

Book Reviews

Louis Jolliet: Explorer of Rivers. By Virginia S. Eifert. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1961. Pp. xii, 242. Maps, bibliography, index. \$4.00.)

Louis Jolliet received minor orders in the Society of Jesus in 1662 at the age of seventeen as a protégé of Bishop Laval. He became a trader to the Indians, but continued to serve the church as organist of the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Quebec while also serving his government as an explorer and hydrographer. When Intendant Talon and Governor Frontenac wished to expedite the plans of Louis XIV's minister Colbert for an expanded colonial empire, they selected Jolliet to secure authoritative information of the country beyond the Great Lakes, from which vague and contradictory rumors had come to Lalemont, Menard, Allouez, Dablon, and Marquette of a River of the West, of the chimerical Northwest Passage, and of a River of the South. Jolliet combined reliability and loyalty with the necessary technical skills and experience with wilderness life. His early Jesuit training and friendships in that aggressive order made his leadership acceptable to the church, while his lay position ensured the government paramount control of the expedition.

The expedition descended the Mississippi River in 1673 until it was certain the waters flowed into the Gulf of Mexico, where Spanish hospitality was uncertain. Marquette returned to the St. Xavier mission on Green Bay, while Jolliet spent the winter expanding his journals and maps at the trading post at Sault Ste. Marie. His original documents and his companions were lost in the Ottawa River rapids near Montreal as he returned in the spring of 1674. The copies he had left at Sault Ste. Marie were destroyed when the post was burned after his departure for Montreal. Jolliet gave an oral report to Frontenac and prepared a map and report from memory, but historians have relied on the journal, supposedly Marquette's, which Dablon constructed from Marquette's report to his superior and from Jolliet's reconstructed account. The loss of Jolliet's original journal has resulted in conflicting views on the relative importance of the leadership of Marquette and Jolliet, the possible dominance of Jesuit influence and plans for the future development of the western lands, and the rivalry between that religious order and the colonial authorities.

Jolliet later explored the English penetration of the James Bay area, established a small Indian trading empire based at his Anticosta Island grant from the government, and began to explore and map the southern coast of Labrador. He was commissioned royal hydrographer of the colony, and he taught classes in map making. As he returned to his Anticosta post in the spring of 1700 his ship was lost in the St. Lawrence.

The author has constructed a rapidly moving tale from the authenticated facts of Jolliet's life. She has made excellent use of the sources, but obviously prefers the Jesuit emphasis of Dablon and Delanglez to the research conclusions of Steck. Miss Eifert has no

good words for La Salle, who "didn't even know how to follow a compass" (p. 65), and only slight praise for Governor Frontenac. There is occasional recourse to those all-inclusive words of the historical novelist: "probably," "may have," and "must have," with which gaps between fragments of historical evidence are bridged; but the teacher who uses this book as a proper device in junior or senior high school for the development of historical understanding can congratulate Miss Eifert on using these words sparingly and wisely. He can also congratulate her on the fact that the personality of Louis Jolliet emerges with such attractive qualities. Miss Eifert reanimates the intimacies of the Jolliet family, and the result is a pleasing book which should be a useful addition to the public or school library.

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The Jonathan Hale Farm: A Chronicle of the Cuyahoga Valley. By John J. Horton. Western Reserve Historical Society, *Publication Number 116*. (Cleveland, Ohio: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1961. Pp. 160. Illustrations, map, bibliography. Clothbound, \$4.50; paperbound, \$2.25.)

The Jonathan Hale Farm is a delightful and informative volume to read. Opening chapters tell of Connecticut's ties with the Western Reserve of northeastern Ohio and of early years in this area. The main emphasis, however, concerns the life and labors of the Jonathan Hale family and their neighbors in the Cuyahoga Valley south of Cleveland following Hale's arrival from Connecticut in 1810 until his death in 1854. Contemporary source material is used to describe difficulties and perils encountered by the Hales and others in making the slow and laborious trip from Connecticut, how they and their neighbors established themselves in the fertile Cuyahoga Valley, their slow and then more rapid improvement of living conditions, the impact of improved transportation, the evolution from barter to an economy based mainly on money, the beginnings of culture, and the almost endless toil and labor required of early settlers.

The Hales and other pioneers "developed" the Cuyahoga Valley from its "underdeveloped" status into an area with a productive economy in a remarkably short period of time. If we had a number of similar histories of additional families who settled in the pioneer Midwest, our knowledge and understanding of pioneer life and what pioneering involved would be significantly increased. Such studies would help test and evaluate ideas and generalizations regarding early economic development, the genesis of culture, rural versus urban influences, the impact of the frontier on the life of the pioneers, the relationship between improvement in transportation facilities and general economic progress, and so on. *The Jonathan Hale Farm*, for instance, suggests that economic development came from both private and governmental efforts, that the frontier in various subtle ways made the Hales something more than merely transplanted Yankees, and that development of transportation facilities was basic to economic progress, with its resulting cultural life.