

narrative as recorded by William Bleasdel Cameron in *When Fur Was King* belongs to a later period than that covered in Greenbie's book.

As factor for the Hudson's Bay Company from 1854 to 1894 he served at numerous posts throughout the Canadian Northwest. His encounters with beavers, bears and wolves must have been all that an adventurous hunter could desire. Because of his fearlessness before ferocious wild animals and his ability to deal with the Indians he cannot resist a little braggadocio; yet for the most part his stories are related with a restraint that makes them convincing.

Part two of the volume consists of Indian stories that deal with "a most dramatic side of the frontier life of the period" and an appendix which gives a brief review of the Hudson's Bay Company's claims to the Canadian Northwest.

As Moberly was with the Hudson's Bay Company both before and after it surrendered its sovereign rights to the Canadian government, he gives first hand information of a period that is now historical. His account is a valuable contribution to the annals of the Hudson's Bay Company.

ELVA L. BATCHELLER

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*John Jacob Astor.* By ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1929. Pp. 296. \$3.50).

This life of Astor is divided into six sections. Book one: A Venture in Flutes, and Book six: The Landlord of New York, deal with the Astor personality. The other four books cover the development of the fur trade.

Mr. Howden Smith is a writer of biography and fiction and recently edited the *Hancock Narrative*. Lippincott's say of him: "He has established himself as a vivid and accurate recreator of personality and a successful searcher for rich historic detail." The first part of this statement is true. Astor is shown in a frank, unbiased, just manner with a human appeal. His character is summed up as selfish, narrow-minded, unsocial, cold, acquisitive, stubborn, and unrelenting. In contrast to this he was courageous, had a masterful resolve, was tolerant, had a deep affection for his family. He had a blending of faults and virtues and there was something "baffling attractive" about him.

This German emigrant came to New York with about \$25 and a few flutes. When he died his estate was valued at many millions. Many American rich men have had as remarkable a financial career,

but few have been given the opportunity of opening up and developing our country, such as Astor might have done. He lacked vision, he had little ability in selecting the suitable men to carry out his work, he thought more of personal gain than of acquiring territory or benefiting his countrymen. Because of these reasons, and because of war and unforeseen disasters his fur posts were a failure. We cannot condone his avariciousness, yet indirectly this was the means of developing the fur trade for others. In establishing Astoria, his influence on the history of our Northwest was greater than many of the statesmen of his time.

Book four: *An Apostle of Empire*, treats of the Hunt Expedition, and Book five: *The First Trust of the American Fur Company*. The author has fearlessly stated his interpretations of this Expedition. Historians might disagree with his characterizations. His tendency is to over-emphasize certain mannerisms, to enlarge on certain faults and virtues. He has, however, depicted each person in the Expedition in an intriguing way making further research work inviting.

A bibliography would have added much to the historic value. The book was obviously not written to attract historians, but to entertain a larger public. The newspaper training of the author accounts for the popular "readable" style.

LOU LARSON

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*The Hunting of the Buffalo*. By E. DOUGLAS BRANCH. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1929. Pp. 240. \$3.00).

*The Hunting of the Buffalo* gives a different phase of the passing of the frontier, describing the hordes that roamed the plains, the territory they covered, and the way in which they were all but exterminated. The author has told his story in a popular way, quoting from authorities and illustrating the book with plates from their works. A good usable index is included.

With the opening of the railroads, excursion rates were advertised for buffalo hunts. "The buffalo had not yet learned to take flight at sight of the engines; if buffalo were traveling in a course across the railway, away they went, charging across the ridge on which the iron rails lay, determined to head off the locomotive and cross in front of it. It often happened that buffaloes and cars ran side by side for a mile or two so near that passengers could almost clutch the buffalo by their manes; then the car windows were opened and breechloaders flung hundreds of wanton bullets."