

*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.

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*The Recollections of Philander Prescott: Frontiersman of the Old Northwest, 1819-1862.* Edited by Donald Dean Parker. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966. Pp. xi, 272. Notes, maps, illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. \$5.95.)

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

post at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, which was eventually called Fort Snelling. Except for brief intervals he spent the rest of his life in that region as sutler's clerk, fur trader, Indian interpreter, and farmer. His marriage to the daughter of a Sioux chieftain in 1823 gave him an added attachment to the area. Although a man respected for his integrity and hard work, Prescott was not one of the important men on the frontier. He had little formal education, never succeeded well in business, and attained public stature only as interpreter for the government and as superintendent of Indian farming experiments near Fort Snelling. His unimpressive career ended tragically when he was murdered by the Indians in the Sioux uprising of 1862.

Yet Prescott's recollections, which he wrote about 1860 at the behest of Governor Alexander Ramsey, are a significant document of early Minnesota. In unaffected style he recorded his experiences from the time he left home to 1852, ten years before his death, and supplied important insights into the life of the solitary fur traders; the relations between Indians, traders, Indian agents, and army officers at Fort Snelling; and the gradual development of the territory. It would be difficult to write the early history of the Fort Snelling area without reliance on Prescott's work.

It is helpful, then, to have this first complete printing of the recollections, to which the editor has added selections from Prescott's official reports as farming superintendent; a geneological appendix on Prescott's family; and miscellaneous supplementary notes about persons, places, and other topics that appear in the recollections. The editorial technique, however, raises serious questions. Parker indicates that he has divided Prescott's longhand manuscript into sentences, paragraphs, and chapters, but he asserts, "The spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, although inconsistent and sometimes incorrect, have been followed with only a few exceptions" (p. x). This statement is decidedly misleading. A comparison of the printed text with selected pages of the original manuscript shows innumerable cases in which spelling has been corrected, capitalization changed, words omitted, punctuation supplied, and abbreviations expanded. Whereas Prescott wrote a narrative that is run together and careless with regard to punctuation and spelling, Parker has supplied a text with neat sentences and paragraphs and impeccable spelling and punctuation. This might be legitimate were the reader fairly warned, but it destroys the flavor and thus some of the value of the original account. Canons for printing manuscripts in literal form have become well established in our day and excellent examples abound. It is to be regretted that the editor and publisher of this work did not follow them. Scholars who want more than the simple factual content of Prescott's recollections will still have to rely on the original manuscript in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.