

cultivated traits as frugality, thrift, and industry. Such important environmental economic factors as abundant and unexcelled natural resources and an expanding national market were always relegated to secondary, if not tertiary positions. Only such external forces as being born in the country of poor parents and hard work during the tender years were admitted by the success advocates. Business failure was also explained in terms of the individual rather than economic circumstances. Lack of good character, inexperience, extravagance, and other similar personal shortcomings were the explanations most used. Failure could never result from lack of intelligence, for the cultists were firm in their conviction that no remarkable intelligence or training was required for business success. After 1900, when men like Carnegie maintained that education had a purposeful value in business, the self-aid groups began to reverse their former position and started to advocate training and education for business. To meet the problems of a new day, other success ideas underwent changes too, but neither the Great Depression nor the publications of business and economic historians refuting the self-help idea succeed in discrediting it. The doggerels were changed, but the success propagandists continued to adhere to the idea that good character was the *sine qua non* of business success. By analyzing and explaining the "rags to riches" myth, Wyllie makes it possible to appraise the role of the idea in American thought and to evaluate its influence in terms of business leadership.

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*American Heritage*, Volume VI, Numbers 1 and 2. Edited by Bruce Catton. (New York: American Heritage Publishing Company, December, 1954, and February, 1955. Illustrations. \$2.95 each.)

In 1949, the American Association for State and Local History sponsored the publication of a paper-backed quarterly called *American Heritage*, which was well received by the reading public. While this project was underway, another organization, the Society of American Historians, Inc., obtained pledges totaling a considerable sum of money from some influential Americans for the purpose of exploring the

possibility of a magazine of history in book form. Realizing their common objective, these two groups now have pooled their resources in joint sponsorship of a periodical in book form. The result is a magazine of history which is handsomely bound between hard covers and which is to be published six times a year.

Many American historians have long recognized the need for some medium whereby history can be made more appealing to a greater number of people. Unfortunately the appeal of the many excellent scholarly articles which appear in the publications of the various historical societies is limited for the most part to the professional historian. Perhaps it is the highly specialized nature of the subject matter of these articles or it is the formidable array of footnotes which characterize the typical professional offering that has made these publications unattractive to the average lay reader. Maybe it is because the historical journals are for one reason or another inaccessible to the general public. Whatever the reason or reasons, the fact remains that comparatively few people read them.

If the first two numbers of this projected periodical are indicative of the caliber of articles to appear in subsequent numbers, *American Heritage* stands out as a welcome innovation in historical literature. Excellent writing combined with appropriate illustrations, photographs, and prints make for pleasant, enjoyable reading. As added attractions to the historically minded readers there are several pages of current book reviews, plus a couple of pages of notes bearing the caption "News of History." In short, *American Heritage* promises to bridge the gap between the offerings of the ultra-pure historians and the superficial works of popular writers.

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