

Reviews and Notices

A History of Indiana. By CHARLES ROLL (volumes I-II, history); by a special staff of writers (volumes III-V, biographical sketches). The Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago, 1931. Pp. xlvi+543, 531, 496, 400, 506, illustrated.

Some day during a pilgrimage to the attic, if one will look among the books that belonged to grandfather, he will be pretty sure to find there a large tome whose faded gilt tells of its former glory. It belongs to the numerous county histories that appeared during the seventies and eighties of the last century. If the pilgrim will open its pages he will find an account of grandfather's life history and accumulations—perhaps even his whiskered visage peering from a yellow page. This biography was gratuitously published, but grandfather subscribed for one or more copies, and these were expensive books, even in that day of low prices.

When one picks up Professor Roll's *History of Indiana* and glances through it, his first reaction is to conclude that the writing of the type of the old county history has been revived, except on a more pretentious scale—a state history. But there is a difference. These old county histories were not written by reputable historians. Here is what appears to be the same sort of thing done by a reputable historian—a scholar and teacher of history. Why did Professor Roll undertake such a work? This is the question that his fellow historians are likely to ask unless they take the trouble to read Professor Roll's work.

Volumes I and II of the set include the *History of Indiana*, and make up the part actually written by Professor Roll. If the reader expects something that lives up to the outward aspect of the work, he will be disillusioned at once. Professor Roll approaches his subject not as Indiana by itself, but treats the territory and state as a part of the Old Northwest. He begins with a touch of its pre-historic background: then makes a clear sketch of New France as it extended out along the Great Lakes and projected itself over into the Mississippi valley; then comes the story of the struggle with the English for supremacy. Though briefly done, the author presents a

living picture of this portentous struggle in the wilderness. Following the elimination of France is the account of the ten years of British policy in the Northwest; then the dramatic story of the region during the Revolution. Next the reader sees the infant nation work out for the Northwest, now its public domain, a system whereby it may be developed into new states. Finally he sees the new nation, under its recently adopted constitution, triumph over a long cherished British policy of maintaining an Indian buffer province, making the settlement of the Northwest possible. It is a great panorama, and never once is the reader lost in its unfolding.

By the time the reader is ready to take up the story of Indiana Territory, he has reached a definite conclusion, especially if he happens to be a teacher of American history. There has existed a long list of scholarly works on the history of the "Old Northwest," but no satisfactory general survey of it. Professor Roll has used all these materials, both secondary and source; has built up from them a thorough survey; and through it all shows the teacher's touch in the clarity of his statement and organization. He has produced a survey of the "Old Northwest" that will solve a real problem for the teacher who wishes to familiarize students of general American history with this field.

The period of Indiana's novitiate as a territory, was marked by such interesting characters as Harrison and Tecumseh, and by such events as the War of 1812. Still, the author is temperate in his treatment of these interesting characters and events. Then comes statehood. Again Indiana is treated as a typical unit in the great westward growth of the nation. The reader sees it in response to the hard times of the early twenties, in the sweep of Jacksonian democracy, in the grip of the speculation fever of the middle thirties. The career and influence of the Whig party is passed in review and its strength and weakness in the west made clear. The reader sees the frontier state grow into a substantial commonwealth with mature agricultural communities, growing towns, transportation systems and educational institutions. Then he witnesses its dramatic part in the Civil War. All along, the author gives due place to the interest element but never allows it to eclipse the value of his narrative. As a survey, the portion of the work from territorial days to the Civil War is

nearly as satisfactory as the earlier part on the "Old Northwest".

Beyond the Civil War the author's approach is less satisfying. The national development becomes a thing of such stupendous breadth that Indiana's part does not portray it adequately. Even the treatment of Indiana's own development is a task requiring good judgment in the selection of subject matter. Here, too, Professor Roll has done well. The reader sees the state grow into a modern commonwealth; sees her response to industrialization and urbanization; her contributions to the literary world and to political leadership; and last, the development of her cultural and educational institutions.

In these two volumes that make up *The History of Indiana*, Professor Roll has done a timely piece of work. The publishers have done a beautiful job of printing, but it is much to be hoped that Professor Roll may use the plates for an edition of these two volumes in a form more suitable for a reference library. Should this be done, every teacher of American History should not fail to stock his reference shelves with an adequate supply of this valuable survey.

The three volumes of biography are of doubtful value to the historian. He can get some ready information on Hoosiers who have made a contribution to the country's history. There is apparently no proportionate evaluation of these historic figures—important men may have only a brief sketch, while men relatively unimportant may be given considerable space. As to the biographies of the present day men of Indiana, should the historian of the future have occasion to find out who was the leading physician, banker, or president of the Rotary Club, in a given Indiana town in the year A.D. 1931, he may find it a helpful reference.

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England, Russia, and the Straits Question, 1844-1856 (University of California Publications in History, Volume 20). By VERNON JOHN PURYEAR, Ph.D. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1931. Pp. xvi+481, \$4.00 (paper cover).

In 1844 the Russian and British governments were in apparent agreement regarding Near Eastern affairs, and signed in that year a secret treaty providing for their co-operation in