

# BOOK REVIEWS

*Historic Houses of Philadelphia: A Tour of the Region's Museum Homes.* By ROGER W. MOSS. Photographs by Tom Crane. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998. A Barra Foundation Book. xiv, 240p. Illustrations, maps, endnotes, bibliography, glossary, index. \$35.00.)

This book is a must for anyone interested in the early architecture of the Philadelphia area. It is an extraordinarily useful compilation of information on some forty-eight historic houses, mostly in and about the city, but also ranging as far as Trenton to the northeast and Chadds Ford to the southwest. It is about structures built as residences rather than public buildings. Moss has organized the book geographically into five subregions: Center City and Nearby New Jersey, Schuylkill River and Fairmount Park, Germantown, Delaware River, and Northern and Western Suburbs. There is a map and introductory essay for each of these subregions. The book opens with an essay entitled "Historic Preservation in Philadelphia." It discusses preservation efforts beginning with the proposed selling of the Old State House in 1813, loss of the Slate Roof House after the Civil War (in spite of efforts by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to save it), the development of Fairmount Park which fortuitously, if unintentionally, assisted in the preservation of what we now call the park houses, a brief treatment of the impact of the Colonial Revival (the effects of which still linger in many of the houses discussed), the saga of the Powel House, and ending with a discussion of the role of government in preservation.

The first subregion, "Center City and Nearby New Jersey," is oddly named because all but one of the Philadelphia houses are in Old City rather than Center City. The latter designation is justified only by the inclusion of the Rosenbach Museum at 2010 Delancey Place—some distance west of Broad Street. Although this is a delightful property housing one of Philadelphia's most charming cultural institutions, this ca. 1865 house is largely a twentieth-century artifact that assumed its present form during the 1940s under A.S.W. Rosenbach, the antiquarian book dealer and collector. But the Rosenbach does meet the author's own criteria for inclusion: originally built as a residence in or close to Philadelphia and now "operated and interpreted for public education and enjoyment" (p. xi). The sites in Old City include the usual suspects: the Powel, Physick, Bishop White, and Todd houses, and, inevitably (and for some of us unaccountably), the Betsy Ross House.

The sixth site is Elfreth's Alley, neither an individual house nor a museum but Philadelphia's last surviving streetscape from the colonial period. The "Nearby New Jersey" properties are less familiar to most of us and therefore especially welcome in this highly selective compilation. They are the Walt Whitman House, Pomona Hall, Barclay Farmstead, and Greenfield Hall.

The "Schuylkill River and Fairmount Park" section includes the obvious park houses, but it also encompasses the incomparable Woodlands, a vastly important and, for the time, innovative expression of neoclassicism; the highly idiosyncratic Bartram House; and the little known, very early, and exquisitely restored Bellair located in South Philadelphia. One of the charms of this book is the author's habit of introducing such relatively unknown architectural treasures as Bellair. The sites in the Germantown section range from a cluster of early-eighteenth-century vernacular buildings known as Rittenhousetown to the flamboyantly Victorian Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion, along with such venerable structures as Stenton, Cliveden, and Grumblethorpe.

Moss's selection of Delaware River properties includes such well-known mansions as Andalusia and Pennsbury Manor, along with the lesser-known but elegant Glen Foerd and the historically important house of William Trent, a founder of Trenton, New Jersey. Burholme, the Ryers mansion, in the Fox Chase section of Philadelphia, is included in this section—even though it is not close to the banks of the Delaware. This grandiloquent Italianate house has undergone considerable alteration to accommodate significant collections of decorative and fine arts. Its inclusion here reflects the author's third criteria for selecting house museums for this volume: collections. The last section, "Northern and Western Suburbs," accommodates thirteen houses. Moss's northern suburbs, all above the Schuylkill, offer Hope Lodge, the Highlands, the Peter Wentz House, and Pennypacker Mills, all strung out on the Skippack Pike (Route 73). To the north lie Graeme Park, with its nearly pristine mid-eighteenth-century interior, and Fonthill, the mansion built of poured concrete ca. 1910 by and for Henry Chapman Mercer. The near western suburbs bring us Harriton, a wonderful early-eighteenth-century house that was once occupied by Charles Thomson, secretary to the Continental Congress; the Grange, a onetime Georgian mansion that was Gothicized in the 1850s; and Waynesborough, the seat of the Wayne family, including the Revolutionary War general of that name. The far western suburbs provide four early houses, three of them in or near Chadds Ford (whose most famous resident, Andrew Wyeth, will no doubt quake at the thought of having his beloved hometown designated a suburb of Philadelphia). These are the Brinton 1704 House, the Barns-Brinton House, and the modest John Chads House. The fourth property is the Caleb Pusey House in Upland which, according to Moss, is "probably the oldest surviving Anglo-American residential structure in Pennsylvania," meaning that it is the only seventeenth-century house in the volume.

