



Book Reviews

A History of the Middle West: From the Beginning to 1970.

By Kenneth R. Walker. (Little Rock: Pioneer Press, 1972. Pp. xvii, 533. Notes, illustrations, selected bibliography, index. \$9.95.)

This pioneer volume attempts to provide a brief yet comprehensive general history of the American Midwest. Geographically it covers the area sometimes known as the North Central States, twelve states from the Kansas-Dakota tier east to Ohio. Chronologically the scope extends from the ice age to 1970. More than a score of topics are given special extended treatment. The book contains sixty-nine consecutively numbered chapters which are organized into six major parts. Each chapter is further subdivided into separately captioned sections. The first part (pp. 3-68) provides a general setting and a narrative of European exploration and other events from the sixteenth century to 1800. Part VI (pp. 481-94) is a summary account of the Middle West since 1940. The four central parts, which comprise the major portion of the book, take up "The Young Middle West" (1801-1841), "The Disruptive Period" (1841-1877), "The Middle West Comes of Age" (1864-1900), and "Progressivism, Conservatism, and Pragmatism" (1900-194). They are structured symmetrically and are of approximately equal length. Each, in general, provides a chapter or more on the admission of states, political issues, and political personalities, and a dozen or so separate chapters on settlement, agriculture, transportation, mining and manufacturing, labor, religion, education, social and cultural life, and other topics. Emphasis is broadly distributed, with politics, war and foreign affairs, and transportation receiving perhaps the greatest attention. Special features include eighty-two illustrations (seventy of them are portraits), a classified bibliography of about 1,200 items, and an index. There are no tables, charts, maps, or graphs.

As a pioneering effort to bring together a vast amount of material into very limited space the book deserves high praise. The style is clear, simple, and direct. Several dozen errors

are apparently all quite trivial, although the transposition of type on pages ninety and ninety-one is annoying. No explicit attempt is made to advocate any special interpretation or hypothesis, and there are no sweeping spiritual or psychological generalizations. The book is comparable neither to Graham Hutton's *Midwest at Noon*, John J. Murray's *Heritage of the Middle West*, Horace Merrill's *Bourbon Democracy of the Middle West*, nor Russel Nye's *Midwestern Progressive Politics*; it resembles to a slight extent the major works of Beverly W. Bond, Jr., R. Carlyle Buley, and Henry C. Hubbart, which covered much of the subject from 1788 to 1880.

A *History of the Middle West* seems most admirably designed as a college level textbook. The reviewer expects to try it out for that purpose during the coming year.

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The Winter Soldiers. By Richard M. Ketchum. *The Crossroads of World History Series*. Edited by Orville Prescott. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973. Pp. 435. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$10.00.)

Richard M. Ketchum is an author and a senior editor with the American Heritage Publishing Company. Of the several books written and edited by him, *The Battle for Bunker Hill* and *The American Heritage Book of the Revolution* illustrate his keen interest in and wide knowledge of the American Revolution. In *The Winter Soldiers* he has attempted to demonstrate how significant to the final outcome of the War for Independence was the early period from April 19, 1775, to January 3, 1777. Although *The Winter Soldiers* "is not intended as a book for scholars" and although footnotes are omitted, Ketchum's narrative is "based upon contemporary evidence" (p. 400). A close examination of the bibliography and notes for each chapter reveals that the author has investigated most of the printed sources and secondary works which cover the years encompassed by this book.

Chronologically, the story extends from the battles of Lexington and Concord to those of Trenton and Princeton