

## BOOK REVIEW

John Porter Bloom, ed., *The American Territorial System*, Ohio University Press,  
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by Dr G. M. Tobin

Since 1967 the National Archives and Records Service in Washington has sponsored a number of conferences designed to bring scholars and archivists together to discuss areas of research arising out of specific sections of its vast holdings of official documents. The purpose of the exercise in each case has been to publicise the work already in progress and to alert researchers to the possible relevance of N.A.R.S. materials to their own lines of enquiry. The proceedings of each conference were to be published as part of the National Archives Conference Series; but although the present volume is listed as the fifth in the series, only two have been released as yet — *United States Polar Exploration*, and *The National Archives and Statistical Research*.

The 1969 Conference focussed specifically on the large body of archival materials covering the Territories of the United States — namely, those areas which lay outside the boundaries of the original thirteen colonies at the time of the Revolution, and have since been incorporated into the Union as a result of either purchase or conquest. The time span is enormous — from 1787 to the present — and the geographic extent even more intimidating — from the Appalachians to Micronesia, and from the Virgin Islands to Alaska. The breadth and diversity of the materials involved makes it difficult to hold a conference of that kind to any consistent theme; accordingly, the papers range from a study of the role of the Territorial representatives in Congress in the early nineteenth century to assessments of the place of the Territories in the American political system in the mid-twentieth century. The editor has tried to impose some unity on the volume by concentrating on political and administrative history, and altering the order of progression from that used in the conference itself so that topics are more effectively grouped. The individual papers are rather more specific than the title of the volume would suggest; a reader looking for an introduction or a guide to the operations of the Territorial system will not find it here, for the papers assume a prior knowledge of the relationship between the Federal government and its dependencies, and concentrate on specialised topics.

Arthur Bestor and Robert J. Berkhofer focus on the attitudes of the revolutionary generation towards the future political development of their own colonial dependencies, and emphasise the attention given to the formulation of guidelines that would ensure the eventual incorporation of those dependencies in the new Republic. Jo Tice Bloom and Robert W. Johannsen are more concerned with the mechanical workings of the relationship between the Territories and Congress; Bloom looks at the careers of the early Territorial delegates, and argues that in the absence of clear specifications, the initiatives of key individuals were quite important in defining the duties and responsibilities of the Territorial delegate for the rest of the century; Johannsen concentrates on the years just prior to the Civil War, and points to

the advantages the Territories gained by having as their main advocate in the Senate the formidable Stephen A. Douglas. The remaining papers deal mainly with aspects of Territorial administration at the local level: one deals with the operations of Territorial Supreme Courts, another estimates the quality of judicial appointees in Utah, and a third examines the operations of the Federal Land Survey system in the Mountain West in the late nineteenth century. A rather different paper, Kenneth N. Owens' "Pattern and Structure in Western Territorial Politics", uses some concepts that have proved helpful in the analysis of pre-revolutionary politics — in particular, the notion of chaotic factionalism — to develop an explanation of the rather untidy patterns evident in nineteenth century Territorial politics.

These are all careful and well-argued studies, by scholars of considerable standing in their field. But for those concerned in the development and use of archival resources, the volume as a whole has special interest. For one thing, it does stand in part as a tribute to the work of the late Clarence Carter, whose editorial labours over a period of thirty years produced the multi-volume Territorial Papers of the United States — a fine research tool, and an example of the value of systematic publication of official documents by a small, skilled editorial unit. The National Archives has shown commendable initiative in developing this Conference series, which does bring to light at least some of the research being done in areas too specialised to attract the general publisher.