

Book Reviews

Faulk writes Western history in a deductive manner with a vigorous prose style for a general reading public, while Gressley writes in-depth studies of a few isolated personalities and events appealing to the economic and political historians. Both books are well done in their own ways and reflect the versatility of American western history.

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The Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775-1850, by Malcolm J. Rohrbough. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. pp. xiv, 444. Maps, tables, index. \$17.50.

The settlement of the frontier between the Appalachians and just beyond the Mississippi receives excellent treatment in Professor Rohrbough's book. The work is not concerned with such traditional topics as Indian wars, international diplomacy in this western region, or the fur trade but, rather, focuses on the frontier institutions of local government, county courts and the law, the militia, and other close-at-hand agencies which directly influenced the individual families who were trying to establish homes in the wilderness. There is some recognition of the development of education and religion, but they do not receive the emphasis which is placed on the legal and administrative apparatus of the county and its relationship to individual citizens.

The author uses the very effective techniques of introducing the experiences of specific families as they struggle with the environment and attempt to get help from their county officials in the process of carving farms out of the forest. For example, he describes in some detail and, in six pages of text, with interesting quotations, the personal narrative of Lovira Hart in setting up a home on Michigan's frontier.

The book is divided into three chronological periods: 1775-1815, 1815-1830, and 1830-1850. Two endpaper maps for 1775

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and 1850 provide clarity for the events discussed, and there are several other maps and tables for illustration. The footnotes appear at the bottom of the page for ready reference. The bibliography is comprehensive and reveals very wide research in monographs, journal articles, theses and dissertations, frontier newspapers, and, interestingly, in county histories.

The only detraction in what is otherwise a superb work is the appearance, far too often, of typographical errors. When the first ones appeared, this reviewer resolved to refrain from nit-picking, but when on page 388 the word "admitted" appeared instead of "admired" on one line and the word "appointed" on the very next line, the resolution vanished. Scholars have come to expect better from the Oxford University Press.

Professor Rohrbough's very scholarly and readable contribution will be useful as a college text as well as being of interest to the general reader. He takes his pioneers from the world of "vast spaces, few people, marginal communication, and subsistence agriculture" in 1775 to "one based on a cash economy and interdependence" by 1850. He especially describes how the frontier of the east kept the frontiersmen "from creating finished societies." This is a good book.

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The Urban West at the End of the Frontier, by Lawrence H. Larsen. Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978. pp. xiii, 173. \$12.50.

As the dustcover suggests, Lawrence H. Larsen's *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* is an analytical study, but not a full-blown history of urbanization in the West in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. For the most part, it is an interpretive analysis of an impressive mass of quantitative information, largely from the single year 1880, from *Report of the Social Statistics of Cities (Tenth Census of the United States, 1880)* published in 1886. From the extracted information, Lar-

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