reviews

understanding the land

MARSHES OF THE OCEAN SHORE: Development of an Ecological Ethic. By Joseph V. Siry. College Station: Texas A&M University Press. 1984. $22.50.

The subtitle sums up Siry's main topic, the history from colonial days to the present of concepts that apply to the varied ecosystems from above timberline to below the continental shelf. The title identifies the kind of ecosystems—on the Eastern, Southern and Western coasts—that he uses continually to illustrate the account. The book is comprehensive, astute, scholarly and readable. It is excellent on the history of scientific research, the ideas of articulate ecological observers from the eighteenth century to now, and governmental actions to regulate the human use of biological natural resources. Siry is freshly and convincingly critical of the Progressives with their reclamation projects and their utilitarian view of wetlands. With marshes and estuaries particularly in mind, the author insists on "an ecocentric view of humanity's relation to nature."

California State University-Los Angeles — Richard G. Lillard

THE LOST LAND: The Chicano Image of the Southwest. By John R. Chavez. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1984. $19.95 cloth, $9.95 paper.

Eighty-five percent of U. S. citizens of Mexican descent reside in what was once the Mexican North and is now our Southwest. They trace their heritage from the chronicles of the Aztecs to the literature and social thought of Mexican-Americans in the 1980s. Chavez focuses, however, on the years since the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. The image of a dispossessed homeland remains central to the Chicano myth and is firmly rooted as the base of their collective desire for political, economic and cultural self-determination to be fully realized through control of the region they occupy. The development of this myth and its marked differences with the Anglo-American myth of the Virgin Land as reflected in the Chicano image of the region are carefully developed in their varied manifestations in this provocative volume.

RL

THE PATHLESS WAY: John Muir and the American Wilderness. By Michael P. Cohen. Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press. 1984. $25.00.

Ever since Samuel P. Hays' seminal *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency* (1959), historians have been (or at least should be) aware that two different, even contradictory, impulses underlay what is loosely termed "the conservation movement." One was the quest for more efficient utilization of natural resources, with Gifford Pinchot its chief spokesman. The other was the preservationist ethic represented by John Muir. Although Muir drew upon utilitarian arguments to rally public support for his crusade to save the wilderness, Cohen's intellectual biography shows that his own motivation was primarily religious—or, to be more accurate, grew out of a mystical sense of personal communion between himself and nature. Cohen's strength lies in his empathy with Muir. But there are corresponding defects: too much intrusion by the author himself and, worse, a lack of sympathy with those unmoved by Muir's vision of the wilderness as a spiritual experience.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln — John Braeman

arts

VIEWS AND VIEWMAKERS OF URBAN AMERICA: Lithographs of Towns and Cities in the United States and Canada, Notes on the Artists and Publishers, and a Union Catalog of their Work, 1825-1925. By John W. Reps. Columbia: University of Missouri Press. 1984. $89.50.

This massive (570 pp.) volume presents and analyzes a genre of visual documents extremely significant in the history of American urban history and visual thinking; not only does it present full-color and black-and-white reproductions of lithographs representing the full range of the urban views it catalogues, it provides a minutely detailed analysis of the evolution of a once-popular art form. Of more importance to the American Studies scholar intrigued with the appearance of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American cities, suburbs and municipal fringe areas, Reps offers insights into the analysis of individual views, showing how housing patterns, institutional location, railroad rights-of-way and other spatial features recorded by "viewmakers" reflect the texture of everyday social and economic life and the biases of the artists. Certainly one of the most significant urban history works of the decade, the volume will undoubtedly spark further productive inquiry into the visual representation of American urban space.

Harvard University — John R. Stilgoe

AMERICA'S CASTLE: The Evolution of the Smithsonian Building and its Institution, 1840-1878. By Kenneth Hafertepe. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. 1984. $19.95.

This small but densely informative book provides us with a history of a building, the Smithsonian Institution's "Castle." We begin with the first ideas for a building in 1840, go through the selection of an architect, and then learn about the difficult period of its construction and reconstruction after the 1865 fire. We conclude with the addition of the Arts and Industries Building in 1878. This period also represents the tenure of the very influential first Secretary, Joseph Henry, who of course plays an important role in Hafertepe's account. Using contemporary illustrations of the building and the participants, this intricate history draws together both published records and manuscript materials with the happy result that we not only learn the facts, but we see delineated the relevant social, architectural and intellectual issues connected with the formative years of the Smithsonian. Kenneth Hafertepe is to be congratulated on his success in making a complex story comprehensible while keeping it complete and accurate.

