Book Reviews

incidence, either aroused this reviewer's interest or offended his sense of objectivity—or his predilections.

With no intent to render an injustice to any author's contribution, a few chapters do warrant particular attention. The weaknesses and strengths of our state government are perceptively analyzed in the second chapter. Indiana, it develops, is in good shape, though numerous pertinent and constructive criticisms are made. Chapter three, with its sprightly style, is possibly the most readable and entertaining of the nineteen, though observations here and elsewhere in the book about Indiana's recent reapportionment bear reconsideration. Why a chapter about "Hoosier Women"? Read this hard-hitting account of the distaff majority, and the answer resounds with portentous virility. The burgeoning business of higher education is accorded thorough and intelligible treatment, but the actual and potential contributions of such institutions, excepting the two largest state universities, are afforded rather cavalier consideration.

Though varied in style and interpretation, the chapters, with gratifying exceptions, have several common thematic characteristics. None indicates that civil rights pertains to anything in addition to the racial issue. The equalitarian call persists in its frequency and misinterpretation. Science and technology, the knowledge explosion, the population explosion, social responsibility, urbanization, and federal aid are the standard concerns. The private sector generally succumbs to the public sector.

The book, however, is rewarding. Virtually no mechanical errors mar the pages. Though space allows little analysis in depth, the chapters do provide informative and pleasant reading. Hoosiers, and others, will no doubt be amazed at the churning activity generated within this heartland of America. They should also have a better appreciation for Indiana's heritage and a keener anticipation of its future after being so self-appraised.

And one last word. No chapter about religion is included. Considering the deep involvement of religion in the whole fabric of Indiana's history one wonders why. Was there insufficient space, was its inclusion overlooked, or was its omission a sign of the times?

Indiana State University

Donald B. Scheick


Rachel Peden's book, The Land, The People, gently evokes memories of a rural America that has passed. At the same time it quietly reminds us that even in this urban world family farms still exist and family farmers still farm, in part at least, for the sheer joy of tilling their own soil and being their own men. Gently too, but perhaps less so, the author insists that "everyone needs—in fact, must have—occasional reacquaintance with the land" (pp. 229-300).

In swiftly flowing passages Mrs. Peden, graduate of Indiana University, farm wife, and columnist for the Indianapolis Star and Muncie
Press, relives for the reader her childhood days on an Indiana farm, traces the history of her husband's family whose ancestors had taken up farms in Owen County the year Indiana became a state, and finally writes of her own life on the farm since her marriage. In doing this she describes with obvious delight and considerable objectivity her father, the learned orchardist; her mother; and numerous members of her own and the Peden family. Of the people she describes, she gives the most attention to Walter Peden, her husband's father.

Walter Peden lived to be ninety-four years old. Mellowed in his later years, he wrote numerous letters to the author and became a never-ending source of farm and family lore. He read much and delved occasionally into history, and perhaps it is to him that Mrs. Peden owes the one or two factual errors in her book. Missouri, for example, did not come into the Union as a free state. Nor would it have been possible for Levi Beem, Walter Peden's grandfather, to have remained a Republican the rest of his life after voting for President Monroe. In any case, the author builds the story of the Peden family in Indiana around the character of Walter Peden. It is an interesting story, filled with thoughtful observations about farms and farming and the way people managed in rural Indiana when farming was the nation's number one industry. For the historian the record of Mrs. Peden's early life and that of the Peden family will be the most interesting.

The book is not only about farm people and farm ways but about the land as well, and the relationship of the land to the people. With skillful transitions, somewhat reminiscent of Henry Thoreau, with whom she is obviously familiar, the author blends the stories of her people and her own experiences on the farm with perceptive insights about the goodness of the land, its productiveness, its permanence, and its ability to teach valuable lessons to all who would learn from it.

Of her basic conviction that man must periodically return to the soil, Mrs. Peden writes: "To say man is of the earth and that his well-being, even his very survival, depends on an occasional return to it is not enough. It is important to try to find out why this is true" (p. xii). And this, indeed, is apparently what she set out to do. It was a chore of much greater magnitude than weeding her garden, and perhaps, in the end, as unprofitable. But no matter. If she convinces no one except those, like the reviewer, who needed no convincing, it was worth the effort.

Texas Western College
Wayne E. Fuller


Philander Prescott spent more than forty years on the upper Mississippi River frontier. In 1819 he left his native New York State to join his brother at Detroit, but he soon moved to the new military