

From the beginning of the publication of this multivolume diary the editors sought a "median ground between pedantic fidelity and readability" (vol. I, p. xxv). Each volume has lived up to that standard. Such editorial aids as a survey introduction, a chronology of events, and an extensive index all contribute to the diary's readability. Careful editing of the manuscript and wide ranging notes drawn from both primary and secondary sources provide the scholar with the fidelity needed for research. The diary, in sum, provides a readable and reliable source of valuable information for both the general reader and the scholar.

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*Religious Newspapers in the Old Northwest to 1861: A History, Bibliography, and Record of Opinion.* By Wesley Norton. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977. Pp. xi, 196. Notes, bibliography of religious newspapers, index. \$12.50.)

If all the religious newspapers published in the Old Northwest to 1861 could be put in a pile, they would make a very large mound indeed. All who read this book will know that Wesley Norton has worked in the scattered remnants of that mound with diligence and unusual comprehension. He offers the reader a vicarious trip through many an acid flecked file.

His "Bibliography of Religious Newspapers with Library Holdings" (p. 159-78) gives an indication of the bulk of the research material. There are 176 entries in this helpful list, but newspapers which were absorbed by others (e.g., the *Indiana Religious Intelligencer* and the *Western Luminary* by the Cincinnati *Journal*) are not cross-indexed. As a consequence the number of papers searched far exceeds the 176 bibliographical entries.

Norton argues that the Old Northwest is an appropriate place to study religious newspapers. It is a frontier which combines many elements of the American population and of the American experience. The assortment of newspapers demonstrates the individualism and diversity of the region. But how can the author generalize about such an amorphous mass of newspapers on the basis of so many scattered readings and soundings? He does so with difficulty and with 464 footnotes, many of them compound, to validate his opinions. One comes to have confidence in the procedure. Norton will advance a generalization, give some annotated examples from the newspapers to support it, and perhaps cite an exception or two. There is the

impression that he has sufficient instances to support his judgments. The positions usually fit well with the conclusions of other research on the period, which he gives evidence of knowing. However, Norton is by no means limited to redocumenting the findings of other historians.

The book does let some of the life and vigor of the newspapers come through. There is the idealistic drive of the denominational leaders to establish newspapers, sadly tempered by discovery of what it takes to make a newspaper run. Proprietors could hardly get subscribers, could hardly get subscribers to pay, and could hardly bring themselves to drop subscribers when they did not pay. Editors were usually clergymen not trained for newspaper work. They received little or no pay, and often enough they lost their own money in the enterprise. But they felt this work of publication must be done. Four chapters of the book offer a subject approach to the editorial content of the newspapers. These chapters reflect the denominational inductive which is stout and the moral advice which is heavy. Commentary on public policy and especially on slavery, or abolitionists, is considered godly journalistic duty.

Norton says that the "uniqueness of the *antebellum* religious newspaper was in its blend of secular and religious purposes" (p. 2). He demonstrates the blend of the secular and religious. The uniqueness of such a blend, however, is not demonstrated and may well be unprovable. But this assertion is in no way essential to the book. Norton's research in this group of religious newspapers has its own value. His report of that research is both stimulating and useful.

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*The Frontier: Comparative Studies.* Edited and with an introduction by David Harry Miller and Jerome O. Steffen. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977. Pp. viii, 327. Notes, figures, maps, tables, index. \$14.95.)

This book, a product of the University of Oklahoma program in comparative and interdisciplinary frontier studies, is a diverse collection of articles which have little in common other than a frontier theme. The authors are from a variety of disciplines, and the essays vary widely in setting (Roman Empire to outer space), purpose, method, and terminology.

John Hudson, a geographer, examines social science methodologies applicable to frontier studies. He combines theories of land use competition and innovation diffusion to