

Book Reviews

Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862. By Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. ([Lexington]: University of Kentucky Press, 1965. Pp. xiv, 186. Notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$6.00.)

Late in the eighteenth century, under the inspiration of the humanitarian movement and the religious revivalism that were sweeping the country, Americans witnessed the formation of many Protestant missionary societies dedicated to bringing the heathens of the world to the benefits of civilization and Christianity. *Salvation and the Savage*, the corecipient of the McKnight Humanities Prize for American History in 1963, discusses those missionaries who chose the thankless but challenging task of Christianizing America's Indians. This brief monograph is a logically written, well-documented, and stimulating analysis of a neglected aspect of Indian-white relations.

Seeking to avoid the moral judgments usually found in books on Indian history, Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., combines the methodology of the historian with the comparative cultural approach of the anthropologist. He has examined the books, letters, pamphlets, and reports of the various Protestant denominations which operated in the American missionary field between 1787 and 1862 with regard to their aims, organization, and activities. Berkhofer has also investigated the response those activities enjoyed among sixteen tribes, ranging from the Senecas of New York to the Nez Percé of Idaho.

The author points out that successful results for the missionaries required a double transformation for the Indians, since Christianizing and civilizing were inextricably interwoven concepts. Not only were the natives to become Christians, but they also had to become carbon copies of the white man, thus making them lose their cultural identity. Besides the church, the general missionary establishment came to include a school and a farm. Indian children, however, found it difficult to be confined in stuffy classrooms, to toil on farms from dawn to dusk, or to be interested in, much less understand, sermons on the depravity of man.

The quick, easy conversions the missionaries had so naively expected never materialized. After years of labor most mission establishments could show only a handful of genuine converts, and most of those were half-breeds. Aside from the natural tendency of the Indians to resist change, the examples of other whites often added to the difficulties of the missionaries. Traders, trappers, and whiskey peddlers had a more tangible control over the Indian minds than did the men of God; and these individuals were seldom as principled or as "civilized" as the missionaries. Most frustrating, however, was the problem of what to do with the few Indians who did successfully make the change. Those unfortunate red men not only found themselves scorned by their brethren, but also rejected by the whites. Americans of the time were

not yet ready to accept the idea of a civilized Indian. As the author concludes, "the laborers in the Lord's vineyard were doomed not to reap the harvest they hoped because of their own cultural assumptions, the racial attitudes of their compatriots, and the persistence of aboriginal culture" (pp. 159-60).

The documentation and extensive bibliographical essay indicate that the author is familiar with the source material related to his subject. It is unfortunate, however, that despite the value of his topic and the almost unexplored mass of material at his disposal, he limited his text to only 160 pages. The narrative is generally well-balanced; but this reader wonders why the most important development in Indian-white relations of the pre-Civil War period, the Indian removal program, should have received such little attention. The program vitally concerned and affected many of the missionary societies. Moreover, the reader is left with the erroneous impression that Isaac McCoy fathered, as well as favored, the idea of removal (p. 101).

Aside from these general criticisms, *Salvation and the Savage* should prove interesting to the layman and worthwhile to the specialist.

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The Fist in the Wilderness. By David Lavender. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1964. Pp. xiv, 490. Maps, note on bibliography, bibliography and notes, index. \$5.95.)

The fur trade with the North American Indians had developed a definite pattern long before young Ramsey Crooks entered the trade in 1806. He served his apprenticeship at Montreal, at Mackinac Island, on the Missouri River, and at Astoria until 1816, when John Jacob Astor placed him in charge of the Great Lakes operation of the American Fur Company. In 1827 this company combined with Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Bernard Pratte and Company, of Saint Louis, in an attempt to control the fur trade from the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains. Crooks almost succeeded in establishing a monopoly from that date to 1832. His greatest obstacles were the Federal Intercourse Acts, the Federal Government Trade House System, Indian agents, rival traders, and his own unpredictable employees. The forces against him were too potent for even his frenetic zeal; and when he bought Astor's American Fur Company in 1834, he secured the pinnacle of his ambition but a business which went bankrupt in 1842.

Ramsey Crooks was an able trader of wide vision, insatiable ambition, and boundless confidence in himself. He knew the meaning and the methods of pressure on an adversary, and those who opposed his plans were sure to be attacked by any means at his command. Crooks failed to understand that his successes against other traders ultimately depended upon the name and financial resources of Astor; that his own energy and abilities were not enough to prevent occasional failures in his grandiose and monopolistic schemes. When Astor retired, Crooks inevitably destroyed the American Fur Company.