

BOOK REVIEWS

THE TINKLING SPRING, HEADWATER OF FREEDOM: A STUDY OF THE CHURCH AND HER PEOPLE, 1732-1952.

By Howard McKnight. (Fishersville, Virginia. The Tinkling Spring and Hermitage Presbyterian Churches, 1954. Pp. xvii, 392. \$8.00.)

This history of a local rural church in the Valley of Virginia is a delightful volume for Presbyterian readers and for others interested in a segment of the American heritage not too well known. It is more than a church history; it is the history of a region. Here is illustrated once more the fact that colonists migrated from Europe to escape persecution for religious convictions only to discover that they also had to keep moving to escape such persecution after their arrival on this side of the Atlantic. The Scottish and Scotch-Irish migrants into the Great Valley beyond the Blue Ridge sought land, of course, and political and religious freedom as well. These they struggled for generations to obtain, during colonial years, the American Revolution, and the Civil War; the story of that struggle is here, with the emphasis on the experiences of one congregation. Much of the account of frontier hardships will be old stuff to many readers. The work is scholarly in the sense that it is heavily documented by citations to sources and rare secondary works; but the narrative is not orderly and is featured by rambling and numerous digressions, long quotations, and lists of names. For the reader who likes to wander with the author—as this one did—the many digressions are no hindrance. The trivia add seasoning, and reward the persistent reader with the feeling that he was really there. Dr. Wilson uses superlatives and exclamation points with great liberality so that the non-Presbyterian may decide that he is being given an overdose of Presbyterian propaganda, of special pleading for the Presbyterian share in the making of our history. This does not presume to be the work of a trained historian, however, but that of a pastor engaged in a labor of love as he chronicles the “story of two hundred and fourteen years of Christian citizenship” Numerous illustrations, the ones from later years too obviously posed, are scattered throughout the volume. The maps are adequate and the appendices and index overwhelming. Finally, all Oklahomans will be pleased with the frontispiece, selected to symbolize the pioneer virtues with which much of the text deals, for it is the Pioneer Woman of Ponca City.

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Six-gun and Silver Star. By Glenn Shirley. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1955. Pp. vii, 235. Illus. Bibliography and index. \$4.50.)

The title of Glenn Shirley's new book awakens an interest that leads on through his narrative to the very end. The records of old court cases form the basis of the author's research in western history, that show up the notorious outlaw gangs and thieves as they were in Oklahoma territorial days. His search for their stories in newspapers and journals of the period and his analysis of conflicting statements sometimes found in these and other writings have added many details to the well known scenes of outlawry. This is one of the first published narratives on the subject as a whole, revealed in first hand accounts and actual records of the time when such officers as Nix, Tilghman, Madsen, Canton and Heck Thomas waged war against outlaws on the last frontier.

The author gives a reason in his Preface for having written the book, saying in effect that the sentimentalists have long held some of the worst outlaws in this country as under-privileged individuals who for some hidden frustration or another had first brushed with the law and then bravely held their own against a force that would wipe them out. Such "legend builders" lose sight of the fact that almost without exception every member of an outlaw gang had a chance to choose his way and lead a better life. Furthermore, the author says that the days of the boomer and the homesteader have been emphasized with "too much sweetness and light" in most works on Oklahoma history.

The Prologue briefs the historical background of Oklahoma that "sprang into being in one day" in 1889. Chapter I follows under the title, "Hell's Fringe," the country fringing west of the boundary line between old Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory where the outlaws of the day played their game. The acts and proclamations for the many different openings of Indian lands to white settlement, that added millions of acres to Oklahoma Territory between 1889 and 1907, lacked the provisions for keeping law and order in these areas, a situation that existed for a time due to the hurry and push of political forces representing the greed for land when the bills for opening the Indian reservations were up for enactment by Congress. The notorious outlaws came here from many states. It was on the border of Hell's Fringe that a battle took place in 1891, at an outlaw camp near the Twin Mounds, in eastern Payne County, between a large posse of farmers and a gang of horse thieves, a few weeks after the Dalton gang held up a Santa Fe passenger train at Wharton in the Cherokee Outlet.

The thread of the narrative picks up in Chapter 2 "The Daltons Gone Wild," for the Doolin gang and later gangs of outlaw fame had their beginnings with the Daltons in one way or another. Doolin

was with the Daltons before he organized the most dangerous gang of all, Tom Daugherty (alias Arkansas Tom) joining up with him. The handwriting was on the wall for the outlaws in the battle at Ingall's near Hell's Fringe, on September 1, 1893, two weeks before the "Run" into the Cherokee Outlet. Three officers and others were killed in the fight. Doolin carried on at large for another two years but Arkansas Tom was arrested at Ingalls, and served a long term in the penitentiary. After his discharge many years later, he never returned to Oklahoma but was the last outlaw when he was killed by the police in a bank holdup at Joplin, Missouri.

Six-gun and Silver Star is a contribution to the history of the fight for law and order in Oklahoma Territory. A graduate of La Salle School of Law and the IAS School of Criminology of Chicago, the author is captain of the Bureau of Identification of the Stillwater, Oklahoma, Police Department, who has prepared and taught police courses in both the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma A. and M. College. Glenn Shirley writes in this book as one who has made a study of law and order and lawlessness in the history of the "Old West."

—Muriel H. Wright.

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Saddles and Spurs. A Saga of the Pony Express. By Raymond W. Settle and Mary Lund Settle. Harrisburg: The Stackpole Company. Pp. 217. \$3.75.)

When one first discovers that the Pony Express was a very short lived experiment, the operations of which extended over a period of eighteen months, it is reasonable to conclude that fiction writers as well as historians have over publicized the adventure. However, after reading *Saddles and Spurs* by Raymond and Mary Settle it is not difficult to visualize every month of this adventure-packed chapter of American folklore.

The three men who were responsible for the express were Alexander Majors, William H. Russell and William Waddell. William H. Russell is most prominently associated with the romantic organization. It was these three in the partnership of the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company that first set up the outstations, bought provisions, horses and hired riders to make that first run at St. Joseph, Missouri on April 3, 1860. The account of the first run that these experienced writers give carries tremendous power. Vividly, the authors tell how everything is planned perfectly "About one hundred nineteen stations dotted the approximately one thousand nine hundred sixty-six mile long trail between St. Joseph and Sacramento. Every seventy-five to one hundred miles was a home station where a rider could rest for a short time before starting

back. Each rider covered the route between two of these stations, changing horses on the average of six to eight times going in both directions."

With the aid of fifty-five superb illustrations, short biographies of many of the men who actually carried the *Mochilas* (mail sacks) from station to station, and a wonderful account of the Pah Ute War, *Saddles and Spurs* makes its debut as a fine volume of American history.

—David B. Hooten.

Idabel, Oklahoma