It is also the last site in the book and thus provides a strong and fitting conclusion to what can only be described as an incomparable tour of Delaware Valley architecture.

Architectural historians will be unhappy with the book because of the lack of floor plans, for the tendency to apportion equal time to each property regardless of its architectural or historic importance, and for the general lack of detailed description and sources. But this book is not aimed at a professional audience. It is aimed at that much larger audience of lay persons interested in the area's history, architectural heritage, and collections—to those people who delight in visiting house museums and who will be overjoyed when they discover in the book new sites to explore. For indeed one cannot peruse the book without being inspired to visit many of the properties described.

Much of the visual appeal of *Historic Houses of Philadelphia* must be credited to Tom Crane whose photographs of exteriors and interiors are stunning. Interiors are difficult to illuminate while still retaining a natural look. Artificial light must be balanced against daylight streaming through windows and doors. Crane's spectacular view of the front passage of the Physick House is a beautiful example of his work, which, no doubt, is why it appears on the jacket and serves as the frontispiece for the "Center City and Nearby New Jersey" section.

The publisher, University of Pennsylvania Press, deserves credit not only for the book's elegant design and high production values but for marketing it vigorously. For weeks after its publication posters featuring the jacket illustration appeared in SEPTA's regional rail cars—quite likely a first for an architectural book. A book of this size and quality and with so many four-color illustrations would normally sell for \$75.00 or more. That it is so well done and priced at only \$35.00 testifies to the substantial support of the Barra Foundation and the determination of its president, Robert L. McNeil, to see it happen.

Roger Moss has served as executive director of the Athenaeum on Philadelphia's Washington Square for thirty years. His accomplishments are too numerous to list in a book review, but they include revivifying the institution, introducing new programs and activities that have drawn national attention, and restoring and furnishing John Notman's elegant Italianate building that has served as home to the Athenaeum since it was completed in 1847, all the while pursuing research, publication, and teaching. (Moss's *Philadelphia Victorian: The Building of the Athenaeum*, a detailed account that *will* please architectural historians, was also published in 1998.) It is inevitable that people of a certain age will find parallels between Roger Moss's career in Philadelphia and that of the late Walter Muir Whitehill who served as librarian of Boston's Athenaeum for many years and whose wisdom and advice were sought by libraries and museums across the nation. Whitehill devoted himself to the study of early Boston, culminating in his *Boston: A Topographical History* (1959, 1968), and in his later years he became known as

"Mr. Boston." Perhaps because of his manifold accomplishments and service to this community, we should now think of Roger Moss as "Mr. Philadelphia."

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

IAN M.G. QUIMBY

*Captain Watson's Travels in America: The Sketchbooks and Diary of Joshua Rowley Watson, 1772-1818.* By KATHLEEN A. FOSTER with commentaries on plates by KENNETH FINKEL. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. xii, 372p. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$69.50.)

In early 1816 the English captain Joshua Rowley Watson took a leave of absence from the Royal Navy (and his wife and six children) to sail to America. Using his uncle's estate along the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia as his base of operations, he spent the year from June 1816 to June 1817 traveling through New England and the mid-Atlantic states. Watson was an amateur artist of some ability, and he soon filled two sketchbooks with picturesque views of the scenery around Philadelphia, and further afield in New England and Washington. Upon his return, he bought a house in Exeter, only to die a few months later at the age of forty-six.

Such is the subject of Kathleen A. Foster's sumptuous catalogue, the product of twenty years of sleuthing. In 1975 she first encountered one of Watson's sketchbooks, recently purchased by the Barra Foundation, its authorship then uncertain. After positively identifying Watson as the artist, she found a companion volume at the New-York Historical Society, and later a diary in family possession that recorded the first four months of his trip. Other sketches and documents permitted her to reconstruct the rest of Watson's robust career. While *Captain Watson's Travels in America: The Sketchbooks and Diary of Joshua Rowley Watson, 1772-1818*, concentrates on his American journey, it amounts to a full monograph on the amateur artist's life and work.

