

Robert Rogers of the Rangers. By John R. Cuneo. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959. Pp. xii, 308. Illustrations, maps, appendix, sources and notes, index. \$6.00.)

With a barrister's skill, lawyer-author Cuneo has presented a convincing defense of the famed Indian fighter, Robert Rogers. He has traced the life of this colorful, yet tragic, figure from his humble beginnings in 1730 as the fourth son of a New Hampshire squatter to his place in the sun when, not yet thirty, he was "the army's most famous colonial fighter, to whom all society was open" (p. 143). The account continues through Rogers' successive disappointments—flights from creditors, court-martial, debtors' prisons, disease and intemperance—until he died in 1795, broken in mind and body. The hazards of his uncivilized frontier world had proved as nothing compared to the dangers and pitfalls of the civilized world which he was ill fitted to combat.

A poor frontier farmer tempted into a counterfeiting scheme, Rogers was saved by the outbreak of the French and Indian War wherein he rose to a position of eminence as commander of a "Company of Rangers." Numerous feats of daring in the Crown Point-Ticonderoga area won for him a reputation both in America and abroad. Yet every accomplishment won also an increasing degree of professional jealousy from General Thomas Gage. The fact that Amherst ignored Gage's attempts to discredit both Rogers and the Rangers only intensified Gage's hostility.

After Gage became commander of the British forces in America, he was in a position to vent his spleen and succeeded in impeaching Rogers for treason while the latter served as commandant of the Michilimackinac post. Cuneo devotes several interesting pages to the court case, as one might expect, and, according to his evidence, anything but a complete acquittal would have permanently stained the integrity of British courts-martial. Both Rogers' defense and Cuneo's reporting make dramatic reading.

The interbellum years found Rogers in and out of debtors' prisons, and at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War he offered his services to Washington. Since he was a retired British major, he was suspect in Washington's eyes, however; and after being arrested by the patriots and threatened with imprisonment, he escaped to the British and offered his services to them. He formed another Ranger unit and for a brief period terrorized the settlements of Connecticut until his battalion was taken over by the British Regulars. For all practical purposes the story ends here, for the author condenses the remainder of Rogers' life into only a few pages since there is a paucity of source material for after this time. It apparently is just as well, for Rogers' career from this point on, judging from what evidence is available, was a tragedy of degradation, divorce, drunkenness, and debt.

The author freely consults Rogers' own books, *A Concise Account of North America* and *Journals*, as well as an impressive list of source materials from depositories in this country, Canada, and Great Britain. Yet, it is lamentable that space limitations did not permit more specific

references to sources than the general lists of materials at the end of the volume. Cuneo indicates that those wishing to pursue the topic further can find detailed notes on deposit at the New-York Historical Society and at the Clements Library, University of Michigan.

Students of Rogers' period will welcome Cuneo's volume. It is a competent work that does much to present a clear and concise account of this exciting partisan leader whose life has been much clouded by folklore, fancy, and fiction. Cuneo writes well—his terse, pithy style makes the exposition as dynamic as his subject matter.

Indiana University

Philip M. Crane

Bluegrass Craftsman: Being the Reminiscences of Ebenezer Hiram Stedman, Papermaker, 1808-1885. Edited by Frances L. S. Dugan and Jacqueline P. Bull. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959. Pp. xxi, 226. Frontispiece, appendix, index. \$5.00.)

Editors Bull and Dugan, head archivist and associate archivist, respectively, at the University of Kentucky, present the memoirs of Ebenezer Hiram Stedman in the form of letters written to his daughter. The original letters are in the Dard Hunter Paper Museum at the Institute of Paper Chemistry, Appleton, Wisconsin. Stedman's brief account of the papermaking industry in Kentucky, which is also included in this book, is at the University of Kentucky Library.

The Stedman family came to Kentucky shortly after the War of 1812, and Ebenezer's father became the foreman of a paper mill in Lexington. Observation of his father's work and his own job as a "lay boy" helped to prepare Ebenezer for his own entry into papermaking. He and his brother Sam took over a broken-down mill in Franklin County, Kentucky, in 1833 and made a thriving business out of it. In 1847 the mill was destroyed by fire, but it was rebuilt and by 1850 the enterprise was valued at more than \$50,000. Subsequent floods and fires damaged the mill repeatedly, but each time it was repaired or rebuilt and for a time furnished all the paper used by the state printers and most of the newsprint used by Frankfort newspapers. The Civil War bankrupted the business, and in 1875 the DuPonts purchased the mill machinery.

The reader will be fascinated by Stedman's lively and colorful description of his business and also of society in the Bluegrass region. He pens interesting character sketches of his acquaintances, describes details of the papermaking industry, bills of fare of that day, the life of rivermen, squirrel migrations, and many other aspects of frontier life. Although tinged with nostalgia and containing some errors of fact, Stedman's account shows his remarkable ability to recall minute details (he began writing in 1878). The editors prove that his memory is surprisingly good. For an uneducated man, the old papermaker had a large vocabulary and an engaging style of writing. His spelling is poor, but at least phonetic. One wonders, however, why he stumbles over such words as "her" and "see," yet correctly spells others like "con-sanguinity" and "anomalous."