GE

ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century. By Richard Longstreth. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press. 1983. $40.00.

This is a study of four architects working in late nineteenth-century San Francisco:

Ernest Coxhead, Willis Polk, A. C. Schweinfurth and Bernard Maybeck. All those interested in architecture will appreciate the extensive illustrations—pictures, sketches, and site and floor plans. The text—though based upon thorough research—suffers (at least, in this reviewer's opinion) from a self-conscious straining for "arty" effects. Of the four figures, only Maybeck has achieved a reputation extending beyond local architecture buffs. Thus Longstreth deserves praise for rescuing the others from neglect. But he acknowledges that Maybeck alone succeeded in transcending the limitations of tradition to develop his own distinctive style, "resulting in work that is unlike that of any other architect."

University of Nebraska-Lincoln John Braeman

BEHOLD THE MIGHTY WURLITZER: The History of the Theatre Pipe Organ. By John W. Landon. Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture, No. 6. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1983. $29.95.

Although the bane of classical organists, theater organ music was a major part of popular culture as accompaniment to films until the "talkies" quickly took over by about 1930. Many instruments were built in movie houses in even mid-sized towns, but since the highpoint in the 1920s most have been abandoned or destroyed. Almost all organ companies built such instruments, but the most prolific was Wurlitzer, whose products were also exported to Europe and even Japan. The market for such a subject is small, except for theater organ buffs, but those who dip into these pages will find an account of the companies and principal players, as well as the 1932 Wurlitzer still in use at the Radio City Music Hall, New York. The author could have mentioned that such accompaniment to screen dramas has a kind of survival with electric organs on TV soaps.

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MUSICAL NATIONALISM: American Composers' Search for Identity. By Alan Howard Levy. Contributions in American Studies, No. 26. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1983. $27.95.

Despite a number of irritating typographical ("sturcture"), spelling ("Skyrum" for Skyrm), and factual (German music was *not* dominant in the U.S. until about 1850) errors, this book, by a historian, is a useful contribution. The basic thesis concerns the cultural and political reasons why America's musical model changed from Germany in the late 19th century (e.g. Chadwick, Paine, Parker) to France in the early 20th (e.g. Carter, Piston, Sessions). Two fascinating discoveries: MacDowell was respected by the next generation of composers because he was associated with the German progressives Liszt and Wagner rather than classicists Brahms and Raff; the vernacularisms of Harris and Thomson, American provincials (Los Angeles and Kansas City) were welcome in Paris, whereas these qualities would have been rejected by the Germanists on the east coast. Therefore Paris was crucial in the creation of a distinct nationalism in American art music.

University of Kansas J. Bunker Clark

THE WORKS OF AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS. By John H. Dryfhout. Hanover, New Hampshire and London: University Press of New England. 1982. $60.00.

Big, thorough and substantial, *The Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* has a substantive foreword by John Wilmerding, a valuable and imaginative illustrated chronology (with photos of people and installations, portraits, caricatures and programs), a thoughtful introduction, then a nearly 300 page catalog, illustrated and annotated, plus good appendices and generous apparatus. Saint-Gaudens intersects with so many people and forces that every Americanist will make discoveries here, see connections he hadn't thought of or had forgotten: to Henry Hobson Richardson, John La Farge, Stanford White, Henry Adams, William Dean Howells, Charles S. Parnell, Phillips Brooks, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Merritt Chase, Charles F. McKim. The sculptor's caricature of Henry Adams as a winged porcupine, angelic but prickly, might stick in the mind as one examines the pages on the Shaw Memorial. Robert Shaw led a black volunteer regiment to a catastrophic battle in Charleston; the monument individualizes soldiers as well as officers.

As in Copley's "Brook Watson and the Shark," a century earlier, the black face steals the show, and one admires the artist who can see people through clouds of bias. Adams of course ties to that war too through his work for his father, but Adams' inexcusable racism shows the tugs in the minds of intellectuals of that generation. Moving photos of the Adams Memorial bring pages of Adams' writing to new life. One made me see an unexpected but unmistakable echo of Michelangelo's *David* in the arm of the shrouded figure. One could go on with associations stirred up by this rich volume. The material seems rich because the man's life was.

