

Reviews and Notices

Minnesota Farmers' Diaries (William R. Brown, 1845-46, and Mitchell Y. Jackson, 1852-63), with an Introduction and Notes by Rodney C. Loehr. The Minnesota Historical Society, 1939. Pp. ix, 245, \$2.50.

This carefully edited and attractively printed book is a fitting token of the nineteenth anniversary of the founding of the Minnesota Historical Society, now so capably headed by Professor Theodore C. Blegen.

Dr. Loehr's 33-page preface to the *Diaries* contains, first of all, biographical sketches of the two diarists, whose journals are so unusual for the very reason that farmers are usually too tired after doing the evening chores to record their experiences. William R. Brown was born in Urbana, Ohio, in 1816, and, in 1841, he moved into the region around Red Rock, Minnesota, married, and took up a claim of one square mile. Brown prospered during the eighteen-fifties, and, on the eve of the panic of 1857, was assertedly worth \$50,000. Mitchell Y. Jackson, the other diarist, was born in the same year and likewise came from the Buckeye state. Jackson, however, spent his boyhood days in Fayette County, Indiana. Then, in 1854, he moved out on the Minnesota frontier to a place near Lake Ct. Croix, where, with his family, he lived for seventeen years.

Minnesota, during those years, may well be regarded as the most primitive of log and sod house frontier communities, although by mid-century it experienced a mushroom growth. It is about the simple everyday life—its joys, its sorrows, and its hardships—that these two diaries tell.

Of particular interest to the students of Indiana history is Jackson's diary, especially the entries from Wabash for 1852-1853 (pp. 85-96). Thus for example one reads:

Sunday 22 [August, 1852] There is a good deal of sickness in town at this time Mostly Flux of which some 10 or 12 have died lately mostly children

Wabash Nov 1852 Tuesday Nov 2 Presidential Election Gen Winfield Scott & Graham are the Whig candidates Pierce & King Locofoco Hale Abolition I vote for the Whig of course and feel proud to loose my vote upon Winfield Scott. . . .

Wabash. July 1853 Sunday 3rd. . . . After preaching a lengthy report is received from our Elders in which among other things they report that they have urged A[lexander] E. Jackson and

all the witnesses they knew of to prosecute and testify as to the guilt of Elder B[enjamin] Whorton. . . . I felt it my duty to state publicly that the report just received from the Elders abounded in misrepresentations and false hoods. . . .

It is in view of the dearth of this type of material, namely diaries by dirt farmers, that the present volume is particularly a welcome contribution to the literature of the frontier.

OSCAR OSBURN WINTHER

The Old Fauntleroy Home. By Ross F. Lockridge. New Harmony Memorial Commission (courtesy of Mrs. Edmund Burke Ball), 1939. Pp. xii, 219, illustrated, \$1.00 (for sale by the Director of the New Harmony Memorial Commission, New Harmony, Indiana).

The author's purpose in this book has been to present "a panoramic view of New Harmony from the portals of the Old Fauntleroy Home." Very fittingly does this historic Home serve as a point of departure for such an endeavor. The Fauntleroy Home was built by the followers of George Rapp, occupied by a typical Rappite family, and when those industrious people moved away, it was used as a dwelling by members of the Owen community. Finally, it came into the possession of Robert Henry Fauntleroy and his wife, Jane Dale Owen. Ever since, except for brief intervals, Fauntleroys or Owens have occupied it. In its more than a century of existence, its walls have witnessed the comings and goings of cultured and educated people, who have given to New Harmony a distinctive character as a center of refinement. The Fauntleroy home was the birthplace of the Minerva Club, a pioneer woman's club in Indiana, and it was the home of scientists, authors and statesmen.

Since the home was built by the Rappites, the first chapter of the book is quite properly devoted to an account of the Rappites and their communal life. Succeeding chapters tell the story of the efforts of Robert Owen to establish a "New Moral World"; the doings of those who came with him; the coming together of the Owen and Fauntleroy families; the founding of the Minerva Club; the lives of its members; the programs of the club; and finally, an appreciation of the work of Miss Mary Emily Fauntleroy in preserving the home as a shrine for the women of Indiana.