

ship between its faculty members and their student charges.

Capping the distinguishing features aired in this review is the history book itself which is cast in dimensions familiar to those who have shelved their school annuals; it is a slim and tall volume and in flipping its pages it does appear to be a book worth cherishing among other bound mementos of an adult's school years. If the book seems comfortable on the shelf, it is because it is a warm and comfortable volume in many ways.

The Eau Claire school may have been isolated by the forests that gently cushion it, yet the familiar features of growing institutions demonstrate that it is in tune with the world beyond the trees. Along with other institutions in Wisconsin and beyond, it was first a two-year normal school, then a teachers college which later added a couple of years to qualify it as a degree-granting institution; ultimately it was to append departments to become, within the past six years, a tentacle of the total structure of Wisconsin institutions now labelled The University of Wisconsin.

Of special interest to Iowans is the fact that the academic leader who was mainly responsible for this last act of consolidation was, for several years, a citizen of our state. Once John C. Weaver had been baptized at the University of Iowa into celestial administrative functions, he went on to Ohio, then to Missouri, before emerging as president of what is now the University of Wisconsin, reaching its appendages from Madison outward and now comprising the nation's fourth largest consortium of state-run ivy clads.

The book, with its portfolio of resurrected illustrations, should spark the interest of anyone like this reviewer who concocts excuses for travel within the midwest. The forests that attracted the early settlers to the area almost a sesquicentennial ago still fringe the campus, and the comfortable aspects of the scene should still show through.

—Robert E. Belding  
The University of Iowa

*The Frontier in Alaska and the Matanuska Colony*, by Orlando W. Miller.  
New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

Orlando W. Miller, an historian residing in Alaska, has written a scholarly account of a federally sponsored agricultural community in the Matanuska Valley which offered fresh opportunities to many unemployed workers from the Upper Great Lakes region during the Great Depression. The New Deal administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt funded this back-to-the-land movement through the Works Progress Administration, thus allowing several hundred families to re-locate, and attempt to escape poverty while they regained their self-respect. Since there was no W.P.A. office in Alaska, the Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corporation managed the colony, which tried to "rehabilitate individuals and families as self-sustaining human beings by enabling them to secure subsistence and gainful em-

ployment from the soil, from coordinated and affiliated industries and enterprises and otherwise in accordance with economic and social standards of good citizenship." (p. 75) Like many work relief projects, this one embraced several goals: to provide jobs, make rural lands productive, retain the loyalties of unemployed Americans, and stimulate the growth of an outlying territory. Many Alaskans welcomed this new attention from Washington and prayed that it signaled the end of federal neglect. They hoped that the colony would usher in a new age of expansion and prosperity. Increased colonization normally brought prosperity, but in 1935 it was hoped that federal pump-priming would finally unlock Alaska's vast storehouse of natural resources and form a solid basis for steady long term economic growth.

Miller has concluded that the Matanuska project was a modest, albeit expensive, success, for it established the only Alaskan community based solely on agriculture. The colony maintained a consistent growth rate and kept thirty-one percent of its original families after thirteen years. Much of this success was due to the competent, conscientious management of the colony by A.R.R.C. officials and the steady support they received from W.P.A. chief Harry Hopkins and a leading aide, Colonel Lawrence Westbrook. Although the colony enjoyed moderate success, it failed to generate the anticipated economic boom for the territory that occurred after 1940 when Washington began to view Alaska as the Gibraltar of the North, and subsequently stepped up military spending in the territory. The resultant injection of federal money into the local economy created a new industry—the defense industry—causing a precipitous rise in Alaska's population that brought the dream of statehood closer to reality until, in 1959, Alaska shed her territorial cocoon. Miller concluded that "What accelerated Alaskan development was increased military activity, not the colony or other settlement." (p. 13)

What is missing from Miller's work is a more precise analysis which discusses Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis" in light of the Matanuska experiment. The author explores the fallacy of Turner's safety valve which never siphoned off discontented urban dwellers during hard times (recent studies have shown that people cannot afford to relocate their families to a new frontier). Matanuska colonists received free transportation from the government, yet there is precious little analysis of the safety valve and its historical refutation. Miller might also have mentioned the psychological safety valve and its impact on the minds of many Americans. The author should have distinguished more clearly between Turner's free-wheeling individualistic pioneer and the Matanuska colony which was a managed, cooperative venture. Whereas opportunity usually awaited Turner's typical pioneer, Miller concluded that, in Alaska, the new settlers often found more poverty than opportunity. This underscores Rexford Tugwell's realistic appraisal that frontier Alaska would offer only "small eddies of retreat for exceptional persons." (p. 216)

Despite these minor drawbacks, Miller's book should be of great interest

to all students of Alaskan history, the history of the West and specialists on the New Deal period. All who read these pages will not only ponder the impact of the wilderness on human development, but will wonder at the persistent desire of mankind to pay the high cost of civilization and progress. Perhaps Alaskans might yet choose to preserve their natural heritage as a reminder that an alternative set of social values can persist into the third century of American independence. So long as we can cling to the Adirondacks, the Ozarks, the Cascades and Alaska, mankind can drink from nature's fount and enjoy the regenerative effects it has on the human spirit.

—**Frank J. Rader**  
**Empire State College**

*The Education of a Public Man: My Life and Politics*, by Hubert H. Humphrey. Edited by Norman Sherman. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1976. pp. xiii, 513. \$12.50.

In analyzing recent United States history attention must be given to the political career of Hubert Horatio Humphrey of Waverly, Minnesota. Complementing recent memoirs from Lyndon B. Johnson and Clinton P. Anderson, this autobiography makes a significant contribution to the study of twentieth century America. Humphrey inherited his liberal Democratic biases from his father, a druggist in small-town South Dakota, and seeming Republican indifference to the plight of South Dakotan farmers during the depression of the twenties and early thirties made him a youthful advocate of an activist and compassionate government. By the time he had graduated from the University of Minnesota and Louisiana State University he had become an ardent New Dealer.

In the early forties Humphrey returned to Minnesota with a wife and family to take a position in the Works Progress Administration. He also became active in Minneapolis and Hennepin County politics and developed strong ties to labor and academic communities. He was the primary force in the fusion of the weak Democratic organization with the militant Farmer Laborites, making the DFL the most potent progressive force in postwar Minnesota politics. In following decades DFL leadership was distinguished by the careers of Orville Freeman, Walter Mondale, Eugene McCarthy, and Wendell Anderson, all of whom became prominent in state and national politics.

In 1945 Humphrey became the popular and innovative Mayor of Minneapolis. Three years later he appeared on the national political scene by successfully pushing through a militant civil rights platform in the Democratic National Convention. Although the Dixiecrats walked out of the convention, Humphrey's state-wide popularity remained undiminished, which enabled him to become the first Democrat in Minnesota history to become a United States Senator.

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