SGL

literature

LYING ON THE EASTERN SLOPE: James Townsend's Comic Journalism on the Mining Frontier. By Richard A. Dwyer and Richard E. Lingenfelter. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida. 1984. $15.00.

The authors' three purposes, to write a biography of Western printer, editor, publisher and generally overlooked frontier humorist James W. E. Townsend (1838-1900), to give selections from his writings (e.g. "The waters of Mono Lake are so buoyant that the bottom has to be bolted down, and boys paddle about on granite boulders"), and to outline the history of mining-camp journalism in eastern California and western Nevada during the last four decades of the nineteenth century are well carried out, with the exception (perhaps unavoidable) that Townsend's life during the 1870s remains a blank page. Depending mainly on newspaper files, published reminiscences and interviews, the authors leave the impression that the comic element of Townsend's journalism was a means of his readers' surviving monotonous diets, ramshackle housing, plagues of insects, terrific onslaughts of the elements, social and sexual unfulfillment, and the continual defeat of high hopes.

California State University-Fullerton Sherwood Cummings

NATURALISM IN AMERICAN FICTION: The Classic Phase. By John J. Conder. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 1984. $21.00.

Having been argued over and simplified to the point of virtual meaninglessness, the term "American literary naturalism" has long deserved a fresh reappraisal. Happily, John J. Conder has undertaken the task, and with admirable results. Conder sees the "classic phase" of naturalism (roughly the 1890s to World War II) not in some sort of literary vacuum, but rather as part of an intellectual continuum which dates from at least Thomas Hobbes and Henri Bergson; and this perspective—or, more precisely, Hobbes' paradoxical reconciliation of liberty and causation, and Bergson's theory of the "shadow self"—serves as the touchstone for Conder's perceptive analyses of naturalistic thought in selected works by Crane, Norris, Dreiser, Dos Passos, Steinbeck and Faulkner. Particularly striking is the readability of this book: it is scholarly without bogging down in documentation or critical jargon, thanks in part to the series of "Bibliographical Essays" at the end. Mercifully, Conder never gets so entangled in the fine points of naturalism as a theoretical concept that he loses sight of the works themselves: his comments on the textual ambiguities of Crane's stories, the use of walls and fences in *McTeague,* and the housefly motif in *Manhattan Transfer* are intriguing and convincing.

Rhode Island School of Design Alice Hall Petry

THE SAGE IN HARLEM: H. L. Mencken and the Black Writers of the 1920s. By Charles Scruggs. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1984. $21.50.

H. L. Mencken might seem the unlikeliest of allies for the black writers of the 1920s. After all, the Baltimore Sage was not above using such nomenclature as "coon," "darky" and even "niggero." But, as Scruggs points out, Mencken and the black writers in and around the Harlem Renaissance shared an absorbing common concern: the profound and numerous shortcomings of American society. Mencken, the indefatigable debunker, thus found a sympathetic audience among black writers, and some of those writers found an

opportunity to publish in the *American Mercury.* Scruggs casts a very wide net. His central character, Mencken, is often abandoned for long stretches or seems only an incidental participant when he does appear. Still, those interested in H. L. Mencken and black writing during the 1920s, George Schuyler, Walter White and, to a lesser degree, Alain Locke will find much to fascinate them in this compact volume.

Tuskegee Institute Bruce Adams

THE MAKING OF A MODERNIST: Gertrude Stein from *Three Lives* to *Tender Buttons.* By Jayne L. Walker. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1984. $17.50.

Walker skillfully traces Stein's development from the naturalistic fiction of *Three Lives* to the counter-rationality of *Tender Buttons.* She begins with a very useful discussion of the affinities among the theories of perception held by Paul Cezanne and William James, theories which influenced Stein's stylistic development. Walker's excellent discussion of *Three Lives*—one of the most intelligent in Stein scholarship—focuses on Stein's rendering of the speech of inarticulate characters. Walker demonstrates that Stein used syntactic patterns to reflect personality, an important principle that Walker later uses to show that the syntax in Stein's portraits of Matisse, Picasso and other artists reflects her judgments of them as stated more directly in her unpublished notebooks. Though the discussion of Stein and cubism is largely recapitulation, the comparison of *Tender Buttons* to collage cubism is very strong. Occasionally Walker tends to overinterpret discursive meaning in *Tender Buttons,* and pays less attention to its word play than one might wish. Walker joins other critics in recognizing Roman Jakobson's importance in Stein criticism; nonetheless, her book is less a presentation of new theories than a welcome enhancement of existing knowledge through study of the primary texts and Stein's unpublished notebooks. On balance, Walker's book makes a valuable contribution to Stein scholarship, and is most useful for its use of material from the notebook to illuminate how Stein's use of syntax reflects her content.

