

reviews

science and technology

PHILADELPHIA'S PHILOSOPHER MECHANICS: A History of the Franklin Institute, 1824-1865. By Bruce Sinclair. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1975. \$15.00.

Few of us have the opportunity to write the history of an institution as "important" as was the Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania, for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts. Fewer of us still have the skill and imagination to make of such a history a window into America's past, so that the issues and actions of that period of America's social and economic and political and cultural transformation may be seen in all the complexity and immediacy they possessed for contemporaries. In Sinclair's book we have not only a model of institutional history but also a major corrective to the mythic view of American economic and technological development as the product of the random efforts of ingenuous mechanists and isolated entrepreneurs, and an important addition to our understanding of the social and intellectual and institutional network of which American (high) culture was composed during the ante-bellum period. We have also an opportunity to observe the changing modes by which men of the period between 1824 and 1865 struggled to understand the meaning of America and to put that understanding into action, themselves seeking to unite democratic theory and practice and to bridge the gap between the possibility of progress in America and the realities of American life, through their advocacy of a union of natural theory and practice, of science and technology. Sinclair treats the Institute's "problems"—the construction of educational programs in science and technology, the design and production of a journal and the establishment of inter-institutional relationships, including relationships with the agencies of federal, state, and municipal government. He treats the Institute's "projects"—its materials testing program, best known in the context of its inquiry into the causes of steamboat boiler explosions, its evaluations of patents, its annual exhibitions of new techniques and new products as well as its attempts to be useful to the coal and iron industries of Pennsylvania and to a public fascinated by science, invention and innovation, to mechanics seeking instruction in science and manufacturers seeking advice about technology. In his hands, "problems" and "projects" become foci for an examination of America itself, so that these, like the iconography of American technology (splendidly represented in four "picture essays" within the book) or the marginalia found in books in the Institute's library, are more than anecdotes or incidents. They become manifestations of the past, symptoms of a world we have forgotten, freighted with meaning for those who care to look in the present.

University of Cincinnati

Henry D. Shapiro

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC: American Scientific and Learned Societies from Colonial Times to the Civil War. Edited by Alexandra Oleson and Sanborn C. Brown. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1976. \$16.50.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences is sponsoring three conferences in the 1970's (1973, 1975, 1977) on the history of scientific and learned societies in America. Sixteen authors contributed substantive essays to this first volume. The coverage is very broad—scientific, medical, agricultural, artistic, and humanistic societies—although heavily tilted toward scientific societies. The volume far surpasses Ralph S. Bates' superficial *Scientific Societies in the United States* (1944, 1958); most essays attempt to relate cultural societies to social milieu and address the question of the transmission,

diffusion, and preservation of knowledge in pre-Civil War American society. Some of the most successful essays are "biographical" portraits of particular societies or particular types or societies, which are highly useful for reference purposes. Barbara G. Rosenkrantz's closing critique is an incisive guide to both the field and to the papers. Despite the limitations of the symposium genre, this is a useful work of reference and point of departure for students of American culture.

HC

DARWIN IN AMERICA: The Intellectual Response, 1865-1912. By Cynthia Russett. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company. 1976. \$9.00. Paper: \$4.95.

Except for a chapter on literary naturalism, Russett's book covers much the same ground as earlier studies by Richard Hofstadter and Paul Boller, Jr. In its treatment of technical philosophical questions her book may be superior to the earlier works, but in other respects it is less satisfactory.

University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Benjamin Rader

literature

F. O. MATHIESSEN: The Critical Achievement. By Giles B. Gunn. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 1975. \$9.50.

Giles B. Gunn has rightly assumed in undertaking a study of F. O. Mathiessen that he is dealing with a figure of capital importance. Doubtless the late Professor Mathiessen's influence extended far beyond his readers and indirectly entered into classroom discussions of American literature everywhere in America. Who of GI-bill, graduate-school vintage will forget the heady sense of a world opening up, of ultimate mysteries being explained, of intellectual adventures being proposed, upon first looking into Mathiessen's *American Renaissance*? The world then seemed fresh and green, and Mathiessen's assessment of the American past only prolegomena to an American future of unlimited possibilities.

