

duce this book. The information the authors needed was scattered through an unusually wide number of sources, some of them painfully obscure. It must have been particularly difficult to run down the careers of the scores of minor figures who sought and obtained office from Lincoln. That Professors Carman and Luthin did their task well is attested by a twenty-five page bibliography.

The authors have invested their story with significance. The information is massive, but the book never becomes a mere catalogue of names and facts. The literary style is marred by frequent use of such awkward phrases as "we now turn our attention to" and "as we have just observed." There are a few typographical slips and factual errors which alert critics will call to the attention of the authors. These minor flaws, however, detract in no way from the excellence of the book.

T. Harry Williams

*The Indiana Home.* By Logan Esarey. Edited by R. Carlyle Buley. (Crawfordsville: R. E. Banta, 1943. Pp. 110. Frontispiece. \$3.00.)

Five essays plus two tall tales, which were not originally written for publication, compose this little book on Indiana life prior to the Civil War by the late Logan Esarey of Indiana University. The essays are "The First Inhabitants," "A Log Cabin in the Clearing," "The Indiana Home," "Farm Life in the Fifties," and "The Settler Becomes a Citizen." The two tales are "The Bewitching of Blackstock" and "The Bull Frogs of Reily Hole."

The book is a blending of miscellaneous notes which were used in class lectures and in talks before historical groups. Any of Dr. Esarey's former students can read the book and have long-forgotten places, old familiar phrases and people brought back. The former student will be able to review his acquaintance with Esarey and with Indiana history as only Esarey could interpret it.

Here is history made palatable, history as intimate and disarming as the tales around the baseburner on a winter evening at the village store, and yet as true as a long life of devoted and exacting scholarship could make it. It is not a history in the accepted sense; it is something much

more. It is drama. Esarey has done what Hamlet told his players to do—he has “held the mirror up to nature.”

The historian will not be disappointed, for historically, the book is accurate. The homely phrases of the pioneer are preserved and, what is more rare, the Hoosier dialect is presented in its true form. What he tells is not a formal story of how the settlers came and took up land, planted, built churches and towns and roads, formed governments, and grew wealthy. All of this emerges from his pages, but it is not the soul of his book. What he has captured and put into this slender volume is a people and their epic—an epic salted with the authentic vernacular of the Border and moving with the quiet power of men and women who were big in love and laughter, in work and in faith.

There is nothing anemic about his people (you know they are *his*) or about his history. It sweeps you along with the lusty humor of the hills and the heart-catching self-sufficiency of folk who fought, worked, and laughed as if they meant it. Such a book is like a breath of fresh air in a stuffy night.

Ralph Watson

*James Hall, Literary Pioneer of the Ohio Valley.* By John T. Flanagan. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1941. Pp. vii, 218. \$2.50.)

Judge James Hall was an important man in the history of the Middle West, 1820-1868; he was also an interesting one—soldier, lawyer, judge (once a judge, always a judge in the West), politician, editor, novelist, poet, banker, but above all, advocate of the West. The student of the history of the region might well mark the progress of his work by the frequency of his contacts with James Hall. Yet a century has relegated the man to an undeserved obscurity.

In the average college course on the history of the West, Hall is conspicuous by his absence; in two of the most widely used textbooks he is not even mentioned. The reason is that good libraries are scarce; good scholars and teachers in the field are scarcer.

James Hall came West from Pittsburg<sup>1</sup> in 1820. At Shawneetown and Vandalia he practiced law, served as judge, helped edit the *Illinois Intelligencer*, founded the Illi-

<sup>1</sup> This is the reviewer's spelling.