

*Israel Thorndike, Federalist Financier.* By J. D. Forbes.  
(New York: Exposition Press, 1953, pp. 160. Illustrations, bibliographical note. \$3.50.)

This biography of a Massachusetts businessman covers a career extending from the Revolution to 1832 and representing in personal form "the transition of New England from an essentially maritime community to a manufacturing area." Starting in maritime trade and then gradually turning to investments ashore, Israel Thorndike created in his own life and fortune a case study for the historian of New England's basic business development.

Forbes' account includes brief glimpses of Thorndike as an individual, and one chapter on his career as a Federalist politician, but is largely a survey of his business life. Chapters on maritime trade, land speculation, and varied activities in transportation, insurance, banking, and manufacturing make up the significant portion of the book. Manuscripts, particularly the Thorndike papers, and public records furnish the chief sources for the study.

As a study of early American business activity, this brief biography will be of use to specialists in that field. The general theme of economic change in New England is of course well-known, so the chief distinction of the book lies in the personification of that theme in Israel Thorndike. Forbes had an often difficult task in piecing together the details of Thorndike's activities, but he has put them into a topical sequence that reveals clearly the extensive interests of an early American millionaire. However, since the author is contributing to a growing field of investigation, it does seem a pity that he chose to omit footnotes and thus deprive fellow-students of business history of the kind of detailed guide to the Thorndike papers which might have proved useful to them. Similarly, the omission of an index also reduces the immediate value of the work.

Except for those who have a special concern with Thorndike, his area, or his business, the book is limited in its appeal. The story it offers often has the itemized and slightly musty air of an old account book; even when Thorndike is presented against the broader background of major public events—at constitutional conventions, as a longtime member of the state legislature, as a wealthy Federalist during

the War of 1812—he usually is a shadowy figure whose name is entered on a public account without noticeably altering the final balance.

Apart from students of business or early Massachusetts history (some of whom testify to their interest on the back of the book jacket), most readers are not likely to gain much pleasure or profit from *Israel Thorndike*.

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Richard C. Haskett

*The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860. A Study of the Origins of American Nativism.* By Ray Allen Billington. (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1952, pp. viii, 514. Bibliography and index. \$6.50.)

The reprinting of Professor Billington's early work again makes available a most noteworthy study. This exposition of the growth of American anti-Catholic intolerance prior to the Civil War has become the definitive work in the area. As a thorough review of much of the American anti-Catholic literature, the book is of importance to any serious student of American social history.

With an appreciation of the importance of placing his work in its appropriate historical setting, Billington first surveys the English background whence the colonists' attitudes sprang. This brief treatment of the decline of intolerance in England contrasted with its growth in America is pertinent to the present day discussion of American intellectual isolationism.

The prejudices brought with the early Protestant immigrants could not die or diminish as the swelling Catholic immigration increased the antipathies of the earlier settlers. Misinterpretations and misrepresentations of the Catholic position were frequent, and the question of Bible reading was always a sore point.

On the latter theme, the Protestant crusaders won the American middle classes to their cause. Meanwhile, the aggressive Protestant papers inflamed the lower classes with stories of wicked Catholic plots and evil plans. Fantastic and fraudulent cases were developed in these appeals to the unthinking masses.

With the growth of support, the crusaders entered into