All that is gone now of course, though Mathiessen's work lives on, a bit tarnished by time and events, but still waiting to excite another generation. Gunn grapples with all the difficult problems of Mathiessen's *Bildungsroman*, for that, as I see it, is essentially what his life was. He went on a spiritual odyssey that took him from the Elizabethans to T. S. Eliot, to the major figures of 19th-century New England, and then toward James and Dreiser. Along the way, as Gunn points out, Professor Mathiessen picked up political and theological assumptions about society and man that placed him under greater and greater tension. It was the apparent collision of values in Christianity, socialism and tragedy—according to some of his critics hopelessly contradictory forces—that finally, one assumes, brought him to a tragic end in 1950.

Professor Gunn does a superb job of balancing all these elements, and bringing them all to mind, in a book that scrupulously examines a great mass of Mathiessen's prolific writings. If at times the author sounds a bit academic, a little too prone to indulge in variations on that condescending cliché (we all do it), "so-and-so has failed to see" (with the implicit assurance that the present writer *does* see [e.g., 80, 106, 147, 188]); at other times, almost too deferential to Mathiessen's detractors (how does the Latin phrase go?—*dammant quod non intelligunt*); and again, more inclined to paraphrase than elucidate Mathiessen—he can be forgiven all these venial sins in light of his overriding purpose. I take that to be a tribute to a scholar, who, precisely because he had the bad luck to be an extraordinarily sensitive human being, was capable of apprehending several layers of reality simultaneously. To call Mathiessen "self-deceived" (which the author of this book most certainly does *not*) says more about the commentator than about Mathiessen. Professor Gunn undertakes to reconcile the opposites in Mathiessen by speaking, among other things, of how his life "was at once realistic and hopeful." For me, though, to enter into communion with Mathiessen one need go no further than Emerson's transcendent "with consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do," and Whitman's impudent followup: "Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes)." It was the voices in America that nudged us toward diminution rather than enlargement that ultimately drove Mathiessen to his death. No one who writes about him should ever forget that. And Giles Gunn, who I assume was very young during that oppressive time of mid-century complacency, nevertheless grasps its essence with astonishing sensitivity.

Mathiessen, in some ways also a Steppenwolf figure, was most certainly Walt Whitman's "I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there." Professor Gunn's book reminds us of the terrible penalties, and exalted rewards, life can sometimes exact from the man of thought. Like Elizabethan historians, we could perhaps be primarily concerned with the providential design in such larger truths rather than the occasional inconsistent

fact. Mathiessen and his readers of a generation ago were drawn into a mutual flame. The test of this book will be to see how well it succeeds in helping to keep that flame alive.

University of Vermont

Kenneth S. Rothwell

THE IGNOBLE SAVAGE: American Literary Rascism: 1790-1890. By Louise K. Barnett. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1975. \$13.95.

Ms. Barnett studies a genre, the frontier romance, which is, by her own admission, "persistently uncreative and deservedly forgotten." Although her method is consistently literary criticism, it is never clear whether the forgotten romances are recalled so their authors can be castigated for their creation of racist stereotypes or their aesthetic failures. The study does, however, provide useful background for the student who is interested in literary Indians as constituents of a racist socio-cultural matrix which might be studied by appropriate interdisciplinary techniques. The chapters on Hawthorne and Melville, in which the techniques of literary criticism are fully appropriate, make small but genuine contributions.

SUNY—Albany

Donald J. Byrd

A MORAL TALE: Children's Fiction and American Culture, 1820-1860. By Anne Scott MacLeod. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books. 1975. \$10.00.

A useful supplement to Gordon Kelly's *Mother Was A Lady: Self and Society in Selected American Children's Periodicals, 1865-1890*. MacLeod deals with the generation preceding and with book length fiction. Although her work suffers by comparison with Kelly's more sophisticated approach to the problems of interpreting cultural values through fiction, she is especially good on the economic factors underlying the publishing industry. Since information on the buyers and readers of children's books in this period apparently does not exist, we are left once again with an impression of the fantasies of a small group of middle class writers. It seems, on the strength of MacLeod's description, that the "gentry" has always been in a state of crisis.

George Washington University

Bernard Mergen

MANKIND IN BARBARY: The Individual and Society in the Novels of Norman Mailer. By Stanley T. Gutman. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England. 1975. \$12.50.