University of Kansas Randa Dubnick

PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS / THE NOVELS OF DASHIELL HAMMETT. By Sinda Gregory. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press. 1985. $19.95.

This study concentrates on the five novels that defined a genre in American fiction; each is treated as an intelligent and sophisticated new direction in the development of Dashiell Hammett's art. Even *The Thin Man,* a novel often criticized as an awkward merger of hard-boiled detective fiction with a comedy of manners, emerges triumphantly as a statement of the reasons why this "chaotic, violent, dehumanizing universe . . . simply cannot sustain the notion of final truths or 'logic-sticking.'" Sinda Gregory writes with lucidity and brio, though occasional repetitions of favorite quotations waste space. Hammett's achievement remains impressive despite the emergence of several genuinely talented successors in the half-century since the publication of his last novel, and this first-rate analysis explains why.

University of Kansas Harold Orel

progressives

TO MAKE DEMOCRACY SAFE FOR AMERICA: Patricians and Preparedness in the Progressive Era. By Michael Pearlman. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1984. $19.95.

This study aims not so much to trace the campaign to prepare the United States militarily for the First World War as to examine "the personal ambitions and domestic motivations of the movement's civilian leadership" (1). The call by preparedness advocates for six-months universal military training was not actuated primarily by security concerns; indeed, most professional military men were unenthusiastic. Rather, Pearlman finds the leaders of the movement—mostly upper-class WASPS—moved by a vision of universal

military training as a means of unifying a country threatened by social and ethno-cultural divisions. At bottom, universal military training was a would-be exercise in "moral reform" (266) aimed at redirecting the American people from the pursuit of individual self-interest and, worse still, pleasure by reinculcating the Protestant work ethic with its emphasis upon discipline, self-denial and duty. This interpretation is not new; but no one before has developed the argument with as full documentation, shrewd insights into the personalities involved, and astute grasp of the intellectual and social context.

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SOUTHERN PROGRESSIVISM: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition. By Dewey W. Grantham. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. 1983. $34.95 cloth, $16.95 paper.

The myth of a monolithically conservative, even reactionary, South is a fixture of American political folklore despite a large body of research showing the contrary. No one familiar with the work of Arthur S. Link, George B. Tindall and John Temple Kirby—to name only the authors of the three most important attempts at an over-all view—will be surprised to learn that the progressive impulse of the first two decades of the twentieth century made a major impact below the Mason-Dixon line. For the details of Southern reform activity, Grantham's account will stand as the definitive work. He has not simply mastered what is by now a voluminous body of published and dissertation research, but he has delved exhaustively into the contemporary printed and manuscript sources.

At the same time, however, Grantham does not revise in a significant way the accepted view. He acknowledges that the Southern progressives accepted, even reinforced, the racial caste system; he admits that they "were in no sense involved in the promotion of fundamental social change." He sees as the dynamic force behind Southern progressivism urban middle-class businessmen and professionals; he finds its animating ideal "a yearning for a more orderly and cohesive community." He gives more weight than many previous writers to its positive achievements, but even he concedes that its "spirit was probably more important than its reform accomplishments." And he finds the key to understanding its successes and limitations in the ambition of Southern reformers "to reconcile progress and tradition." They functioned "both as agents of modernization and . . . cultural traditionalists, bent on maintaining the best of their section's habits and values."

University of Nebraska-Lincoln John Braeman

politics and the law

IMPEACHMENT IN AMERICA, 1635-1805. By Peter Charles Hoffer and N. E. H. Hull. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press. 1984. $30.00.

