

ing meetings (which he disliked to do) and serving on governing boards. As had been his custom for many years, he continued to give generously of his time and money to church and Sunday school. The Fletcher home stood hospitably open to the new schoolteacher, the itinerant preacher, the poor relative, and the orphaned child. Twenty persons were as likely to gather around the breakfast table on any morning as around the supper table on Christmas Eve.

All this is not revealed by the scanning of a few pages of the diary, but the reader who perseveres through the volume will find himself as involved with the Fletchers as with his favorite television family. He will eagerly await news of Cooley, the eldest son, a missionary in Brazil; he will follow the younger children to their schools and feel with Calvin, Jr., Elijah, and Miles as they try to establish their independence; he will keep a watchful eye on the mother's uncertain health and view with amusement and sympathy the father's attempts to improve his irascible disposition; he will suffer with the Fletchers through cholera epidemics and the death of the first grandchild. The historian who reads the diary will be rewarded with new knowledge of banking practices, the midwestern cattle trade, conditions of travel (for the Fletchers were often on the road), and many other aspects of the economy and society a century and a quarter ago. In sum, the Fletcher diary is unrivalled as an account of life in the Midwest during the years that it covers.

As was the case with earlier volumes, the editors must be commended for their careful work on this one.

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Indiana Coverlet Weavers and Their Coverlets. By Pauline Montgomery. (Indianapolis: Hoosier Heritage Press, 1974. Pp. vii, 138. Illustrations, notes, index. \$14.95.)

"Any book on pioneer crafts must necessarily be written in the subjunctive mood. It is too late by more than a century to make positive assertions concerning some aspects of professional weaving" (p. vi), recognizes Pauline Montgomery in her volume describing Indiana's professional coverlet weavers and their products. She consequently has not attempted to discuss the technicalities of the weaving process

or to make technical analyses of individual coverlets. Neither does she claim a definitive listing of coverlets weavers in the Hoosier state. Included in her book are descriptions and illustrations (in black and white and in color) of various types of coverlets, suggestions as to the acquisition and care of coverlets, pioneer recipes for dyeing yarns and cloth, and a brief background of the development of textile production in Indiana during the pioneer period. The unique aspect of her work—and its major contribution—however, is its emphasis on the individual coverlet weavers. “Many of the weavers have become very real people to me” (p. v), writes Montgomery; her well researched, yet fascinating vignettes, make them very real to her readers, too.

Professional coverlet weaving flourished in Indiana during the midnineteenth century and provided a connecting link between the pioneer home as a self sufficient textile producing unit and the power loom. Thus Montgomery places her subjects in their historical context. She quotes their prices, includes illustrations of their correspondence and business ledgers, lists their assets, and identifies their weaving trademarks whenever possible, thereby providing an economic and a professional context as well. Within this framework the weavers themselves emerge: Samuel Balantyne, whose Scottish mother thought a successful weaver more respectable than an impoverished actor and whose assets (listed as \$3,000) in 1850 vindicated his mother’s choice of career for her son; John Muir, married three times to women in “comfortable circumstances,” who “by his integrity and honesty . . . succeeded in obtaining a liberal share of this world’s good and at the same time rearing a large family” (p. 79); Indiana’s “first family” of weaving, the La Tourettes—John, the father; Henry, his son and Indiana’s only native born weaver; and the “incomparable” Sarah, his daughter and the only woman professional weaver in the Hoosier state. Then there are the coverlets they wove—the Whig Rose, King’s Flower, Cat Track, Tennessee Trouble, Frenchman’s Fancy.

Although the footnotes do not always reveal precisely how and where Montgomery secured all her information, the prodigious amount of research which went into this volume is evident. The author writes with conviction and expertise; not often does one doubt her conclusions. There are things wrong with the book, of course. The chronology and organiza-

tion are often confusing. Not until the end of the volume, for example, is there an attempt to explain a few weaving terms which may have confounded the reader throughout the work. And certainly the nonprofessional after reading the book will be no more able to distinguish among a single jaquard, a double jaquard, or an overshot coverlet than he was before. It is undoubtedly unfair to expect to do so, since providing this kind of knowledge was not Montgomery's intent, but it is frustrating all the same. Whatever the book's few technical problems, however, its contributions to Indiana history in general and to professional weaving in particular are myriad. It is a refreshingly informative and interesting volume.

Indiana University, Bloomington Lorna Lutes Sylvester

Oscar Carleton McCulloch, 1843-1891: Preacher and Practitioner of Applied Christianity. By Genevieve C. Weeks. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1976. Pp. xvii, 248. Illustrations, notes, sources, index. \$7.50.)

In this age of impersonal social service bureaucracies it is refreshing to encounter the life of a person whose solitary human efforts made a difference in the quality of life for the poor and underprivileged. Genevieve C. Weeks, a professor in the School of Social Service, Indiana University, has revealed such a person in her loving, thorough, and well documented biography of Oscar McCulloch.

As minister of the Congregational Plymouth Church and as president of the Indianapolis Benevolent Society from 1877 until his death in 1891, McCullough was the most energetic leader of humanitarian reform in Indianapolis. Whatever the issue—urban poverty, housing and health, the right of labor to organize, strike, and win an eight hour day, kindergartens, child care and fresh air camps, or nurses' training, prison reform, and juvenile justice—McCulloch was in the thick of things. When not delivering a sermon on "Problems of Poor Relief" or "Some Things I Want the Legislature to Attend To" (there were many), the indefatigable minister was out in the city raising funds for his countless projects, organizing the consolidation of charity societies in Indian-