

*The Nation Builders: A Sesquicentennial History of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1838-1863*, edited by Frank N. Schubert. Fort Belvoir, VA: Office of History, United States Army Corps of Engineers, 1988. ix, 80 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$2.75 paper.

REVIEWED BY JOSEPH C. PORTER, CENTER FOR WESTERN STUDIES, JOSLYN ART MUSEUM

*The Nation Builders* is a concise introduction to the significant history of the United States Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers. The corps had its roots in the revolutionary war when the army realized that it required officers trained in cartography and topography. This need increased after 1800 as the United States moved into the Great Lakes region and the Louisiana Purchase. Although Schubert does not emphasize the point, the accomplishments of William Clark, Meriwether Lewis, and Zebulon Pike should be regarded as part of the corps's tradition.

After the War of 1812 the need for such specialized engineers grew. Schubert notes the events that led to the creation of the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1838. The "topogs" became instrumental in surveying and mapping rivers, lakes, and great expanses of land. In this brief book Schubert highlights the importance of the "topogs." It is impossible to write a full history of the Corps of Topographical Engineers in so few pages, but *The Nation Builders* should spur readers to learn more about this interesting group of nineteenth-century army officers.

*The Rural Vision: France and America in the Late Nineteenth Century*, edited by Hollister Sturges. Omaha: Joslyn Art Museum, 1987. 94 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY SARAH BURNS, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON

*The Rural Vision* contains the proceedings of a symposium held at Omaha's Joslyn Art Museum in conjunction with the 1982 exhibition, *Jules Breton and the French Rural Tradition*. In the later nineteenth century, Breton's idealized paintings of French peasant life won him fervent acclaim and high prices on both sides of the Atlantic, but his reputation withered in the twentieth. The Joslyn show and symposium were intended to repair his tattered fame, reevaluate his work, and examine the universal appeal of his romantic, noble vision of rural life.

Three of the symposium papers deal with various issues relating to Breton's peasant paintings, while the remaining three take up the subject of rural life in nineteenth-century American art, literature, and photography. Social historian Robert J. Bezucha's "The Urban Vision of the Countryside" mercilessly exposes the prevarications in Breton's images

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