

and other party propaganda on major public issues and the "images" of various parties and has sought to relate them to the numbers of votes cast for various party tickets in New York chiefly from 1834 to 1844. In later chapters correlations are sought between the numbers and proportions of votes cast and certain "quantified" economic, social, cultural, ethnic, and religious characteristics of the population. The author's conclusions are forthright: the underlying assumptions of historians who accept "the term and concept of Jacksonian Democracy" are, at least for New York, untenable; and the concept of Jacksonian Democracy has obscured rather than illuminated the course of New York history after 1815. His findings are, in brief, iconoclastic.

Benson recognizes only three approaches to the study of American politics in this period: first, the hypotheses of Beard and Turner with their later modifications; second, the "metaphysical notions about the country's 'divine democratic mission,' or the 'peculiar political genius of the Teutonic race'" (p. 272); and third, "'chaos floating into chaos'" (p. 272). He ignores other approaches of the past hundred years: the search to discover how Americans governed themselves, who participated, at what levels, to what extent, at what times, in what ways, for what purposes, and with what consequences for themselves and for others; the role of "the court house gang"; the changing nature of political leadership. The "general theory of voting behavior" which he elaborates is not a general theory but a hypothetical statistical correlation that diverts attention from basic questions such as what was the significance of voting. He neglects fundamental problems involved in the formation of party platforms, party tickets, and political parties themselves and the functions of those institutions in American society. Heavily weighted with arithmetic and ideology, the study seems lifeless, abstract, and unreal.

Within the limits Benson set for himself his book is an outstanding work of destructive criticism, the removal of debris that historians need to do before they begin to write. It seriously weakens the arguments presented by followers of the Simons-Beard-Hacker school and to some extent those of Turner disciples without touching the main stream of Jacksonian studies. Its positive contributions are negligible.

Ohio University

Harry R. Stevens

Charles Richard Van Hise: Scientist Progressive. By Maurice M. Vance. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1960. Pp. 246. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$6.00.)

As a scientist and historian Maurice M. Vance is a peculiarly well-fitted biographer of the pioneering president of the University of Wisconsin who was both a scientist and a maker of history. The Foreword of the book, by Conrad A. Elvehjem, acknowledges the competence of the author in giving "a scholarly but sprightly full-length picture of the man who, at the turning point in this institution's history, headed it into greatness." Undoubtedly Van Hise deserves the tribute of "great."

The book is more than a personal biography, for it clearly relates the life of Van Hise to three important aspects of American culture: the rise of basic research and advanced technology; the broadening of educational activities and horizons, particularly the development of university extension and other public services; and the political Progressive movement, especially the drive for conservation of natural resources and the regulation of business and industry. Also Van Hise played a part in the patriotic wartime effort to preserve the freedom of the western nations and in the movement to establish an international organization.

Two chapters, "Geologist in Charge" and "Geology and Van Hise in the University," plus considerable portions of other chapters deal with the history of geology. Much of this material is hard reading for laymen, but it succeeds not only in substantiating the role of a fruitful geologist but also his roles as a manager of research and as a teacher and administrator who made a powerful impact on the emergence of basic research as a prime function of institutions of higher learning.

Not so successful is the treatment of the contributions of Van Hise to "The Wisconsin Idea," the university function of extensive, practical service to the state. Vance probably believes that the publications listed have amply covered the story. If so, he is mistaken because, even with many sources not mentioned, it is true that no book has yet been published that adequately explains the American university as a public service institution, particularly that aspect of it vaguely called "university extension" and "adult education," both of which are often met with scorn by academic pundits, neglected by administrators, and little understood by the public. Most Americans regard universities as either ivory towers or colleges for the young. Vance recognizes the significance of the Wisconsin Idea as revolutionary but almost dismisses that evaluation when he says, "More concise, less grand in conception, equally illuminating, was the oft-quoted comment of a Wisconsin farm wife who had enrolled in an extension course, 'I never knew that the University was something for me'" (p. 204). Perhaps when the biographies of L. E. Reber, W. L. Lighty, and other early representatives of the university extension movement are written, the service function of universities may be illuminated as a true revolution. Van Hise not only championed practical service, including faculty appointments on governmental agencies and other public enterprises, but he also vigorously stressed theoretical research; the combination signals a highly important development of American universities.

Two episodes of curious interest are here worthy of note because they are related to the acute present-day problems of academic freedom and conflict of interest. Van Hise had reservations as to the former and a somewhat anomalous attitude to the latter. He refused to accept the AAUP suggestion of guaranteed tenure for professors; yet his defense of provocative sociologist E. A. Ross and other dissident faculty members was very strong. In the matter of opposition to faculty participation in various enterprises, Van Hise himself used his knowledge as scientist and public servant to build a substantial private fortune. If that fact had not been kept secret from his enemies, his career might have been wrecked. Van Hise became a powerful defender of freedom

for faculty and students and of institutional commitments in public and private affairs despite intense political criticism. The famous quotation inscribed on a plaque in Bascom Hall, 1915, expressed in general what Van Hise himself successfully stood for: "Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe the great University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found" (p. 206).

Indiana University

W. S. Bittner

The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad. By Larry Gara. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961. Pp. ix, 201. Index. \$5.00.)

"The legend of the underground railroad," according to Larry Gara, "tells of intrepid abolitionists sending multitudes of passengers over a well-organized transportation system to the Promised Land of freedom" (p. 2). The legend had its origin in the ante bellum period, but it reached its greatest flowering in reminiscences and memoirs published in the generation following the Civil War. Later it was incorporated into many works of history as well as fiction. Among historians, William H. Siebert did most to perpetuate the legend. In his numerous writings Siebert relied heavily upon the reminiscences of former abolitionists and their descendants. In his critical and scholarly little book Gara has used many of the materials which Siebert collected but has come to different conclusions than Siebert did.

Gara finds that the legend of the underground railroad, like most legends, contains some elements of truth but also much exaggeration and folklore. His conclusions are not particularly startling, and some of them have been anticipated by other historians, but his is the first systematic examination of the legend. Briefly summarized his findings are as follows.

First of all, there was no tightly knit organization on a national scale dedicated to helping slaves escape, but there were a few localities in which there was a flourishing underground railroad—as, for example, in eastern Indiana where Levi Coffin was active. Not all slaves who ran away tried to come North. Some sought relatives or friends in the South or ran away and hid to escape punishment. The number who actually reached the free states or Canada was very small. The legend emphasized the daring and heroism of the white conductors of the railroad rather than that of the slaves. In the revised version which Gara gives us, "the abolitionists play a less important part and the escaping slaves a more important one . . ." (p. 18). Slaves who escaped were likely to be those who were most intelligent and who had had the greatest educational advantages. They usually made the break for freedom on their own initiative and were largely self-reliant. Expectation of assistance from white abolitionists in the North played little or no part in the decision of most slaves to try to escape. In fact, slaves often were unaware of any organization in the North which might help them. The escapees usually headed, when possible, for the homes of Negroes who might lend them aid. Obviously the most difficult and