Kolko neatly summarizes some of his views near the end of the book when he asserts: "If Roosevelt played the role of the self-anointed and fundamentally conservative defender of the best interests of the railroads, and Taft the role of his politically inept but well-intentioned echo, Wilson was to assume the part of the nationalistic advocate of the railroads who allowed the railroads to define his role for him" (p. 208). By the end of the period the railroad served the government and the government seemed to serve the railroads. This mutual relationship was disadvantageous to the railroads in the ensuing period, and the book closes with the railroads about to move into an era of heightened competition with rival modes of transportation. To this day the industry struggles to keep the share of the market which remains after those private and unregulated carriers have skimmed much of the choice movement. If Professor Kolko were to do a series of books on influences over the allocation of resources for transport, he would now write of the power of the public purse, private fleets, the strategic role of the Bureau of the Budget, and the activities of the Department of Commerce. The Interstate Commerce Commission would probably not claim much of his attention.

Indiana University  

L. Leslie Waters

*Klondike Saga: The Chronicle of a Minnesota Gold Mining Company.*

By Carl L. Lokke. (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, for the Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1965. Pp. xiii, 211. Notes, illustrations, maps, appendixes, index. $5.50.)

The late Carl L. Lokke, former chief of the foreign affairs branch of the National Archives, has presented in *Klondike Saga* a narrative of the Monitor Gold Mining and Trading Company of sixteen Minnesotans who went to Western Canada in the 1890's. His story is based upon diaries, letters, and newspaper articles the Minnesotans wrote during that trip. Most of the party were young Scandinavian immigrants to the United States. The author's grandfather, Lars Gundersen, was the company's leader. Through their narrative one may catch glimpses of the gold rush at its peak. A kaleidoscope of prospectors' experiences, it describes forms of transportation, climbing the Chilkoot Pass, murderous snowslides, boat building, shooting the Whitehorse rapids, and prospecting in the Yukon and Stewart tributaries. Much of the book treats life on the creeks and wilderness survival. When others left the Stewart River country because they failed to strike it rich, the Monitors continued digging for a new Bonanza. But they never found it.

In his prologue the author remarks that those familiar with the story of Norwegian-Americans will find few surprises in this account of their activities in the Yukon country. They displayed there the same characteristics as the pioneers of the Middle West—physical stamina, self-discipline, willingness to endure hardships, and independence of spirit. Like their Dawson contemporaries, they visited saloons, dance-halls, and gambling places. Yet their chronicles do not dwell on examples of human frailty. Rather they recounted spectacular scenery and problems common to those who toiled for gold.
Lokke contends that the venture proved a modern parallel to earlier Viking exploration, that in spirit they were close to youthful adventurers of all places and times. Further, he believes that the experience quickened the Americanization of the European-born. For "the free and easy life of the mining frontier soon broke down separatist, old-country patterns and substituted new ones native to the land" (p.191). The best writing in the volume is the description of the Chilkoot ordeal and danger and violent death from the deadly avalanches in the mountains and boat-smashing boulders in the tricky rivers of the North.

Although the Monitors returned to the United States without gold, they felt themselves wealthier men, reminiscent of the Arctic tale that in his search the sourdough seldom finds gold but often discovers himself.

Alaska Methodist University

Robert Allen Frederick


After the death of William Jennings Bryan, H. L. Mencken commented on the career of the Great Commoner: "He came into life a hero, a Galahad, in bright and shining armor. He was passing out a poor mountebank." In so writing, Mencken gave expression to what was to become a standard evaluation. Yet, as Lawrence W. Levine proves conclusively, that evaluation can no longer be considered satisfactory. Defender of the Faith, according to the author, originated in an effort to discover why a man who had spent most of his life as a crusader for social and economic reform ended his days as the champion of an outdated rural evangelism. A careful reading of the record, however, led Professor Levine to the view that such a transformation never really took place. As he sees it, the central problem of Bryan's last years is not one of understanding why Bryan changed, but why he proved incapable of change. In addressing himself to this more complex problem, he makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the period during and after World War I.

The major premise of this book, then, is that Bryan's last ten years were "a finely structured microcosm of his entire career" (p. 358). To demonstrate the validity of this contention Levine probes deeply into the congeries of beliefs—the faith—which lay behind Bryan's efforts for world peace, his continued pleading for reform measures such as woman suffrage, his advocacy of prohibition, and his identification with fundamentalism. Among the central concepts of the Commoner's faith were his Jeffersonian-Jacksonian trust in the people and his distrust of business privilege, concepts which are evident in the early Bryan who would not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

Later in life, after World War I had come, Bryan "attempted to convince the government to call a halt to the process which he claimed