

sent an exemplary synthesis of information available only in much longer, more detailed, and less readable works. The discussion of federal assistance to highway construction programs brings together in very brief fashion all the major pieces of federal legislation since 1916.

According to the author the history of the automotive industry is divided into roughly three periods. The first, from 1893 to 1921, was one of experimentation and growing sophistication in the garage, and, despite Ford's dominance after 1915, one of reasonably healthy competition in the marketplace. The major problems were those of technology and production; they were solved by the invention of the electric starter which assured the triumph of the gasoline engine over its competitors and the perfection of the assembly line which ushered in the age of mass production. The second period, from 1921 to 1945, witnessed the maturing of the industry. The depression of 1920-1921 hit the leaders hard and forced many of the newer and smaller companies out of the business. After the shake-up General Motors emerged stronger than ever, Chrysler Corporation appeared as a strong contender, and the Ford Motor Company began its gradual decline. By 1929 the trend toward oligopoly was evident; the great depression and World War II only strengthened the tendency. Within the industry planned obsolescence was introduced to combat the competition from used cars, techniques of distribution were greatly improved, and the rise of the UAW necessitated far-ranging changes in management-labor relations. Since 1945 Rae finds few major innovations within the industry. The outstanding features in the automotive world have been in highway construction and design and the explosion of suburbia, both the results of increased automobile usage.

The only unsatisfactory portion of this book is the discussion of social change engendered by the automobile. Here, it seems to me, the author has been content merely to catalogue the obvious and sometimes to overstate the role of the automobile in the sweeping social changes so obvious in our times. Happily, this is a small failing in an otherwise informative and valuable book.

*Indiana University, Fort Wayne*

Lawrence C. Kelly

*Idol of the West: The Fabulous Career of Rollin Mallory Daggett.*  
by Francis Phelps Weisenburger. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1965. Pp. ix, 220. Illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$6.95.)

Here is a good book and a fascinating yarn. Written by an eminent American historian, it offers in about two hundred tightly packed pages a biography of a lesser figure worth our acquaintance, a vivid experience in the Gold Rush to California, an exciting record of mining-boom days in the mountain regions of California and Nevada, and a thrilling account of the lusty, reckless, swaggering, sensuous crew of artists who built a literature out of the "magnificent, grand rocks" and the wild, rampant urban frontier of the Far West.

Rollin Daggett, the story's central figure, was born of New England parents in northern New York, not far from the Thousand Islands, in 1831. While a small lad, he continued with his family the transmigration to northwestern Ohio, where the Black Swamp frontier town of Defiance became home through the time of his youth. Daggett's early exposure as a printer's devil at eighteen to the trade that attracted him to a writing and editing career was interrupted by the cry of "Gold!" in the West, and early in 1850 he hit the trail for California.

Two years in the gold fields apparently were rewarding and late in 1852, Daggett joined J. Macdonough Foard in San Francisco in founding and publishing for eight years the *Golden Era*, the Pacific Coast's most important literary journal of the nineteenth century. Bret Harte's earliest preserved works appeared in the *Era* during Daggett's editorship. After two years of editing the San Francisco *Daily Evening Mirror*, 1860-1862, Daggett headed for Virginia City and the Comstock Lode, "by . . . to make money." After establishing a brokerage firm there, he was soon writing for the *Territorial Enterprise*, along with a brilliant, roistering coterie of youthful reporters that included Joseph T. Goodman, the editor, Dennis E. McCarthy, along with Goodman a proprietor of the paper, Dan De Quille (William Wright), Samuel L. Clemens (who became Mark Twain on this paper), and Charles Carroll Goodwin. For a time, 1874-1875 and 1877-1878, Daggett edited the *Enterprise*.

In Virginia City he also gave part of his time to politics. In 1862 he was elected to the Nevada Territorial Legislature, and between 1867 and 1876 he served as clerk of the United States Circuit and District courts of Nevada. In 1876 he was a Hayes elector, and two years later he was sent to Congress for a term. Defeated for reelection, he was named by Arthur minister to Hawaii in 1882 and served there until 1885.

Meanwhile, his writing—prose and poetry—continued for newspapers and magazines. A novel entitled *Braxton's Bar* appeared in 1882, and the materials were gathered for a book on *The Legends and Myths of Hawaii*, published in 1888 by Mark Twain.

In Congress Daggett fought for the equalization of railroad freight rates, free coinage of silver, and public land benefits for his adopted state; and at one point he worked for a copyright law that would be advantageous to his old friend, Twain. As minister he strove to create and maintain a situation and atmosphere favorable to ultimate annexation. Although he was a nationalist, he was, above all, a westerner who fancied himself a frontiersman and perpetuated his view of the West in voluminous writings. To him, air and space were the fortune of the West and the preservative of American life, while "poverty and crime and discontent nurse schemes of disorder in the narrow ways and crowded tenements of the great cities, and fill the air with threatened violence" (p. 69).

On a superb descriptive background of the early nineteenth-century towns of Richville, New York, and Defiance, Ohio, and of the gold fields, San Francisco, and Virginia City, Professor Weisenburger has painted

a rich portrait of this ebullient figure. Daggett could carouse all night with Artemus Ward and reporters on the *Enterprise*, receive official guests with his galluses slapping his thighs while minister to Hawaii, enjoy the corrupt political fray of Nevada in the 1870's and 1880's, stretch the truth in his mountain tales, or write lines like these:

And tardy Summer, garlanded with flowers,  
Trips down the hillside like a wayward child,  
Her garments fringed with frost; but in her smile  
The valleys turn to green, and tender flowers  
Woke from their slumber by the song of birds,  
Reach up to kiss the dimpled mouth of May.

*Kent State University*

James H. Rodabaugh