

and others will find weaknesses in his case. Among the former is the almost complete exclusion of folk dance, art, and crafts. Among the latter, three examples will suffice. It appears that the author raises some issues that ought to be pursued further. One of these is the problem of maintenance of tradition by immigrants. He probably dismisses too quickly the general implications of the studies of Marvin K. Opler, who reaches a conclusion in his study of the Japanese and Nisei that varies from Dorson's own. More collecting and interpreting in this area is needed before a firmly held conclusion should be reached. Weaknesses also appear in the chapter on folk heroes. Dorson correctly designates Paul Bunyan hero-tales as "fakelore." Are, however, many of the Davy Crockett tales, which were in part the products of Whig politicians and propagandists, less "manufactured" than those about Bunyan? In short, the useful term, "fakelore," should be applied consistently. Also, why should the author exclude the leading figures in our national experience about whom tradition has woven many tales, namely George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Abraham Lincoln, from his gallery of folk heroes? To qualify, must a folk hero be of local significance and then become legendary through oral word and sub-literary media? Must the hero be only "folksy"? Why not consistently follow the definition of "tradition" as folklore if it is valid? These weaknesses, however, are minor in view of Dorson's thesis.

Professor Dorson demonstrates beyond much doubt his theory that American folklore, or at least many of its aspects, follows the "contours" of American civilization. This is his great achievement, for which we are grateful. Further, he uses his extensive collecting and interpreting in the field of folklore skillfully and easily, making this book both a good introduction to American folklore for the beginner and a stimulating interpretation for the scholar.

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*Seed, Soil and Science: The Story of Eugene D. Funk.* By Helen M. Cavanagh. (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1959. Pp. xii, 544. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$7.50.)

This book is largely the story of one member of a pioneer family of German descent which settled on the untamed prairie near Bloomington, Illinois, in 1823, accumulated large land holdings, established a well-known seed company, and has for years exerted energetic leadership in scientific agriculture and in local, state, and national affairs. Its central figure, Eugene D. Funk, Sr. (1867-1944), grew up during a period of rising land values and rapid advancement in agriculture.

In the auspicious first year of the present century, the Funk Brothers Seed Company was founded. Its first concern was the production of better seed corn to fill a need generally felt at that time. Much attention was given later, however, to other crop plants, such as alfalfa and soy beans, and to the general improvement of agricultural practices.

By the time that the groundwork was laid for the production of hybrid corn, the Funk Company had established a reputation for producing good seed corn by the older methods of selection. Eugene Funk had also reached the age at which he might have been content to rest

on his laurels and let a thriving business continue as it had been going. But, having a vision of far better things to come from the new approach to corn breeding, he saw to it that generous provision was made for continued research. The result has been a high level of accomplishment in producing greatly increased yields, consistent uniformity, and resistance to fungus diseases and insect pests. Funk's Research Acres, near Bloomington, has become a mecca for agronomists and plant breeders from all over the world.

Funk was a leader in the planning and support of the corn fairs, corn schools, and national corn expositions which left their unique mark on American farm life during the first fifteen years of the century. He also took an active part in the founding of the American Seed Trade Association and served as its president in 1925. Although basically opposed to interference with free enterprise, he often served as consultant and aided in studies leading toward the regulation of prices and production.

A book which resulted from the assimilation of materials from the numerous diaries, journals, and other documents to which the author had access could not be expected to be entirely free from error. The corn plant may be called maize or *Zea mays*, but never *Zea Maize*, as on p. 161. Errors in spelling are noted on pages 93 (Kjeldahl), 396 (Gibberella, Pythium), and 536 (corn borer). The description of Nilsson-Ehle's work (p. 83) would lead the reader to believe that he was working with corn. It was probably wheat or some other small cereal. Nowhere in the book do we find a clear, concise account of the exact steps by which hybrid seed corn is produced or of the theory underlying the process. These and other amateurisms lead to the impression that the author has not succeeded in getting very close to the scientific aspects of the subject.

The main fault that we find with the book is the failure to assimilate the voluminous details. What might have been a moving story of a great man and a fascinating era has remained too much a tabulation of unadorned facts, with little to indicate their relative values. Even the reader who is pretty well acquainted with the subject often finds himself floundering in a mire of details which do not lead anywhere. This makes dull reading. The book will serve as a valuable reference work, but, if there was hope that it might be widely read, this could have been much better accomplished by stripping away two-thirds of the detail and then weaving the remainder into a smoothly flowing narrative.

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*Patterns from the Sod: Land Use and Tenure in the Grand Prairie, 1850-1900.* By Margaret Beattie Bogue. *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, Volume XXXIV; *Land Series*, Volume I. (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1959. Pp. 327. Charts, maps, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$2.50.)

This book, which is dedicated to Paul Wallace Gates, is a comprehensive study of land use and ownership in eight east central Illinois counties forming the bulk of the Danville Land District. This area was a rectangle which included the rich farm land now extending from