
Review Notices

The Magnificent Ambersons. By Booth Tarkington. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. Pp. xix, 516. Illustrations. Clothbound, \$17.50; paperbound, \$9.95.) Here is a leading candidate for the honor of representing the epitome of Indiana's golden age of literature. Booth Tarkington's thinly disguised hometown of Indianapolis changed rapidly as the automobile and smoky factories appeared and as the Amberson family's fortune declined. Tarkington's literary skill in capturing the details of change, in playing off past, present, and future, is the stuff of good historical analysis. *The Magnificent Ambersons* is one of Indiana's finest historical documents, yet it is also a novel to be read for the sheer pleasure of a good story, of seeing George Amberson Minafer get his comeuppance. Only after reading the book, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1918, should one also seek the pleasure of Orson Wells's film. This reprinting in the Indiana University Press Library of Indiana Classics series includes also a very good introduction by Donald J. Gray. *James H. Madison, Indiana University, Bloomington.*

The Archaeological Investigations of Fort Knox II: Knox County, Indiana, 1803-1813. By Marlesa A. Gray. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1988. Pp. x, 301. Figures, illustrations, notes, tables, bibliography, appendixes, index. Paperbound, \$32.00.) Located on the Wabash River two miles north of Vincennes, Fort Knox was garrisoned from 1803 to 1813 but played its most important role as the staging area for the troops who fought at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. This report summarizes several archaeological investigations of the site, known as Fort Knox II to distinguish it from two other forts of the same name. A combination of archaeological evidence and written documents has enabled the investigators to provide abundant and fascinating detail about the daily life of the inhabitants of the fort, including diet, clothing, health, and the place of women there. *James H. Madison, Indiana University, Bloomington.*

William Murray, Esq: Land Agent In The Illinois Territory Before The Revolutionary War. By Myles N. Murray and Rev. Robert V. Zoba. (Brooklyn, N. Y.: Theo. Gaus, Ltd., 1987. Pp. xvii, 157. Maps, illustrations, notes, appendixes. \$18.50.) This is a marvelous example of special pleading combined with a conspiracy the-

ory so fantastic that it links George Washington with Lord Cornwallis in a secret personal deal in support of the House of Hanover! The hero of the book is William Murray, one of those shadowy figures who made a rough living as a frontier trader while dreaming of grand and glorious land speculations. The authors assert that the William Murray who certainly acted as chief agent of the Illinois and Wabash land companies was related to William Murray, Marquis of Tullibardine, a leading Jacobite who died in the Tower of London in 1746 before he could be tried for raising an army in support of Bonnie Prince Charlie. They further assert, without a shred of evidence, that the colonial Murray was true to the Stuart cause, prompting his many enemies in Britain and America to frustrate his ambitions and virtually erase his name from history.

In fact Murray was an agent of the Franks and Gratz interests of Philadelphia and purchased from various Indian chieftains a large tract of land along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers and two smaller tracts on the Wabash. By offering a share of the enterprise, he managed to secure some support from Lord Dunmore, the governor of Virginia (whose name was John Murray), but Lord Dartmouth, the colonial secretary, sharply rejected the entire scheme as a violation of the Proclamation of 1763. The united Illinois and Wabash land companies struggled for forty years without success to persuade Congress to recognize their western land titles, and Murray died in obscurity near Natchez in 1795.

Readers curious about the complex realities of land speculations, including those of William Murray, should refer to Thomas B. Abernethy, *Western Lands and The American Revolution* (1937) and Clarence W. Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics* (1917). Patrick J. Furlong, *Indiana University, South Bend*.

Correspondence of James K. Polk. Volume VII: *January–August, 1844*. Edited by Wayne Cutler; associate editor, James P. Cooper, Jr. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1989. Pp. xxxiv, 561. End maps, illustration, notes, index. \$32.50.) As matters stood when the last volume of his correspondence appeared in 1983, James K. Polk's career had suffered a serious setback through a failed gubernatorial candidacy; he was seeking the 1844 Democratic vice-presidential nomination; and the Polk Project itself was in a precarious financial position. Since then, the situation has brightened considerably for all parties. The project has changed sponsors and relocated, and scholars now can confidently look forward to the publication of the remainder of Polk's correspondence. As for Young Hickory, in 1844 he won not second place but the presidential nomination itself. This volume will, therefore, be of particular note to those interested in that year's crucial election. The letters document Polk's campaign strategy and raise

questions about just how dark a horse the nominee actually was. The volume is admirably put together, with helpful but unintrusive annotations and conveniently located notes. Editorial practices are carefully described in the preface and seem on the whole reasonable. A useful calendar is included, as is an extensive index, though the latter contains some entries that are dauntingly long and difficult to use. This volume should be an important source for those interested in antebellum politics. *Gary L. Bailey, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania.*

The Sugar Creek Saga: Chronicles of a Petroleum Geologist. By Harold W. Scott. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: the author, 1986. Pp. xviii, 308. Illustrations, maps, tables, graphs. \$20.00.) Harold W. Scott chronicles the cultural and economic impact of petroleum exploitation in the twentieth century as seen through the eyes of his own family. Scott chooses the major oil discovery of Spindletop in 1901 as a beginning; however, the giant Lima-Peru Field of Indiana-Ohio in the late 1800s was the first significant petroleum-related factor in the Midwest. *Dan M. Sullivan, Indiana Geological Survey (retired).*