

BOOK REVIEWS

The West of Phillip St. George Cooke, By Otis E Young.

(The Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, California, 1955. Pp. 394.
\$10.00)

One has only to stand on the grounds of the Utah Capitol at Salt Lake City contemplating the monument in memory of the heroic Morman Battalion to realize that Philip St. George Cooke stands as one of the greater men in American military history. Cooke was graduated from West Point and commissioned a Second Lieutenant in July, 1827. His West Point career gives little evidence of the future stature of the man, as he stood an unimportant 23rd in his class. Fate, however, had more imposing plans for this fine officer. He was at once ordered to the West. The young 18 year old Second Lieutenant joined the 6th Infantry at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. There he commenced a remarkable and outstanding service to the cause of the westward growth and expansion of the United States, a career of almost unbroken fame until personal tragedies closed in upon him at the War Between the States.

This volume, although the history of a man, is more accurately a series of vignettes of the history of the West. The Dragoon Expedition of 1834, the Escort to Santa Fe, the South Pass Expedition, the glorious Morman Battalion, the unfortunate Fremont-Kearny affair, and "Bleeding Kansas" all come to vivid life. In each, Cooke served an important role and his personal contribution to the ultimate conclusion of each was of no minor significance.

With an intense sense of loyalty to the Government and Union that he had by oath sworn to serve, he wrote on June 6th, 1861:

At fourteen years of age I was severed from Virginia; the National Government adopted me as its pupil and future defender; it gave me an education and a profession, and I then made a solemn oath to bear true allegiance to the United States of America This oath and honor alike forbid me to abandon their standard at the first hour of danger.

In the national service I have been for thirty-four years a Western man, and if my citizenship be localized, a citizen of Missouri . . . I owe Virginia little, my country much . . . and I shall remain under her flag so long as it waves the sign of the National Constitutional Government.

The price of loyalty came high and three of his four children forever after declined to recognize him as their father. Fate continued thereafter to deal unkindly with Cooke; and personal jealousy of Fitz-John Porter led to his relief from command, thus making him serve as the scapegoat following Gaines Mill. Then a Brigadier General, he served out the rest of the War at desk jobs and on recruiting service. He never again saw active field service. A belated brevet as Major General could only partially atone for the unkindly consideration he received from a country he had served so well and faithfully.

Books regarding the West are now very much in vogue, and there have been many recent additions to the published knowledge of the region. There is no better contribution than this volume. It is extremely well done and belongs in every Oklahoma Library.

Oklahoma City

—George H. Shirk

United States Domestic Postage Rates. (U. S. Post Office Department. Superintendent of Documents, Washington, 1956. Pp. 138 45¢.)

When Samuel Osgood was appointed the first Postmaster General of the United States, his Department had 77 employees, 75 post offices in the entire United States, and annual revenues of \$25 thousand Dollars. In 1955 the postal system had 38 thousand post offices, employed in excess of a half million people, and handled 175 million pieces of mail every working day.

The year 1957 is the centennial of the first overland mail service. This service was carried to the Pacific by the organization headed by John Butterfield. With the Butterfield Trail crossing the Sooner State, Oklahoma is particularly conscious of the rich contribution made to the growth of America by the postal service. The progress of America could not have been possible without a rapid, efficient and trustworthy postal system. A rapid interchange of mail, before the days of telegraph, telephone and radio, was the force that welded the separate states into one Federal Union.

This volume is a complete compendium of all laws since the first Congress fixing rates for postage. The first rates in effect in 1789 covered only "letters and packets". Oddly enough, the postage rate was based on the number of sheets of paper in the letter, not the weight. In theory, one huge sheet of paper, regardless of its size and weight, if folded enough times would go at the single rate even though it might weigh more than four lightweight separate sheets.

Mail was not divided into classes with special rates for each until 1863. Parcels and merchandise were placed in a separate category, Fourth Class, in 1879. The parcel post system was established January 1, 1913. Registration service was instituted in 1855 with a fee of 5¢. Indemnity for lost registered mail first came in 1898. Postal Savings first started January 3, 1911.

Here is a complete ready reference covering all of the postal rates, classes of mail, special services and other charges ever made and now in effect by the Post Office Department. A special appendix is included giving a digest of every Act of Congress pertaining to franked, penalty and free mail. The Department is to be commended for making available to the general public such a worthwhile publication.

—W. R. Withington

Oklahoma City

William Penn, a Biography. By Catherine Owens Peare. (J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1957. Pp. 414. \$6.00.)

A biography of William Penn must necessarily be also a history of the beginning of the Society of Friends or the Quakers. Although we in America think principally of William Penn as the founder of Pennsylvania and the one man who dealt fairly in all things with the Indians, his life in England as a Seeker after Truth is of far greater significance.

It was Thomas Loe who touched off the spark in Penn and, at the age of twenty-two, Penn began his ministry. His life is a series of arrests and imprisonments to which he willingly submitted in defence of "obedience to the manifestation of God in his own conscience".

Penn, a friend and follower of George Fox, spent many years in Holland, Germany and France as well as traveling over England, winning converts to the Friends.

The first Quakers arrived in America in 1655 and suffered indignities and persecution. At the same time, all religions—Presbyterians, Baptists, Catholics—were struggling for existence in England. The Church of England was the only religion tolerated in England. Penn called for a "sincere promotion of general and practical religion based on the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount."

Always a personal friend of Kings, Penn received the grant of Pennsylvania in 1681 as payment for debts owed his father for services performed for Charles I. Pennsylvania was settled, a government framed and Philadelphia laid out by Penn's surveyor-general before Penn ever set foot in America.

Penn actually spent very little time on this continent. He arrived in October, 1682 and returned to England in 1684. It was fifteen years before he came to Pennsylvania again and then for another period of two years.

Always the idealist, he believed so deeply in Brotherly Love that he parceled out the government of Pennsylvania to people of all religions but without his guiding hand, Pennsylvania became embroiled in jealousies and bad management. The author gives, in detail, the Frame of Government as written by Penn and the tedious business of establishing boundaries.

The majority of Penn's writings, which were voluminous, were explanations of Quakerism or refutations of attacks on his beliefs. His greatest work, *No Cross, No Crown* is reproduced in part in this volume.

Impoverished in his later years, Penn died a poor but undefeated man. The Testimony of the Reading Quarterly Meeting of Friends reads, "A man, a scholar, a Friend, a minister, surpassing in superlative endowments whose memorial will be valued by the wise and blessed with the just."

Oklahoma City

—Mary Ann Rheam