

## Belles lettres and bell ringers

LOUISIANA IN FRENCH DIPLOMACY, 1759-1804, by E. Wilson Lyon, University of Oklahoma Press, 1934, 268 pages, \$3.00.

**I**N his *Louisiana in French Diplomacy*, Mr. E. Wilson Lyon has written a comprehensive history of French colonial and foreign policies so far as they affect the Colony of Louisiana.

The volume traces the history of the Franco-Spanish diplomacy concerning the territory, the transfer to Spain, the development of Napoleon's plan for a great French Colonial Empire and the consequent transfer of the territory to France. After the cession of the Territory of Louisiana to France by Spain, Napoleon was forced to occupy himself more and more with Europe with the result that the Colonial Empire was given up. Other considerations led him to abandon the colonial ventures: Louisiana without the Floridas would not be easy to protect and the acquiring of the Florida was well-nigh impossible; again, the French defeat in San Domingo shattered the whole structure of the proposed western empire. Napoleon, thus forced to abandon the plans for the colonial enterprise, was willing to sell the Colony of Louisiana.

It is the author's opinion that Napoleon's primary motive in the sale of Louisiana to the United States was "to break up the Anglo-American *rapprochement* and to secure the good will of the United States for France and her allies." To accomplish this, Napoleon was willing to violate the terms of the cession of Louisiana to France from Spain.

The volume concludes with an account of the negotiations of Monroe and Livingston and the purchase of Louisiana by the United States and the subsequent taking of possession of the territory by the American forces.

Running through the account one is impressed by the lack of importance attached to Louisiana during its earlier history. The French were quite willing to give the territory to Spain in 1762 and Spain was very reluctant to accept. It was believed on both sides that the cost of protection and administration exceeded the value to the colonial power.

Lyon has made two very important contributions to the diplomatic history of Louisiana. Most of the literature dealing with the subject has been written from the point of view of the United States and is

based upon American sources. The contribution of the present volume lies in its presentation of the events of French colonial policy and diplomacy based upon the French point of view as revealed in French and Spanish sources, many of which have heretofore remained unpublished. Again, the author has gone beyond the customary diplomatic documents and has presented considerable memoir material.

Thus, the policy of French diplomacy is not presented as though it were developed in a vacuum far removed from French domestic politics and the general European situation. There has been avoided one of the errors common to diplomatic history.

The University of Oklahoma Press is to be congratulated for its most recent addition to the field of diplomatic history. The excellent workmanship of the press has produced a volume of unusual beauty.

R. J. DANGERFIELD  
University of Oklahoma  
government department  
and author, *In Defense  
of the Senate*, a history  
of treaty making.

### ▲ Snowfall After Dusk

Snowfall after dusk . . . an eerie sight . . . the unreal reflection of the street light on the frozen icy surface . . . the quiet glide of the flakes through the frigid air . . . the plump effect of the snow-layers over the hedges . . . bedecked bushes like so many giant mushrooms . . . billowy banks heaped high near the terrace . . . fresh tire-ruts in the streets . . . the sheathed tree-limbs in silhouette . . . overhead, the power-lines like slack, white ropes . . . an eerie sight . . . snowfall after dusk.

JOSEPH A. KORNFIELD, '30as, Tulsa

### ▲ Webb and Truscott, Authors

A history of Clay County, Arkansas, has been written and published by Robert T. Webb, '33ex, Patsy Truscott, '33ex, and Bruce Brown.

The eighty-eight page volume deals with the early history of the county, civil war days and brings the story down to the present time. Also, in the volume is announced the formation of the company of Webb, Truscott and Brown as collectors and publishers of histories of town, counties and families. Their office is in Piggott, Arkansas. Miss Truscott was women's editor of the *Oklahoma Daily* last year and Webb was enrolled in the law school.

**Send \$3  
Be a member**

IMAGE IS NOT AVAILABLE  
ONLINE DUE TO COPYRIGHT  
RESTRICTIONS.

A paper copy of this  
issue is available at  
call number LH 1 .06S6  
in Bizzell Memorial  
Library.