

the historiography of the period by publishing documentation and conducting and excerpting a vast number of interviews.

Delaware State College

JOHN W. GARDNER

The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870–1914. By DAVID McCULLOUGH. New York, 1977. Simon and Schuster. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 698. Cloth. \$14.95.

The Path Between the Seas was on *The New York Times* best-seller list in 1977 and was a Book-of-the-Month Club Selection. It has received enthusiastic reviews from popular and academic commentators in newspapers, magazines, and journals. After reading the book, I have no choice but to jump on the bandwagon. It is a well-crafted book, gracefully written, and deserves the praise and success it is enjoying. Therefore, in order not to repeat what has already been said elsewhere, I shall limit myself to two questions of particular interest to historians. Is it good history? How useful is it to scholars and specialists in the field?

The answer to the first question is yes. Mr. McCullough has combined literary merit with historical skills. He has done a prodigious amount of research and has organized and evaluated his material in a balanced and scholarly manner. Although he does not use the conventional footnote form, his statements and conclusions are carefully documented. He does not permit anecdotal material to detract from the main story, a flaw of many popular histories, nor does he engage in speculation. I might only quibble that McCullough tends to favor published accounts over archival material. For this reason, he misses the relationship between Philippe Bunau-Varilla and William Nelson Cromwell, which one discovers in Bunau-Varilla's papers, but not in his published works. In every other respect, however, McCullough is eminently thorough. The French, the North Americans, and the West Indian black laborers all receive recognition for their part in the construction of the canal. McCullough describes with fascinating detail the North American construction effort, but he does not neglect the less admirable features of the story, such as the United States role in the Panama revolution and the circumstances surrounding the negotiation of the 1903 canal treaty.

Concerning the usefulness of the book to specialists, it must be judged within its genre. It is not a monograph. Despite the claim on

the jacket that "it is an account drawn from unpublished and hitherto undiscovered sources," it does not present much that is new, nor is it a unique interpretation. Mr. McCullough is a master organizer and summarizer of a vast amount of material, most of which has been published. His book is like a pleasant reunion; he has assembled a lot of old friends, and they were never in better form. McCullough does not replace old friends like Gerstle Mack, Dwight C. Miner, and Miles P. DuVal, Jr., but he is a bright, new one, well worth having.

Pennsylvania State University

CHARLES D. AMERINGER

A Milícia Cidadã: A Guarda Nacional de 1831 a 1850. By JEANNE BERRANCE DE CASTRO. Preface by SÉRGIO BUARQUE DE HOLANDA. São Paulo, 1977. Companhia Editora Nacional. Tables. Graphs. Appendixes. Bibliography. Pp. xxvi, 260. Paper.

While in comparison to the turmoil experienced by its Spanish-speaking neighbors, Brazil's independence and early national period proved largely pacific. Nevertheless, that nation did pass through a time of troubles. The years from 1831 to 1850, spanning the regency and first decade of young Pedro II's reign witnessed considerable political maneuvering, and a host of armed uprisings. Highly politicized, and of questionable loyalty to the new regime, the army seemed an unreliable instrument for expressing the regency's authority. As such, Diogo Feijó, the liberal Minister of Justice, created a National Guard, a "citizen's militia" that would preserve national order. Although the guard did accomplish that mission with some success, it failed to replicate the democratic character of the French institution which had served as its model.

The guard's loss of popular and liberal character, and its ultimate transformation into the political arm of a conservative government forms the focus of *A Milícia Cidadã*, a doctoral dissertation written under the direction of the eminent Brazilian historian, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda. It explains this alteration as the product of the guard's Brazilianization, a process in which changes in orientation and structure resulted from the accommodation of a liberal French institution to a patrimonial Brazilian milieu. From this orientation, the National Guard becomes a paradigm; its transformations reflect the ongoing synthesis of change and tradition that characterized the early years of Brazil's national experience.

Despite the soundness of this approach, and the positing of several