Clarion Review

Autobiography & Memoir

Cadre of the Mews
Edwin Lancaster Hobbs
CreateSpace
978-1-4537-2312-8
Four Stars (out of Five)

A memoir of a determined entrepreneur who went from police officer to tree-trimmer, inventor, business owner, and falconer, *Cadre of the Mews* is a fascinating read of adventure and courage. When many of his original tree-trimming crew gathered for a reunion, the idea was born to put together a book relating the adventures of a group of men who trimmed and removed trees in difficult locations, often in miserable weather conditions.

Edwin Hobbs and his original business partner meet through the police force, discovering that they both had some tree-trimming experience. Looking to supplement their income and possibly a way out of police work, B&H Tree Service was born. This was the first of four businesses the author would establish.

Hobbs shares his experiences growing up outdoors in California and of his passion for birds of prey. Many of his employees first got to know Hobbs through a shared passion for falcons. He weaves details on tree trimming and removal techniques in chapters describing particularly challenging jobs.

With input from employees, Hobbs developed several safety devices still used today by tree-trimmers as well as the FBI and other government agencies involved in search, surveillance, and rescue work. Getting these products to market led to the establishment of two other businesses: Bry-Dan Corporation and Climbers Equipment Company. The book contains both illustrations of these devices in use and some of the advertising materials.

Half of the book is devoted to profiles of eighteen employees. These profiles are an effective means to relate tales of tree-trimming work and the characteristics of successful employees. Some off-the-job adventures are also told, demonstrating the risk-taking backgrounds of many of their employees.

The attractive and eye-catching front cover includes photos of the author with one of his

falcons, while the back cover shows a trimmer risking his life attacking a particularly difficult tree. Forty pages of photos of employees at work, safety equipment in use, reunion pictures, and falcons on the hunt are worthwhile additions.

Those in the tree-trimming industry, as well as other entrepreneurs and adventure seekers, will find this memoir an enjoyable read. The author shares a few observations on the difficulties of sole proprietorship and finding good employees. This book would be more beneficial if it included more business details shared by this successful entrepreneur, especially regarding his fourth business dealing with security and surveillance, which is only briefly discussed.

Early in the book, Edwin Hobbs states the characteristics of his winning team, or cadre: “Loyalty, integrity, courage and spirit.” He does an admirable job of showing how these factors make not only a successful team but also a successful business and an enjoyable read.

Mary Cary Crawford