Gutman offers thorough, coherent and informed analyses of Mailer's novels to date, including the important work of autobiographical fiction, *The Armies of the Night*, in which Mailer resolves issues brought up earlier in the novels. The book's thesis is that Mailer's literary talents are primarily novelistic and that his novels are explorations of one central intellectual concern—survival of the individual in mid-20th-century society, the characteristic institutions of which are totalitarian and life-denying. Gutman persuasively demonstrates, in lucid prose, Mailer's growing conviction that individual survival depends on courage, a commitment to continual growth, and a willingness to engage death. Joining the new wave of Mailer criticism, Gutman also considers the importance of style and form in the author's work.

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FIGHTERS AND LOVERS: Theme in the Novels of John Updike. By Joyce B. Markle. New York: New York University Press. 1973. \$10.00.

John Updike likes this book best among those that have been written about him, and I think I can see why: Markle demonstrates, in greater detail than Updike's other critics, the central importance of love—between parents and children, wife and husband, unmarried couples—in the novelist's vision of contemporary American life. She examines other themes too, such as the problematic nature of religious faith in the society depicted in the novels; but it is the workings of love in the lives of Updike's protagonists that rightly claims most of her attention. This is an extremely useful book because she has outlined the broadest, most resonant context in which to understand Updike's full-length fictions.

The University of Kansas

Charles G. Masinton

the south

A SOUTHERN ODYSSEY: Travelers in the Antebellum North. By John Hope Franklin. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1976. \$12.50.

Since 1881, when Henry Cabot Lodge in *A Short History of the English Colonies in North America* pointed to the colonial origins of the Civil War in the radically different

social and political systems of North and South, we have accepted sectional divisions (as distinct from sectional or regional distinctness) as normal and necessary characteristics of American history, and have explored and exploited aspects of the two cultures which prevailed before and after the Civil War. Against this view Professor Franklin has, with characteristic modesty, offered a compelling argument that our fundamental assumptions are simply incorrect. Franklin does not deny that the Civil War occurred, of course, but he does suggest that our easy explanation of its occurrence as the natural consequence of a pattern of fundamental division needs reconsideration, in light of the readily available evidence of substantial and, he suggests characteristic patterns of inter-sectional "connection," manifested in this case by Southern travel accounts of the North and by the travel to the North which underlay them. This in turn suggests, though Franklin does not say so explicitly, that a nationalist model, characterized by the relationship between metropolis and hinterland, is more useful for understanding the connections between peoples living in distinct geographic areas of the nation during the ante-bellum period than the traditional sectionalist or regionalist models we more usually employ. For if the South was different from the North, so was the North different from the North, both in "reality" and in the eyes of contemporaries. Philadelphia was one thing, New York another, Boston another, Cincinnati another, and so on, but all of these, like Niagara Falls and Saratoga Springs, were available to tourists from the entire nation, and in this availability provided Americans not so much with the experience of the nation as a whole as with a sense of their participation in a national culture. If Southrons on tour said of New York (or Boston, or Philadelphia, or Cincinnati) that it was a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there, they were only expressing the tourist's normal preference for home and the familiar, and in any case they kept coming North until the War itself made Northern travel impossible. When the War ended, they started coming again, until the shifting economic and social patterns of the later nineteenth century created metropolises all over the nation and denied the northeast its wonted dominance in American culture and its wonted dominance over American tourism.

University of Cincinnati

Henry D. Shapiro

THE IMPROBABLE ERA: The South since World War II. By Charles P. Roland. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 1975. \$11.95.

The Improbable Era surveys the history of the postwar South and emphasizes the enduring nature of this unique area's regional characteristics in the face of immense and compelling change. Roland portrays the traditional South as shaken by the stresses of postwar change, from the civil rights movement to rapid industrialization and urbanization. Nevertheless, he argues that lingering and powerful vestiges of an older South prevail, especially in "the South's perception of itself and the nation's perception of the South." *The Improbable Era* provides background material useful to students of American studies in its discussion of postwar Southern society, from country music to evangelical religion. This brief work is of most value, however, for the general reader and the new student of Southern history.

Iowa State University

Mary S. McAuliffe

THE URBAN ETHOS IN THE SOUTH, 1920-1930. By Blaine A. Brownell. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1975. \$12.50.

