American Frontier Tales
Book Notices

is Chinook jargon for "That is all" and while this will certainly not be the last word on Chief Joseph, it will stand for a long time as testament to a great Indian leader. The publishers certainly have produced an excellent book—the photographs alone are worth the price.


Centered around the diaries and letters of William Swain, a New Yorker who sought his fortune in the 1849 California gold rush, this revealing volume is one of the best first-hand accounts recently published. The author devoted nearly thirty years in collecting and editing the materials. He has blended these accounts with scores of others and provides excellent background chapters on the origins and development of gold mining in California. Beautifully illustrated with contemporary drawings from the notebooks of J. Goldsborough Bruff (whose diary has also been used), this book should remain as a classic among the literature of the '49er movement.


The author, member of the editorial board of the Journal of the West, has been a writer and researcher of western Americana for many years. This present book presents a series of vignettes based upon a wide variety of primary sources. These stories are presented in a non-academic style, yet are based on the precise research of the author. Here one will find an account of Hiawatha who helped formulate the Great League of the Iroquois, the mystery of Sacagawea's death and the puzzle of her son, Charbonneau, the role of Chief Joseph in his dogged resistance and noble resignation, Hopi Indian prophecies, and the role of the horse in the development of the West. The reader will be enlightened and entertained by this book.

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483