman of the History Department and Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, has spent considerable time working with scholars at El Colegio de México in Mexico City, and thus he is thoroughly familiar with the main currents of past and contemporary thought concerning the Revolution.

The distinguished historians associated with the Colegio (Daniel Cosío Villegas, Moisés González Navarro, *et al.*) would seem to have answered Ross' query "Is the Revolution dead?" in the affirmative, for they have already begun to prepare a multi-volume history of the Revolution (*Historia Contemporánea de México*) and have placed the terminal date at 1940—the date which they consider the Mexican Revolution as an historical movement to have ended. Leftist authors in apparent agreement that the Revolution has ended are *Cuadernos Americanos* editor Jesús Silva Herzog and political analyst José R. Colín, who feel that the classic Thermidorean phase of the Revolution began a quarter century ago and that the Revolution will never be revived. Surprisingly, conservative historian and long-time opponent of the Revolution, Jorge Vera Estañol, comes to the same conclusion, but for different reasons. He believes the Revolution is dead because it has failed.

Yet there are those who maintain that the final verdict is not in yet. Old revolutionaries, like Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama and Heriberto Jara, insist that the Revolution is temporarily stalled and will ultimately fulfill its idealistic social goals. Similarly, labor leader Lombardo Toledano insists that the Revolution is now in Marx's classic bourgeois phase and will inevitably move on toward a proletarian triumph, though, contrary to

Marxian doctrine, by evolutionary means rather than through violence.

Spokesman for the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), such as Alberto Morales Jiménez and ex-President Adolfo López Mateos, insist that the Revolution is a vital and going concern, and spokesmen for Mexico's new industrial elite, such as economist Manuel Germán Parra, take a similar view.

An optimistic appraisal of the achievements of the Revolution is provided by historian Howard Cline, a pessimistic one by sociologist Pablo González Casanova, and noncommittal ones by Frank Brandenburg and by Ross himself. In sum, there is such rich interpretive fare in this book that the political and philosophical appetites of most any reader can be fully accommodated.

What is surprising is that despite the fact that the Mexican Revolution has so many unique characteristics of its own, Mexican and United States intellectuals still rely heavily on sociological concepts and categories drawn from the West European revolutionary experience—particularly from France and Russia. Similarly, they have all too often utilized the theory and methodology of European and Western bourgeois historians and of the Marxists to classify Mexico's problems. Perhaps this is an inevitable result of the insignificant role played by the intellectuals in the Mexican revolutionary process and of the consequent failure of the Revolution to develop an ideology of its own. However, until Mexico's revolution is dealt with as a truly indigenous phenomenon, there will continue to be serious problems in understanding it.

The University of New Mexico

EDWIN LIEUWEN

MY LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS AND ON THE PLAINS. By David Meriwether.

Edited by Robert A. Griffen. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1965. Pp. xxii, 302. Illus., bibliog., index.

THE MERIWETHER AUTOBIOGRAPHY is not a significant, but it is a welcome addition, to the historical literature of the Southwest. Drawing upon his memory at the age of 85, and an assortment of materials that he had collected, Meriwether dictated his memoirs to a granddaughter. The story is told in simple, straightforward language without the slightest embellishment or vanity, and it might well have been otherwise. When, in 1820, a young man of only twenty, joins an Indian war party to gain entry into the city of Santa Fe, hoping to establish trade relations between the United States and Mexico; finds himself imprisoned, and set free only to spend two wintry months on the Plains, holed up with a few Indian companions,

dining on a cache of dried meat, keeping an eye open for hostiles, then he might well be tempted to boast a bit—but not Meriwether.

Chapter one covers his boyhood days. His career as a trader in the Plains country began in 1819 and is covered in chapters two to seven, well filled with facts and events that were deeply embedded in his memory. Chapter eight covers the years after his return home from the Plains in 1822 to the 1850's, a period when he worked his farm, floated down the river with produce for market at New Orleans, and engaged actively in politics. A Democrat in a predominantly Whig state, he seldom won high office, but his career was crowned with appointment to Henry Clay's vacant seat in the Senate and subsequent appointment as governor of the Territory of New Mexico.

