or communism as a national policy? Is it not better to study the records and write in as detached a manner as possible what the records seem to reveal? Can we of the twentieth century write a history of the past that will be acceptable to the twenty-first century?

When we turn to the third chapter, we come to something very different. It is a review of historical writing about the causes of the American Civil War. It demonstrates the frailties of historians, but it also reveals a growing realization of the complexity of causation, the broadening content of history, and a more mature understanding of the problem. It also indicates that some historians have been able to overcome the peculiar bias which they might be expected to show. The author, Howard K. Beale, concludes "This study has encouraged the present writer . . . to believe that the repeated efforts to discover the 'truth' about causes of the Civil War have been fruitful and that both the methods and quality of history have improved in the period analyzed." Additional studies of this type should be encouraged.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters are valuable. They contain a discussion of "The Need for Greater Precision in the Use of Historical Terms," a series of propositions on historical procedure, and a reading list. The propositions scarcely embody the Beardian ideas.

Whether the report justifies the labor of such eminent historians, as the committee members and the authors, and the backing of such distinguished societies as the national associations of the anthropologists, economists, historians, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, and statisticians, in addition to the Social Science Research Council, each reader may decide for himself.

John D. Barnhart

Notes on General Ashley, The Overland Trail, and South Pass.

By Donald McKay Frost. (American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1945, pp. 159. Map and Index. $2.00.)

Information concerning the activities of many of the American fur traders remains scattered, conflicting, and vague. In view of this, the volume under review is most welcome because Donald McKay Frost, the editor, has here brought together a number of items concerning the fur trad-
ing exploits of the notable General William H. Ashley during the year 1822 to 1826. Moreover, the editor has prefaced his selected materials with a 58-page foreword containing comments on the accompanying documents, a critical estimate of the activities and accomplishments of Ashley and his associates, and a sketch of American fur trading in general during the years previously indicated.

Republished here are three revealing letters of Daniel T. Potts which originally appeared in the Philadelphia Gazette and Daily Advertiser, 1826 and 1827, and miscellaneous but pertinent newspaper articles, covering the years 1822 to 1830. Also included is an excellent map showing the routes of Ashley's men.

The editor deserves praise for his careful workmanship and for the precise and interesting treatment of his subject. It is his candid opinion that General Ashley was more interested in making money than he was in exploring. He was, however, a good organizer, and the men in his employ were those who "ascertained the most practical route from the Mississippi Valley across the Continental Divide"—notably, the great Overland Trail.

Oscar Osburn Winther

The Diary of a Public Man and a Page of Political Correspondence, Stanton to Buchanan. Foreword by Carl Sandburg, prefatory notes by F. Lauriston Bullard (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1946, pp. ix, 137. $3.00.)

This volume is merely a less expensive edition of the book reviewed in the Indiana Magazine of History, XLI, September, 1945, p. 304. As such it comes within the reach of many more readers, and serves every purpose that the expensive edition will serve, except that of being a very fine book. The contents are as intriguing as ever and the problem of authorship still remains unsolved.