This study describes the Southern concept of the city during the 1920s. It focuses on the rhetoric of business leaders and newspaper editors and demonstrates that these Southern boosters glorified urban expansion with the same enthusiasm as their northern counterparts. Brownell labels their concept of the city as "corporate-expansive," for they emphasized the social unity of the city while seeking unprecedented population growth. According to Brownell, this urban ethos probably arose from fears that urbanization "threatened to undermine the legitimacy, stability, and socioeconomic order of the city itself" (p. 155). This theme of a threatened urban elite pervades much recent historical literature, but Brownell offers little convincing support for his view and seems to invest booster rhetoric with unduly grim overtones. Brownell does, however, offer an enlightening view of the Southern mind and reveals the degree to which urban leaders had abandoned the magnolia-and-mint julep concept of their native region.

Purdue University

Jon C. Teaford

FREEDMEN, PHILANTHROPY, AND FRAUD: A History of the Freedman's Saving Bank. By Carl R. Osthaus. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1976. \$10.95.

This specialized study of a project conceived to encourage thrift and help former slaves along the road to middle-class citizenship will be of interest primarily to students of the reconstruction period or of black history. Based on extensive research and well

documented—though it could be better organized—it traces the bank's history from the Reverend John W. Alvord's idea, through the bill of March 3, 1865, and up until the bank ceased operations on July 2, 1874, the victim of increasingly poor management and the panic of 1873.

University of Nebraska—Omaha

Frederick W. Adrian

north and northwest

THE FRONTIER IN ALASKA AND THE MATANUSKA COLONY. By Orlando Miller. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1975. \$15.00.

Based upon an impressive use of manuscript and other primary materials, this work treats the origins and results of a New Deal project to resettle impoverished farmers from the cut over forest region of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota in an agricultural colony in Alaska's Matanuska Valley. Aside from showing that the Matanuska project cannot easily be labeled as a success or failure, Professor Miller handles his topic within the broader context of Alaskan development through the early 1970's. He observes that a persistent frontier promotionism, especially as it relates to agriculture, has ignored the realities of the Alaskan environment. The book also stresses the conflict between Federal policy and the desires of Alaskans for rapid development of their resources.

Miller's book will be of particular value to students of the modern American West. It is also a model of solid conceptualization and research in local or regional history.

University of Nebraska—Omaha

Harl A. Dalstrom

CONFLICT ON THE NORTHWEST COAST: American-Russian Rivalry in the Pacific Northwest, 1790-1867. By Howard I. Kushner. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1975. \$13.95.

This concise but solid monograph speaks to American diplomatic historians and, to a lesser extent, frontier and economic historians. Drawing on a wealth of primary materials, Kushner cogently argues that conflict and occasionally near hostility characterized Russian American relations in the Pacific Northwest from 1790 to 1867; that St. Petersburg reluctantly decided to cede Alaska when faced with the choice of selling the possession or eventually having Americans seize it, as officials of the Russian-American Company for years had foreseen and influential policy makers at home more recently had contended; that Alaska's intrinsic value, as well as its potential as a stepping stone to Asia, attracted varied American economic interests, the penetration of which precipitated and sustained the bilateral rivalry and finally doomed continued Russian ownership. Contrary to the author's claim, this study revises traditional interpretations less than it illuminates with new data and sharpens understanding of a long neglected subject.

Iowa State University

Richard N. Kottman

INDIAN LIFE ON THE NORTHWEST COAST OF NORTH AMERICA: As Seen by the Early Explorers and Fur Traders during the Last Decades of the Eighteenth Century. By Erna Gunther. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 1972, reprinted 1975. Paper: \$5.95.

"This study was written," the author writes, "to assemble all the information available on the Indian life of the period." It does precisely that, carefully and thoughtfully. The material is presented in a fashion which makes this a valuable book for the specialist and non-specialist alike. It is well illustrated and includes a useful checklist of eighteen-century Indian objects in European museums. The brief introduction outlines a methodology for ethnohistory which others will no doubt follow. This reprinting rightly calls attention to a sound and important book.

SUNY—Albany

Donald J. Byrd

the midwest

POPULISM: A Psychohistorical Perspective. By James M. Youngdale. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press. 1975. \$15.00.

