

Natural Sciences and as editor of the academy's *Journal* was the lifeblood of that institution in its early years. Say's frequent descriptions and classifications of insects and mollusks in the journal established his scientific reputation and in 1818 landed him an appointment as zoologist to the Long Expedition. Collections made during those explorations enabled him to provide the first detailed descriptions of the coyote and the plains gray wolf and to produce his most notable scientific study, *American Entomology*. More important, Stroud maintains that Say's scientific work was representative of early nineteenth-century American natural history. Say's publications emphasized the practical and economic importance of insects. While opposing scientific specialization, he advocated that Americans study their own flora and fauna rather than relying on the work of European naturalists. Stroud's study also illustrates the crucial role that patronage played in Say's career. Much of Say's scientific research relied on the largess of the geologist William Maclure. Maclure provided resources for Say's early scientific work, and Say adopted Maclure's social and educational views and became a mainstay of Maclure's utopian experiment at New Harmony, Indiana. As Maclure's representative in New Harmony, Say edited a newspaper and kept alive the utopian ideal. Say also continued publishing his volumes of *American Entomology* and *American Conchology*; but as Stroud effectively indicates, Say's obligations prevented him from undertaking fieldwork, and his isolation from scientific colleagues and activities proved increasingly frustrating both personally and professionally.

Stroud's biography is a fine study of Say's life and career. In addition to offering new insights into the scientist's personality and contributions, the discussion of Say's later life provides one of the most complete examinations of science at New Harmony. Despite Say's many accomplishments, however, there is little that is distinctive or unique about his science, and not surprisingly the author offers no new interpretation of natural history in the early Republic. This portrayal of Say's life and work reinforces and provides a personal dimension to current understanding of the major features of American science in the early nineteenth century.

RONALD RAINGER is associate professor of history, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, where he teaches courses in the history of science and technology. His most recent publication is *An Agenda for Antiquity: Henry Fairfield Osborn and Vertebrate Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History, 1890-1935* (1991).

The Tri-State Tornado: The Story of America's Greatest Tornado Disaster. By Peter S. Felknor. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1992. Pp. xvii, 131. Map, illustrations, appendixes, notes, selected bibliography. Paperbound, \$13.95.)

As people go about their daily lives, it is easy to forget the powerful forces of nature that lie just over the horizon. Thunder-

storms, hurricanes, and tornadoes are all fearsome reminders of how quickly nature can transform itself from nurturer to destroyer. Peter S. Felknor's account, *The Tri-State Tornado*, is a case in point. One moment Annapolis, Missouri, was a sleepy little Ozark hamlet; the next moment much of the town had blown away, and four people lay dead in the remnants. The nation's worst tornado disaster had begun its awful odyssey.

From its initial touchdown in Annapolis just after one o'clock on the afternoon of March 18, 1925, to shortly after half past four that same afternoon, the tornado cut an uninterrupted path of death and destruction some 219 miles in length and up to a mile in width. Its course carried it across three states, Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana, at forward speeds reaching as much as seventy-three miles per hour. The tornado did its greatest damage in Illinois where 606 lives were lost, 1,563 were injured, and over \$13 million dollars in property was destroyed. In the three states combined the death toll numbered 689, more than twice any previous record for a single tornado (p. 120). The combined injury and property losses for all three states reached 1,980 and \$16,532,000 respectively. As dramatic as these figures appear, they would have been much worse had the tornado not followed a predominantly rural course.

Felknor wants the story of this little-known disaster to be told in the words of those who experienced it (p. 28); thus, he uses the remembrances of fourteen eyewitnesses who ranged in age at the time from children to young adults. Their accounts along with newspaper reports of the tornado constitute the major sources of information used in the author's reconstruction of events. Felknor arranges his material into seven chapters beginning with the eyewitnesses' first responses to the disaster and continuing through their visual images of the sights and sounds of the tornado, the depth of details they remembered, the pain and suffering caused by the tornado, the bizarre aspects of the tragedy, the problems brought to the devastated area, and finally the psychic effect the disaster had on its survivors. In 1992, a year that witnessed the devastation of Hurricane Andrew, the author reminds readers that such catastrophes are not one great disaster but many little personal disasters.

Felknor bookends these seven chapters, which are the heart of his work, between an introduction and two concluding chapters that deal with the nature of tornadoes. These sections, especially a hypothetical narrative in the introduction that introduces the reader to the spectacle of a tornado's birth (p. xi), provide useful information for understanding tornadoes.

The author did not set out to write a history of this catastrophe, nor did he. Instead his work is largely a collection of personal remembrances of a common experience. His object is not to present a single image of the disaster but rather to show its many-faceted

nature. As one eyewitness declares, "No matter how many people you talk to, you get a different story, because everybody saw it from where they were" (p. 59). Thus *The Tri-State Tornado*, using vivid eyewitness accounts, has made a meaningful contribution to folklore and popular culture through the convenient collection of the many personal stories it reports.

DONALD T. ZIMMER is professor of history, Tri-State University, Angola, Indiana. At present he is working on an up-date of his history of Rush County, Indiana, and an article on the architecture of antebellum Madison, Indiana.

Our Kentucky: A Study of the Bluegrass State. Edited by James C. Klotter. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992. Pp. viii, 350. Maps, illustrations, tables, figures, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$29.00.)

Aimed at tenth and twelfth grade students, this work originated in the efforts of a group of high school teachers to obtain a suitable textbook for Kentucky Studies courses. The Kentucky Humanities Council provided funds to determine how best to approach the creation of such a text. The Kentucky Historical Society gave staff and logistical aid. A committee of nine teachers determined the format of the text, which emphasizes a topical approach, and contacted possible authors. The Kentucky Bicentennial Commission made this their primary educational project. The Ashland Oil Foundation provided funding for publication.

James C. Klotter, state historian and director of the Kentucky Historical Society, edited this volume, which comprises nineteen essays. Most were written by historians and focus on aspects of Kentucky history. These begin appropriately with geography and prehistory and conclude with thoughtful pieces on education and the future of the commonwealth. Essays on government and politics, religion, the performing arts, literature, and architecture are also included. Ample and well-placed maps, drawings, photographs, and tables make this textbook visually appealing. A distinctive feature is a selection of seventeen essays written by high school students on such subjects as the logging boom in the early twentieth century and the impact of illiteracy on the state.

Our Kentucky is an impressive text. It offers no sugar-coated approach, as essays on race relations by George Wright and violence by Robert Ireland, among others, attest. The concluding chapters offer frank insights into a state with a tradition of educational mediocrity and an economy that has been excessively dependent on coal, horseracing, and tobacco—all of which face uncertain futures. The work also attempts to place Kentucky's development in a national context while describing what makes the state distinctive (*e.g.*, Kentucky's tradition of violence and its appeal, as a "place-bound state," to present and former residents).