

Throughout the book the author manifests a scholarly mastery of his field including such items as the ballad forms in the ancient hymnbook of 1564, the *Ausbund* (pp. 138-139). His description of Amish singing is superb (p. 140). All in all this is one of the finest studies of the Amish to date and is written with scholarly accuracy and interpretation and with fine objectivity.

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Probing the American West: Papers from the Santa Fe Conference.

Edited by K. Ross Toole *et al.* Introduction by Ray A. Billington.
(Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1962. Pp. viii, 216.
Notes, index, program pamphlet. \$5.00.)

The term "West" in American history has been applied to a moving area much in the same way as the term "frontier." In this book the editors have apparently decided to accept the West of the post-Civil War days as the "West." For the most part the contributors to this volume do not think of the West as a psychological force creating new men. There are in these essays few suggestions about any distinct kind of man—except perhaps in the essays on Indians.

There is implicit in the calling of the symposium and in the selection of topics a notion of a definite historical locale and period. The approach is generally historical in the sense that the meaning of the American West is sought in the area itself and not in any national or world-wide significance. The bibliographical essays indicate that the study of the West for itself is really just beginning.

The other essays in the volume tend towards the literary and perhaps the whimsical. Several of the essays, particularly that of Oscar Winther on "The Persistence of Horse-Drawn Transportation in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1865-1900," help to get away from anachronistic elements that slip into one's notions of the West. William T. Hagen's "Quanah Parker: Indian Judge" and John E. Ewers' "Mothers of the Mixed-Bloods: The Marginal Women in the History of the Upper Missouri" suggest many chapters of interesting history that can be written by understanding writers who do not get too technically sociological. The lack of any essay on the religious history of the West is unexplained. Probably the want of religious historians of these areas explains the lack of interest.

Certain non-western factors, such as the trend to the city, the decline of agricultural values, and certainly the latest changes in the means of transportation, have as much to do with the changed evaluation of western history as the change in the West itself. But there are always people who seem at home on marginal lands and some who are content to be identified with a locality where they can survive comfortably. The old West was chiefly a story of conquest, of striving toward a golden future. Some places in the West are continuing to grow and to aggrandize their inhabitants. But the West discussed in this symposium is something gone.

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