the investments in canal construction, basing his estimates on new materials, and concludes by showing how canals contributed to economic development in the years before the Civil War. He provides firm substantiation for the general view that by connecting the northern Atlantic Seaboard and the Northwest, canals stimulated and promoted rapid economic growth.

The Enterprise of a Free People and Canals and American Economic Development are “must” reading for anyone wanting a better understanding of American economic development in the first half of the nineteenth century. Moreover, these volumes are not just of historical interest; they carry contemporary implications for underdeveloped countries in the mid-twentieth century. Both books are clearly written and purged of excess fat. Here are examples of where writers have given readers the results of their research and not all of the research itself. The authors are careful in drawing conclusions and do not claim more than their evidence warrants.

Supporters of laissez faire will be disturbed by these books; however, the record is clear that our ancestors relied heavily upon government to foster and promote economic development in the early nineteenth century. Where government could be used to benefit society, American citizens had the good sense to use it as an instrument of economic growth and social betterment. They seldom entered into doctrinaire discussions regarding the right of the state to promote enterprise. Their approach was pragmatic and these studies further substantiate the idea that the growth of government functions and responsibilities in the United States has come from needs the people could not supply for themselves rather than from any foreign ideology.

University of Oklahoma

Gilbert C. Fite


Brackenridge was a native of Pittsburgh who resided in Missouri and Louisiana between 1810 and 1814. In 1811 he was invited by Manuel Lisa, an important member of the Missouri Fur Company at St. Louis, to accompany him on a trip up the Missouri River. In the descriptive journal which Brackenridge kept he not only recorded the daily activities of the group, but he also took note of the weather, the condition of the land along the way, animal life, and perhaps most interesting of all, the encounters of his party with the Indians and the impressions thus received.

In the first portion of the book the author relates the various explorations of the Spanish and French and discusses the historical determinants of the boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase which were so much in doubt. He had extensive knowledge concerning the natural setting of the country and its mineral wealth, as well as the uses that were being made of it at that time and those possible in the future.
In accordance with the belief of the times, he noted that the wooded areas had generally good soil but that the barren plains "can scarcely be said to admit of settlement" (p. 29).

The second part of the book presents a similar detailed account of the Missouri Territory but includes in addition an explanation of its political subdivisions and population. The appendix contains extracts from other works pertaining to the Indian mounds of the region and the Trappist monks in the American Bottom; and there is also a short account of another journey into the upper reaches of the Louisiana Purchase. Throughout the book are tables concerning the length, conditions, and sources of rivers, and the location, population, and trade of the various Indian nations.

The dust jacket explains that this work was selected for republication since the Journal "is regarded as a notably precise and valuable contemporary document on the early Missouri fur trade and on the Indians of the area." This book is presented as it was first published; it is not an edited work. Views of Louisiana is the first volume of a new series which will make available once again source materials that have long been out of print. It thus promises to be a great boon to librarians as well as scholars, both of whom occasionally feel the pinch of a limited budget when buying older editions. The series is under the general editorship of Dr. O. Lawrence Burnette, Jr., of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, and promises a wide coverage of topics. This particular volume will be an asset to anyone interested in a contemporary view of the trans-Mississippi West in general and of its fur trade in particular.

Rose Polytechnic Institute

E. Duane Elbert


Here, at long last, is a highly reliable biography of James Buchanan by a scholar who thoroughly understands both the man and the nineteenth-century environment in which he operated. So far as this reviewer knows, no significant attempt has been made to narrate and analyze all the events of Buchanan's long and active life since the publication of George T. Curtis' biography in 1883. Since that date not only have Buchanan's Works been published by John Bassett Moore and numerous manuscript collections been opened to scholars, but many portions of the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century have been examined in detail by a succession of able historians—one might cite Roy F. Nichols' works on the Democratic party in the 1850's as an outstanding example.

Professor Klein makes excellent use of this voluminous literature while basing his work solidly on manuscript sources. Starting with Buchanan's forebears, the author traces the growth and development of the fifteenth president through his early life and, especially, through his early years in Pennsylvania politics. He is convinced (and the reviewer heartily agrees) that no one who is not intimately familiar