

o.u. press books retell

The Civil War Saga

By SAM R. POWELL
'60journal

THIS year heralds the beginning of the 100th anniversary of the Civil War, and not to be outdone by other publishers who are climbing on the bandwagon, the University of Oklahoma Press has released several works on this era in United States history. The new books follow others which have been brought out in recent years, all combining to give the University a good representation in the current effort to acquaint the public with the heritage of Civil War Americana during the four years of the Centennial, 1961-65.

Some of the more recent works to come from the University Press have been of special interest to the Civil War student, in that they take up neglected areas of the war and depart from the usual rehashing of the big eastern campaigns and the better-known battles.

CIVIL WAR IN THE WESTERN TERRITORIES

The first of these was published in 1959, entitled the *Civil War in the Western Territories (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah)*. Author Ray Colton tells for the first time the complete story of the struggle to gain control of the Southwest. Here the Confederates had hoped to establish a new empire, but for the most part the people remained loyal to the Union. The book covers the campaigns and strategy used, but also points up the fact that the war initiated the coming of age of our western territories.

CIVIL WAR IN THE NORTHWEST

Following as a supplement to Colton this fall was Robert Huhn Jones' *Civil War in the Northwest*, dealing with Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and the Dakotas, essentially Indian frontier at that time. The purpose here is also to touch on new ground in Civil War history. The major incident of this area was a massive Sioux Indian uprising in 1862, which occurred when the war effort drained the federal troops from the area.

THE ROCK OF CHICKAMAUGA

Freeman Cleaves has authored two books published by the Press, both of which are

biographies of Civil War generals. The first, *The Rock of Chickamauga*, is the story of a Southerner who chose to follow his conscience which told him to stay with the Union. This book, the life of George H. Thomas, is the ironic tale of a man who was accepted in neither camp. Called a traitor by the South, distrusted by the North, "The Rock" was one of the best fighting generals the Union had. The descriptions of the battles and the manner in which a man like Thomas made decisions that were to become history are especially well done.

MEADE OF GETTYSBURG

Meade of Gettysburg is the life of the man who stopped Lee in the greatest battle of the war. Published in 1960, the author tries to assess fairly the value of the services of Meade from war office records and archives and from public and private documents. Although George Gordon Meade is now considered one of the great heroes of the war because of that monumental battle, he was not considered one at the time. Cleaves delves into the reasons why, and whether the criticism was justified.

THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE

For the ardent reader of this period, several past books published by the Press are still available. *The Army of Tennessee*, by Stanley F. Horn, is a good history that was originally published by Bobbs-Merrill and has seen three printings since being picked up by the Press. It is the story of the tragic, yet gallant army that faced the might of the Union in the bitter campaigns of the Kentucky-Tennessee area.

PRIVATE ELISHA STOCKWELL, JR., SEES THE CIVIL WAR

Private Elisha Stockwell, Jr., Sees the Civil War, edited by Byron R. Abernethy, is another journal that takes a look at the way the common soldier lived—and died—in the costliest war in America's history.

GENERAL GEORGE CROOK, HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

For the person who wants some blunt opinions and appraisals of Civil War gen-

erals, *General George Crook, His Autobiography* fills the bill. This new edition which was issued last year, edited and annotated by Martin F. Schmitt, is primarily concerned with Crook's Indian fighting, where he gained his fame. But he was a favorite of Grant and a close associate of Sheridan in the war, and his views of this period are a valuable addition to history.

TRAVELS IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES

The only book to be published this spring concerning the Civil War is a second printing of a 1948 Press offering. *Travels in the Confederate States* by E. Merton Coulter is the first volume published, but the fourth in chronological sequence, of a bibliographical undertaking. This work is a description of nearly 500 accounts by travelers—including soldiers, prisoners, journalists, foreigners and others—in the South during the Civil War.

THE SINGING SIXTIES

Perhaps the most unusual and interesting of all the books about this period to be published by the O.U. Press so far is one entitled *The Singing Sixties* by Willard A. and Porter W. Heaps, brought out this fall. As the jacket describes it, the book is "the Spirit of Civil War Days Drawn from the Music of the Times" and to the average book-bug would appear to be a rather dull affair. Actually the book is quite the opposite. Here indeed is a new slant on the war, and the Press has come up with one of its better offerings to commemorate the event.

The authors have caught the real mood of the Civil War era, as they trace the entire history of the United States at this time through its music. Each song that was sung during, before and after the war, is used, and the story behind it is told. As an example—the South's many flags were the basis for many songs. The story of the origin of the most famous Southern standard, the Stars and Bars, is woven in with the songs, making interesting and off-beat reading. This book has not received the publicity given to others connected with the war, but it deserves notice as one of the better ones.