

sophistication of the masses? Only by analysis of specific case studies in Poland, where such peaceful participation has occurred, can the beginnings of an answer be found. Unfortunately, though a few such studies have already been completed, the authors have ignored them.

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RAY ALLEN BILLINGTON. — *Frederick Jackson Turner: Historian, Scholar, Teacher.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Given the vast literature on the frontier thesis, it is remarkable that Frederick Jackson Turner has heretofore lacked a biographer. It is fitting that Ray Billington, America's major exponent of the frontier thesis, should now pioneer that role. The opening of the Turner Papers in the Huntington Library provides a solid foundation for such a venture, amply augmented by gleaning from over fifty other manuscript collections and innumerable printed sources.

In his preface, Billington indicates his object is to write the biography of a college professor; but, as Billington takes pains to make clear, Turner was no ordinary college professor, which after all is the point of the book. Though the frontier thesis inevitably looms large, it is Billington's purpose to show that Turner's greatness as a historian rests on more than that. Indeed he wishes to lift the albatross of monocausationism from around Turner's neck. Turner was not merely a pioneer, but perhaps the father, of "The New History." He realized very early that the historian's proper study was the whole of society, not just politics and political institutions. He survived his graduate training under Herbert Baxter Adams more or less unscathed. Politics rested upon an economic base and all the social sciences provided the historian with his tools. He was among the first to realize the importance of economic and social history and he introduced them very early into his own courses. The common man was a topic worthy of the historian's attention and his quest should be for a usable past. Such was Turner's creed years before James Harvey Robinson wrote *The New History* and Charles A. Beard published his classic work. His reviews of Burgess, Rhodes and Von Holst written in 1890's indicate his insistence on probing beneath the surface of mere political events.

Billington reminds us that Turner was recognized by colleagues as a distinguished diplomatic historian, as well as pioneer in immigration history, although in that role he is something of a Jeremiah reflecting the Progressive suspicions of the alien newcomers in American society. Instrumental in the creation of the *Dictionary of American Biography*, he rendered his final service by doing much to transform the Huntington Library into the major research institution it is today.

The frontier thesis still dominates the book nevertheless. The greater part of it is devoted to the years of its gestation, birth and propagation, 1884-1910. The first five chapters record the emergence of the thesis just as they record the birth and intellectual maturing of Turner himself. This ground has already been recently traversed by Billington in *The Genesis of the Frontier Thesis* (San Marino: 1971). Those familiar with that work will find little new here. The biographical sections of the *Genesis* are now expanded, while those on the intellectual background are given in a briefer form. This is not only more appropriate to a biography but is in keeping with Billington's own rather Turnerian interpretation of the thesis itself — rooted in young Fred Turner's experiences in Portage, Wisconsin, to be later refined and nourished by subsequent observation and reading. What Turner really sought in the work of others was *how* the frontier shaped men and institutions; he needed no convincing that it did.

The intellectual influences on Turner, Billington has already outlined in his *Frontier Heritage*<sup>1</sup> — Francis A. Walker, Walter Bagehot, John A. Doyle, Henry George, Emile Boutmy, Achille Loria — but now such influence is discussed in greater detail. Relying on the work of William Coleman<sup>2</sup> (unavailable before 1966), Billington adds the influences of the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel and the Neo-Lamarckians. Environmental determinism becomes even more a key element in the thesis, despite Turner's later denials that he was an environmental determinist. Curiously, however, missing are the caveats noted in *The Genesis* that Turner never read Ratzel until after 1893 and may rather have been influenced by Nathaniel Shaler and Ellen Churchill Semple. However, as in *The Genesis*, he puts Loria's influence into perspective. The recent republication of Lee Benson's essay notwithstanding,<sup>3</sup> the "Loria-Turner free land thesis" is the "Turner thesis" once more. Turner is more of a geographic determinist than an economic one. Benson has the more ingenious argument; but Billington has Turner's papers.

Billington also advances a new and more ingenious explanation of the term "free land." He contends Turner meant by it land yielding no rent in the economists' sense — a notion picked up from Richard Ely's economics course at Johns Hopkins.

Diverted into diplomatic history in the late '90's and then seduced for the rest of his life by the sectional hypothesis, Turner could not be excited by warmed-over ideas and so never tried to put the frontier thesis on a solidly researched foundation. While showing that Turner could be circumspect and precise in definition in obscure articles and the classroom, Billington holds Turner himself, as well as his disciples responsible for the exaggerated claims made for thesis. In the popular magazines or on the public lecture platform, Turner was easily carried away by his own rhetoric.

