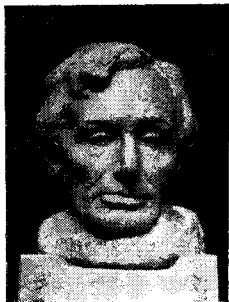


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The Components of America

"Race and Nationality in American Life," by Oscar Handlin (Little, Brown, 300 pp. Clothbound, \$4. Anchor, 262 pp. Paperbound, 95¢), is a volume of essays about the racial and cultural stocks that make up this country. Professor Harvey Wish of Western Reserve University, author of "Society and Thought in America," reviews it.

By Harvey Wish

AS A SOCIAL historian, Professor Oscar Handlin emphasizes in the thirteen essays which make up his new book "Race and Nationality in American Life" the rich diversity that has made up the American experience. While he is optimistic regarding the progress we have made in learning to live together, he reminds us that the racist insistence on a forever congealed population pattern is still embodied in our current immigration code and in the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which perpetuates the philosophy of the National Origins provision of 1924 discriminating against Italians, Greeks, Eastern Jews, and Baltic peoples on the clear if unstated premise that they are inferior biologically and unassimilable culturally.

Mr. Handlin believes that the origins of racialism are so recent that "we may, in our lifetime, see it run its full course." Hence he hopes that his book, as a historical analysis, may advance an ultimate solution. Perhaps the most valuable of all the essays are those dealing with "The Linnaean Web" and "Old Immigrants and New." The first shows in illuminating detail how scientists on both sides of the Atlantic unwittingly gave aid and comfort to a large and influential breed of racist pseudo-scientists in the social studies. Out of this wedlock came an arbitrary but plausible racial classification of man that provided grist for the mill of immigration restrictionists and Negrophobes. Mr. Handlin shows what the impact of this type of confused thinking was upon the main stream of American thought. The latter essay is, in large measure, an acute analysis of the Dillingham Report which, drawing heavily upon the new racist "science" and other peculiar notions regarding the nature of the Southern and Eastern European, provided a rationale for the discrimina-

tory immigration policy of the last few decades.

The change that has occurred in thinking about racialism since the 1930s constitutes, in Mr. Handlin's view, a social revolution. The newer ideas of the social scientists as well as the current prosperity and our shock at the events of Belsen, Dachau, and Maidenek have made possible such advances toward ethnic equality as is embodied in the various local FEPC laws, desegregation, and other gains. Even the McCarran-Walter Act has to be defended, if at all, with non-racist arguments. Mr. Handlin buttresses his emphasis upon ideological causes of persecution by severely attacking the thesis that prejudice is a primary product of capitalist exploitation. He is less happy in his discussion of such social factors as family instability and sex mores.

When he turns from the immigrant to the Negro Mr. Handlin's argument grows less convincing. He might have explored the "racial integrity" myth of the South and of mid-nineteenth century California (aimed in this case largely at the Chinese) which produced our own Nuremberg racist laws on intermarriage. To this reviewer at least Handlin's explanation as to the reasons for the greater amount of racist prejudices in the lands settled by Americans as compared to those settled in the New World by the French and the Spanish were less than convincing.

But these reservations should not obscure the real merit of Handlin's contribution in making a most scholarly and readable contribution to a pressing contemporary issue.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Ernest Poole. 2. Booth Tarkington. 3. Edith Wharton. 4. Booth Tarkington. 5. Willa Cather. 6. Margaret Wilson. 7. Edna Ferber. 8. Sinclair Lewis (he refused to accept). 9. Louis Bromfield. 10. Thornton Wilder. 11. Julia M. Peterkin. 12. Oliver LaFarge. 13. Margaret Ayer Barnes. 14. Pearl S. Buck. 15. T. S. Stribling. 16. Caroline Miller. 17. Josephine W. Johnson. 18. Harold L. Davis. 19. Margaret Mitchell. 20. John P. Marquand. 21. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. 22. John Steinbeck. 23. Ellen Glasgow. 24. Upton Sinclair. 25. Martin Flavin. 26. John Hersey. 27. Robert Penn Warren. 28. James A. Michener. 29. James Gould Cozzens. 30. A. B. Guthrie, Jr. 31. Conrad Richter. 32. Herman Wouk. 33. Ernest Hemingway. 34. MacKinlay Kantor.

Books for Young People



—From "Little O."

MANY OF US who believe that children instinctively respond to the best in books—to excellence in literary style and in illustration—were pleased to find expressed in two recent articles in the *New York Times* similar beliefs in regard to films and music for children. Peretz Johnnes of the Museum of the City of New York is convinced that children's taste in films is far more sophisticated than generally conceded, and, in planning his Saturday morning programs for them, draws from a wide stock of art and historical films those that appeal to this high level of appreciation. Samuel Antek, who has programmed "Music for Fun" youth concerts of the New Jersey Symphony and children's concerts for the Philadelphia Orchestra, feels that a children's concert cannot be secondary in quality, that it can not be made of warmed-over tidbits from a previous adult program, nor should one play down to children any more than one would talk down to them. Or—we who work with children and books would add—write down to them. This respect for the intelligence of the child; this recognition that he not only enjoys but prefers, when he can get it, entertainment of quality and integrity; this knowledge that he will read and look at and listen to the best—all these deserve consideration from those who plan children's programs in the mass media.