His term as governor from 1853 to 1857 was marked by the customary difficulties in Indian affairs, and the annexation of the Gadsden strip. Meriwether does not throw any new light on the history of the period, although several incidents are of unusual interest; for instance, when he brought Kit Carson to heel as his subordinate agent to the Indians at Taos (p. 228); and the recovery of a watch from an Indian who claimed to have killed Captain Stanton in 1855. The Governor questioned him about the matter and found out that the watch, which had been ticking, "died," whereupon the Indian buried it. He persuaded the Indian to dig it up, turned his back, rewound it, and, lo and behold, it came back to "life." The Indian thought the white man was a witch.

In answer to a not unusual question, Meriwether states (p. 232) that Kit Carson could only sign his name; he could not write a letter. The governor is confused about Fort Webster; it was not active at the time he wrote. No doubt he meant Fort Fillmore, although the editor of the memoirs does not point this out. The origin given for the Lewis and Clark expedition is also incorrect. On the whole, however, the annotations are well done, but errors creep into the best of efforts. For instance, New Mexicans hunting the buffalo could not have met at Tascosa because it was not founded until after the day of buffalo hunting (p. 79, note 7). And it is very doubtful indeed that the Pawnees raided early seventeenth-century New Mexico to get horses, Frederick Hodge to the contrary notwithstanding (p. 79, note 6). Zuñi Mountain is a domal uplift, not a part of the Rocky Mountains (p. 206, note 21). The probable year for building the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe is 1610 (p. 89, note 9). "Quoetaro" is not a reference to the Chiracahua Indians, but Meriwether's phonetic rendering of the Spanish word "coyotero," a name applied to another Apache group (p. 258).

The Autobiography ends with Meriwether's term as governor, so the story of his subsequent career must be found elsewhere. A three page

Epilogue summarizes his late activities in business and politics. He served his last term as a legislator at the age of 85. Death came seven years later.
The University of New Mexico FRANK D. REEVE

RANALD S. MACKENZIE ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER. By Ernest Wallace.
Lubbock: West Texas Museum Association, 1964. Pp. x, 214. Illus.,
maps, index.

THIS is the story of a Custer-like young officer who won distinction in the Civil War as the leader of a Connecticut Volunteer Regiment, and who also earned the title "boy general" by rising to the rank of Brevet Major General of U.S. Volunteers at the age of twenty-four. Resuming his rank of Captain of Engineers after the war he waited five impatient years for the kind of position that suited his daring nature. Late in 1870 he was given command of the 4th Cavalry and immediately he set about perfecting the organization, then stationed at Fort Concho, Texas. "I intend that it shall not be on account of any laziness of mine if it falls below any other," he wrote of his new command. For the rest of his life this attitude characterized his devotion to his profession. Hard-driving, Spartan in his living, unable to relax, he pushed himself to eventual insanity and death in 1889 at the age of 48. Sherman once said of Custer that he was "young, very brave even to rashness, a good trait for a Cavalry officer." He felt much the same about Mackenzie; Sheridan fully agreed with him.

Texas in the '70's provided all the normal frustrations of Indian campaigning—an elusive enemy, parched distances, and impatient settlers—with the added complication of the international boundary as a barrier. The Kickapoos, who had fled the United States during the Civil War to take refuge in Mexico, now began to plunder Texas towns and flee back into Mexican sovereignty for protection. The effectiveness of their raids so disturbed military authorities in Washington, D.C., that the federal government decided to risk Mexican wrath by pursuing the Indians across the border. In the spring of 1873 Mackenzie led his troopers some sixty or seventy miles into Mexico where they destroyed the Kickapoo village and generated no more than a mild protest from Mexico. In the following year the hard-working cavalryman fell upon a group of Kiowa and Comanche raiders he had long searched for and he badly mauled them in what became known as the battle of Palo Duro canyon. A large part of 1,424 captured animals were destroyed along with food supplies and lodgings belonging to the Indians. In 1878 Mackenzie again chased cattle thieves across the border into Mexico and the author concludes that his presence in the region, as well as his willingness to cross the Rio Grande, did a

great deal to tighten Mexican resolve in the matter of controlling international raiders.

