

try from 1776 to November 16, 1833, the date of his death. He was the first settled Presbyterian minister west of the Alleghenies.

The Presbyterian frontier minister combined school-teaching with his work as a minister, and John McMillan, like many others, conducted a "Log College." The vast educational need all about him, as well as the necessity of increasing his means of livelihood, naturally lead the college-trained minister to assume the schoolmaster's task in connection with his ministry. John McMillan's school developed into Jefferson Academy, and Jefferson Academy became Jefferson College. At Washington, Pennsylvania, only fourteen miles away, another Presbyterian "Log College" was formed by Thaddeus Dodd, likewise a Princeton graduate, which later became Washington Academy. In the course of time (1865) the two colleges merged, after a long "college war," to form what is now Washington and Jefferson College.

"Politics" is the title of an interesting chapter on the Whisky Rebellion in western Pennsylvania and John McMillan's part in it. To John McMillan the "Rebellion" constituted a threat to the orderly life of the community and he courageously took the side of law and order. In fact, all the frontier churches stood for obedience to law and constituted islands of order in a sea of disorder.

The author has further served the cause of frontier history by including the hitherto unpublished John McMillan Journal, together with his brief autobiography, in an Appendix.

*Pomona College*

William Warren Sweet

*America First: The Battle Against Intervention, 1940-1941.*

By Wayne S. Cole. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1953, pp. xi, 305. Bibliography and index. \$3.50.)

Surely it is part of the historian's province to study events and movements of the recent past; and Cole's brilliant little volume, *America First*, proves that such study in some instances can be done so thoroughly that it will never have to be done again. Inaccessibility of materials used to be the plea against full-dress historical investigation of events with-

in one's own generation, but by great ingenuity Cole, beginning with files of the America First Committee now available in the Hoover Library, worked outward by means of newspapers and secondary works and filled in gaps with personal interviews and correspondence. The result—a history of the America First Committee from its founding on September 4, 1940, to its demise on December 7, 1941—is as nearly definitive as 199 pages and 805 footnotes can make it.

Begun as a counterweight to William Allen White's Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, the America First Committee sought to keep the United States out of the Second World War. Although composed largely of conservative businessmen, the Committee had a mixed membership including two labor leaders, three clergymen, two aviators, three scientists, half a dozen university faculty members, a movie actor, and an actress. Several members (as Cole carefully notes) had written books. The Committee carried on the usual activities of American propagandist organizations devoted to the public weal; it bought full-page ads in newspapers throughout the nation, organized local branches in small and large cities, and belabored congressmen with letters, telegrams, and phone calls. In 1940-41 it opposed Lend-Lease, convoying, and amendment of the neutrality act. The Committee was not pacifist, and always stood for defensive military preparation. Its program lent itself to the schemes of several American fascist organizations and of Japanese and German agents, but the Committee did its best to avoid such hangers-on, and in the main was successful.

Perhaps because of obligation to the many former members of America First who helped in the gathering of information, Cole does not condemn, praise, or otherwise express strong opinions on his subject. The reader of Cole's book must judge America First on its record, which is laid out very dispassionately. As Cole has written it, that record was an honorable one. The movers behind the movement had their country's best interests at heart. Even Charles A. Lindbergh's speeches come out rather well; one of Cole's most helpful contributions is to print enough of Lindbergh's alleged anti-Semitic speech at Des Moines on September 11, 1941, to show that the speech was grossly misconstrued by people who did not bother to read what Lindbergh really said.

The America First movement, as Cole has so skillfully described it, appears as the sincere effort of many Americans to keep their country out of war at a time when Japanese and German ambition was almost inexorably drawing it in. It is easy to say that the America Firsters possessed a very limited view of the strategic and moral factors which, as we now see, justified American belligerency. More people, however, than are now willing to admit to it, were isolationists in 1941. Probably they were wishing for the impossible: a return to the unhurried and utterly safe years of the century before 1914, when Americans peacefully spread across and began to develop the vast resources of half a continent without the distraction of foreign wars. America First, perhaps, was an honorable if short-sighted attempt to preserve a way of life which had gone forever.

Indiana University

Robert H. Ferrell

*Illinois in the Second World War.* By Mary Watters. (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1951. Vol. I: *Operation Home Front*, pp. xiii, 444. Illustrations. Vol. II: *The Production Front*, pp. ix, 591. Index, bibliography, and illustrations. \$5.00.)

It is no small assignment to write a book about Illinois, the third most populous state in the union, with the sixth largest city in the world. In 1940, Illinois ranked first among the states in agriculture, second in railroad mileage, third in manufacturing, fourth in petroleum production, and ninth in per capita income. It boasted of the World's Greatest Newspaper but reluctantly admitted to one of the nation's poorest rural school systems. It provided domicile for a host of colorful figures—wily demagogues, agrarian lobbyists, autocratic labor bosses, arrogant journalists, mesozoic capitalists, medieval philosophers, millionaire playboys with social consciousness, and evangelistic entrepreneurs. In pre-Pearl Harbor days it was torn by political dissension, labor strife, racial discrimination, bickering between government and business, and the bitter isolationist-interventionist debate. When war came, however, Illinoisans of all persuasions closed ranks. Nearly a million of them entered the armed services. More than 600,000 Chicagoans marched for thirteen hours