

colonies, or an army equal in size to the rebel forces. When he returned to England late in 1775, after twenty years of service in America, the author declares "it was his hard lot simultaneously to be abused by his American enemies and to be deserted by his compatriots." Dr. Alden's summary analysis of the man forms a splendid commentary on colonial politics.

The author's interpretation of Gage includes correction of an earlier belief that he acted on his own initiative in ordering his troops to march to Concord in April, 1775. Gage's great popularity in New York, his headquarters for ten years, is made known, and it is denied that he accepted any interest in the Illinois Company. Alden takes issue with a more recent characterization of Gage's power and position in America as that of a viceroy. And in marking that Gage accurately prophesied what would be required to subdue the Americans, the author labels him "the Cassandra of the first British empire."

Dr. Alden's style shows great improvement, perhaps because the book was not written for a faculty committee. The new volume is highly readable. It has pace, smoothness, variety, and flashes of humor. There are enough footnotes to satisfy the most scrupulous scholar—rather more than might be expected after the author's declaration against making "a fetish of documentation." The book can be recommended to other investigators who have thought of preparing biographies of eighteenth-century characters. Louisiana State University Press is to be congratulated upon its enterprise in publishing this work. It has turned out an attractive and dignified volume at a reasonable price.

Indiana Historical Bureau

Howard H. Peckham

Agricultural Literature and the Early Illinois Farmer. By Richard Bardolph. Volume XXIX, Numbers 1 and 2, *Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences*. (Urbana, Illinois, The University of Illinois Press, 1948, pp. 200. Appendixes, bibliography, and index. \$3.00 clothbound, \$2.00 paperbound.)

One of our prominent social historians has observed that in dealing with agricultural history "there seems to be no substitute in first-class historical analysis for a high degree

of familiarity with the homely and intimate experiences of the specific . . . period." If this is true there seems to be evidence that much of our existing history of American agriculture suffers from this lack. In fact one can almost say that many of the histories of farming were written without consideration of the farmer or the immediate influences that surrounded him. With rare exceptions, one is left with the impression that new crops, new farm animals and new types of machinery, just sprang into being and the factors or agencies that motivated the farmer to accept these new ideas were ignored.

This monographic study has not neglected some of these agencies of diffusion. The author's purpose is to show the influences of various forms of agricultural literature on actual practices upon the Illinois farmer during the first seventy years of the nineteenth century. Although he has limited his study to the farmers of this state, the work will have a wider significance, for what happened in Illinois was fairly typical of that which occurred in the United States as a whole. He makes no effort to cover all the agricultural agencies that came in contact with the Illinois farmer, and he recognizes the influence of others such as the local and state fairs and agricultural societies. He has, however, left them for a future study.

Dr. Bardolph begins with a lengthy chapter devoted to the rise of books on husbandry, tracing the evolution in the United States, with some account of English and continental antecedents. This was necessary since these European publications served as the basis for agricultural knowledge in America for some years. Following this chapter on books of husbandry, there are five more which are largely concerned with the rise, together with an analysis of the content of the agricultural instruction provided in the newspapers, advertising circulars, published proceedings and transactions of societies, and the farm periodicals of the state. Much space is given throughout the study to leading personalities and their works of the period, both within and without the state.

The author has analyzed carefully the growth, as well as the content of these various publications. From a selection of over three hundred various newspapers he found that about one-fourth carried regular columns on farm life. The nature of the materials evolved with the years; in the early phase of the journals they were apt to publish mostly the writings and

essays of "gentleman farmers, ministers, physicians, and other professional men, and the general tone . . . was somehow detached and stilted." As the farm journals, however, became more democratic, shedding their dilettante claptrap, they extended their range of interests to actual farming practices and problems touching the farmer on the lowest levels. The columns were never entirely free of such things as fads, frauds, and humbugs or of some lost cause that they were advocating at the time. They periodically campaigned for some social or moral reform that may today seem ludicrous. It must not be overlooked, however, as is noted in this book, that several of these rather fantastic ideas came into reality because of the advocacy of these early journals. The death rate of these publications was high; their span of life frequently running no longer than a few months with but two or three managing to survive until the present time.

The task of assessing the precise influence of these journals on actual farming practice was the author's principal problem. It is in this phase of social history that the real test of value presents itself. With the techniques now available to the author of this work, or to any social historian as far as that is concerned, it is not possible to come to any very precise conclusions. About all the author was able to say when evaluating the contributions of a particular paper or book was that the "proportion of farmers who were influenced by it can not have been large. Yet, to dismiss its importance it is to despise the day of small things."

It seems to the reviewer that upon this problem of evaluation the future of social history must rest. At the present time any one working in this field is handicapped by the inadequacies of the available methodology. Those who glean the facts from the historical sources have done well, but what to do with them and how to evaluate precisely the causal effects, is the task of the social historian if his studies are to be of any importance to those who depend upon historical data. For example, when a farmer changed his methods of reaping, adopted a new plow, or introduced a new variety of seed, was this innovation due to "book learning" on his part or was it the result of some form of social interaction? The anthropologist was up against a similar problem some years ago; he roamed over rather large areas collecting data, describing and cataloguing facts pertaining to early man and drawing his conclusions and generalizations on the basis of this type of

study. But it was not until he changed his approach in the form of a more detailed study of a limited area that he was able to gain the recognition that the science of the study of man has now attained. The reviewer is only posing this problem that if social history, such as is found in this monograph, is to be of real importance in the understanding of human behavior, past or present, those who write it must develop a more precise method.

Dr. Bardolph writes with a zeal for the subject and many of his phrases and quotations show a liveliness that make for interesting reading. The monograph is free of errors, is well edited and shows an immense amount of accuracy in dates and references; it literally bristles with footnotes and there is appended an excellent bibliography of prominent American horticultural writers in the period to 1870.

Northern Illinois State Teachers College Earl W. Hayter

Kaskaskia under the French Regime. By Natalia M. Belting. Volume XXIX, No. 3, *Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences*. (Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1948, pp. 140. Illustrations, appendix, and index. \$2.50 clothbound, \$1.50 paperbound.)

The social history of the French villages in the Illinois country during the eighteenth century, with particular attention to Kaskaskia, is told in this number of the *Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences*. The other villages are Fort de Chartres, St. Philippe, Prairie du Rocher, Cahokia, and Ste. Genevieve.

Kaskaskia was founded when the Kaskaskia Indians left the vicinity of La Salle's Fort St. Louis on the Illinois River, moved to the west of the Mississippi River opposite Cahokia, and then in 1703 settled at the mouth of the river since called Kaskaskia. With them and the Jesuit missionaries were a number of French traders who had married into the tribe and who were the founders of the village. The French were chiefly interested in the fur trade, but the fertility of the soil soon led them to agricultural pursuits. At first the Jesuits tried to maintain order alone and then with the aid of troops. Government was extended in 1718 when Illinois became a province or military district of the colony of Louisiana. The chief migration of the French dwindled after the twenties and there-