

concerns life at Hampton Institute when Washington studied and taught there, the focus naturally is on the founding and first years of Tuskegee Institute, the period when Washington constructed the base on which his later power and eminence rested. But even here the importance of the material lies less in tracing a great man's early achievements than in documenting the activities of hitherto faceless people engaged in momentous efforts of self improvement at a critical time and an inauspicious place.

Readers with varying interests can find much of value in these publications. They may also be persuaded that those who assert the wisdom of according greater attention to the seldom acknowledged molders of our past are not merely captious in their critiques and proposals.

The Ohio State University, Columbus

Merton L. Dillon

The American Mail: Enlarger of the Common Life. By Wayne E. Fuller. *The Chicago History of American Civilization.* Edited by Daniel J. Boorstin. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972. Pp. xi, 378. Bibliographical essay, index. \$8.95.)

Despite the somewhat innocuous title, Professor Fuller has written an exceptionally good and long needed account of the American postal service from its colonial beginnings through the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970. The work is immeasurably enhanced by the author's ability to weave postal history into the broader fabric of the American past. His descriptions of the relationship between the postal revisions of Queen Anne's Act and the later Stamp Act controversy, the effect of Benjamin Franklin's improved postal service on the solidarity of the colonies during the 1760s, the appalling financial condition and the growth of postal service during the heyday of Jacksonianism, the emerging struggles between rural and urban America, and the overriding issue of whether the postal service should pay for itself are cases in point. In all of these areas Fuller outlines the problems and draws the necessary implications. There are, in addition, several chapters—"Bond of Union," "Expansionism and the Post Office," and "Government Business vs. Private Busi-

ness"—which are well organized and serve to tie together the chronological development of the story.

As Fuller demonstrates throughout his book, the Post Office was inevitably drawn into national controversies. Worthy of special notice are his remarks concerning slave mail carriers and the southern fear of slave conspiracy. Fuller dates the closing of the southern mind on the slavery question as early as 1802, when concern was expressed that allowing Negroes to carry the mail would afford an opportunity "of associating, acquiring, and communicating sentiments, and of establishing a chain or line of intelligence" that would encourage insurrection (p. 90). Then, too, as the author explains, southern opinion was solidified before the Civil War partly because of the expansion of the mail service into the backcountry. Just as the mail facilitated the spread of abolitionist literature in the North and West, so the extension of mail service into the Southwest during the 1850s provided a greater audience for the southern newspapers and fiery pamphlets which helped to build the imposing edifice of southern nationalism and sentiment.

Fuller is at his best when discussing the relationship of the postal service to the free enterprise system. In an era of vocal dedication to *laissez faire*, Congress chose to pursue a "socialistic experiment" in government owned business while at the same time, almost as an apology for that decision, allowing the growing railroad monopolies to gouge the public with excessive charges for mail transportation. Never could it be claimed that the government was competing with the business community in an economic venture. The author also relates a fascinating history of the franking privilege, the businessman's discovery of second class postal laws, the impact of postal laws on the paperback book industry, and the development of rural free delivery.

Fuller's work would have benefited from an effort to provide more comparative history. Although he begins the book with a brief survey of the development of mail services from the time of the Persians and Romans, he tends in later chapters to describe the American postal system too much in a vacuum. If, as he suggests, the postal system cut broad swaths through American politics, then surely a remark or two concerning postal systems in other nations in the nine-

teenth century might have added strength and validity to his thesis. Then, too, the author provided only a minimum coverage of the Confederate postal service. Fuller might also have investigated more fully the development of the postal savings banks, and there is an interesting history yet to be written on the relationship between the mail and Populism, northern philanthropy, and black history in the late nineteenth century. These criticisms, however, are only incidental and do not detract from an excellent study of the American mail.

Indiana University, Northwest

John S. Haller, Jr.

The Citizen Soldiers: The Plattsburg Training Camp Movement, 1913-1920. By John Garry Clifford. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, for the Organization of American Historians, 1972. Pp. ix, 326. Notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$9.50.)

The outbreak of World War I in Europe was a signal for the formation of a large number of citizens' groups in the United States, each designed to further some specific set of national goals. Each group devised an impressive letterhead stationery, printed on it a list of distinguished names to give their principles added weight, and set out to agitate for armed neutrality, a league to enforce peace, some form or another of "patriotism," or one kind or another of "pacifism."

Professor Clifford has written the story of one of those organizations, the volunteer training camp movement which advocated preparedness, military training for all able bodied men, and the careful professional training of a non-political officer corps. The movement had its origins in a series of college training camps which were started even before the European war began. A group of Harvard graduates, well to do and of the "best sort," developed that idea into the famous and well publicized Plattsburg, New York, training camp for businessmen in the summer of 1915. From that time onward, the task of this group was to further the "Plattsburg idea," both through ceaseless and ever expanding organization and publicity and through their considerable influence within the War Department and Congress. They started