Ostensibly about the populism of the upper midwest, Youngdale's monograph has richer implications. His real aspiration is to enter the dialogue on methodology that has marked the American Studies movement since its inception. Leaving behind the narratives of a John Hicks or Norman Pollack, outdistancing Richard Hofstadter's

hypothesis about status anxiety, Youngdale borrows the psychology of Alfred Adler and Leon Festinger, as well as the overthrown and overthrowing paradigms of Thomas Kuhn, to paint the populists—and, by extrapolation, many other groups—as a much harassed people who worked through and around contending paradigms in search of psychic homeostasis. As Huck Finn said of Bunyan, it's "interesting, but tough."

University of Miami

Bruce A. Lohof

LAND OF THE POST ROCK: Its Origins, History, and People. By Grace Muilenburg and Ada Swineford. Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas. 1975. \$13.50.

The land of the post rock is a large area of northcentral Kansas named after a sheet of rock that is exposed throughout the region. And the rock is called "post rock" because it is soft and workable enough to be broken off into fence-post length blocks which, upon exposure, harden like concrete.

The flaws of this book are much easier to forgive than are errors of methodology logic, observation or interpretation because here the errors are those of an unabashed affection for the subject and a hopeless enthusiasm on the part of the authors. The love affair between Mmes. Muilenburg and Swineford and the post-rock region of Kansas is so intense that in reading their book I began to feel like a voyeur. I can scarcely fault their affection except where it produces the maudlin language of the love-letter. Yet in general the style of this book is not enough to obscure the information—though I did lose a few minutes of reading time and a lot of composure upon encountering the phrase "no-person's land."

Every building constructed of post rock is described and located in detail until one's vision begins to blur. Still, the detail underlines the fact that the book is comprehensive and exhaustive. A similar criticism: a large number of the photographs of stone fence posts are not illustrative; they do not demonstrate any particular features or forms but are simply shots of fence posts. That does not, to be sure, interfere with the usefulness of the book but it does detract by virtue of dilution from the power of the book's statement.

Perhaps the most attractive feature of *Land of the Post Rock* to the student of American Studies is its implementation of the concept of interdisciplinary investigation. Geology, geography, folk and sophisticated technology, history, architecture and tradition are brought to bear on a single physical item. As humble as that item—a kind of fence post—is, it is given a contextual examination that provides the true picture of the posts' validity and beauty. In that light the book is worth the price even if you don't really care to know very much about stone fence posts in north-central Kansas.

University of Nebraska

Roger L. Welsch

vietnam

THE WOUND WITHIN: America in the Vietnam Years, 1945-1974. By Alexander Kendrick. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1975. \$4.95.

Wry, pungent, epigrammatic, Kendrick's journalistic account of the interrelationship of the Vietnam War and American life makes powerful, disturbing reading. In a sensitive, impressionistic narrative, he demonstrates how the Cold War, typified by the United States military adventure in Vietnam, helped warp and corrupt American values, subverting the free institutions it was alleged to defend.

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PRELUDE TO DISASTER: The American Role in Vietnam, 1940-1963. By Weldon A. Brown. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press. 1975. \$15.00.

Although the roots of American policy in Vietnam badly need a thorough scholarly examination, this thinly researched, occasionally strident and personal polemic hardly does the job. Indeed, despite Brown's central contention that a Manichean view of the world inherited from World War II led to disaster in Indochina, he clings with undiminished fervor to the political simplicities of a bygone era.

State University of New York at Albany

Lawrence S. Wittner

FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER. By James D. Bennett. Boston: Twayne Publishers. 1975. \$7.50.

This slim volume includes a discussion of the Turner Thesis and summarizes the positions of supporters and opponents, but it deals largely with Turner himself and the details of his life. It is of use to many in American Studies because of Turner's special relationship to this approach to scholarship, which is itself a frontier of sorts.

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A DARKNESS AT DAWN: Appalachian Kentucky and the Future. By Harry M. Caudill. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 1976. \$3.95.