When, in the fall of 1983, there was an increasing clamor for the impeachment of President Richard Nixon, lawyers and historians alike rushed into print to elucidate a subject to which little, if any, attention had been paid in the past. So limited was the understanding of the nature of impeachment that a few years earlier, when there was a movement in Congress to impeach Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, Gerald R. Ford, then the minority leader in the House of Representatives and one of the main movers behind the impeachment drive, could rather cavalierly observe that an impeachable offense was anything on which a majority of the House of Representatives could agree. When Richard Nixon became the target of a similar attack and similar questions arose, there were still no better answers. The scholars who then hurriedly sought to provide the answers looked into English practice—there was no adequate study of American practice prior to the (unsuccessful) attempt to impeach Justice Samuel Chase in 1805.

This volume fills the void and does so very well. Hoffer and Hull examine the documented instances of impeachment in the American colonies, arguing successfully that these—rather than cases in distant England—informed the Framers' thinking on the subject of impeachment. The authors show that in the colonies legislative bodies employed impeachment and trial to punish abuses of power, even where they appeared to be protected by the crown and its representatives. The new states then applied the same weapon to

combat corruption in government. Misuse of power and corruption in government were the two conditions which the Framers (and their contemporaries) feared most in their endeavor to establish a working government along the lines of republican ideals. The practice of the colonies and new states provided them with the model and hence it is this practice—rather than that of Great Britain—that one should look to in any search for the meaning of the Constitution's impeachment clause.

University of Kansas Francis H. Heller

FRANK MURPHY: The Washington Years. By Sidney Fine. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 1984. $29.95.

This third—and concluding—volume in what will stand as the definitive biography deals with Frank Murphy's one year (1939-1940) as Attorney General and almost ten years (1940-1949) on the Supreme Court. As one has come to expect from Fine, the work is based upon prodigious research—including access to several of the justices' notes on the Court's secret conferences. The result is the fullest account extant of the inner workings of the Court. That account will not enhance the Court's reputation; indeed, one sees why the more astute of the justices have tried so hard to keep a lid of confidentiality upon the Court's proceedings. Its decision-making involves the same bargaining, the same influence of individual biases, even the same personality clashes that are found in the legislative bodies that the justices are so prone to second guess. Nor will the work do much to upgrade Murphy's own reputation. Although straining to put the most favorable gloss possible upon Murphy's performance on the bench, Fine is too solid a scholar not to confirm his shortcomings. Regarding Murphy's legal craftsmanship, the most that Fine can muster is that "Murphy's opinions were not conspicuously below the average . . . for the Court as a whole" (590). And even that owed more to his clerks than to Murphy himself: "He did not work very hard. . . . [H]e did very little writing of his own . . ." (594). As for the substance of his opinions, "Murphy decided to take advantage of his position on the Court to give expression to the values he cherished. . . . [O]verly concerned with results, he does not appear to have given much thought to the limits of his authority" (592, 594).

University of Nebraska-Lincoln John Braeman

diplomacy

CHINA AND THE OVERSEAS CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1868-1911. By Shih-shan Henry Tsai. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press. 1983. $17.50.

The great virtue of this book, which is essentially diplomatic history, is that it uses both Chinese and American archives and secondary literature. Although dedicated to the "nameless Chinese laborers who helped to build the American West," its real heroes are some of the Chinese diplomats and representatives who struggled, largely in vain, to protect the interests of Chinese Americans. In his concluding chapters Tsai throws interesting light on the ways in which Chinese reformers and rebels, chief of whom was Sun Yat-sen, drew support from overseas Chinese in America and elsewhere. Told largely from the Chinese side, the perspective here is a useful corrective to the nativism—and worse—which too often still mars the pages of books dealing with the Chinese question during these years.

University of Cincinnati Roger Daniels

BITTER LEGACY: Polish-American Relations in the Wake of World War II. By Richard C. Lukas. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 1982. $16.00.

This volume is a follow-up to the author's *The Strange Allies* (1978), dealing with United States-Polish relations during 1941-1945. The present study covers from the Potsdam Conference to the consolidation of Communist rule over Poland in 1947. As in the previous work, the villain of the story is Roosevelt for his accommodationist policy toward Stalin. Following the same line, Truman at Potsdam shied from challenging Stalin to achieve a meaningful guarantee of free elections in Poland. And even after the administration

switched to a harder line against the Soviets, its efforts to prevent Poland's satellitization proved unsuccessful. In part, Washington policy makers exaggerated the leverage the United States could exert via "economic diplomacy"; in part, the administration gave first priority to saving those parts of Europe—such as West Germany—not under Soviet military control. In dealing with the role of the Polish issue in the beginning of the Cold War, Lukas treads largely familiar ground; his major new contribution lies in his account of developments within Poland.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln John Braeman

THE 25-YEAR WAR: America's Military Role in Vietnam. By General Bruce Palmer, Jr. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 1984. $24.00.

