

ography of identifiable Iowa tax buyers is interesting. As a group they were "professional land capitalists—bankers, lawyers, realtors, and loan agents—who not only resided in the county-seat towns, but also dominated the local governments" (p. 57). One served as governor of Iowa, and several were sent to Congress by the voters. All were respectable citizens and leading public officials who must have served a critical need to both tax collectors and tax paying citizens. Their role changed in the twentieth century when limited interest charges on tax liens reduced the attraction of this form of investment.

James S. Easley, a Virginia land capitalist, with whom Swierenga dealt extensively in his *Pioneers and Profits* (1968) is also here as a tax buyer, and there were a few other out of state buyers. Generally, however, the local nature of the business and the extensive record keeping necessary gave advantages to county seat capitalists. The author concludes that the tax auction mechanism served "two community needs: regular government revenue and private development capital" (p. 103). Seldom did "acres for cents" produce land titles: instead they were "security for tax certificates."

This pioneering study should serve as a splendid model for similar projects in other states.

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Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue. By Merrill D. Peterson. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1976. Pp. xiv, 146. Illustrations, notes, index. \$7.00.)

When reviewing the work of a master historian one expects sound scholarship, mature judgment, and a felicitous style. Merrill D. Peterson, author of the best single volume biography of Thomas Jefferson, more than satisfies these criteria in this book.

In four essays first delivered at Mercer University in 1975, Peterson traces the famous fifty year correspondence between John Adams and Jefferson. But Peterson does much more than narrate the story of a fascinating and complex friendship. His study has a far more important purpose: it is an analysis of "the dialogue of ideas through which

these two philosopher-statesmen carried forward the ongoing search for the meaning and purpose of the American Revolution" (p. 1).

Adams and Jefferson had much in common, but Peterson believes that the differences between them were more important. While both men were ardent revolutionaries, each held opposite views of human nature; therefore, each advanced different theories of governmental organization. Adams was a Hobbesian. Man was evil, and the division of society into classes was the natural result of man's self interest. Government existed to restrain man's evil tendencies and to maintain social order. The balanced constitution with upper and lower classes checking each other through separate but equal branches was best suited for this purpose. Jefferson, on the other hand, was a disciple of the Enlightenment. Man was basically good and naturally sought the good of others. Thus he advocated a government which was limited in its ability to regulate human affairs. Peterson succinctly notes the difference between the two friends: "In Jefferson's view government should be absorbed into society, becoming true self-government, while Adams believed that society must be absorbed into government, reproduced in it, and regulated by it" (p. 20).

This ideological divergence, present but muted in the Revolutionary struggle, became more pronounced in the 1790s. The friends' contrasting responses to the French Revolution marked a critical juncture in their political and personal relationship. Adams' fear of social disorder made him view the utopian violence of the French revolt as the logical consequence of democracy run rampant. Jefferson had no such fear. He believed that the American Revolution was prologue to a new world order; the French Revolution, while disappointing to the Virginian, "furthered his education in democracy . . . and extended his vision of America's responsibility for advancing the freedom of mankind" (p. 53).

The friends parted company during the late 1790s as their ideological conflict became part of a partisan struggle for political power. Yet Peterson notes that Jefferson's election in 1800 meant that the people had settled the conflict in the Virginian's favor. Jefferson's optimism and his faith in the virtues of a democratic polity best suited America's vision of its future. Adams, as he accurately

prophesied to Jefferson when their correspondence resumed in 1812, became a forgotten hero.

Adams and Jefferson will be greeted enthusiastically both by scholars and by the general public—and deservedly so. It is a superb addition to the bicentennial literature, and together with *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, edited by Lester J. Cappon, it will become the starting point for anyone who desires to understand the relationship between these two giants of the American Revolution.

The University of Georgia Press deserves praise for producing a handsome, well edited book. It is rare when superior scholarship is so well complemented by the attractiveness of the volume itself.

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Perspectives on the American Revolution: Bicentennial Lectures. Edited by James Haw. (Fort Wayne, Ind.: The Department of History, Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, 1975. Pp. 154. Notes. Paperbound, \$1.00.)

This small book reproduces eight lectures presented by the Department of History, Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne in the fall of 1975. The purpose of the lectures was "to shed light on the background of the American Revolution and its meaning for the United States and other nations" (Preface). The topics are well suited to the stated purpose, and they are well developed. Doubtless the series contributed, as was hoped, to "a better public understanding of what it is that Americans are celebrating in these Bicentennial years" (Preface).

Inevitably the quality of this kind of book is uneven. Some of the writing is flawless, but there are errors. The error is literary when one writes that "Franco . . . is strongly anti-communist and that is sufficient justification to enamor him to us" (p. 103). It is chronological when one declares it unlikely that either the American or the French Revolution "would have . . . taken place without the other" (p. 137). It is mathematical when, regarding the relation between revolution and frustrated expectations, one asserts that "if you