Professor Wallace's monograph concerns principally the Texas days of Ranald Mackenzie, during the 1870's, but the study is highly detailed and is the result of exhaustive examination of documentary sources in the National Archives. In addition, it is a well-organized, well-written account. Consequently, though its scope be somewhat limited, the work is of consequence and it will be required reading for any future student who attempts to understand or to write about the Southwest military-Indian frontier.

University of Colorado

ROBERT G. ATHEARN

WITH SCOUTS AND CAVALRY AT FORT APACHE. By Harold B. Wharfield.

Edited by John Alexander Carroll. Tucson: Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, 1965. Pp. xii, 124. Illus., index. \$6.00.

QUITE OFTEN the reader of this pleasant reminiscence finds it helpful to turn back to the first page, so as to be reassured that the events described actually take place in 1918. Such assurance is necessary, because the environment, the duties, the routines of Troop L at Fort Apache, resemble something out of the 19th, rather than the 20th century. Even in 1918, the fort was served only by horse-drawn vehicles, and the garrison morning report would not have surprised General Crook. Troop L was kept busy with the kind of work that bored frontier soldiers for a century. The officers went hunting or exploring to vary the dull routine, and the men performed the same necessary or useless tasks day after day.

All the characters familiar to frontier army accounts are present: the knowledgeable "old army" commanding officer, the tough, but fair, topkick, the drunken enlisted man, the slightly mysterious, philosophical army medic, the homesick retired soldier, the tangled red-tape of regulations, the busy-work, the faithful Indian scouts, unreliable at times, but always romantic. Indeed, the entire scene resembles a set for a 1966 television Western. The only missing ingredient is action. Except for the usual AWOLS, malingerers, drunks, and arrivals or departures of mail, there was no action at Fort Apache. An uneventful visit by Troop L to Globe was the biggest excitement of the year, unless it was overshadowed by a raid on an Indian booze camp. It was true, as young Lieutenant Wharfield had been told, that Fort Apache was the best place for a soldier who liked to ride and hunt. There was not much else he could do.

The Lieutenant found this life interesting and exciting, and his recollection transmits his impression well. His situation was new and strange. History spoke to him from every trail, ford, and pass. As an adventure in

nostalgia it was fascinating. As army service, Fort Apache was an anachronism. Many officers would have rebelled or taken to drink in such a situation. But the Lieutenant made the most of it. In fact, he liked the life so much that he could not understand that some of the troop might not.

The book is neatly printed, and the illustrations are adequate examples of amateur photography. One quibble: it seems unlikely that the Lieutenant (now Colonel) would spend his life in the army and still refer to a bandoleer as a bandelier.

University of Oregon Library

MARTIN SCHMITT

THE BLAZED TRAIL OF ANTOINE LEROUX. By Forbes Parkhill. Los Angeles:

Westernlore Press, 1965. Pp. 235. Bibliog., index. \$7.50.

FORBES PARKHILL rightly judges Antoine Leroux worthy of a full-length biographical study, for Leroux participated in such well-known episodes in the opening of the West as the Ashley-Henry expedition of 1822 and the march of the Mormon Battalion. As a trapper, Leroux gained knowledge of great unexplored areas of the West which he later put to use by serving as a guide for several American military and exploring parties. As an early settler in New Mexico, Leroux was among those Americans who facilitated the later American conquest of the area. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that this book will, as Parkhill hoped, "establish the place of Antoine Leroux among the outstanding mountain men, guides and Indian fighters of his era."

