

dred buildings in the first two decades of the new century. "Murals were the grand opera of painting . . .," writes Morgan; "their themes were larger than life, grander than living," and they were meant "to speak broadly to a tradition that viewers could comprehend, and which would enlarge their sense of importance as citizens" (p. 139). Cox's knowledge of Italian Renaissance masters, his belief in the power of idealism and allegory, and his proficiency as a figure painter combined to make the artist one of America's most sought-after muralists. Cox provided works for new state capitols in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, as well as for the Library of Congress and several public buildings in New York City.

As Morgan shows, Cox's critical attack on modernism, which he saw as culturally divisive with its emphasis on the eccentric, the individual, and the mundane, was a natural extension of his classical training and his belief that art should unify and uplift the viewing public. Though Cox's conservative stand has been largely discredited, his writings testify to the large aspirations of an age that made best sellers out of such novels as Lew Wallace's *Ben-Hur* and Charles Major's *When Knighthood Was in Flower*. Morgan's biography illuminates the kind of dedication and struggle that a life in American art entailed, even for someone as talented as Cox, whose finances were a continual worry and whose critics, including family members, were not always supportive of his belief in the idealism and symbolism of nude figures. The book will be useful to anyone interested in American art and culture.

J. KENT CALDER is managing editor for the Indiana Historical Society. His article on muralist John D. Pusey appeared in the summer, 1990, issue of the IHS's *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*.

*Adventures on the Western Frontier: Major General John Gibbon.*

Edited by Alan and Maureen Gaff. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. Pp. xvi, 256. Illustrations, sources, index. \$24.95.)

While John Gibbon's role as a Union officer during the Civil War was chronicled in his *Personal Recollections of the Civil War* (1928), his military and personal experiences in the American West are less systematically delineated. This edited work presents an account of Gibbon's more than two decades of military service in the American West assembled from articles he published in various magazines, particularly the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, and from manuscript materials in the General John Gibbon Collection at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. An 1847 graduate of the United States Military Academy, Gibbon was a perceptive observer of the changing life of the western frontier, and his works provide perspective on the transitory nature of the frontier. Although a military officer throughout his career, he was,

nevertheless, not unaware of the failure of military and civilian policy in addressing the future of Native Americans.

The editors have selected for inclusion in this work entries that reveal Gibbon's experiences in frontier travel, his fascination with the natural wonders of Yellowstone and the West, his role in the Indian campaigns of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and his suggestions for addressing the "Indian Question." Each entry is a personal and unofficial account of a selected segment of Gibbon's western experiences. Much of the work focuses upon his military endeavors in this region including his experiences in the aftermath of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, his pursuit of Chief Joseph and the Nez Percé, and the defeat of his forces at the Battle of the Big Hole by the Nez Percé.

Although not present at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Gibbon arrived there with his company of the Montana Column shortly after the withdrawal of the Sioux and Cheyenne and played a role in providing care for Major Marcus Reno's wounded forces and the burial of General George A. Custer's men. While providing no new insight into the details of this battle, his account does present a sense of the universal confusion and apprehension that swept through General Alfred H. Terry's forces as they sought to comprehend what had transpired.

Appreciating the nuances of frontier life in the West, Gibbon sensitively describes in clear and concise prose the plight of Native Americans, the transformation of the region by white settlement, and the decline of wildlife resources. Commenting frequently upon the difficulty of travel in this region, Gibbon demonstrates the dilemmas of the United States Army in closing with the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Nez Percé, societies that were more mobile and more knowledgeable of the environment in which they lived. Although a military officer with a distinguished record of service, Gibbon empathized with the Indian tribes he encountered and understood their reaction to continued white intrusion into their traditional lands. While recognizing the inevitability of the destruction of the traditional life of the Crow, Sioux, Cheyenne, and Nez Percé, he acknowledged the legitimacy of their defense of their lands and the responsibility the United States government had in defining a future for them.

The volume is edited in a light, but careful manner. Since many of the entries were derived from articles in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, it would have been useful to have explored Gibbon's relationship with this publication. The book's index allows the reader to find specific topics and themes easily. Maps would have enhanced the work and made it easier to follow Gibbon's experiences in the West.

PHILLIP DRENNON THOMAS is presently engaged in a book-length study of wildlife in the American West. His research interests include the art and artists of the American West and the growth of natural history in America.