

THE BOOKSHELF

the drive for fame or riches (he had been led to believe that as a Negro he could hope for neither) shaped the pattern of a life all America honors. Our greatest agricultural genius, one of our most eminent personalities, his is a moving and a revealing story, admirably told by his biographer. This is a book adults should put in the way of all high school youngsters.

In *Bound for Glory* (Dutton. \$3) Woody Guthrie has taken time off from riding the freights and singing his way across the country with his guitar to write as alive and American a book as has come off the presses in a blue moon. The stuff tumbles out of him—nervous, powerful, electric. Fundamentally Woody is a poet—though he would shy from the term—and he handles words as if they had been new-minted for him alone. But COMMON GROUND readers know this already; they were the first to meet Woody Guthrie in print.

Here is Woody's childhood in Okemah, Oklahoma, where his father was a land speculator. Here are the boom-town days of the '20s when they struck oil and the boom-chasers rolled in. Here are the Guthries losing out, the mother going insane, Woody foraging on the dump heaps, and finally hitting the road. And on every page are people, tough strong people who, like Woody, take trouble in their stride, who have a marvelous capacity for courage and quiet gentleness, the great common people for whom there's a new world "in the mail," who, Woody is sure, are "bound for glory."

The Other Side of Main Street by Henry Johnson (Columbia University Press. \$2.75) is Swedish-born Henrik Jönson's narrative of his American upbringing—with family, village, and state all seen in a perspective determined by an odd accident of the book world. For the place of his father's choice was Sauk Centre, Minnesota, birthplace of realist Sinclair Lewis, and model for Gopher Prairie in *Main Street*, accepted by Americans everywhere as the type-portrait of small-town life and character. Here is a different view of it, by an emeritus professor (Columbia Teacher's College) who owns a debt to the helpful friends he made there, especially among the teachers of a well-conducted public school. Culture and stimulating contacts were not wanting in the real Sauk Centre. This autobiography is of value as reflector of the life of a new American so soon adjusted that he feels Minnesota his native state.

Jacques Ducharme in *The Shadows of the Trees* (Harpers. \$2.50) analyzes the place of the French Canadians in the life and economy of New England. Simple, hard-working people, the part they have played so far, he writes, "is not a showy one. They are the laborers, the small taxpayers, the privates in the Army, the millworkers, the small merchants, the women clerks in the department stores, all common people." Written easily and informally, the book is a good addition to the growing list of volumes that probe into the backgrounds of the people who make up America.

HEMISPHERIC BACKGROUNDS

Benjamin Subercaseaux's *Chile* (Macmillan. \$3) merits a thousand words of warmest appreciation. For its poetic and imaginative handling, this book will be a delight to readers who discern that under

his light touch this author conveys the truthful portrait of a land, of a people he has known, by an uncanny sense of value. He has searched the land, the thousand-year-old races, body and spirit, with the

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eye of an artist. Max Miller, in *Land Where Time Stands Still* (Dodd, Mead. \$3), has written of his overland journey from San Diego to Cape San Lucas, through Baja California. With his gift for original reportage, and aware of his limitations as an outsider, he has sought to capture the real mood of natives who live as if this were 1750. Harry Franck's *Re-*

discovery of South America (Lippincott. \$5) is perhaps the most intimately revealing of current travel books by Americans from the States. The author retraces routes which he formerly covered two decades earlier—on foot and with pack (where possible)—and is alive to the significance of changes. Highly informative and delightfully informal.

FOR AMERICAN UNITY

Brothers Under the Skin by Carey McWilliams (Little, Brown. \$3) is an excellent presentation of the problem of color in relation to national unity and the struggle we are engaged in. Our American legal and social discrimination against our racial groups is a real threat to the morale of common folk now fighting for or controlled by the United Nations and a constant excuse for defamatory propaganda. An expert in law, experienced in research and social studies, an established writer and a keen analyst, Mr. McWilliams has gathered in this book not only the results of his own wide study and observation but also the verdict of other authorities competent to speak on problems that have baffled the government for three generations. His account of the Indians, Chinese, Mexicans, Japanese, Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and Negroes in the United States—and our own treatment of them—is scholarly, convincing, and sane, and makes deeply distressing reading for those who give more than lip service to democracy. Mr. McWilliams has rightly seen the common pattern of injustice and exploitation that runs through our treatment of groups of "high visibility." It is all part of a piece and demands a national approach for a cure. In his closing chapter, "Outline for Action," he indicates remedial legislative measures

in which as citizens we may all share, if only as molders of public opinion. Whether legislation is the final solution to the problem of color in America is probably a debatable point; but Mr. McWilliams has done an incalculable service in marshaling the facts before us and bringing the indictment. The American people—all of us—must make the answer.

Patterns of Negro Segregation by Charles S. Johnson (Harpers. \$3.50) is the second volume in a series of studies on the Negro in America, sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation under the direction of Dr. Gunnar Myrdal. Here Dr. Johnson, who is dean of social sciences at Fisk University, brings together a comprehensive and disturbing array of facts on discrimination against the Negro in varying sections of the country: in housing and recreational facilities, opportunities in the public service, commercial and professional opportunities, transportation, education, and the exercise of civil rights and citizenship responsibilities. The second half of the book analyzes the behavioral response of Negroes to discrimination—how far they accept it, how far they seek to avoid it or meet it with outright hostility, what it does to personality. A solid and important study for real understanding of interracial relations.