

**SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, DANIEL:
A Life of Webster in His Own Words**

edited by Walter Lewis

Houghton Mifflin, 505 pp., \$8.95

WALKER LEWIS, a lawyer and author who gave us a fine biography of Roger Taney, now has had the excellent idea of letting Daniel Webster tell his story in his own words. Lewis has distilled the eighteen-volume National Edition of Webster's *Writings and Speeches* into a 500-page elixir that goes down smoothly and warms us on its way.

Let Webster speak for himself? Try and stop him! Although he found himself unable to declaim before the school at Phillips Exeter Academy, he overcame his shyness with a vengeance. He was elected to Congress largely on the strength of a Fourth of July address, and it was his oratory that made him famous. When we think of Webster we think of him speaking: the great dark deep-set eyes glowing at his listeners; the huge voice that could be heard, unamplified, by a throng of 20,000; the overwhelming presence—no man, said Canon Smyth, could be so great as this man looked. And what words he spoke! Read aloud the end of the peroration in Webster's 1830 debate with Hayne over the right of a state to nullify federal legislation:

When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre, not a stripe erased or polluted, nor a single star obscured, bearing for its motto, no such miserable interrogatory as "What is all this worth?" nor those other words of delusion and folly, "Liberty first and Union afterwards"; but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heaven, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart—Liberty and Union, now and for ever, one and inseparable!

Rich, perhaps; a chocolate layer cake of American oratory that makes Everett Dirksen sound like Calvin Coolidge. But incomparably great. So, too, are the argument in the Dartmouth College case ("It is, sir, as I have said, a small college. And yet there are those who love it—"); the speech for the

prosecution in the White murder case; the Adams-Jefferson commemorative address; the speech in support of the 1850 compromise, and many more.

It is not only Webster the orator whom Lewis shows us. There is also Webster the diplomat, settling with Britain the disputed Maine boundary; Webster the farmer, saying he preferred the company of his oxen to that of his fellow Senators; Webster the fisherman; Webster the traveler, pleased by the number of dukes and earls who entertained him in England; Webster the family man; Webster the speculator in Western land, and Webster the impecunious (Lewis points out that in 1842 two of Webster's promissory notes, in the aggregate face amount of \$17,750, sold at auction for \$400).

Not everything in the book is pro-Webster, largely because not everything in the book is in Webster's own words. Lewis has supplied skillful notes connecting his selections from Webster's speeches and letters and furnishing background material on such topics as Webster's drinking (conclusion: rarely excessive), his Supreme Court practice (which yielded more than \$15,000 a year), his lifelong ambition to be President (when a Whig President was finally elected—William Henry Harrison—Webster could not resist giving him, unsolicited, a draft inaugural address).

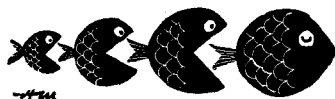
While he was a Congressman from Massachusetts Webster represented claimants for damage to American commerce done by Spanish cruisers in 1788-89, and succeeded in having Congress enact a law providing for the payment of the claims. His fee, 5 per cent of the amounts recovered by his clients, came to \$70,000.

While Senator from Massachusetts he actively represented the Second Bank of the United States during the struggle between Jackson and Biddle over the renewal of its charter by Congress. At the height of the fight Webster went so far as to write Biddle that his retainer had not been "renewed, or refreshed as usual," and that if Biddle wanted him to continue to represent the Bank rather than its enemies, "it may be well to send me the usual retainers."

In brief, it is the whole Webster, a Webster of godlike speech and human flaws, to whom Lewis introduces us. It is a pleasure to make his acquaintance.

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USA

**CAPTIVE CITY:
Chicago in Chains**

by Ovid Demaris

Lyle Stuart, 366 pp., \$6.95

MAYOR DALEY'S CHICAGO, still nursing bruises from the 1968 Democratic Convention and the Walker report, gets a belt right in its solar plexus from Ovid Demaris. His is probably the most comprehensive and best-documented account in recent years of the criminal-political alliance in the nation's second largest city, which allegedly is still first in the hearts of The Outfit, as the mob is dubbed thereabouts. Demaris says he had access to new information and to secret federal reports, and he quotes the latter at length to finger police, city- and state-elected representatives, a few judges, and a couple of Congressmen he claims were gang-dominated.

The opus thus adds up to a multiple-count indictment. If those named were tried, preferably with a change of venue—which is impossible—there might be some action. (That "change of venue" bit may be a little unfair; the majority of Chicago judges undoubtedly are honest, and they had Chicago Bar Association approval when elected.) Recently mobsmen have been prosecuted on such charges as contempt of court. Furthermore, the city's traffic tickets are fed into a computer so that violators are tracked down, even after three years, and fined large sums. Jail sentences have been imposed on a number of flagrant violators unable to come up with the money.

So maybe Chicago is getting ready for reform, though out-of-towners don't always remember that big trees from little acorns grow. Demaris failed to discern any such tendencies. And, indeed, no great reform wave occurred in Las Vegas as a result of *The Green Felt Jungle*, by Demaris and Ed Reid.

Anyhow, as a long-time Chicago watcher dating back to the Dillinger days, this reviewer suggests that *Captive City* tries to be an honest book. Out of some thirty-five references to Mayor Daley a couple are almost complimentary, even if the rest inferentially accent the negative.