An analysis of the difficulties of Appalachia can hardly avoid consideration of history, economics, sociology and government. There is an astonishing amount of information in this tiny book. Although Caudill identifies many contributing factors, he believes the troubles of the area are essentially political, and that the only solutions are therefore political solutions, specifically collective action and locally-controlled public ownership of resources. Because of his perception and his insights, Caudill's book is not limited in interest to those concerned with economically or even socially depressed areas; it should be read by anyone concerned with American highland cultures, and would be useful at least indirectly to all who study American society.

MJS

EDUCATION IN NATIONAL POLITICS. By Norman C. Thomas. New York: David McKay Company, Inc. 1975. \$4.95.

Focusing upon programs administered by the U.S. Office of Education, the author describes and analyzes the policy-making process in the 90th Congress (1967-1968). Conclusions and generalizations are based on approximately eighty interviews with key actors in education policy. In addition to a detailed and useful process-oriented description of education policy-making, Thomas includes a historical sketch of the federal role in education and a review of several major education issues. Concluding that education policy-making corresponds to the pluralist model, the author sees no viable, constitutionally acceptable alternative to interest group liberalism.

Southwest Missouri State University

Garth Youngberg

THE POLITICS OF AMERICAN INDIVIDUALISM: Herbert Hoover in Transition, 1918-1921. By Gary Dean Best. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1975. \$12.50.

A solution is offered here for a problem that few of us have raised: How did Hoover, a member of Wilson's "War Cabinet" and "possible standard-bearer for the [Democratic] Party in 1920," gain sufficient prominence in the Republican Party to be invited into Harding's administration? One might ignore the problem by assuming Hoover's wartime service to have been a Democratic aberration in an otherwise Republican life. Best's solution is more complicated and maybe even more accurate: Hoover was a pragmatic, issues-oriented spokesman for "American Individualism" who stayed near the locus of authority while authority itself changed party affiliation.

University of Miami

Bruce A. Lohoff

THE GENERAL: Robert L. Bullard and Officership in the United States Army 1881-1925. By Allen R. Millett. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1975. \$19.95.

Despite the large role the military has played in recent American history, there are surprisingly few scholarly biographies of twentieth century military men. This is an excellent one—solidly researched and beautifully written. Bullard, who was one of the five highest ranking American Army officers in World War I, had a career which spanned from the Indian Wars through the Wars of Empire to the fighting in France. His experiences are interesting, but what makes his life a fascinating study is the fact that he was an introspective man who wrote extensively and well. Millett makes good use of his writing as well as other relevant sources in placing Bullard in his context. He succeeds admirably in getting across the "feel" of battle and garrison life. This is a basic book for anyone interested in the evolution of the modern American Army.

University of Wisconsin—Madison

Edward M. Coffman

THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE CATALOG OF MOTION PICTURES: Feature Films 1961-1970. Compiled by the American Film Institute, Richard P. Krafusur, Executive Editor. New York and London: R. R. Bowker. 1976. Two volumes. \$90.00.

The second installment in the American Film Institute's massive catalog project. (*Feature Films 1921-1930*, also in two volumes, appeared in 1971.) When all nineteen segments have been published, the Catalog will be the basic source of factual information for the entire history of American films since 1893. Volume one of the current set is an alphabetical listing by title of all feature films (over 5800) released in the United States between 1961 and 1970 (including foreign films), with running time, cast and credit lists, detailed plot synopsis, and story source. Volume two contains credit, story source, subject, and national production indexes for volume one. Of special interest to Americanists of all persuasions is the elaborate subject index (8500 headings), a content guide to characters, topics, motifs, themes, situations, places and so on ap-

pearing in the films. A major reference source for anyone interested in the history of the film in America.

University of Illinois

Robert Carringer

THE SOUTH CENTRAL JURISDICTION, 1939-1972: A Brief History and Interpretation. By Theodore L. Agnew. Oklahoma City: Commission on Archives and History. 1973. Paper: \$1.95.

This small volume serves several purposes. It is a history of the Methodist Church governing body named in the title, a handbook covering the Jurisdiction and a forum for Agnew's analysis of certain Methodist practices. The writing is good although the limitations of the material (as in any such work) are formidable. Of course Agnew's critical freedom is circumscribed by the fact that this publication is strictly an in-house product. Works of this type deserve publication and support, even though they are now of parochial interest only, because they will be in the future tremendous sources of basic materials for historians.

University of Kansas

Timothy Miller