(For publication)

1-2-29

" History itself, hence the history of any man or event, is a series of approximations, irregularly spaced with many blanks and guesses. What may be sacred writ to one, or to millions, may be and is a matter of indifference or even derision to others, and all equally sincere, and often of more or less equal intellegence. History, like Beauty, has never been satisfactorily defined. That Jesus was, also is, the Son of God? a myth? or a mere man? is and has been, a matter of multitudinous dispute for centuries, and hundreds of millions disagree on the three sided question today. That Genghis Khan was a slant-eyed yellow-skinned Mongolian? or a red haired Caucasian, possibly a Goth? is also a long fought question. Who? or what? won at Waterloo has been constantly argued from then to now. Did Erick? or Columbus? or sundry others discover America? And were thousands of so-called 'White Indians', apparantly of the white race, here centuries before all that? Did Socrates actually live? was he a real man? or was he merely a fiction figure on whom Plato hung his own philosophy? Who can say? Each has his own ideas, but who can convince all the others?

"The history of the American frontier, being part of world history, is necessarily just as uncertain. Living witnesses are not the answer because no two or more living witnesses, nor dead ones either, ever exactly agreed about anything. That seems to be humanly impossible. All records, official, private and otherwise, coming from human hands, and hence contain the same elements of human error. No matter what you, I, or any other man writes, some will believe and some will not believe, some will approve and some will hoot, so all we can do is to do the best we can, and not only frankly acknowledge but publicly proclaim that our best effort is only an attempt, not a certainty. The only indisputable writing I know of is the multiplication table, and history is not mathematics."

CHAUNCEY THOMAS