

here he introduces new materials, such as a hitherto unknown set of letters by Louis McLane to his son about the Oregon negotiations in London and McLane's political ambitions. Also Sellers has the advantage of much earlier research in the British archives by Frederick Merk and others. Unfortunately, however, he has failed to use the very revealing dispatches of the British minister to the United States, Sir Richard Pakenham. In assessing cause and effect he has not always been careful to allow for the slow communications of the 1840's. Thus he reproves McLane for his disloyal letters of January 2 and 3, 1846, in which McLane informed John C. Calhoun of conciliatory spirit in England and "unwittingly encouraged" the latter's peace movement in Congress (p. 383). Calhoun could not have received the letters much before January 26, when McLane's official dispatch of January 3 arrived in Washington; and by Sellers' own account the peace bloc was in full operation by January 12 (p. 368). McLane may not have been wholly loyal to his superiors, but his information came too late to have decisive effect.

The account of the coming of the Mexican War sheds little new light on the Mexican background, being based primarily on American diplomatic correspondence and a few standard secondary accounts. By implication, however, this emphasis suggests how limited was Polk's knowledge of Mexican character and institutions, and the American political aspects of the declaration of war are well handled. Sellers has chosen an unfortunate title for the chapter dealing with Mexican negotiation: "A Hard War Averted—and an Easy War Gained." The term "easy" as applied to the Mexican War is probably intended to represent Polk's attitude, but this should be made clear. In any case, as the author will surely demonstrate in his final volume, the Mexican War proved to be far from easy and its hidden cost to the American people dismayingly high.

The abundance of Sellers' materials and the complexity of the problems with which he deals make for a crowded, sometimes opaque style and slow reading. Nevertheless, he has written an impressive, scholarly account of national politics at one of the critical points in American political history.

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*Harper's University: The Beginnings.* By Richard J. Storr. *A History of the University of Chicago.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966. Pp. xvi, 411. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical notes, index. \$8.95.)

This book, based on an impressive amount of research, is concerned with the founding of the University of Chicago and its first sixteen years under the aggressive leadership of its initial president, William Rainey Harper. In making this study Storr had free access to the extensive records of the university and also to the relevant material in the Rockefeller archives—which records seem to cover almost every aspect of the founding and early history of the institution. Moreover,

the University of Chicago gave Storr further help in the form of free time and research assistants during the years this study was under way. The result is a richly informed, thoughtful book.

Thorstein Veblen concludes *The Higher Learning in America* by saying that "as seen from the point of view of the higher learning, the academic executive and all his works are anathema, and should be discontinued . . .; and . . . the governing board . . . has the same value and should . . . be lost in the same shuffle." But, as Storr makes abundantly clear, without the money and other support by John D. Rockefeller, the captain of industry, and without the ideas and drive of the captain of erudition, William Rainey Harper, there would have been no University of Chicago; and higher learning in the United States would have been much the poorer in consequence.

The University of Chicago was chartered in 1890 as a kind of successor to the old University of Chicago, a Baptist-sponsored institution that had collapsed in 1886. Baptists, both clergymen and laymen, had begun to cast about for leadership and benefactors to establish another institution under the same name; and they found them in Harper and Rockefeller. Harper accepted the presidency after some hesitation and with steady and generous support from Rockefeller for the next decade and a half worked with great energy to create an outstanding institution. Harper quickly brought together a distinguished group of teachers and scholars and exhibited what one of Rockefeller's agents described as a "tendency to absorb into the University everything that is loose" (p. 344). Hence it is not surprising that there was never enough money to go around. Although Rockefeller was generous and there were other benefactors, the University of Chicago continued to present during the Harper years the somewhat curious picture of a wealthy institution almost constantly harassed by deficits. It was even darkly hinted that the university was "an organized effort to rob Rockefeller of his wealth" (p. 357).

The book is concerned primarily with the internal history of the university and probably gives as detailed a picture of the establishment and early conflicts as we are apt to have. This fine study will not soon be displaced. It is to be regretted, however, that Storr on the basis of his great knowledge of the university does not offer an assessment of the larger impact that Harper and his university had in deepening and broadening higher education throughout the United States. Perhaps this will come in a later book.

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*Descriptive Bibliography of Civil War Manuscripts in Illinois.* By William L. Burton. ([Evanston]: Northwestern University Press, for The Civil War Centennial Commission of Illinois, 1966. Pp. xv, 393. Index. \$8.50.)

Some state Civil War centennial commissions organized pageants and staged re-enactments, making considerable hoop-la-la and gaining headlines for a day. After the tumult and the shouting died down,