

*George Rogers Clarke and the Revolution in Illinois, 1763-1789.* By THEODORE CALVIN PEASE and MARGARET JENNISON PEASE. Illinois State Historical Library and Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, 1929. Pp. 96. Illustrated.

This monograph presented by Dr. and Mrs. Pease as a sesquicentennial memorial is a highly informative treatise written in simple and compact form. It consists of four chapters and an epilogue. The chapters are divided into sub-heads ranging from ten in the first to five in the fourth. It traces with careful and exact detail the entire story of the Illinois Country in all its connections with the American Revolution beginning with early French foundations and ending with the last days of the old regime in Illinois and the organization of St. Clair County in 1790. A vast deal of collateral information is presented touching all the important factors of a geographical, political, racial, and personal nature. Step by step this thrilling and vital history is told with a simplicity that might be characterized as effective understatement.

Although George Rogers Clark is the central figure of the story, his career is related in a terse and seemingly almost indirect manner without any attempt whatever to cast a halo over him. His early western career on the upper Ohio and in Kentucky up to the time he reached Kaskaskia, July 4, 1778, is covered in less than five pages. The taking of Kaskaskia and Cahokia and his dealings with the Creoles, Spaniards, and Indians occupy a little over three pages. The heroic expedition to Vincennes and dramatic capture of Fort Sackville comprise about three pages. For the rest, Clark is only mentioned incidentally here and there but he looms up in stalwart proportions everywhere and possibly all the more so because of the scholarly restraint with which he is depicted.

The authors do not urge conclusions as to Clark's heroic achievement but the conclusions appear clearly by the mere fact of terse historic recital. The fact that Clark's conquests over the British in the West resulted decisively in giving this region to the United States and keeping it from Spain, is made definite and clear (p. 65) :

Had he not taken possession of the British posts in Illinois in 1778, it can be taken as a certainty that the Spaniards would have done it the next year when they were at war with Great Britain. Once they were

established in possession in the Illinois, the United States might well have abandoned all hope of it.

It is also shown that the failure of Virginia to support Clark to the point of actually reaching the site of Detroit did not lessen the ultimate fact of conquest nor the debt of gratitude owed to Clark; but only lessened Virginia's claim and made the debt to him due from the nation at large the greater.

Notwithstanding the brevity of the study, it contains such a vast amount of concrete material that it ought to be fully indexed. There are a number of full-page illustrations including portraits of Clark, General Gage, Colonel Morgan, Governor Rocheblave, Father Gibault, and Lord Shelburne together with a picture of the site of Kaskaskia and an early Revolutionary map of the West.

The *Epilogue* makes touching reference to the misfortunes of Clark's later career beginning with this striking sentence:

The ancient Greeks would have taken the later career of George Rogers Clark as an exemplification of their belief that the gods, jealous of human achievement, sometimes delighted in proving mortal weakness by heaping undeserved and crushing misfortune on the head of a man who had done great things.

His historical and scientific contributions are referred to as follows:

The cloud that enveloped him sometimes lifted to show something of the old Clark. He could begin a memoir of his exploits that displays no trace of failing power. He could dissect with sure scalpel the extravagant theory of Pelatiah Webster that the mysterious earthworks of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys were the work of De Soto's men; he could state sharply his own conviction, long after to be adopted by scientists, that the mounds were the work of the progenitors of the red men of his day.

The monograph ends with this dramatic climax:

George Rogers Clark passed over, we may imagine, to that company of like spirits whose immortality the genius of Plutarch has set like mor-dant to endure for the ages. The score and more of centuries that lay between Roman and Virginian could be bridged by the common understanding of men who have been patriots, have against great odds led their fellow citizens to victory, and have learned that republics are ungrateful.

ROSS F. LOCKRIDGE.