

BOOK REVIEW

American Heritage. Bruce Catton, Senior Editor. (American Heritage Publishing Company, Inc., New York. Vol. XI, No. 5, August, 1960, and No. 6, October, 1960.)

"OUR WILD, WILD WEST"

Westward expansion is perhaps the second, if not the first, subject in importance in all American history. Of course the gradual settlement and utilization of the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific includes a great deal more than the sensational activities described in that branch of American literature commonly known as our "Wild West".

Peter Lyon, in the *American Heritage* of August, 1960, has done an excellent job of removing the halo from the heads of some of our most popular western heroes and inserting in its stead the enlightening facts of real history. If his line of writing should become the popular thought of the American public he would be the most unpopular man in America from the standpoint of the movie producers, the television promoters, the yellow journalists, and the avid followers of sensationalism.

He "debunks" the "true stories" of Wild Bill Hickok, Jesse James, Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and Billy the Kid, and pays his respects briefly to Belle Starr and a few of the other lesser lights. He lifts them out of their legendary setting and shows exactly who they are and what they were. He portrays them as plain killers, robbers, and men of vice generally, and their chroniclers as falsifiers or blind followers of falsifiers. He ridicules Wyatt Earp's puncturing a friend's hat brim with a neat circle of bullet holes while the hat is in midair, and that too with black powder, or his killing a coyote at four hundred yards with a pistol. Billy the Kid killed one man for each year of his life regardless of how old he was.

Peter Lyon's picturing these legendary heroes in their true light and his condemnation of the so-called historians who perpetuate these legendary accounts is a refreshing stand for a critical historian to take. The discussion of his sources, too, is interesting.

"THERE WAS ANOTHER SOUTH"

The traditional view of the Old South has commonly been one of complete unity of thought and action upon all the main issues of the time: states' rights, slavery, the Democratic party, and secession. Carl N. Degler, the author of "There Was Another South" in August, 1960 issue of *American Heritage*, points out the fallacy in this line of thought.

The South, he says, is a region of "immense variety" not only in landscape but in its thinking on these main pre-war issues. James Madison opposed Calhoun's "*Exposition*" of 1828 concerning the nullification question and emphasized the Supreme Court, instead of the states or of secession, as the arbiter of disputed questions. Such southerners as James L. Petigru of South Carolina and John Bell of Tennessee opposed the secession movement.

Although the voting figures of 1860 are not completely convincing, they do show that thousands of people of the Deep South were opposed to separation from the Union. Furthermore, the peace societies that operated in the South during the war and the findings of the Southern Claims Commission show that many thousands of southerners were true to the Union cause.

Between 1830 and 1860 not all southerners, by any means, favored slavery. Marcellus Clay of Kentucky argued that slavery retarded the economic growth of the South. Helper's "Impending Crisis" of 1857 also brought this view vividly to public attention. Early leaders like Washington, Jefferson, and Monroe felt that slavery contradicted their ideal of a new republic of freemen. Frederick Law Olmsted, in his travels through the South in the 1850's, found this view to prevail among some of the people.

The wide differences of opinion on all of these major issues throughout the war period show conclusively that "There Was Another South."

"LINCOLN TAKES CHARGE"

The political crisis in President Lincoln's management of the government brought about by Union losses, and especially by General Burnside's disastrous defeat at Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862, and the solution of this crisis are well explained in Allan Nevins' "Lincoln Takes Charge" in *American Heritage*, October, 1960.

Mr. Lincoln was having a hard time managing the government, under the dire stress of war, but his task was made more arduous by the criticism of some of the leading men of the time, like Chase and Seward, who were sure they could manage things better than the President could.

The Radicals in the Senate were opposed to Lincoln's conduct of the war and more especially to what they termed the Secretary of State Seward's influence over Lincoln. This group looked to Salmon P. Chase, Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury, to assist them. They held a secret caucus and urged the President to dismiss Seward from the Cabinet. When Seward heard of this he immediately sent to the Presi-

dent his resignation. The President called a joint meeting of this caucus and his Cabinet, except Seward, and had a long and frank discussion of the whole matter. This put Chase in such an embarrassing position that he too turned in his resignation.