Although he attempts to cover his subject's entire life span, Parkhill concentrates on Leroux's last years (1846-1861) when the one-time trapper served as a scout and guide. For this period, information is more accessible and Parkhill seems more at home with his material. He appears to have combed published sources thoroughly, quotes extensively from them, and adds considerable detail to the story that Grant Foreman outlined in his brief article, "Antoine Leroux, New Mexico Guide" (NMHR, vol. 16, no. 4, 1941). Parkhill's treatment of Leroux's early life (1801-1846) is sketchy, at best. In covering these years, Parkhill does a great deal of padding, giving extraneous details about the times instead of the man. Further archival research might have revealed more information about Leroux's life in New Mexico; he was, for example, involved in trade on the Chihuahua Trail (a guía dated August 18, 1841, is in the Mexican Archives in New Mexico, State Records Center, Santa Fe). Regardless of how deserving Leroux may be of a biography, it would appear that Parkhill has not uncovered enough new material to justify presenting his findings as a full-length study.

The Blazed Trail of Antoine Leroux is not, as its publishers claim, "a serious study," if the term is understood in a scholarly sense. A bibliography

is provided but footnotes are used rather whimsically, and the reader will frequently be unable to locate the source of Parkhill's assertions. This could easily be forgiven if the book were written with the concern for accuracy that characterizes such popular history as David Lavender's *Bent's Fort*—but this is not the case. Even the general reader may be bothered by the absence of accents and tildes on almost all Spanish names (i.e. "Donna Anna Maria" p. 21), and by such generalizations as: "most Mexicans were too indolent or too lacking in skill to become successful trappers." (p. 48). *Doubtless* and *certainly* are often used when the reader wonders if a *probably* would not be more appropriate. Most disturbingly, many errors of fact are apparent. An almost incredible example is the statement that "Antoine Leroux was the fourth and youngest child of Marie Rose and Jean Sale dit Lajoie." (p. 28). These were Leroux's maternal grandparents. On the same page we find that Josiah Gregg wrote his famous *Commerce of the Prairies* in 1884 instead of 1844. James Purcell (rendered "Pursell" by Parkhill) is credited with reaching Santa Fe in 1802 rather than 1805 (p. 34). Thus the reader is told that Jean Baptiste Lalande, of textbook fame as the first known merchant to bring goods from the United States to Santa Fe, arrived two years after James Purcell. Not quite the pathfinder that his subject was, Parkhill places New Mexico's Rio Puerco in "today's Arizona" (p. 111). Finally, the author's use of Spanish materials is not to be trusted. A case in point is the last paragraph on p. 57 in which he makes a number of errors that can only be ascribed to faulty translation or transcription (his source is not cited but it clearly comes from a document in the Mexican Archives in New Mexico).

Like so many mountain men, Antoine Leroux left few records from which a later generation might reconstruct his story. If this biography does not quite succeed, Leroux must bear part of the blame. Indeed, Leroux covered his trail so well that, until the appearance of this study, his name was almost unknown to the general reader of Western Americana. For his work toward remedying this situation we must be thankful to Mr. Parkhill. Nevertheless, a study based on sound scholarship is still needed if we are to come to a full appreciation of Leroux's role in the opening of the West.

The University of New Mexico

DAVID J. WEBER

THE SOURCES AND DIFFUSION OF THE MEXICAN SHEPHERDS' PLAYS. By Juan B. Rael. Guadalajara: Librería La Joyita, 1965. Pp. 647. Illus., maps, bibliog. \$5.00.

UP TO THE PUBLICATION of this splendid work on the shepherds' plays there had been quite a bit of conjecture among folklorists both as to the origin

and dissemination of these dramatic representations. In this, his latest contribution to the field of folklore studies, Dr. Juan B. Rael of Stanford University conclusively shows that these folk dramas have their origin, not in California or New Mexico as has been believed, but in Mexico (either in Durango or in Zacatecas). From there they were taken north into the great American Hispanic Southwest. The main channels of diffusion coincide with the routes followed by early Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustinian missionaries: by sea to California and by land through Chihuahua and New Mexico to southern Colorado or through Coahuila and Nuevo Leon into Texas (San Antonio).