Watson's career recalls that of Patrick O'Brian's celebrated character Jack Aubrey, which also takes place against the backdrop of Nelson and Trafalgar, and nearly twenty years of continuous war with France. And like Aubrey, Watson advanced from a position as a fictitious captain's servant (kept on the books as a personal favor in order to create seniority) to command of a 74-gun ship of the line. Watson was a product of the Maritime School at Chelsea where he seems to have acquired his lifelong hobby of drawing. With but limited family connections, he rose through personal effort, being rewarded with his own command in 1795 after he helped capture a French frigate. With disappointments and shipwrecks alternating with sudden bouts of prosperity through captures and prize money, Watson's career took him through some of the major theaters of that early world war: the West Indies, the Mediterranean, Denmark, and three bleak years guarding

the Irish coast against the threat of French invasion (where he missed the battle of Trafalgar). During this often tedious duty Watson honed his watercolor skills, sketching between naval actions, dividing his time between flogging deserters and gathering wildflowers. After the defeat of Napoleon, Watson was pensioned at half pay, which gave him the opportunity for his American journey.

Foster tells this story with considerable charm and intelligence, and proves herself as gifted in naval as she is in art history. Following her detailed biographical essay on Watson is a portfolio of drawings from his sketchbooks (with conscientious historical notes by Kenneth Finkel). She also provides a wide-ranging discussion of Watson's artistic style and influence, showing how some drawings were reproduced as prints, enjoying a wide circulation, especially his view of Washington's mausoleum at Mount Vernon. Completing the catalogue are a comprehensive list of the sketchbook drawings and transcriptions of his surviving diary.

Watson's topographic interests will delight historians of the American landscape. He made at least two excursions during his visit—a summer trip up the Hudson as far as Lake George and then overland to Boston, and a spring trip to Baltimore and Washington—both of which he documented with copious watercolors and pen and ink sketches. His tastes were profoundly picturesque and romantic, and he shunned urban subjects in favor of rural estates (perhaps because he was then considering buying such an estate himself). He followed the conventions of English landscape drawing, invariably depicting country houses together with their grounds, enframed by trees and fronted by spacious swaths of lawn. Watson was also drawn to scenes of water, showing the deft hand of the nautical artist at swiftly evoking a passing shoreline.

In keeping with his naval training, Watson also made technical drawings, sketching floor plans of houses and recording with insatiable curiosity the construction of virtually every bridge he encountered. He copied Benjamin Henry Latrobe's drawings for the Capitol, and even made a fanciful perspective of it, imagining its unbuilt portico in place. Especially valuable are his views of long-vanished features, such as the odd Delaware River bridge at Trenton or the little-known obelisk on the site of the Burr-Hamilton duel.

Watson's diary abruptly ends outside of Boston, leaving unclear much of the rest of his journey. Still, the surviving fragment vividly details his early weeks in Philadelphia as well as his voyage by steamboat up the Hudson. While not a deeply introspective diarist or great observer of social mores, Watson observed his physical surroundings with a keen searching eye. His descriptions and drawings of Lake George and Saratoga are of exceptional interest, captured just as they were about to become great resorts. This same landscape, of course, was the cradle for the Hudson River School, which developed within a decade of Watson's trip. His images are particularly interesting for the light they shed on the subsequent work of fellow Englishman Thomas Cole, whose landscape paintings added a religious and

philosophical dimension absent from Watson's earlier picturesque tradition.

As meticulous as this book is, one question nags: why did Captain Watson undertake his odd trip, with its curious mix of leisure and disciplined study? Was it merely to visit his uncle and to investigate opportunities for a possible family move to America? Foster suggests that the diaries contain nothing of use for naval intelligence, but on the other hand, Watson's travels seem too ordered and purposeful for a mere artist's divagation. He covers the major harbors and river systems, particularly the Hudson and Chesapeake, so lately the scene of major strategic operations. And certainly a program of systematic sketching would be an ideal cover for the sort of genteel industrial espionage that was common during the early industrial revolution. But Foster should not be blamed for gaps that the cryptic Captain Watson has left us. She has written a superb catalogue, a reference book that will be consulted again and again, and which is that *rara avis*, a scholarly compendium that can be read with genuine pleasure.

