

BOOK REVIEWS

Ka-mi-akin, The Last Hero of the Yakimas. By A. J. SPLAWN.
(North Yakima, Washington, Mrs. A. J. Splawn. 1917. Pp. 446. \$5.00.)

For more than twenty years A. J. ("Jack") Splawn was known to be busy collecting materials and writing a book about Indians, pioneers and early history, especially of the Yakima country. He finished his work but did not live to see it published. He had made all arrangements for the first edition to appear on heavily coated paper and morocco binding stamped with gold. These plans have been completed by his widow and the limited first edition is now available.

The first quarter of the book is devoted to Ka-mi-akin and the other Yakima leaders, including their conflicts with soldiers on several occasions. After recording these events and noting the deaths of the greater chiefs, the author heads the nineteenth chapter, "Entering the Promised Land." There he tells how in 1860 he, a boy of fifteen, followed his brother Charles into the Klickitat valley "to see this wild land, inhabited only by the red man. After much persuasion, my mother finally consented to let me go with my brother."

With that as the beginning and with much the same intimate tone he proceeds through the balance of the book to tell the interesting and exciting events which he witnessed and of which he was often a part.

In this book, Mr. Splawn has made a distinct contribution to the historical literature of the Pacific Northwest. He makes very few citations to archives or other books. He is very largely his own authority. Readers and users of his book will have to depend upon his statements, checking up as occasions require, with such government archives and other first-hand sources as may become available. He uses many definite dates and if by tests from subsequent researches these prove dependable his book will become one of the reference works on the "Inland Empire."

Here is an example (pages 274-275) of the self-reliant way he writes of men and dates. He is speaking of J. L. (Jordie) Williams, who worked on the Columbia River and was with Lieutenant Phil Sheridan in the battle of the Cascades. "Williams," says he, "came

to Yakima in 1866 and was in the cattle business with John Allen. They moved their herd from Yakima to the east side of the Columbia, where they located, their cattle ranging principally on Crab Creek. In 1870 Egbert French also moved his herd and family there. Allen soon left the country, but Williams remained. His herd increased to a goodly number till the winter of 1880-1 left him poorer than when he first came. Men came and went with their herds, but Jordie stayed for twenty years, often alone, except for old Indian Jim and his few people. He was an eccentric man, but a true friend. He died a few years ago in North Yakima."

Another paragraph (page 297) tells about the founding of the beautiful city of Ellensburg by building the first store as follows: "In the year 1870 Ben Burch, who was camped in the Kittitas Valley looking after Purdy Flint's cattle, and I decided to start a store. We bought a hewn log house, 14x18 feet, which stood a few miles away and contracted with Martin Daverin to haul and put it up near our old camp. We bought goods and November 20 our pack train and loaded wagons arrived. When we got through unloading the stuff, the cabin was so full that it looked as if there would be no room inside for customers. John Gillespie, a young settler of the previous year and a good friend of mine, rode up and asked how I was going to get inside to do business. I told him that I should sell first the goods nearest the door and thus gradually work my way in. He said that I needed a sign and volunteered to make me one. I accepted his offer. A few mornings later I read over my door, 'Robber's Roost.' It staggered me for a moment; but, on second thought, I concluded that perhaps John knew more about the sign business than I did. Though it did look very suggestive, I decided to let it stay."

That incident explains why some old pioneers still playfully refer to Ellensburg as the "Roost." A book filled with such stories of the old times is sure to have an earnest welcome in the Northwest. Quotations from and references to Splawn's *Ka-mi-akin* will become familiar in writings about Central Washington during the next few years.

It is unfortunate that the book has no index. The topical table of contents is helpful, but by no means takes the place of a good index. The eulogy of the author. The eulogy was delivered at the funeral by Austin Mires, himself a pioneer and for many years a close friend of Mr. Splawn. Judge E. P. Preble's appreciative address is also reproduced.

EDMOND S. MEANY.