Since the Indians had a strong taste for the dramatic, the missionaries provided them with these simple New Testament plays that dramatize the journey of shepherds to Bethlehem to offer homage to the Christ Child. These are the same plays that have been represented at Christmas time both in northern Mexico and throughout the American Southwest. It is unfortunate that interest in these plays has waned due to newer forms of diversion.

Working under three separate grants from the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, the author did extensive research in Mexico, Central and South America. He discovered that, except for an occasional play in Guatemala and Colombia, the shepherds' plays, as we know them in the Southwest, are all but unknown in South America. The bulk of his collection of manuscripts comes from Mexico or from New Mexico and southern Colorado.

In a most meticulous line-by-line comparison between variants of several texts in his possession and others written by peninsular dramatists, such as Calderón and Mira de Mescua, the author concludes that none of the plays in his collection originates in Spain. He does see the influence of certain Spanish plays, particularly two by Calderón (*El pleito matrimonial* and *La vida es sueño*), two by Mira de Mescua (*El coloquio de Nuestro Señor* and *El buen ladrón*), and one each by Antonio de Castillo (*Auto sacramental al nacimiento del Hijo de Dios*) and Godínez Segundo (*Coloquio de los pastores de Belén*). Other minor peninsular influence is seen in the names of some of the shepherds (Bato, Bartolo, Gila). Basic thematic similarities between the Mexican shepherds' plays and those of Spain are discounted by the author since all the works are inspired in the same biblical theme—the trek of shepherds to Bethlehem.

The Sources and Diffusion of the Mexican Shepherds' Plays is a most valuable contribution to the field of folklore studies and is a must both for the layman and the serious student of southwestern Hispanic folklore.

The University of New Mexico

RUBÉN COBOS

A **MERCEDARIAN ANTIPHONARY**. By Lincoln Bunce Spiess, with notes on painted ornaments by E. Boyd. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1965. Illus. Pp. 48.

THIS SCHOLARLY musicological monograph is a fine thorough study of a 17th-century parchment manuscript from Guatemala. It is the chant "Sequence" for the feast of St. Peter Nolasco, founder of the Order of Mercy, a Spanish mendicant Order. The manuscript is part of the Collection of Spanish Colonial Art left to the Museum of New Mexico by our famed and beloved archaeologist, the late Sylvanus G. Morley. The study is beautifully printed, and illustrated with excellent photo reproductions of the text itself, as well as a rendition of it in modern musical notation. The frontispiece is a color reproduction of a 19th-century New Mexican *retablo* depicting a once popular *santo*, San Ramón Nonato, who was a Mercedarian friar. This provides a charming, if tenuous, connection with New Mexican colonial art.

This would have been fine and proper if the author had not ventured briefly into unknown historical territory by suggesting that the Mercedarian Order might have had some influence, and even representatives, in New Mexico. Utter nonsense, and the single unfortunate fleck in this otherwise superb treatise.

Peña Blanca, N.M.

FRAY ANGELICO CHAVEZ

OUTLAW: BILL MITCHELL ALIAS BALDY RUSSELL, HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

By C. L. Sonnichsen. Denver: Sage Books, 1965. Pp. 197. Illus., bibliog., index. \$4.75.

BILL MITCHELL sought anonymity in the changing Southwest between 1874 and 1928. He did so because both he and his father committed murders. His withdrawal from society partially explains his survival for so many years after the commission of his crime, perhaps his biography, and certainly the scarcity of documents required for an historical study. Mitchell lived till he was in his seventies. His life story is therefore quite unlike that of Billy the Kid, Henry Plummer, or the many notorious outlaws who died prematurely. But unless one accepts the Brushy Bill Roberts type of account, western history provides few glimpses of those who lived well beyond any given climactic incident.