This personal though comprehensive account of the Vietnam War by a four star general covers decision making in Washington as well as theater activities. The author is critical of civilian and military leaders, the former for not clarifying objectives, the latter for not providing a suitable strategy and both for failing to coordinate ends and means. Basing judgments on his own experience and numerous studies, Palmer assesses the various factors that contributed to defeat, the negative and positive effects of the involvement and presents constructive recommendations for avoiding a repetition of this tragic episode. Planning, implementation, execution, logistics, organization, command, inter- and intraservice rivalry, tactics and weaponry are described and analyzed, as is the effect of dissent at home and world wide commitments. Praise and blame are allotted as activities and events affecting the military outcome are related to the combat situation. This well-written, perceptive book is an outstanding contribution to the postmortem literature on the Vietnam conflict.

University of Miami Raymond G. O'Connor

INVESTIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY: Public Responsibility in the United States, 1865-1900. By William R. Brock. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. 1984. $39.95.

Brock has written an important revisionist study that demolishes the myth that the late-nineteenth century was for the United States an era of passive, hands-off government. He focuses upon four major types of state-level agencies—boards of state charities, boards of public health, bureaus of labor statistics and railroad commissions—to show that the misnamed "gilded age" was not the heyday of *laissez-faire,* but rather a time of increasing governmental activism and interventionism. He similarly disposes of the legend of judicial negativism toward state regulatory action: "far too much prominence has been given to the few cases in which state statutes were invalidated, and far too little to the widening stream of judicial approval for more and more advances in the regulation of social and economic life" (86). And he concludes that the contributions made by late-nineteenth century state agencies in identifying, investigating and publicizing the problems accompanying industrialization and urbanization laid the basis for "the twentieth-century revolution in attitudes toward government responsibility" (247).

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A GREAT AND NECESSARY MEASURE: George Grenville and the Genesis of the Stamp Act 1763-1765. By John L. Bullion. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press. 1982. $24.00.

Even those whose knowledge does not go beyond the standard textbook accounts are familiar with the role of the tax measures devised by George Grenville, Britain's First Lord of the Treasury from 1763-1765, in sparking the colonial resistance that would culminate in the American Revolution. Based upon thorough research in archival materials in Britain and the United States, this study explores the political, economic and fiscal motives animating Grenville. Bullion argues that Grenville was actuated only in part by Britain's financial exigencies. Perhaps even more important was his determination to reinforce "the

colonies' political subordination.'' Bullion's evidence is persuasive, but his thesis is scarcely as new as he appears to think.

* * *

FLIGHT IN AMERICA 1900-1983: From the Wrights to the Astronauts. By Roger Bilstein. Baltimore, Maryland and London: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1984. $32.50.

Lavishly illustrated with more than a hundred contemporary photographs, this volume traces the history of aeronautics in the United States from the successful flight of the Wright brothers. By the 1930s, air travel had passed the pioneering stage. But the military build-up before and during World War II brought revolutionary new changes in technology and equipment. In the years after the war, civilian and military aviation continued to advance rapidly in a symbiotic relationship. And with the rapid progress of rocketry, the industry (now renamed aerospace) began its conquest of the space frontier. Although touching upon the social and cultural context, Bilstein focuses primarily upon the technological and business side. His work, therefore, makes an invaluable complement to Joseph J. Corn's *The Winged Gospel: America's Romance with Aviation, 1900-1950* (1983).

University of Nebraska-Lincoln — John Braeman

THE PRESIDENCY OF HARRY S. TRUMAN. By Donald R. McCoy. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. 1984. $25.00 cloth, $14.95 paper.

Based on wide reading and extensive research in primary sources, this volume of the American Presidency series is the best single volume study of the Truman presidency now available. McCoy's central theme, carefully developed, is that the Truman presidency in both domestic affairs and foreign policy enhanced the authority of the federal government and made it a powerful and enduring factor in world affairs. Truman became a highly controversial president whose programs and policies became central in American life for at least two decades after his presidency. Though footnotes, following the style of the series, are kept to a minimum, an extensive (10 page) bibliographical essay concludes the volume.

RL