

Book Reviews

Gentlemen from Indiana: National Party Candidates, 1836-1940. Edited by Ralph D. Gray. *Indiana Historical Collections*, Volume L. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1977. Pp. xx, 338. Notes, illustrations, bibliographical essays, index. Clothbound, \$8.00; paperbound, \$4.50.)

Nearly all contributors to this book have been, or currently are, identified with Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Under the editorship of Ralph D. Gray, they have written chapters on twelve Hoosiers nominated at least once for the presidency or vice-presidency of the United States. No fewer than sixteen campaigns were involved. Nine of the twelve nominees ran as major party candidates. Two (one Whig and one Republican) became White House occupants. And four (two Republicans and two Democrats) reached the nation's second highest office.

If anyone has reservations about the quality of Indiana's professional historians, such skeptics are urged to peruse this volume. For here is no mere "rewrite job"—no indication that editor and authors were satisfied with what predecessors committed to print. The scholars went to the sources and, having examined everything pertinent they could find, proceeded to compose sandpapered and polished essays. Thus the products of their pens are both readable and reliable.

The most impressive asset, however, is the one of interpretation. It was to be expected that something new along this line would be offered in the cases of William H. English and J. Frank Hanly (to pick evident examples). But similarly stimulating are the treatments of Schuyler Colfax, Eugene V. Debs, Charles W. Fairbanks, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas A. Hendricks, George W. Julian, Thomas R. Marshall, and Wendell L. Willkie. And Bernard Friedman (writing on William Henry Harrison) and Peter J. Sehlinger (on John W. Kern), while benefiting from the cited work of Robert G. Gunderson and Virginia F. Haughton, have performed superbly on facets which most readers probably never heard of.

The book includes a few unfortunate expressions, such as "Henry Clay's Compromise of 1850" (p. 37). Abraham Lincoln appointed Montgomery Blair, not Horatio King (p. 66), postmaster general. Kern became a state senator after moving from Kokomo to Indianapolis (p. 201). Indiana's importance as a pivotal or doubtful state in presidential elections is suitably emphasized on pp. vii-viii, 107, 183, and elsewhere. Extraordi-

narily discerning is the discussion (pp. 162-63) of the 1890 congressional election. Delightful humor, with which several appraisals are sprinkled, is exemplified in James H. Madison's story (p. 185) of how Fairbanks was fancifully transformed from "Buttermilk Charlie" into "Cocktail Charlie." Partial or total revisionism fairly often is a feature—on pp. 22-23 respecting "Old Tippecanoe," for instance; on pp. 114-15 in connection with the 1880 campaign, and on pp. 258, 261, and 265-68 with reference to Hanly.

There is no reason to direct attention to rotten apples in the Gray barrel, for fortunately there are none. If the index is thin, the bibliographical essays are most helpful. In sum, the book is a first-rate contribution not only intrinsically but because it suggests so much scholarship which may henceforth be undertaken in Indiana and elsewhere. Happily, *Gentlemen from Indiana* has been distributed to 550 secondary school and college libraries by the Indiana Historical Bureau and the Indiana University American Revolution Bicentennial Committee.

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The Indiana Experience: An Anthology. Compiled and edited by A. L. Lazarus. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977. Pp. xvi, 426. Index of authors and titles. Clothbound, \$15.00; paperbound, \$4.95.)

Indiana has always been a writing state. From the days of Edward Eggleston and Lew Wallace to those of Theodore Dreiser and Ernie Pyle the Hoosier commonwealth has produced a flood of fiction, essays, autobiography, and verse, much of which has left an impact on the American reading public. Books like *Alice of Old Vincennes*, *A Hoosier Holiday*, and *Alice Adams* have had multitudes of readers, while the dialect and domestic verse of James Whitcomb Riley live in the memory of a large audience whose tastes are not conspicuously literary. Obviously the anthologist who wishes to represent the Indiana achievement has a major problem in selection.

A. L. Lazarus has arranged his material by literary types rather than chronologically or thematically. Thus sections are devoted to essays, fiction, biography and autobiography, plays, and poetry. This plan is convenient but not always satisfactory. The two major divisions, life sketches and fiction, occupy about 225 pages, appropriately more than half the book; but eighty pages are devoted to a naïve farce by George Ade which focuses on mistaken identity and a dated drama by David Graham