

Every House a Frontier: Detroit's Economic Progress, 1815-1825. By Floyd R. Dain. (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1956. Pp. viii, 168. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. \$3.50).

The subtitle suggests the scope of this well-documented monograph on Detroit's economy. The author begins with "Detroit in 1815," devotes chapters to "Transportation and Communication," "The Settlement of the Hinterland," "Currency and Exchange," "Commerce and Industry," and concludes with a brief eulogy of Yankee achievement under the title, "Detroit at the Close of 1825." In competent fashion Mr. Dain defines the problems confronting the community (dependable transportation, an adequate local food supply, and a stable currency) and describes their solution.

The period under consideration has special interest because it concerns Detroit's transition from a leisurely, French, fur-trading, garrison village to a bustling, Yankee, commercial town. The inevitable cultural conflict involved, while not explicitly treated, is frequently suggested in the author's generous use of contemporary strictures upon the *habitant*. He was "shiftless" and "lacking in ambition." "He wasted . . . his time in idleness and amusement." Certainly his habits and values were not those of the New Englanders who were flocking to Detroit. And the migrant Yankee of the early nineteenth century was rarely tolerant of cultural patterns that differed from his own. A fuller treatment of the processes whereby the *habitant* relinquished or lost his Detroit lands would have been desirable.

Many more studies of this kind are needed. Definitive syntheses in urban history cannot be written until much more such spadework is done.

Indiana Historical Society

Hubert H. Hawkins

The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing. By Homer Carey Hockett. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955. Pp. xv, 330. Bibliography and index. \$5.00.)

Billed as a third edition of the author's well-known *Introduction to Research in American History*, this useful book is, as its preface admits, not only reorganized and largely

rewritten, but vastly expanded. The older editions were organized around three main processes in historical research and writing: selection of subject and material, critical evaluation of the material, and the process of composition.

In the new volume, Hockett discusses the principles of historical criticism first, utilizing the traditional division into external and internal criticism. He prefaces this section by a new discussion of the importance of history and the role of the historian, concerns to which this pragmatic age increasingly forces us to attend.

Next the student is led step by step along the road to completion of the historical thesis. Bearing the elements of criticism in mind, he learns how to choose a subject, how to gather data, and about problems of note taking. The latter part of this section incorporates the last part of the earlier editions concerning composition of the master's essay, with somewhat more added about the importance of good writing, which, again, reflects a hopeful modern trend.

In this latest edition, the third section is entirely new, entitled "Beyond the Masters Degree," and serves both to guide the aspirant for the Ph.D. in meeting the requirements, and to sketch the opportunities open to the student of history. By taking note of current historical activities in government, business history, and war history, the author serves not only those who intend to teach but points out other important areas for the professional historian.

Much of this last section is devoted to a brief survey of American historiography. In the reviewer's opinion this is not happily inspired. Such information is treated better and more at length in various other works with which candidates for the higher degree will necessarily have to acquaint themselves. It must be admitted, however, that it performs a real service in drawing attention to the efforts of private collectors, libraries, and historical societies usually overlooked in surveys of historical scholarship.

It may also be objected that in broadening the title of his work Professor Hockett misleads the reader, for the work is still largely centered on the problems of writing *American* history and the developments of historical study in America. But the author rightfully seeks in his title to stress the critical method, not only because it deals with something essential to success in writing history, "but be-

cause it involves a discipline of mind and character which everyone needs" (p. 72). Many will agree that for these modern times history might well replace the study of traditional logic. Historians themselves too often sell their subject short in counseling and teaching. Its methodology offers as much or more for those who would learn as does its content.

The use of exercises in criticism suggested in earlier editions has apparently been well received, for eight such exercises are suggested, including the extensively developed one previously included concerning Van Buren's role in the election of 1824-1825. The author has very practically provided, too, a considerable body of information about how to find material. A bibliographic summary draws attention to bibliographies of bibliographies, bibliographic information in comprehensive works of history, biographical dictionaries, indexes to periodicals and newspapers, catalogues of books, government publications and guides to them, and the intricacies of statutes, documents, and court records.

Towards the end of his discussion on requirements for the master's degree the author permits himself some remarks on "some conditions that must be faced" (pp. 173-180) that tend to be somewhat lacking in direction. However interesting, his remarks tend to be the kind that will soon be dated, and to some extent preachify. The reviewer would take serious issue, too, with the statement on page 185 that it is advisable for candidates for the doctorate to limit themselves to subjects which can be developed by the use of printed materials rather than collections of manuscripts or archival matter. The National Archives, Library of Congress, state libraries and historical societies are all bursting with manuscripts and documents fit for the doctoral candidate to batten on with great profit to the more mature scholar who needs the monographic studies that will result and who alone has achieved the breadth of view to make meaningful general syntheses. Reworking of well-known printed materials by any but the most brilliant graduate students seldom results in a worthwhile contribution. The author's objections that the Ph.D. candidate lacks the special techniques for the work in archival or manuscript sources and that he is customarily refused access to them is not borne out by the experiences of most of them.

Altogether, despite these objections, it is with a sense of gratitude that the reviewer puts down this work. So much useful information is here compiled, logically and conveniently, to spare the mentor of aspiring students the effort that Hockett has performed for him, with a sensitivity and grasp that most of us could not summon. The author teaches by example as well as precept, mirroring implicitly in his style the same lessons he discusses explicitly. Though possibly more pedestrian than the similar works by Allan Nevins and Louis Gottschalk, and not as concise as Sherman Kent's little manual, for the student interested in American history Hockett's work is the most useful. Mixing stimulating generalizations with excellent specific illustrations, the author should, in this work, imbue most readers with enthusiasm for writing history.

Butler University

George M. Waller

The Radical Novel in the United States 1900-1954. By Walter B. Rideout. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956. Pp. viii, 339. Bibliography, notes, and index. \$6.00.)

The subtitle of Professor Walter B. Rideout's study of the radical novel, "Some Interrelations of Literature and Society," underscores the book's scope and method. This is not only a history of a certain literary type, the radical or proletarian novel, in a given period but also an attempt to explore the connections between the type and the society which produced it. In a sense then this book has a double focus, and although the author shifts back and forth easily, the reader sometimes gets the impression that in the effort to handle two subjects adequately he has given neither in satisfactory detail.

Professor Rideout defines the radical novel clearly: "A radical novel, then, is one which demonstrates, either explicitly or implicitly, that its author objects to the human suffering imposed by some socioeconomic system and *advocates that the system be fundamentally changed*" (p. 12). Using this criterion, he then proceeds to examine over 160 novels published in the first half of the twentieth century and to point out their distinctions in theme, characterization, and