

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 Pittsburg¹ in 1820. At Shawneetown and Vandalia he practiced law, served as judge, helped edit the *Illinois Intelligencer*, founded the Illi-

¹ This is the reviewer's spelling.

nois Historical Society and in 1830, the *Illinois Monthly Magazine*. In 1833 he moved to Cincinnati where he edited the *Western Monthly Magazine* for four more years. The next thirty years of his life were devoted to banking and business, but his pen was never idle. Among his more important works were *Letters for the West* (1828), *Legends of the West* (1832), *Sketches of History, Life and Manners in the West* (1835), *Statistics of the West* (1836), *Notes on the Western States* (1838) and, with Thomas McKenney, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America* (1836-1844). In addition he wrote one novel, some fifty tales, and quite a bit of poetry. Many of these works, as are the two periodicals, are fairly rare items today.

Professor Flanagan attempts no complete narrative life of Hall. Twenty pages cover his youth; the lawyer and journalist are sketched in fifteen more. Brief chapters cover the political and editing periods. In all these the chronology of Hall's writings is clear. The meat of the book lies in the chapters on Hall as "Romancer and Historian," as "Library Critic," as "Storyteller," and in the chapter on "Characteristic Ideas." Little of significance is missed. The vigorous editor lambasting at English travellers who tried to give America a black eye; judging the merits of literary works on the basis of their contributors to morality and patriotism; his frank and at times blatant pleading for the West; his advocacy of a truly American literature; his interest in Indians, the public land question, agriculture, trade, transportation, and finance; his second-rate novel and tales (first rate only in the settings, lesser characters and fairly authentic dialect) and his third-rate poetry (often used as filler in his magazine) are all clearly and fairly treated. Not to be overlooked is the complete bibliography of Hall's writings. The documentation is adequate and correct in form.

The author modestly states his purpose as that of presenting an adequate picture of a man "not a major figure in American history." Who knows for sure who the major figures are? Certainly not always the historian. For a few minutes of physical bravery (very common in this world) or a few weeks of hardship and the possession of a certain type of leadership, the George Rogers Clarks, the Waynes, or the Harrisons become major figures. The men who help mold the thinking, record the history, pioneer in

medicine, build the schools, found the banks, and carry on the commerce too often get lost in the shuffle. In a generation which saw Daniel Drake, Caleb Atwater, Timothy Flint, John James Audubon, Mann Butler, Henry R. Schoolcraft, William D. Gallagher, to name a few, living and writing on the West, Judge Hall occupied a position second to none.

If he be a second-rate personage, Professor Flanagan has done a first-rate study of him. Sad, but true, the modern historians of the Middle West have neglected the early historians (who also helped make the history) of the region. It is to the students of literature—the Rusks, Dondores, Hazards, and Flanagans—that their students must turn for help.

Could the reviewer have this book rewritten to order, he would specify another hundred pages and more emphasis upon Hall as historian and publicist. The men of this period has as broad a concept of history as none but a few have today. The Turner viewpoint of half a century later, the "New History" of James H. Robinson, Harry Elmer Barnes *et al*, the social history and economic history but recently discovered was all old stuff to these men of a century ago—to Flint and Hall particularly. He would also specify more liberal quotations from Hall's writings. The hefty prose of that day can not be transferred by summary or paraphrase; least of all, that of James Hall. Only first hand can the reader get the essence of the man and his thought. But the reviewer is prejudiced in favor of Hall; in fact, he has long been a Hall fan. Naturally he is prejudiced in favor of any historical job well done, so much so that he passes the opportunity to call attention to a few doubtful statements on history not germane to the study of James Hall.

The book is attractively printed and well edited. It makes a neat as well as indispensable addition to the library on Midwest history.

R. Carlyle Buley

The Old South. The Founding of American Civilization. By Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942. Pp. xvi, 364. Illustrations. \$3.50.)

This significant volume on the civilization of the South by the eminent authority on colonial Virginia should be read by every student of early American history. The author's