

Although primarily a specialist's book for specialists, the general reader will not find this work forbidding. It is attractively manufactured; the numerous tables and maps are well done; and the indispensable footnotes are at the bottom of the page, a real boon in this case. One minor error was noted: Henry Clay Dean is mistakenly listed (p. 217) as a speculator who attained a seat in Congress.

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Before Mark Twain: A Sampler of Old, Old Times on the Mississippi. Edited by John Francis McDermott. *Travels on the Western Waters.* Edited by John Francis McDermott. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968. Pp. xxxiii, 298. Notes, illustrations, index. \$15.00.)

The casual reader of Mark Twain is probably unaware of the fact that although Twain gave the classical account of life on the Mississippi River he was not the literary discoverer of that stream. Indeed long before Huck and Jim took their immortal cruise on the raft, many other adventurers had become familiar with the western waters: explorers, merchants, slave traders, missionaries, backwoodsmen, keelboatmen, and gamblers. A surprising number of them were articulate and literate, and some of their accounts have the vividness and immediacy if not perhaps the nostalgia of Clemens' own record.

With the present volume John Francis McDermott launches a fascinating new series of books about the rivers of the Middle West, either anthologies of material gathered from miscellaneous sources or new editions of titles long out of print and not generally available. Thus we are promised fresh editions of Christian Schultz, Zadok Cramer, George H. DeVol, and J. C. Beltrami. This series should prove invaluable.

Before Mark Twain presents a wide spectrum of fluvial life, with the emphasis generally on the river rather than on the settlements along its banks although both St. Louis and New Orleans receive some attention. Steamboat travel on the Mississippi before the Civil War was both exciting and hazardous. A boat was vulnerable in many ways: it could run aground and be battered by the river current, it could be speared by a sawyer or pierced by a floating tree, it could be blown sky high by an explosion which was often caused by the captain's passion to win a steamboat race and by his willingness to feed the boilers with turpentine or tar as well as cordwood. Few steamboats survived more than two or three years on the Ohio and Mississippi, but this high incidence of disaster did not prevent the builders from fitting out their vessels with elegant furnishings and providing passengers with sumptuous meals and well stocked bars.

Yet this is not to say that river travel was always comfortable. Slaves, immigrants, and the indigent crowded the upper decks; sanitary arrangements were primitive, and space for sleeping was often inadequate even if one had blankets and a mattress. Mosquitoes proved troublesome; the engines were

noisy; the smoke stacks belched black fumes. Sand bars often brought the vessel to a violent stop. Inadequate railings allowed men to slip overboard. Gambling and drinking were permitted most of the twenty-four hours.

McDermott has drawn from a wide variety of sources: the chronicles of American and British travellers, contemporary magazines, St. Louis newspapers. The reader will find here Timothy Flint's description of the variety of river boats, Schultz' amusing sketch of an Indian band which made eerie music out of enormous kettles and the joints of sugar cane, the actor Joe Cowell's comment that a Mississippi steamboat was a "high-pressure prison," Thomas Hamilton's lugubrious dismissal of the river as a place of "solemn gloom," and John Bradbury's graphic account of the New Madrid earthquake as it felt to terrified voyagers on a keelboat. Other travellers testified to the abundance of the food, the picturesqueness of the woodyards where the steamboats replenished their supply of fuel, the kaleidoscopic scenery which unrolled in actuality like a John Banvard panorama in miniature.

Every anthologist naturally faces a problem in selection. A reader might regret the omission here of anything by Charles Dickens or Captain Marryat or Francis Parkman. Basil Hall is not represented, and one looks in vain for that superb account of the social milieu on a Mississippi steamboat which Herman Melville gives in chapter two of *The Confidence Man*. *Au contraire* there are T. B. Thorpe and C. A. Murray and J. S. Robb and J. M. Field. There are some twenty pages of illustrations by Jacob A. Dallas and a handful of cartoons by an early artist named Arrowsmith. And there are excellent preliminary remarks and headnotes by the editor. *Before Mark Twain* is vivid description and important social history.

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The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815. By Marshall Smelser. *The New American Nation Series*. Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968. Pp. xiv, 369. Notes, illustrations, select bibliography, index. \$7.95.)

The task which Professor Smelser set for himself in offering this survey volume was to blend together into a coherent narrative the great body of historical writings on the period from 1801 to 1815 published since the appearance of Edward Channing's volume on the Jeffersonians in the *American Nation* series in 1906. That he has done this with care and diligence is unquestioned; the heavily footnoted volume is a storehouse of references to a half century of scholarship. Moreover, he has lifted his work from the shadow of Henry Adams, whose monumental study has long dominated surveys of the period. Yet the volume is not fully satisfying as a summation of current scholarship in the period. The author's decisions on what is important to be reported, what findings or interpretations of scholars should be accepted, and what should be ignored, are based on subjective