

penitentiaries. But since the major reason he adduces is that the island's geographical location resulted in producing among the staff 'the sort of comradery that builds a sense of interdependence,' the work hardly offers much in the way of guidance to would-be penal reformers.'

"Well worth the price," says Ralph Vigil of *BILLY THE KID: A Bio-Bibliography*. By Jon Tuska (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983, \$35.00). This book, he goes on, will be enjoyed by all readers interested in the legend of Billy the Kid and the American West. In addition to providing the reader with an accurate and readable account of the life and death of the Kid, Jon Tuska in succeeding chapters competently evaluates the uses to which the legend has been put in history, fiction and film. In summary, the author's critical examination of existing works on the Kid is a valuable and highly interesting contribution and complements the earlier works of Ramon F. Adams.

Words from Tim Miller on a reference volume follow. *GOVERNMENT AGENCIES*. Edited by Donald R. Whitnah (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983, \$49.95). "This book might sound like a dry directory, but instead it provides a lucid prose introduction to the hundreds of agencies covered. In each case there is a history of the agency, especially detailing the manner in which it came into existence, and a general description of the agency's work, highlighting especially important functions and controversies of note. Each entry also contains a bibliography of relevant government documents, monographs, and muckraking analyses. A useful reference work for anyone whose research involves any important contemporary federal agency."

Loring Silet knows about photography and Hawthorne, so we mailed him *PORTRAITS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: An Iconography*. By Rita K. Gollin (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1983, \$25.00 cloth). His reply: "This book contains an exhaustive listing of all of the known portraits and photographs made of Hawthorne during his life. Included in the notes to each item are Hawthorne's reactions to the various likenesses which have been drawn from his letters and notebooks. It is a fascinating little book full of historical insights and intriguing connections between Hawthorne's work and his attitudes toward the art of portraiture. Especially promising are Professor Gollin's remarks, in her brief introduction, on Hawthorne's use of portraits and other likenesses in his fiction."

*DISCOGRAPHY*: We asked Jim Seaver, historian, classical archaeologist, numismatist, authority on opera and an important discophile, to examine a new reference book. His letter follows: I have now had a chance to look at [Ted] Fagan and [William] Moran's book *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF DISCOGRAPHY OF VICTOR RECORDINGS* (Greenwood Press, 1983, \$49.95). Both Fagan and Moran are well known for their research and interest in singers

and the history of the phonograph. Bill Moran and I were good friends at Stanford from 1936-1940—where we collected records together on several occasions. Bill is wealthy, has a huge collection which he will donate to Stanford, and is unmarried. He married records and singers early and has devoted his life to the phonograph.

Therefore this is a completely solid and serious work. It is comprehensive and exhaustive, and this is only the first volume in many more to come. This volume only covers 1903 when a *few* records were issued. How many other volumes there will be in this survey boggles the imagination.

As for this volume: Moran's introduction is well organized and written clearly. He writes quite a lot for *The Record Collector* and has an excellent English style. The list of recordings appears to be very carefully done from the original lists and cards and the indexing is comprehensive. This appears to be a useful book for all interested in the history of the phonograph.

Warren French writes to tell us that the book we sent him is "a remarkable compilation." His OBNA notice says it all in one sentence: "Just at the time that Jackson J. Benson's biography has given us the long elusive facts about John Steinbeck's life, Robert J. DeMott in *STEINBECK'S READING: A Catalogue of Books Owned and Borrowed* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984, \$47.00) has provided the materials for his intellectual biography with this annotated list of all the books known to have influenced him, illustrated extensively with quotations from his works."

*VISIONS, IMAGES, AND DREAMS: Yiddish Film Past and Present*. By Eric A. Goldman (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983, \$39.95). Goldman seeks to do no more than document the extraordinary persistence of Yiddish cinema (films produced by Jews sympathetic to Jewish heritage, for Yiddish-speaking audiences) in times and places both expected and unexpected—pre-Revolutionary Russia, Soviet Russia, Poland before and after (!) World War II, other Eastern and Western European places, the United States and even, most astonishingly perhaps, Israel. Of most obvious interest to Americanists as a record of the extraordinary interpenetration of Hollywood with what one would have assumed to be a very minor-league enterprise, this modest and "simply factual" book is, finally, both suggestive of further lines of cinematic and sociocultural research, and deeply moving.

Tim Miller read a pamphlet called *THE PROMISES OF LOVE IN THE WEST: Stories of the Frontier Spirit in America*. By Margaret Fisher (Tampa: American Studies Press, 1984), and reports that it's "an expanded version of a 1983 lecture on the Great Plains, and gathers several tales of the old plains into a running essay on values and human behavior. As usual in works of this type, the most interesting parts are odd anecdotes. Did you know that Josiah Royce came into existence against great