

mention is made of federal mineral leasing policy in Michigan of the same period. It may not be fair to ask more of the author than he intended to do, and certainly the first experience of the American government in dealing with its minerals needed attention, yet one could wish for a treatment of lead mining of the scale and with the technological knowledge that Rodman Paul has given to gold mining.

The story is not a pleasant one. It reveals a low standard of public morals in officials charged with the administration of the lands, the leases, and collections in the lead district and the tarnished reputation of the entrepreneurs engaged in the mining. The author finds that the leasing system seemed to work fairly well at the outset, which is somewhat surprising, but that it soon broke down. Through dissimulation, influential people in the region, including prominent politicians, were able to persuade the government that much lead-bearing land contained no minerals so that it could be sold.

Administration of the leasing, collection, and sale of the rent lead was handled by the War Department rather than by the General Land Office. This divided responsibility did not work for the best. The author has used the local deed records and is aware of the speculation in lead-bearing land carried on by local people supplied with capital from the east. He has made no effort, however, to show the extent of their purchases. He is concerned with the "profitability" of mining and smelting, but the operations were on such a small, individualistic scale and participated in so widely that he is not able to be very concrete. Some attention is given to the gradual shift from mining to agriculture.

Widespread discontent with leasing and a concerted drive in Congress to end the system, led by that redoubtable champion of free enterprise, "Old Bullion" Benton, resulted in 1846 in what the author calls the "desocialization" of the mineral reservation policy. The reserved lands were to be sold as other public lands were sold, first at public auction and thereafter at private entry, except that no preemption rights were to be recognized until after the public offering. Tracts on which mines were actually being worked were to be offered in small lots at a minimum price of \$2.50 an acre, and working mines then under lease were not to be sold until the leases expired. Wright has produced a useful account of a small segment of a big and much needed history of federal mineral policy.

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*Newspapers on the Minnesota Frontier, 1849-1860.* By George S. Hage. ([St. Paul]: Minnesota Historical Society, 1967. Pp. ix, 176. Illustrations, appendix, notes, index. \$4.50.)

Much newspaper history is no more than superficial chronology shored up by a liberal use of quotations. The present book fits more into that genre than anything else, but not entirely. The author,

professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota, begins his account with the publication of the first newspaper in Minnesota in 1849 and finds 1860 a justifiable cut-off point because that was the year the telegraph line reached St. Paul.

He recognizes in the foreword that "One approaches research in a specialized segment of regional history hoping it is justified as a part of the whole." Such an approach is justified, but Hage forces the reader to perceive the relationships between his treatment of certain characteristics of the frontier press and that which others have observed elsewhere. These include the importance of public printing contracts to the foundation of early newspapers, the promotional and town-boosting function of the frontier editor which had more than a little to do with determining the trend of Western urbanization, and the extreme partisanship of most local newspapers.

However, Hage has set out to write a history of Minnesota journalism during a limited period, and that is what he has accomplished, albeit with a parochialism that is sometimes frustrating to the general reader. As almost always happens in journalism history, he treats the newspaper as though it were an editorial entity only, with only perfunctory attention to advertising and subscription. Nowhere does he treat the early newspapers as business institutions or attempt to show their place in the emerging economy of territory and state. But, then, the paucity of personal and business records of early editors often hamstrings the historian in this area, too. While Hage does include the whole of Minnesota journalism in his scope, his emphasis is on newspapers in the St. Paul area. An appendix lists all the newspapers involved.

Hage goes into considerable detail in recounting the political positions of the major newspapers. This effort, although appropriate to such a study, involves him in a forced rehash of early political history in which the significance, if any, of the attendant editorial sound and fury is not clearly indicated. At the same time, he does give a clear idea of the general pattern of content, which, incidentally, shows no departure from the norm for that period.

A frontier historian would appreciate more analysis of the background of the early editors, the areas from which they emigrated to Minnesota, and where they went next. Some of that information is present, to be sure, in brief identifications and in the observation that lawyers, editors, and printers predominated among the first Minnesota editors.

In all fairness to Hage's conscientious research, clarity of writing, and controlled organization, it should be pointed out that his book is of considerable value to subject and area specialists. Because this review is intended for non-Minnesota readers, it deliberately views the book from the vantage point of one who would have wanted some useful generalizations or, at least, more indications of relationships.