

*Circuit Rider Days in Indiana.* BY WILLIAM WARREN SWEET, Professor of History in Depauw University. W. K. Stewart Co., Indianapolis, pp. 344.

SOME years ago Dr. Sweet came into possession of the official records of the old Indiana Conference. The first session of this conference met at New Albany, October 17, 1832, with eighteen circuit riders present and Bishop Joshua Soule in the chair. The last session was held at Crawfordsville, October 18, 1843, with Bishop James O. Andrew presiding and Matthew Simpson secretary. There were ninety-three preachers ready to answer the first roll call. The minutes published by Dr. Sweet thus cover a period of eleven years. The great problem of the church during this period was organization. As the settlements spread to the north the church had to gather its adherents into classes, circuits, and districts. In the first conference there were five districts, one being missionary. Eleven years later there were sixteen districts. This period of remarkable growth is covered by the book under review. Besides the ordinary work of the church its principal activities during the period were the organization of Sunday schools, furnishing Bibles to the settlers, publishing tracts and newspapers and missionary work. It was an endless task to finance the work. Not only must the working circuit riders be supplied but money had to be raised for missions, suppression of vice, negro colonization, aid of superannuated preachers and widows, and various other purposes, not the least of which was education. Covering this period as it does, these minutes furnish one of the best sources for early Indiana history. In publishing them Dr. Sweet has put all the people of Indiana in his debt and especially is this true of the Methodists.

The first ninety pages of the book are occupied with a historical introduction in which the history of the church is brought down to 1832. In the preparation of this Dr. Sweet has had the advantage of the large collection of material in Depauw University Library including a complete file of the *Western Christian Advocate*. The history of the pioneer Methodist church in Indiana is the story of a valiant struggle. Preparing this has been a labor of love for Dr. Sweet. He has done it well.