Reviewers for this issue: Julia Jussim Brody, Bronx Borough Children's Specialist, The New York Public Library; Marjorie Halderman, Supervisor, Public School Libraries and Librarian, High School, Astoria, Oregon; Ruth Hill Viguers, Lecturer, School of Library Science, Simmons College.

—FRANCES LANDER SPAIN,

Coordinator, Children's Services,
The New York Public Library.

BIANCA AND THE NEW WORLD. By Tony Palazzo. Viking. \$2.75. This attractive picture book tells the story of Bianca, a white Sicilian burro, and her master, Marco, as they arrive in America as immigrants. There wasn't much for a small burro to do in New York to earn a living for himself and his master. There were no fields to work in and the hard pavement hurt his feet. Small children will love the beautifully drawn black circus horse who became Bianca's firm friend, and they will be happy when this friendship results in employment for Bianca and Marco at the circus.

—MARJORIE HALDERMAN.

THE COW WHO FELL IN THE CANAL. By Phyllis Krasilovsky. Illustrated by Peter Spier. Doubleday. \$2.75. Hendrika was a well-fed, well-cared-for cow, but an unhappy one, because her life was the same day after day; there was no excitement in it. She heard about the city from Pieter, the horse who took her milk in each morning, and longed to go there. One day she fell in the canal, scrambled up on a raft, and floated down to the city. When she was returned to the farm, she was content to stay, for she had seen many wonderful things to think about.

Mr. Spier's double-page illustrations in color and his black-and-white line

drawings accentuate the humor of this picture book and give a fine feeling for Holland, his native country.

—F. L. S.

A SONG FOR GAR. By Jean Merrill. Pictures by Ronni Solbert. Whittlesey House. \$2.75. The combination of delightful story and charming illustrations make this a most distinguished book for children. Absalom, of the scratchy voice, was the youngest brother in a family of six boys who lived in the hill country. Embarrassed and ashamed by his odd voice, Absalom would sing his songs only to his coon, Barbary Allen. By chance the oldest brother, Gar, overheard a song one day and chose to sing it at the

contest for a fat purse of a hundred dollars. Of course Gar won the Song Swapping, the purse, and red-haired Camden Pride as his bride.

Words and music are included in the book.

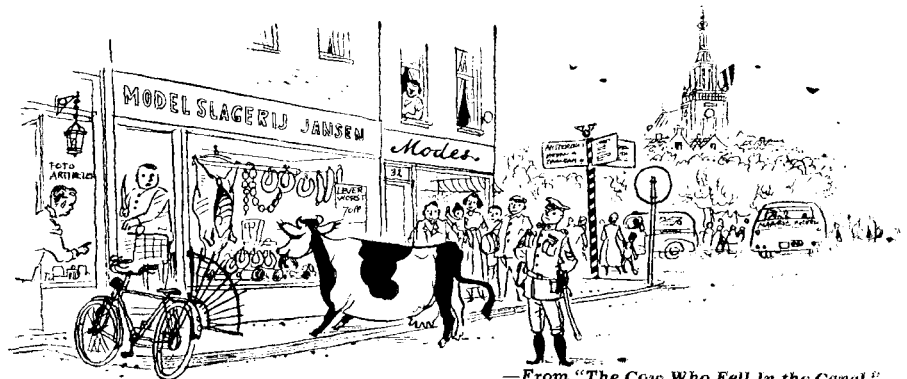
—M. H.

LITTLE O. By Edith Unnerstad. Translated by Inger Boye. Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin. Macmillan. \$2.50. Little O, the youngest Larsson of "Saucepan Journey" and "Pysen," is as susceptible to all kinds of adventures as are her six brothers and sisters. Too old to be treated as a baby, too young to be allowed much independence, she nevertheless establishes her identity as an individual. Louis Slobodkin's line drawings, and the story's humor and depiction of family relationships make this a fine book for beginning readers.—F. L. S.

THE LITTLE MAVERICK COW. By Belle Coates. Illustrated by George Fulton. Scribner. \$2.25. This is an appealing, easy reading story of a boy and girl living on a wheat ranch in Montana, who find a maverick cow to take the place of their milch cow that has died. There is good background of ranch life, and the depth of children's feelings for an animal and the intensity of their longing to solve the family problems pervades the story in spite of the simplicity with which it is written.

—RUTH HILL VIGUERS.

WILDLIFE CAMERAMAN. By Jim Kjelgaard. Drawings by Sam Savitt. Holiday House. \$2.75. Here is another entertaining book for young people from the pen of Jim Kjelgaard, this time about a boy who ventures into the wilderness for a summer's experience in wildlife photography—experiences that include tangles with a man-killing bear and a long-wanted poacher. Youthful nature lovers will take to their hearts the unassuming Jase and his dog Buckles. And they will also be drawn under the spell of life far from civilization. Small animals as well as large come in front of the lens of Jase's cameras and amateur



—From "The Cow Who Fell in the Canal."

A fine feeling for Holland."