Not that there is any suggestion the mayor ever took a dishonest dime: no one has ever accused him of that. Demaris gives him the nod as an astute politician, which might be considered laudatory by some; but the author's idea of what makes an astute politician is eyebrow-lifting if not eye-opening. If the West Side Bloc candidates are put into office it must be because they are the men the electorate wants, and

the mayor does not—except on rare occasions, one of which Demaris notes—stand in the way of the will of the people.

And when things backfire, as they did the time a lot of cops teamed up with a burglar who turned out to have a big mouth when he thought he hadn't gotten his fair share, the mayor works through a Blue Label committee and/or commission to straighten out the mess. In this instance, California's professor Orlando Wilson was brought in



to clean up the police department; one of the first things he did was to obtain computers to speed up complaints and records. Wilson, according to Demaris, sharply improved the general efficiency of the department, but confessed disappointment at not breaking up The Outfit or severing the hoodlum-politician ties. "The perfesser," as he was known to mobsmen, has since gone. His computers remain.

Most Chicagoans will regard the book as a twice-told tale and try to shrug it off as muckraking to make a fast buck, which it definitely is not. And most New Yorkers and Angelenos will pull a Jack Horner. A little advice: Chicagoans, Washingtonians, *et al.*, had better read *Captive City* thoughtfully and ponder. It is an indictment not only of politicians, judges, and criminals, but of an uninterested electorate.

Demaris's word must be taken for the authenticity of the documentation. To be sure, this reviewer spotted a few errors, but they are not major ones. There are some undeserved snide remarks, like calling a nightclubbing, show-loving judge a playboy, thus damning him as an associate of possibly evil characters; and questions are raised about another judge, now highly regarded and deservedly so, simply because as a young and broke lawyer he once represented a top Mafia leader.

Robert S. Kleckner

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Twenty-five Issues

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of the automobile, the production methods associated with it, and the economic integration and wage-scales resulting from it have deeply affected American life. And we do indeed find in the *Annals* a two-page snippet by Frederick W. Taylor entitled "A Piece-Rate System of Wages" (1895). Henry Ford himself is represented by two selections. One is the four-and-a-half-page sententious piece "Success" (1928); another is his two-page "Advice to the Unemployed" (1932) exhorting them to go get a job. The editor's introduction naturally explains that "he hated Jews, Catholics, fat men, prisons, doctors, bankers, and tobacco, carried a gun and believed in reincarnation." But there is no selection from Ford (although numerous vivid passages are available) concerning his introduction of assembly-line techniques, or his eight-hour day, or the symbolically important \$5-a-day wage. There is, of course, is a seven-page selection (including a photograph of the author) from Ralph Nader on "Unsafe Automotive Design" (1966).

If we turn to Space, we find, again, no lack of selections crying woe and pointing the accusing finger: a one-and-a-half-page editorial (1957) by Walter Lippmann on the implications of Sputnik, referring to McCarthyism and the general Philistinism and backwardness of American education; a Negro folksong (1957) which, according to the editors, argues "that the effort to reach the moon was morally and spiritually wrong, as well as expensive"; a piece on new dangers from the frightening political powers of scientists. And a six-page essay recounts the unhappy consequences of President Kennedy's determination to get us to the moon: "... its implementation has built a Procrustean bed and the American space program has been severely mutilated to fit it."

This, we are told, is the place of space exploration in modern American civilization! One need not be a chauvinist, a warmonger, an enthusiast for the "military-industrial complex," nor a man without a conscience to say that this picture is oddly myopic. Not a word on the spectacular organization and collaboration which made the space-shots possible, nor on the exhilarating sense of adventure and promise felt by the millions (perhaps a majority) of Americans who were not editors of the *Annals*.

And so it goes. Is it any wonder that a people who are told by such respectable sources to see their history from

this point of view should feel ashamed and guilty for everything their civilization has been? If our earlier ancestors were such "anti-democratic" fools and our recent compatriots such heartless, confused dolts, would not *anything* else be better?

In still another way the *Annals* exemplify some of the special problems of our age. If the editors' claim is correct we have here a foretaste of what may be in store for us as a result of the more simple-minded attempts to pigeonhole materials to make them "accessible" to computer retrieval. The quality of selections printed out from a body of electronically stored material can be no better than the quality of the selections that went in. Or, in the wise new adage of data processing: "Garbage In! Garbage Out!" We can be confident, then, that the compilations and instant-textbooks "retrieved" from these volumes will be no whit more sensible or more usable than the original set. By contrast with such a product a passable, well-organized, well-indexed textbook of history would look good.

Each chapter of the canonical "Con-spectus" offers a crude, dogmatic introduction (mostly of strung-together quotations) followed by an equally canonical "Outline of Topics," followed by key-numbered references (running up to forty pages), followed by "Cross References" to other supposedly canonical sources (*viz.* the Syntopicon of the Great Books; Encyclopaedia Britannica; Compton's Encyclopedia [now, we are told, owned by EB]), followed by "Recommended Readings" (of admittedly non-canon-

FRASER YOUNG LITERARY CRYPT No. 1357

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1357 will be found in the next issue.

ETZTN BX K FJVEU LXQ AVEB
BVAAVSQIF, DTSKQPT KEXFJ-
TN HTNPXE GJX AVEBP VF
TKPL GVII DTKF LXQ KF FJT
UKOT.

—GVIIVKO OXNNVP

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1356

One must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing.

—OSCAR WILDE.