Lincoln thus maneuvered things with such skill as to embarrass the discordant factions in his Cabinet and to discountenance the efforts of the radical Senators. He then refused to accept the resignation of both Chase and Seward and at the same time silenced the Senatorial criticism. Chase became less critical of the administration and Seward less egotistical and both continued in the Cabinet and performed their proper functions. Lincoln, too, learned better how to cooperate with his assistants.

The President then called together his whole Cabinet and formulated with them his famous emancipation proclamation and the new year opened up with better prospects.

"THE BLOODIEST MAN IN AMERICAN HISTORY"

It is usually unsafe for a historian to use the superlative. The author could doubtless have made his case sufficiently convincing by saying one of the bloodiest instead of "the bloodiest". There could have been a very bloody American of whom he has not heard.

The author's story of William Clarke Quantrill and his raiders, in *American Heritage*, October, 1960, is based upon the hostility that existed between the antislavery Kansans and the proslavery Missourians just before and during the War between the States. There was intermittent raiding back and forth between these two groups. The two particular raids that he describes are the destruction of Lawrence, Kansas on August 21, 1863 and the surprise attack upon General James G. Blunt's Union troops near Baxter Springs, Kansas in October, 1863. The writer thinks that Quantrill's raiders killed close to a thousand men during this year.

They fell upon Lawrence, Kansas unexpectedly about daylight one morning and burned practically all of the town, killed 150 men, and wounded thirty more. They also took away with them much loot and plunder, and all this with the loss of only one of their own men.

This raiding band of Confederates were able to surprise Blunt's force near Baxter Springs by clothing themselves in the uniforms of Union soldiers. Here they also killed about 150 men. In extent Quantrill's raiders are supposed to have ranged from Virginia to central Texas and over into the Indian Territory but their most destructive burning and killing took place in Kansas, with the Indian Territory a

close second. Quantrill held a Confederate captaincy, and even posed as colonel for a time, but really fought in only a very few of the regular battles of the war.

Toward the end of the war his hold on his guerillas waned. The leadership fell to his underlings. He was wounded by Union troops and died in a military prison in Louisville, Kentucky, June 6, 1865.

—T. L. Ballenger

Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Canadian River Hunt. By Gen. Wm. E. Strong, Edited by Fred P. Schonwald. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1960. pp. 47, Map, slipcase. \$5.00)

Sheridan's Roost has always been something exciting in Oklahoma place names. The circumstance that it was a spot where General Phillip Henry Sheridan, then commanding the Division of the Missouri, once found an enormous turkey roost makes the spot not only interesting to historians but to nimmers as well.

In 1878 General Sheridan invited a group of his friends, with the renowned Ben Clark as a guide, to join him for a turkey hunt in the Indian territory. The party traveled to Fort Reno and from there military facilities were available to the Division Commander for his hunting expedition. One of the members of the party was William E. Strong. General Strong kept a complete journal or diary of the hunting trip, even to a schedule of the daily bag and the results of the nightly euchre games. General Strong prepared his journal into a manuscript volume and presented a copy on Christmas, 1878, to General Sheridan as a gift. By great fortune, the original journal has come into the possession of Fred P. Schonwald, Esq. of Oklahoma City. He is to be heartily commended for making it available in this special printing of 1,050 copies. The format follows as closely as possible the arrangement of the original, including a large military map that had been included by the author.

The journal is delightful and interesting in every way. Every lover of the great Oklahoma outdoors will treasure a copy. On the Cimarron and on the North Canadian the party found their game. It was here in abundance and variety. The chronicle paints a vivid and exciting tale of the good old days when bountiful hunting was available just by the taking. Anyone who has ever enjoyed a gun will wish that somehow he could have been a member of that hunting party of long ago.

—George H. Shirk

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma