

of contents and the book when end notes are grouped by number only. Despite her book's flaws, however, Ashbaugh has made a beginning toward examining the life of this fighter for social justice.

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*The Presidency of Warren G. Harding.* By Eugene P. Trani and David L. Wilson. (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977. Pp. ix, 232. Frontispiece, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$12.00.)

The aim of the *American Presidency Series*, according to its editors, is to bring together, synthesize, and draw conclusions from the best of the secondary literature on each presidential administration. In the case of the Warren G. Harding presidency the number of secondary accounts has grown enormously in recent years, reflecting both an increased availability of archival materials and new perceptions of the period's significance. The need for a synthesis has been great, and in this volume Eugene P. Trani and David L. Wilson go far toward providing one. Their command of the literature is impressive, their synthesis of it thoughtful and effectively presented, and their portrait of Harding's administration a balanced and generally convincing one.

On numerous matters Trani and Wilson accept the revisionism associated with Robert Murray, Andrew Sinclair, and Randolph Downes. They conclude, for example, that the famous "smoke-filled room" was more myth than reality, that Harding was a shrewd and effective politician, that he was not personally involved in the scandals perpetrated during his term in office, and that he did bring some highly capable men into his administration. They still conclude, however, that he and his administration were failures. He was, so it is argued, a weak leader of questionable morals at a time when the nation needed moral leadership. He had little understanding of the forces at work during the period or of how government could be used for constructive purposes. And the Harding administration's major achievements, depicted more as the work of Herbert Hoover, Charles G. Dawes, and Henry C. Wallace than of the president himself, were essentially stop gap actions. Despite the revisionism, the authors feel, Harding still deserves to rank near the bottom of presidential polls.

Trani and Wilson also incorporate substantial elements of the revisionism associated with such historians as Joan Hoff Wilson, Carl Parrini, Melvyn Leffler, Donald Winters, and Robert Zieger. They note in particular the rise of a "corporate liberalism" and the way in which this affected diplomatic developments, economic policy, and the organization building of the departments of commerce and agriculture. What they make of this, however, is not entirely satisfying, chiefly perhaps because they miss or have chosen to ignore much that these revisionists have considered especially significant. There is little recognition, for example, of the divisions or changes within business or of the administrative conflicts over what constituted desirable forms of economic organization. Nor is there a recognition of the larger frameworks involved or the kinds of historical continuities that the revisionists have stressed. On the contrary the images of progressivism and the New Deal are essentially those found in the liberal history of the 1950s.

The authors have not, in this reviewer's estimation, jettisoned enough of the old progressive framework. But this disagreement aside, there is much to admire about the way that Trani and Wilson have pulled together and synthesized recent scholarship. They have also provided an excellent bibliographical essay, one that should be the starting point for those who would become serious scholars of the Harding presidency.

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*A Valley Renewed: The History of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District.* By Hal Jenkins. (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1976. Pp. xii, 206. Illustrations, appendixes, index. Clothbound, \$11.00; paperbound, \$5.75.)

This book deals with the planning, financing, and implementation of solutions for the recurrent problems of flooding and drought in the Muskingum River Valley of eastern Ohio. During the 1920s, while memories of the devastating flood of 1913 were still fresh, business leaders of the region formulated tentative plans for a water conservancy district. Their program for flood control and water conservation through a series of dams and reservoirs drew heavily on the example of the Miami Conservancy District, which had been planned by Arthur E. Morgan after the 1913 flood.

Although reconciliation of conflicting interests within the Muskingum watershed proved difficult, acquisition of funds