Mr. Sonnichsen set out to reconstruct the life of this fugitive which was an extremely challenging proposition; the family left few if any documents. The Mitchells helped pioneer a remote part of central Texas. Over the years problems accumulated with neighbors, the Truitts, resulting in Mitchell's father suing for payment of a debt. In 1874, during the time the case was in court, Isaac Truitt was killed in a gun battle with several

of the Mitchells. Bill Mitchell's father was tried, convicted, and executed for the murder. The surviving Mitchells left their central Texas home and Bill began his long life as a fugitive. In 1886 James Truitt was shot and killed. More than twenty years later Bill Mitchell was tried for the murder and after many delays went to prison in 1912 only to escape two years later. He died of natural causes in 1928 in New Mexico where he had spent most of his adult life on the fringe of society.

The book's major weakness is its lack of sufficient documentation. The footnotes reveal that the author relied heavily on interviews and letters. A majority of the interviews, conducted in 1963, concerned events which took place during the 1870's, the period of the trial from 1907 to 1912, and the years after Bill's escape from prison in 1914. The letters were essentially written interviews rather than contemporary documents and follow much the same pattern as the oral interviews; most of them were written in 1963. Thus Mr. Sonnichsen based his book on the recollections of people who were frequently relatives of the central figures. They had been told some time in the past what had happened and were recalling the stories from a half century more or less. Parts of the trials, murders, and such were reconstructed from court proceedings and similar more acceptable historical documents. The legal highlights were held together by ideas extracted from the interviews and the author's surmises as to what might have happened. Indeed the best parts of the book are the fine descriptions which the author provided as settings for incidents important to Bill Mitchell's biography. Parenthetically, Cooney Mitchell's last statement will prove interesting to some students of western history.

The physical quality of the book is mediocre, misprints were noted, and occasionally colorful but imprecise phraseology was used. These objections seemed insignificant when compared with Mr. Sonnichsen's need to rely on supposition and hearsay for the core of his story. As the book now appears, it might prove interesting to some readers in New Mexico and possibly Texas.

Colorado State University

CHARLES J. BAYARD

RED MAN'S RELIGION: BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE INDIANS NORTH OF MEXICO. By Ruth M. Underhill. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1965. Pp. 269. Illus., maps, index. \$7.95.

INTENDED as a companion volume to the author's *Red Man's America* and an introduction to its subject, this book covers its field thematically and geographically and does so very well. Curing, funerals, vision quest, the great communal rituals, peyotism, etc. are all here. They are not as much described as evoked, for Underhill draws on her broad experience and

familiarity with the subject for apposite anecdotes, fragments or outlines of ritual or belief which convey the feeling of Indian religiosity rather than its organization or intellectual content. Inevitably this technique holds her to the introductory level: what is missing is the elaboration of the fragments into systems, the sense of fit of one myth or rite with another, the intellectual subtlety to which even simple band religions lend themselves. Mythology is particularly skimmed by such a treatment, and I am not convinced by Underhill's disclaimer that myths are for specialists while rites may be expected to reflect the viewpoint of the Indian layman.

Underhill manages the juxtaposition of the familiar facts with freshness and vigor, and the diverse cultures of North America stand forth clearly. Ecological and historical differences are lucidly presented. Siberian and Mexican influences on North America are traced in some detail; European influences are largely omitted, since the facts are related in the ethnographic present. Suggestive questions emerge in detail (why were the Indians seemingly so insensitive to flowers?) and in general (why is cannibalism so strikingly absent in North America? Why is the spirit quest peculiar to it?). Inevitably this first synthesis of North American Indian religion raises an even broader question: is there a thematic unity to the North American cultures, or must we deal with them in two, five, thirteen or thirty importantly distinct patterns? Obliquely but pervasively Underhill suggests throughout that the Indians have something in common besides exposure to English, and amid the complexities and diversities the "feeling" persists. Elusive and inexplicit as it is, this question remains an intriguing and I believe significant undercurrent of her book.

The student of North American Indians will find this a useful introduction to the more specialized literature on their religions. A selected bibliography is included and is cross-referenced by chapter, and there is a good index. For the more general reader, the work is a well-written, comprehensive and accurate summary. The illustrations are notably well selected.

Tulane University MUNRO S. EDMONSON