

*The Rise of the West, 1754-1830.* By Francis S. Philbrick. (New York: Harper and Row, 1965. Pp. xvii, 398. Notes, maps, illustrations, appendix, index. \$6.00.)

In American history the West is not only an area, a population, or a manner of living but an expression of the love of men and women as they search for better lives. In this addition to *The New American Nation Series*, Francis Philbrick proposes to sacrifice the romance and idealism of the West in favor of truth. The author correctly treats the early West as a part of the British Empire. He examines the problems and subsequent weak solutions of British colonial policy between 1754 and the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War. Americans quickly discovered that independence was not a panacea, and that the newly formed Confederation government had inherited many difficulties. Conflicting land claims among states, the validity of individual land grants, and the controlling of Indian relations pointed to the need for regulation of western land. Confederation committees chosen for organization of government in the Northwest squarely faced these problems. Philbrick contrasts the land ordinance of 1785 with its famous successor two years later and contends that the Jeffersonian stamp of the earlier ordinance gave way to a plan by eastern conservatives led by Rufus King and Nathan Dane. Philbrick's argument—previously presented by Merrill Jensen—makes certain that the reader credits the Ordinance of 1787 to Nathan Dane.

This book is something of a revisionist effort. The author minimizes the importance that the West had in affecting democratic institutions and criticizes the scholarship—or lack of scholarship—of Frederick Jackson Turner. The author declares that “Turner could never even have read the Ordinance of 1787 not seemingly before 1899” (p. 368). He states that the Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan territories violated the indentured servitude and slavery provisions of 1787. He describes how squatters threatened recently arrived speculators attending government land auctions and how commonplace was the frontier institution of lynching. Philbrick concludes that “Turner's frontier was totally unreal” (p. 370).

The author provides a sound analysis of the neglected relationship between Indian removal and public land policy. The clamoring of land-hungry settlers had its effect upon public officials. Difficulties in extinguishing Indian claims sometimes forced the government to buy parcels of land several times. Through 1830 the cost of buying peace from the Indians, of purchasing foreign land, and of managing the federal lands was greater than the proceeds from the land sales. Not measurable were the ties created between the West and federal government. Through her congressional spokesmen the West constantly worked for more favorable land laws.

Despite its generally high quality of scholarship the book shows certain defects. The author stresses diplomacy involving the West but omits a substantial amount of social and political history. He entirely dismisses pioneer settlement beyond Ohio prior to 1830. Thus the settlement and eventual admission of the large tier of states extending from Indiana and Illinois to Alabama and Mississippi are ignored.

During this time questions of statehood and slavery spiraled into a crisis, but the author makes no mention of the Missouri Compromise. Of the states included in the study, nine had a population over fifty thousand by 1820, and their influence in the affairs of the nation cannot be dismissed. There are also minor errors: Fort Harmar is misspelled; the map showing the routes of Generals Hull and Harrison in the War of 1812 is incorrect (p. 267).

The editors, because of ample citations in the footnotes, have deleted a bibliography and included a historiographical note on the Turner thesis.

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*American Forts Yesterday and Today.* By Bruce Grant. (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1965. Pp. 381. Illustrations, maps, glossary, selected bibliography, index. \$5.95.)

It appears that many Americans suffer from an edifice complex. How else can one explain the rapid rise in the number of books written on forts? At least six of them have appeared on the market during the past three years, and a number of others are in the production stage. They are limited, however, to military posts, to the fur trade, or to those found in a particular region of the country. Forts of the American West seem to be especially attractive to writers, historians, artists, photographers, publishers, and book buyers, if quantity is a valid indicator. In this newest addition to the list, Bruce Grant goes one step further. He attempts to cover them all—every stockade, palisade, blockhouse, redoubt, garrison, camp, mission, shack, ruin, and rockpile, which at one time or another someone in wisdom or foolishness decided to dub a fort. There are more than 1,200 entries, each of them a monument or a memory to the ingenuity of man.

The author has a sense of balance for which we may be grateful. Descriptions vary in length according to the importance of the fort. In most cases, the basic information is included. Grant usually gives the dates of the establishment and the abandonment of each fort and frequently includes a statement of its significance. If remains exist, they are discussed in detail. The book is also easy to use. It is divided into sections by geographical area, and forts are grouped by states. The eight regional maps are crowded but adequate. The drawings by Lorence Bjorklund are delightful. Although lacking in detail, they capture the spirit of the times and occasionally evoke an intended chuckle.

The book has a fatal flaw. One cannot depend on its accuracy. Some of the descriptions appear to be correct, but others are obviously not. Take, for example, the treatment of Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Grant devotes a full page (p. 258) to the post but commits so many errors, both common and uncommon, that it would take several pages to recount and correct them. One need mention only a few to cast a long shadow on the research of the author.