As a study of Turner the historian, or even the academic, this is a splendid work; impeccably researched and well written. It gives a fascinating description of the emergence to greatness of the University of Wisconsin and the nature of university life around the turn of the century. Turner was a wily character capable of pulling strings for a student, playing college presidents off against each other to extract more sabbaticals and a higher salary for himself; he even organized a press campaign to engineer his return to Wisconsin. There is ample detail of his private life, complete with salary, debts, mortgages, extravagances and even his wife's menus. However, as a biography of the whole man it somehow lacks depth. There are glimpses of a man forever finding excuses for not writing, preferring to do more research or just go fishing; a compulsive signer of publishers' contracts he surely knew where incapable of fulfilment; someone always eager to start a new project but too much the perfectionist ever to finish it. Yet we never quite get inside the man as a human being. The overwhelming emphasis on Turner's earlier life, his formative and most active period intellectually, perhaps means that we can see or be interested in Turner really only when acting as an historian.

Billington manages to write on for three chapters after Turner's death. The first of these, a "Portrait of The Man," while fascinating as a sketch, would have much better been integrated with the narrative as a whole to give greater dimension to the man. The second on the "Persistence of Theory" has not a little *déjà vu* about it, albeit a shrewd and not uncritical defence of Turner's theories, but it is also somewhat at variance with the final

<sup>1</sup> (New York: 1966).

<sup>2</sup> William COLEMAN, "Science and Symbol in the Turner Frontier Hypothesis," *American Historical Review*, LXXII (October, 1966), 22-49.

<sup>3</sup> *Toward the Scientific Study of History: Selected Essays* (Philadelphia: 1972), 175-189. The battle is waged mainly in the footnotes; Benson also differs on the influence of Henry George and sees Turner as a kind of Trojan horse for subtle marxist influence in American historiography.

chapter on Turner's significance as a historian, where Turner the New Historian rather than the frontier theorist is stressed. In a better crafted biography, such chapters would perhaps be superfluous, the points already having been made *ars est celare artem*.

There are a few minor irritations: occasionally the prose is a shade too rich, the detail at times a little excessive and one wonders why a letter is footnoted only to a manuscript collection when it has been published twice already once by Billington himself.

However, this is a book that should be read by all interested in American historiography. It will clearly dominate its field for some time to come: it deserves to.

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### *Puritan New England Revisited*

DAVID H. HALL. — *The faithful Shepherd; A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1972.

STEPHEN FOSTER — *Their Solitary Way: The Puritan Social Ethic in the First Century of Settlement in New England*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971.

After the untimely death of Perry Miller some ten years ago, the mantle of leadership in Puritan Studies fell to one of his former students, Edmund S. Morgan at Yale. In the past few years, Yale has produced a number of doctoral dissertations *cum* books, on Puritan political ideas (Breen), the halfway covenant (Pope), the early Massachusetts General Court (Wall), to mention only three. *Their Solitary Way* and *The Faithful Shepherd*, both written by Morgan students, represent new additions to the work of the third generation of Puritan scholars in the Miller tradition. A good deal of scholarly debate has recently been generated over the meaning of "Millerism," but most disputants could probably agree that basic components are the emphasis on the "mind" of New England society as represented in its public utterances; a principal focus on the seventeenth century; and an acceptance of the Puritan's own view of the decline of piety and unity from the vigour of first settlement. Like their other colleagues, Hall and Foster are to some extent revisionists, but quite firmly within the Miller canon.

Foster is quite explicit about his concentration on the public utterance in a preface which is sometimes painfully apologetic and self-conscious. He argues that "for the most part I am writing about what New Englanders habitually said they believed in, not what they habitually did about it," though he recognizes the need for a social context (which he cannot provide) for what was said. Foster's opening casuistry is illuminating about the limitations of the Miller approach in the hands of some sensitive members of the third generation. They realize, as did the third generation of ministers in New England, that they have no answers, but they appear unable to formulate or work out a new approach. Hall is less apologetic about the matter of evidence. As his analysis and footnotes make quite clear, he has relied heavily upon the publications of his ministers, and has employed other sources (manuscript collections, and especially church and town records) only at their most available.

How one can hope to write about the ministry without a thorough explication of its activities on the local level is problematic. The covenanted church in the organized town, after all, was the basis of the ministerial authority and responsibility. Hall's remarks on civil maintenance, one of the most critical and divisive issues facing the seventeenth-century ministry, are sketchy and unrevealing. One looks in vain for any evidence that he has personally inspected the necessary church and town records to attempt to place the ministry into its local context. Not surprisingly, Hall does not particularly emphasize that the clergy had a local context. Emphasis instead is on Boston (where Boston records are