

*The Kickapoos: Lords of the Middle Border.* By A. M. Gibson. *The Civilization of the American Indian Series*, No. 70. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963. Pp. xv, 391. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$6.95.)

"Kickapoo" has probably been used more to refer to a cough syrup than to the Central Algonkian people that are studied in this work by the head of the Manuscript Division of the University of Oklahoma Library. The book is a straightforward historical narrative based almost exclusively on official reports written from the white man's point of view. The reader will find nothing on the culture of the tribe but will find a great deal about the migrations and political maneuverings of the Kickapoo from their first contact with the French "black robes" in the early seventeenth century to their reservation phase in the early twentieth century.

During their Midwest phase the Kickapoo had mixed success in dealing with the French, British, and Americans, all of whom valued their military aid and dreaded their enmity. After the French lost the Midwest, the Kickapoo adopted the British as their "Father" and attempted to stem the tide of American settlement from about 1780 to 1815. The more famous massacres in which the Kickapoo played a part are described in detail.

The period of Indian removal following the War of 1812 saw the half dozen independent bands of Kickapoo driven from their homes in Indiana and Illinois to the Osage River country of Missouri. The story becomes rather confused because the author attempts to follow these splinter groups in the wanderings which took them from the Midwest into the Plains and through the southern Plains as far south as northern Coahuila, Mexico.

The last group to leave Illinois was the band of Kennekuk, the "prophet," who formed his own religion and exhorted his followers to take up the plow. These Indians settled peacefully in present Brown County, Kansas, and had little to do with the other bands that ranged the frontier stealing horses, driving the Osage Indians from their homeland, and terrifying the Texas settlements.

The remainder of the book is devoted to the largely unsuccessful efforts of American officials to persuade the Kickapoo to give up their nomadic existence and to accept schools, missionaries, land allotments, and "civilization." The Kickapoo that remain on their reservations in the United States and Mexico are still remarkably independent and the least acculturated of all the Algonkian-speaking tribes.

Writing a history of an Indian tribe is a most difficult job despite the efforts of William Fenton, Wilcomb Washburn, and other ethno-historians to remove the thorns from the path of anyone who would make the attempt. A lifetime could be devoted to digesting the relevant historical, linguistic, and ethnological data; and one could only hope to produce the story of the Indian "from the inside" as John Mathews has done in his *Osages*.

Most of the numerous factual errors in this work flow, however, not from the choice of research methods but from lack of care in reading

the sources used. There was, for example, no "Kickapoo confederacy" during the early French contact period (p. 13), but simply a war between the Fox Indians and the French. The Kickapoo were not on the warpath in 1805 and 1806 (pp. 55, 57), but were very friendly with their white neighbors during that period. They did not participate in the Pigeon Roost massacre at all and they did not play the leading role in the attack on Fort Harrison (pp. 67-69). The O'Neal massacre took place in Missouri Territory, not in Illinois (p. 64), and so on.

The materials for writing a definitive history of the Kickapoo Indians are available, and in fact are listed in Gibson's extensive bibliography, but that history is still waiting to be written.

*Wheaton Central High School*  
*Wheaton, Illinois*

Michael A. McCabe

*Benjamin Logan, Kentucky Frontiersman.* By Charles Gano Talbert. ([Lexington]: University of Kentucky Press, 1962. Pp. ix, 332. Notes, bibliographical notes, index. \$7.50.)

*Benjamin Logan, Kentucky Frontiersman* is much more than a biography of an early settler who became one of the founding fathers of the commonwealth of Kentucky. It relates Logan's family background in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and later in the Holston Valley of eastern Tennessee before he moved to the Kentucky Bluegrass in 1775, just as that region was being settled. It then tells the story of his life in Kentucky until his sudden death from apoplexy in 1802. But Logan participated so much in the political and military life of Kentucky that his biography almost of necessity becomes a history of Kentucky from 1775 to 1802. The emphasis in this volume, however, is on the period from 1775 until 1792 when statehood was achieved.

Talbert gives much attention to Indian affairs, the prolonged Kentucky statehood movement, and the relations between residents of Kentucky and the Spanish who controlled the lower Mississippi. According to Talbert, the concern of Kentuckians about the ability and willingness of the government of the United States to protect them from the Indians and to protect their interests regarding trade down the Mississippi delayed the achievement of statehood. But Kentuckians were reassured and their ties to the Union strengthened by the failure of Congress to approve a trade treaty John Jay negotiated with the Spanish during the mid-1780's which would have closed the lower Mississippi to American trade for a quarter of a century and the increased responsibility which the United States assumed in protecting frontier settlers from Indian attacks during the late 1780's and early 1790's. Talbert apparently regards the possibility that Kentucky might not have entered the Union upon her detachment from Virginia as a potentially serious problem which never developed into significant proportions. He indicates that Kentucky's admission to the Union resulted in no small degree from the substantial understanding and patience, to say nothing of aid and support, which Virginia afforded Kentucky settlers, who were citizens of the Old Dominion until 1792.