
Governor of Indiana for four years during the era of World War I, and for eight years before that the state chairman of the Republican party, James P. Goodrich left public office with a heartfelt desire to get away, to do something else. The latter turned out to be an interest in, indeed an infatuation with, Soviet Russia, to which then remote nation he journeyed three times during 1921 and 1922 and a fourth time in 1925. He took interest in the great Russian famine of the early postwar years—his initial trips were arranged by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover who persuaded Congress to appropriate $20 million for food. Goodrich traveled to the famine areas, by train and sometimes riverboat, under primitive circumstances. These were no excursions but open-eyed trips to measure the suffering, which was intense, and discern what Americans could do. The governor distinguished himself in his investigations, which he made in the company of the Stanford University historian Frank A. Golder. It was a selfless work and marked the high point of his life.

Goodrich advocated trade with the USSR at a time when such advocacy was not popular, and in addition he recommended recognition when it too was beyond the pale of Republican politics. His advocacy of the latter was quiet and careful, for he knew it was hardly possible. He did what he could, which was not a great deal, for Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes was dead set against recognition and so was his successor, Frank B. Kellogg. Goodrich sought out the presidents, with some interest by Warren G. Harding who told him in 1923 that he would consider it after he returned from his Alaska trip and then died in San Francisco. Goodrich had an interview with Calvin Coolidge who as was his wont listened carefully and then, after the governor sent him a solicited memorandum, replied with a Coolidgean letter of two sentences.

Rhodes offers some vignettes of Indiana politics that are amusing—as the politics of the state can be. The governor attended high school with the irrepressible James E. Watson, later the Hoosier senator. The two Jims disliked each other. On one occasion Jim Goodrich wrote to a mutual friend, with the advice to pass the information along, that "there has never been a time and I can cite you to numerous occasions where the interest of the party conflicted with Jim's desires, when he didn't sacrifice the party" (p. 157). Four years before Goodrich died in 1940 the other Jim published his autobiography, that compilation of truth and falsehood, and clearly had given some
thought about how to handle his rival, Goodrich. He did it exquisite-
ly, by not mentioning his name.

Benjamin D. Rhodes has based his book on the Goodrich papers
in the Herbert Hoover Library in West Branch, Iowa, and has done
exceedingly well. Goodrich comes alive in this carefully researched
and beautifully written account.

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Buckeye Schoolmaster: A Chronicle of Midwestern Rural Life,
1853–1865. Edited by J. Merton England. (Bowling Green, Ohio:
Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1996. Pp. xiv,
308. Map, illustrations, index. Clothbound, $49.95; paperbound,
$24.95.)

A farmer, miller, teacher, school director, and essayist in Madi-
son County, Ohio, John M. Roberts (1833–1914) was committed to the
Democratic party, free schools, and a free press. An ordinary citizen,
he was a talented observer and recorder of the human condition.
From a collection of Roberts's diaries and manuscripts, editor J. Mer-
ton England selected the material for Buckeye Schoolmaster. Begin-
ning on January 17, 1853, and ending on December 31, 1865, Roberts
chronicled crucial years in the American experience—those of rising
sectionalism and the Civil War, and the editor's well-crafted intro-
ductions to each chapter establish the context for the diarist's entries.

The nineteen-year-old Roberts made his initial diary entry when
attending the local one-room school, studying spelling, Ray's Arith-
metic, and grammar. Some of his classmates were as young as five.
Already a critic, Roberts found Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's
Cabin full of "imaginary evil" and his teacher's instruction discon-
nected. He continually sought knowledge and availed himself of every
opportunity for education, attending geography, singing, grammar,
and spelling classes in the evening. His plan to attend Farmers Col-
lege, near Cincinnati, was thwarted because he was needed to stand
in for his ailing father on the farm and at the mill. In 1858 Roberts,
then twenty-five, attended a short teachers' institute and began his
teaching career in a one-room school in Ohio's Palestine–Mt. Sterling
area. He earned twenty-five dollars a month, plus board.

A contribution to educational history, Buckeye Schoolmaster
also provides useful social and political information. Roberts's jour-
nal reveals the nineteenth-century Middle West's nativism, particu-
larly the region's antagonism to European immigrants, Catholics,
and blacks. Roberts feared the influx of Irish Catholics who he believed
sought to take political power. A determined Americanist, he want-
ed to replace any lingering monarchical sympathies on the part of
the immigrants with genuine republicanism. Wed to Manifest Des-