

masa's, from an old manse

(a new column, in need of a title)

With this issue, *American Studies* discontinues the column "Books Received." We initiated "Books Received" out of pressure of conscience. Each year the journal receives a large number of books which it does not review, either because they are not about the United States or because they are collections, anthologies, textbooks, reprints or specialized reference works. (We make occasional exceptions when someone on the staff is moved by a book of unusual quality or implications and succeeds in convincing others that our readers should know about it.) For several years we attempted to return books to publishers. Several, however, wrote to tell us that the return process cost them more than an individual copy was worth. Mailing books is costly for us, too. Thus "Books Received" at least acknowledged that a volume had made it to our office.

I might add that we've conscientiously filled in forms which various services and publications which serve publishers have sent us; in them we have accurately described the sorts of books that we would and would not review. But inappropriate books seem to continue coming in at about the same rate. In recent years, we have let them accumulate until the late spring, then run a sort of yard sale, the proceeds going to benefit the journal, the books going at bargain rates to scholars and students.

In place of "Books Received" we thought to erect a half-way house in which we could at least mention books of interest to Americanists which should not, by journal policy, be reviewed formally.

JONATHAN EDWARDS: It has never been clear to us what to do with editions. As a general rule, detailed reviews of editions should appear in specialized periodicals. Our editorial discussions of the matter were inconclusive, for while we all agreed first, that the journal should not review individual volumes in editions as they came out piecemeal over the years, and second, that we should review any important completed editions which came to our office, anyone familiar with the history of major editions knows how unlikely an event is the arrival of a complete set. The last edition which we discussed, and the first which we will mention under our new policy, is the Yale University Press' *Works of Jonathan Edwards* series. It will be our policy when new volumes in such series appear to run such a note as this: Already in print: Volume 1: *Freedom of the Will* (1957); Volume 2: *Religious Affections* (1959); Volume 3: *Original Sin* (1970); Volume 4: *The Great Awakening* (1972); Volume 5: *Apocalyptic Writings* (1977). Just out: Volume 6: *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, edited by Wallace Anderson. Forthcoming: Nine other volumes.

SURVIVALS OF PASTORAL. Edited by Richard F. Hardin. Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1979. \$6.00. This makes any number of connections to American topics: the essay by Edward L. Ruhe has at least a gam with the Pequot; *Typee* is important in those of Hardin and Thomas J. O'Donnell; Roy E. Gridley deals with primitivism and pastoralism in writers about the Great Plains as different as Cabeza de Vaca and Allen Ginsberg; there are at least passing references to Robert Frost, Washington Irving and others. The tentative nature of much of what is said one attributes to the authors' care and to the fleeting nature of the pastoral moment, but Gridley especially is aware of the strength of pastoral echoes in American thought, and O'Donnell's essay on Levi-Strauss reminds us of the influential connection which Europeans have gone on perceiving between the New World and the Golden Age. Several of these authors would have enjoyed and benefited from the sessions on landscape at the Spring, 1980 MASA meeting. I found myself scribbling notes all over their essays, for, while tentative, they are richly suggestive, and many Americanists from

fields as different as art history, geography, history of science and literature could respond creatively to this collection to the benefit of themselves, the authors and our field.

THE SOUTHERN COMMON PEOPLE: *Studies in Nineteenth-Century Social History.* Edited by Edward Magdol and Jon L. Wakelyn. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980. \$27.50. A large and very varied anthology—Frank L. Owsley and W.E.B. DuBois are represented as well as current writers—on social issues just now coming into historical focus. The stress is on “common” white southerners in the last century, but some essays cover other people and eras. Your Faithful Editor has been getting an education on the historiography of southern society through helping direct a thesis on how nearly Faulkner’s novelistic portrayals of Mississippi match the changing hypotheses of social historians over the decades; this fat volume draws together in convenient form much of the scholarship on which that thesis is based.

DIALECTS IN CULTURE: *Essays in General Dialectology.* By Raven I. McDavid, Jr. University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1979. \$22.75. A very large collection of McDavid’s writings. The implications of much of the work of linguists should capture the imaginations of good American Studies people. McDavid himself, who has written for this journal, is aware of these implications, and sometimes writes with a general audience in mind, but it seems to me that even much of the more technical material is grist for our mill. If the gap between more specialized linguistic work and broader cultural study is now being bridged anywhere in our discipline, I’m unaware of it, though there was talk of such connections as long ago as the 1950s. This is to indicate that *American Studies* is receptive to such studies.

AMERICAN STUDIES SINGING. By Jay Gurian. Tampa, Florida: American Studies Press, 1979. \$2.00. Familiar poems tampered with so that they deal with academia, particularly our own flavor of academia:

When I see intellectuals bend to the left
and right
Across the stares of straighter, darker
colleagues
I have to think some fear’s been
swinging them.

Although there’s no way to sustain the gag
through the book’s seventeen pages of poems,
Gurian has his moments:

Swift blazing bra of the militant,
Egos with chest of red and gold,
These women were not born to sigh and
cry.
Point for them the virtue of
Competition,
Make plain to them the excellence of
bibliographies. . . .

THE AMERICAN INDIAN: *Prehistory to the Present.* By Arrell Morgan Gibson. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1980. A textbook, but apparently conscientious and informed.

AMERICAN AND ENGLISH POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT: *A Guide to Information Sources.* By Don B. Wilmeth. Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research Company, 1980. A reference work.

WESTERN WRITERS SERIES. Boise State University, Boise Idaho. Little buff-colored pamphlets of about 50 pages or less. A useful project covering amazingly diverse writers. We have in the shop: No. 31: *Virginia Sorensen* by L.L. Lee and Sylvia B. Lee; No. 32: *Alfred Henry Lewis* by Abe C. Ravitz; No. 33: *Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa)* by Marion W. Copeland; No. 35: *Don Berry* by Glen A. Love; No. 36: *Enos Mills* by Peter Wild; No. 37: *Gary Snyder* by Bert Almon; No. 38: *Charles Marion Russell* by Robert L. Gale; No. 39: *Jack Kerouac* by Harry Russell Huebel; and No. 40: *C.L. Sonnichsen* by Joyce Gibson Roach.

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