

BOOK REVIEWS

South Pass 1868. James Chisholm's Journal of the Wyoming Gold Rush, Edited by Lola M. Homsher. (The University of Nebraska Press, 1960. pp. 244. Maps and Illustrations. \$4.50.)

The book first gives a run-down on James Chisholm who had been something of a reporter about town with the ladies in the cultural circles. One would infer him too "sissy" even to make the trip west in the days of 1868 but he did remarkably well. As he describes the fearless people of this area, it is a wonder his feet were not "put to the fire" but frankly, these roughs must have thought he might "write them up" if they helped him about. They even made sure that he did not lose his notes.

In long paragraphs, Chisholm gives intimate details of bachelor living in the wilds. He denotes the aspirations of such men, he reveals characters. He describes quests for food, shelter, and enough gold to buy grub and whiskey in order to keep going. His words frame realistic pictures as good as Stewart Edward White. He even gives statistics on gold production and values. His drawings are about the caliber of a third-grader but they help carry the idea. His "Miner's Cabin" is fair to good. He lets the reader "see" much better through his words.

The author, Lola M. Homsher, is careful in presenting her subject. She and the Nebraska Press have made a text-book out of *South Pass 1868*. If one's grandfather lived between 1803 and 1869, he might have gone through here. This third book of the Nebraska Press in its "Pioneer Heritage" series calls for us to buy the other two volumes. They, no doubt, are reference books as well as Western Americana for education and entertainment.

This reviewer predicts TV will use portions of this book. If so, we hope the editor and publishers make them stick to the scene exactly as James Chisholm described it.

—Joe W. McBride

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The Southwest: Old and New. By W. Eugene Hollon. (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1961. Pp. xvii, 487. Maps. Illustrations. Index. \$7.50.)

The author, a professor of history at the University of Oklahoma, gives us a much-needed up-to-date general historical survey of the Southwest. Attempts at a historical study approach-

ing the comprehensive reach of this volume have been less satisfactory treatments, maximizing interpretation and minimizing history.

Few, attempting to define the political boundaries of the Southwest, agree on the states to include—or exclude. Fortunately, this author has limited the region to Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas, thus permitting, within space restrictions, a wholly satisfactory survey of the social, political, and cultural picture. The author skillfully handles the task of confining himself to four states, and even the role of the Southwest in the history of the nation is judiciously treated and placed in proper perspective. The coverage remains wide-ranging, and is concerned with the development of the area from prehistoric man to the present. Organization of the book is chronological, and within this framework the topical approach is used to good advantage. While reader comparison of developments and situations in the region will be inevitable, they are not comparatively treated by the author, for the material itself tells a vivid story of contrasts.

The writing is relaxed, clear, and descriptive. Sometimes the author uses the first person in relating observations and experiences which are the result of his travels. Frequent editorializing is tempered, thoughtful, and always in good taste. Southwest legislators will not be offended when they read of their do-nothing attitude on the water problems and reapportionment; perhaps Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona and the Board of Regents of the University of Texas will rejoice that they have not been more roughly handled. The readers will also enjoy the author's subtle wit and humor, and will probably be motivated to use the informative bibliographical notes.

Physically the book is handsome. The type is clear, the margins wide. Footnotes give information rather than documentation. The paper is of excellent quality, and the binding is attractive.

Professor Hollon's book should circulate widely throughout the Southwest, and also have considerable nation-wide appeal. Oklahomans will see their state in focus, and be better prepared to judge its successes and shortcomings. However, like all historical writing concerned with the present, revision in the near future will be necessary to keep this volume current and meaningful. Unlike much writing on recent history, this book will be well worth revising.

—LeRoy H. Fischer

*Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma*