

no real banks, with perhaps one exception; the factory system was in the future; the telegraph had not yet been invented; the prison at Jeffersonville was the only state charitable or correctional institution; agricultural methods were more like those of ancient times than the practices of the 1950's; and the northern half of the state was largely unsettled, partly because many of the Miami and Potawatomi Indians still occupied much of this area. Even more suggestive of the situation at that time is the report of the state treasurer for 1829-1830 which estimates state expenditures as aggregating about \$34,000 for that year, leaving a balance in the public treasury of just over \$2,000!

This series should definitely be continued, although items included in the *Documentary Journal*, which commenced with the legislative session of 1835-1836 and continued through that for 1909, should generally be excluded. Moreover, a high priority should be given to the search for and publication of correspondence to and from the governor. Whatever the pros and cons of keeping certain governmental records secret or inaccessible from contemporaries—though even here the public interest is often sacrificed by too much secrecy—the failure to preserve and publish basic information about essential public functions unfortunately merely adds to the “black-out” of significant and relevant information and to that extent results in a less well informed and therefore a less capable citizenry. Furthermore, public officers should always be aware that public office is a public trust and that they are responsible to both current and succeeding generations. With Indiana's sesquicentennial of statehood only about a decade away, the period between now and then should be one in which Hoosiers give greater support, both private and public, to significant efforts for preserving and publishing important source materials concerning all phases of Indiana's history.

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Johnny Appleseed: Man and Myth. By Robert Price. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1954, pp. xv, 320. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. \$5.00.)

Those of us who have known of Robert Price's protracted labor on this book may regard the final achievement with the

greatest sense of reward. If he seems proprietary of the uniqueness of his research and of Johnny Appleseed himself, he has the justification of long and scholarly association. For as he states in his foreword, the work took him nearly a quarter century (twenty-three years, to be exact) from the time he set out to give "the few facts and the multitudinous fancies . . . a critical sifting." Possibly there are biographers who might not regard John Chapman of sufficient importance for such an expenditure of time and labor. But a writer's freedom to choose a congenial subject and to pursue it with faith and tenacity is his unquestioned privilege. In this case the results as set forth so ably by Robert Price will prove of great interest and value to the regional historian, to the devotee of Americana, to the folklorist, and to those whom the author lumps together as the "swarms of [Johnny Appleseed] enthusiasts." (The last breed may not be as multitudinous as he believes, but certainly their number is gratifyingly large, including both the informed and the uninformed.) For his final research Price was given a year's grant-in-aid by the Library of Congress.

Price does not greatly overstate his claim in declaring that he tells "Johnny Appleseed's real story for the first time." He means that he is the first to present to adult readers the sum total of true facts available and an exhaustive interpretation of both man and myth from the purely scholastic standpoint. Toward this end he tracked down every possible source. He made innumerable journeys, charting the itinerant nurseryman's probable, actual, and traditional locations and movements. (It is a pleasure to read the author's graceful descriptions of "the Johnny Appleseed country.") Through the years he delved into courthouse and statehouse records. He found and selected illustrative items which give emphasis and add interest to the finished book. He scanned every existing scrap of related poetry, every line of related prose, including documents, letters, and newspapers. With analytical scrutiny he perused the county histories. He describes them as "none too accurate," a fact well known to others. These volumes abound in colorful pioneer yarns and hand-me-down family reminiscences about Johnny Appleseed. The task of deciding which may be retained as basically true or rejected as invention is a difficult one. It is doubtful if the most meticulous and logical-minded investigator could come

up with an infallible conclusion every time. But because of the integrity of Price's scholarship and his "critical sifting," his decisions are bound to be as nearly correct as may ever be reached. They are not likely to be challenged.

