

forts of the Hudson's Bay Company. We catch glimpses of many people well-known in the trade, including David Thompson and Daniel Williams Harmon: the one examining and surveying the river; the other, preparing himself for more important duties in New Caledonia.

The book shows on every page intense and painstaking effort. A genuine attempt is made to identify the position and the changing positions of every post on the river. Here Mr. Wallace's work in the field and his training as a surveyor stand him in good stead. A skeleton map of the river, showing the old trading posts, enables the reader to follow the text and gives him the feeling of being accompanied by a competent guide.

Mr. Wallace goes to the prime sources and refuses to accept blindly the views of his predecessors. He tests and tries all their conclusions and accepts only those that are satisfactorily established. Other historical writers who encounter difficulties sometimes sidestep them or pass them over without comment; not so, our author; indeed he goes a gunning for them and sometimes even finds them where their existence had never been suspected. Though many students have found the dates usually given in connection with Simon Fraser extremely difficult to reconcile none has been bold enough to suggest, as he does, that two persons of the same name have been confused by the historians—and this may be the case.

The inclusion in the appendix of the journal of Fort Dunvegan from April 18, 1806, to October 14, 1806, will be welcomed by every student of the fur-trade. It is an interesting human document, throwing much light on the daily life of the fur-trader.

Mr. Wallace has done his work thoroughly and well; the index is reasonably complete; the map is a great assistance; but the printer has made many errors.

F. W. HOWAY

Frontiers and the Fur Trade. By SYDNEY GREENBIE. (New York: John Day, 1929. Pp. 235. \$3.75).

When Fur Was King. By HENRY JOHN MOBERLY; in collaboration with WILLIAM BLEASDELL CAMERON. Illustrations by John Innes and from photographs. (London: Dent, 1929. Pp. 237. \$2.75).

Fur traders, trappers and fishers are coexistent with frontiers. This is an axiom in Sydney Greenbie's *Frontiers and the Fur Trade*. Emphasis is placed on the fur trade, only a few incidental chapters

being devoted to fishing. Beginning with Arabia and Persia, continuing with the barbarian frontiers of Greece and Rome, Greenbie advances his theme westward to the Pacific Northwest. Reverting thereafter to the vikings, he pursues his narrative eastward through Russia and Siberia and across to Alaska, thus encircling the globe. The ramifications of the history of the fur trade from the time of Usoos, the Phoenician, to James Bridger, Northwest trapper, he interprets in their present day significance.

The major portion of the book is concerned with America and in America Greenbie considers only those fur traders who were the pathfinders of the forests, men who preceded the trapper guides and the settlers of the early nineteenth century. Fur has been a dominant force in the exploration of the American continent. "But for the beaver we might now be addressing our petitions to Governor Olden Barnevelt Beverwyck, New Amsterdam, instead of Governor Alfred Smith, Albany. Had it not been for fur, France and England might still be in America today." Spain too made an attempt, though belated, to profit by the wealth in furs in America. In brief, the influence of fur is shown to be incalculable.

There is not a page in the book that lags. Enticing titles lead on from chapter to chapter; saga and legend, epigram and humor leaven the whole. As transitions between chapters are frequently lacking, however, the final impression is of a collection of entertaining historical essays rather than a carefully unified history. Nevertheless entertainment is surely to be found here and also an incentive to read more detailed accounts of the adventures of Lord Selkirk, Hendrik Hudson, John Ledyard, Manuel Lisa and all the others who pass. For this reason the omission of a bibliography is regrettable. The book does not duplicate or displace F. J. Turner's *Frontiers in American History* or H. M. Chittenden's *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, but is an excellent introduction to further study of the subject and as an inspirational account of the influence of fur upon our present civilization, it needs no apology. There would be more readers of history were it vitalized as in *Frontiers and the Fur Trade*.

"If there is any doubt whether trader or priest led the way of civilization in North America, it is dissipated the moment a finer distinction is drawn between trader and trapper. The trader as representative of the monopolies, soon built a manor in the new world and barricaded himself against the slings and arrows of outraged barbarism." Henry John Moberly was a fur trader and his

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

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,