



Imprint of Quality

IF THE ADVANCE SALE is an accurate barometer, the University of Missouri Press now is launching its all-time best seller. *Jesse James Was His Name*, by Tulsa University's William A. Settle, Jr., is receiving favorable reviews, good early acceptance from retail book outlets, and more than passing interest from the public.

All of this, quite naturally, is pleasing to the Press's director, Robert L. Morris. But Morris and his 14-member Press committee are just as proud of the selections just preceding and next following the James work: *Social Science and Farm Politics in the Age of Roosevelt*, by Missouri University associate professor Dr. Richard S. Kirkendall, and *The Persistent Quest for Values: What Are We Seeking?* by the president of the University of Michigan, Harlan Hatcher. While it seems safe to say that neither will ever be featured on television's late, or even late-late, show, their value to scholars is the measure of their worth to their publisher. As with other university presses, Missouri does not have a publishing philosophy based primarily on sales. It seeks two types of books: scholarly works largely of interest to other scholars, and books of more general interest, that are based solidly on available knowledge and scholarship or are contributions to the understanding and appreciation of the arts. The test for publication, then, is simple—does the manuscript make a contribution to the world's body of knowledge?

Some years ago, Princeton University Press published the Pylos tablets. At the time, no one in the world could read the book. But as a result of their publication, the tablets were deciphered and a significant contribution to learning was made. As this story illustrates, some of the most imaginative and valuable publications of our time come from the 54 university-owned and -operated presses in this country.

Missouri's publishing venture was established in 1958, operating then, as now, under the control of a committee of faculty and alumni members appointed by the President. The Press Committee determines the direction and program of the Press



Director Bob Morris faces his Press committee. From the left, clockwise, Dr. Fred Lucas, chairman of the Pathology department; Dr. Richard S. Kirkendall, associate professor of history; Dean Ralph H. Parker, of the School of Library and Information Science; Willard L. Eckhardt, professor of law; Dr. Loren D. Reid, professor of speech; Dr. William H. Peden, professor of English; Dr. Rondal G. Downing, associate professor of political science; Dr. Charles E. Marshall, acting dean of the Graduate School; Dr. Charles Dougherty, of the St. Louis campus; Dr. John M. Kuhlman, professor of economics; and Dr. Donald Siehr, of the Rolla campus. Not pictured are the two Kansas City campus representatives, Dr. Warren French and Dr. Harold Bushman, and the alumni member, Roger Straus, president of the New York publishing firm of Farrar, Straus and Giroux.



Morris has been with the Press since it began in 1956. Long-time Press editor is Mrs. Margery McKinney, right.



and has the sole authority to bestow on works of merit the imprint: University of Missouri Press.

In its first nine years the Missouri Press has published 59 books. Five of them—in competition with books submitted by commercial publishers and other university presses—have won prizes for excellence of design and production from the Midwestern Books Competition and the Chicago Book Clinic. Four books, dealing with literature and literary criticism, have been selected by four different British publishers for distribution throughout the United Kingdom.

In addition to the book program, the Press also publishes the University of Missouri Studies series, which was established in 1926. This series presents results of original research by University faculty members or graduate students. Over the years, 110 monographs have appeared in this series.

Another of the Press's programs is believed to be unique among University publishing operations. Two long-playing record albums of performances by the Collegium Musicum have been released. So far as is known, no other university press is dealing in records.

Since 1965 the University of Missouri Press, *The Kansas City Star*, Hallmark Cards, Inc., and the Jewish Community Center of Kansas City have sponsored the Kansas City Poetry Contests. The competition for the Devins Memorial Award, one of the prizes, has attracted entries from all 50 states, and the winning book-length manuscript is published by the Press.

The University of Missouri Press welcomes worthwhile manuscripts by any competent person. About half have come from University faculty members and Missouri residents, but no preference is given them because of the Missouri tie. Each book selected by the Press Committee must stand on its own merits, and the committee zealously guards the integrity of the Press imprint. At the same time the Press is in full competition with other publishers for the best work of Missouri faculty and residents.

Although the Press publishes books on all subjects of interest to the scholar and the informed layman, it feels a special responsibility to publish books dealing with Missouri and the Midwest.

"There is no necessity," says Morris, "for making the sharp distinction some scholars make between traditional 'contributions to knowledge' and 'regional' books. It is more proper instead to regard them as regional

and nonregional contributions to knowledge. It is a narrow view of scholarship indeed which holds that the Medici banks of Florence are legitimate subjects for scholarly inquiry, but that the operation of a big cooperative association in the Midwest is not."

Upon receiving a manuscript, members of the Press staff appraise the work as to its general nature. If it appears that the manuscript might be appropriate to the Press's publishing program, it is then sent to at least one expert in the subject matter who has no connection with the author or his institution. If the reports of the readers are generally favorable and the director believes that publication is economically feasible, he presents the manuscript to the Press Committee of final decision. Last year some 90 manuscripts were submitted and 12 actually were published.

The approved manuscript is turned over to one of the Press editors, who checks such matters as consistency and correctness of spelling, punctuation, grammar and diction and the form and completeness of footnotes and bibliography.

Morris arranges for the design of the book and draws up the specifications for its manufacture. Private printing firms contract for the printing and binding, following the sealed-bid procedure of the Purchasing Department of the University.

A book is usually scheduled for publication between six months and a year after acceptance. Few books are published during the summer months, when the academic community is scattered and therefore difficult to reach with announcements.

The finished books do arrive from the bindery one day, however, and review copies are sent to specialized journals suggested by the author as well as to more general reviewers. Missouri Press books have been reviewed by such periodicals as the *New York Times*, *Saturday Review of Literature* and *Newsweek*.

By their nature, book reviews are of unpredictable help. A recent one begins, "Oh, no! Not another Jesse James book!"

Fortunately, the review ended, "We would suggest that Settle's book will be the standard that future historians use in determining Jesse James' place in American history and folklore."

And that's what the University of Missouri Press had in mind when it published "another" book about the world-famous badman. □