Price has accomplished the work of organization and presentation of his material with unusual skill and clarity and with a fine sense of balance. His attitude toward it is cool and judicial, his style urbane and leisurely, with graceful harmonic overtones. The book is divided into five parts, picturesquely titled. These depict John Chapman in his various roles and interpret his character as man and myth. There is the young Yankee pioneering westward to make his first entry into north-central Ohio as an itinerant nurseryman. There is Chapman the tough border hero. In the latter presentation, Price relates many yarns as spun by Chapman's contemporaries, and declares "they were inspired by the fact that [the man] most certainly was a participant in the Indian troubles" [Ohio]. In introducing Chapman as a land-seeker, leasing or buying with remarkably shrewd foresight, the author gives documentary proof. (Copious appendices and notes, plus a list of the planter's land-holdings, help to substantiate and enlarge the text.) Price writes that by the time Chapman was forty he held "640 acres of tiptop land under lifetime leases, and owned outright two town lots in Mount Vernon." Expanding in a much later chapter on the nurseryman's growing business transactions, the author states that they gave him an affluence considerably better than that of the average settler. Discerningly, Price concludes that Chapman's reticence regarding his business affairs and his silent acquiescence to the settlers' opinion of him as a penniless eccentric was, "considering the sums he transported from time to time [along] lonely ways," a matter of Yankee caution. Moreover, "the dusty records of John Chapman's real estate" prove that "the man behind the [folk] idealization was anything but a feeble-minded vagrant or impractical fanatic." Further proof of a different kind of intelligence is contained in an illuminating section on Chapman as a Swedenborgian missionary. That he was a dispenser of New Church doctrines is well known. But for the first time this phase of "the man's inner life" is offered the lay reader by means of extractions from the letter book of a prominent Eastern Swedenborgian of the time. The letters are not only written in respectful fellowship to Chapman himself, but to

others of the faith regarding his labors, particularly his surprising offer to exchange some of his land for Church literature.

Price continues to follow Chapman into new ranges, even to setting down chronologically (from documentary date entries) his movements from 1830 to 1838, when Indiana became his home base. But when he died in Fort Wayne, a considerable owner of property, the extent of which even his kin and appointed administrators never fully learned, he was little known in the region.

Midway of this narrative of true events, Price begins to explain how the legend took root and grew. (He calls the nickname—*Johnny Appleseed*—"grotesque," an adjective most readers will protest.) A host of pioneer tales which fostered the various facets of the legend are recounted, drawn chiefly from the county histories. While there have been "episodic accretions" from other sources, these histories are the fountainhead from which has sprung most of the portraits of the folk hero, particularly abundant in the field of literary production. Price seems to be moderately tolerant of these, and specifically mentions a few he considers worthy. He has provided a bibliography, also. But he deplores exaggerations of the myth which have sent it flying wildly off its valid base, and he scorns the weakening effect of much sentimental prettying-up. "No apple-blossoms, please," he begs for himself on the jacket flap. It is therefore rather cheering to note his momentary departure from this firm stand, when he reports a weather entry in a Fort Wayne diary a few days after John Chapman's death. "*In the night thunder showers—then fair—first apple blossoms.*"

Undoubtedly it was the myth which first attracted Price. But while he gives it just and proportionate space, he is much more interested in presenting the man. This is both understandable and fortunate. Johnny Appleseed is already far better known to Americans than John Chapman. Price wished to elevate him to his true stature as a real person. It was his primary purpose, therefore, to disengage man from myth, as nearly as such cleavage can be effected. He believes that the legend is still vigorously expanding. In reference to this conviction, and to those Americans who claim Johnny Appleseed and his orchards far beyond truth and reason, Price terminates his book on a slightly sardonic note—"He will be

out your way soon." However, in view of the nature of the present times, and because print on the Johnny Appleseed theme is already of considerable extent, one might venture to opine that the myth may have reached the limit of its stretch except, perhaps, via television. Even then Johnny will appear in Disneyesque garb: as the traditional fixation rather than the new true story: as myth rather than as man. Thus do Americans prefer him. They will continue to be unsparingly sentimental about him, or to cherish a purer sentiment, according to their individual natures. Indeed, Johnny Appleseed is more important in our American culture as myth. Throughout his book, Price is aware of its preponderance and its enduring vitality, and after all his laborious work, yields to it with understanding and humor.

Those who miss this fine, richly detailed book will be the losers. Those future would-be biographers of John Chapman shall better relinquish their aspirations. For Robert Price's book will remain the definitive factual and interpretative work on the subject.

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Mabel Leigh Hunt

Captured by Indians: True Tales of Pioneer Survivors. By Howard H. Peckham. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954, pp. xvii, 238. Illustrations and index. \$5.00.)

Capture by Indians was one of the many hazards which faced the pioneers from coast to coast. The tales of the survivors were told and retold, printed and reprinted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and this book by Howard H. Peckham proves that interest in them has not disappeared altogether in the twentieth. Peckham has retold fourteen such narratives, with added historical background and contemporary illustrations, in a style more concise and readable than that of the originals; he has selected the accounts for their drama, entertainment value, and reliability, with some attention to chronology and geography. Thus, while they illustrate the range of occurrence in both time and space, they are not intended to be a cross section of captivity experiences but rather an introduction to this type of historical literature.