*Williams College*

MICHAEL J. LEWIS

*The Lord Cornbury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America.* By PATRICIA U. BONOMI. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998. xiv., 290p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, has long possessed a notorious reputation among historians as one of the most corrupt, despotic, and debauched royal governors colonial British Americans were ever forced to endure. This first cousin to Queen Anne (1702–14) governed New York a scant six years before his political enemies managed to secure his recall in 1708. He has since lived in memory as a bribe-taker, plunderer of public funds, and religious persecutor. The most deliciously scandalous aspect of Cornbury's character is his reputation for dressing in women's clothes, a vice supposedly immortalized in a portrait that since the 1950s has hung in the New-York Historical Society. Patricia U. Bonomi casts a skeptical eye on the evidence on which Cornbury's reputation rests. Yet hers is no radical assault on the validity of the historical record. Rather, this seasoned historian demonstrates how records and artifacts of the early eighteenth century, including the weakly attested Cornbury scandal itself, point to an unstable world of vicious transatlantic political rivalry where rumor was wielded as a devastating political weapon. Bonomi uses effectively the records of the Cornbury era to advance our understanding of transatlantic politics and culture during the last Stuart's reign.

Bonomi approaches the Lord Cornbury scandal as an enduring artifact of the Whig history that has conditioned generations of scholars to believe the worst about

Crown appointees to colonial posts. She detects in most colonial political histories a consistent bias that favors colonial assemblies while branding royal administration as inherently corrupt, reading conflict between the two as a harbinger of the American Revolution. Bonomi opens her challenge to this Whig bias by effectively undermining the authenticity of the portrait that has seemingly provided the most tangible and damning artifact of Lord Cornbury's transvestism. Bonomi shows that the identification of the portrait's subject as Cornbury rests on remarkably thin evidence: a morsel of gossip exchanged and recorded more than seventy years after Cornbury's death. Her painstaking analysis of evidence regarding the portrait's origin, history of possession, dissimilarity with other available depictions of Cornbury, and its possibly late date all raise grave doubt that the governor is the person portrayed.

Having challenged the portrait's reliability, Bonomi examines afresh other evidence concerning the governor and his world. Bonomi treats Cornbury as a contestant within a transatlantic political system where the concept of a legitimate opposition had not yet emerged to frame and contain the bitter factional rivalries of the late Stuart era. Her biographical survey of Cornbury's life and career shows how his family connections placed him firmly within the Tory camp in England, where his integrity in service to the Crown was never seriously questioned. Bonomi draws extensively on colonial records to show how representatives of rival New York factions of "Calvinist Leislerians" and "Anglicizing anti-Leislerians" initially welcomed such a highly placed representative of the Crown and competed for his favor. She also offers a persuasive reinterpretation of his policies as principled, balanced, defensible efforts to advance imperial interests, efforts that won cautious support from some colonial leaders.

By 1705, however, Cornbury's efforts to strengthen imperial control over colonial finance were provoking opposition interests within the New York and New Jersey legislatures. Bonomi argues that the permanent stains on Cornbury's reputation came not from his conduct or policy, but from this opposition's scurrilous campaign to oust him. She devotes substantial attention to the insinuations of Cornbury's transvestism that made their way into four colonial letters to English correspondents. Drawing on other letters, diaries, and printed sources of the era, she shows how such rumors were often deployed in England through extensive gossip circles and the Grub Street press, where they could destroy the reputations on which members of the ruling class staked their ability to acquire and exercise power. Bonomi shows how planted rumors of transvestism could be exceptionally devastating in an age when moral reformers were laboring to discourage a practice increasingly identified with foppery, effeminacy, and buggery.

*The Lord Cornbury Scandal* affords a fascinating, authoritative glimpse into the seamy underside of imperial politics in the late Stuart era. Bonomi's analysis affords a model of critical historical scholarship as well as a compelling reinterpretation of

imperial relations which turn out to be less familiar, more complex, and more intriguing than the Whig account of history would have us believe.

*Central Michigan University*

TIMOTHY D. HALL

*The Papers of George Washington: Retirement Series. Volume 1: March–December 1797. Volume 2: January–September 1798.* Edited by DOROTHY TWOHIG, PHILANDER D. CHASE, BEVERLY H. RUNGE, FRANK E. GRIZZARD JR., MARK A. MASTROMARINO, ELIZABETH B. MERCER, and JACK D. WARREN. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997. Vol. 1: xxi, 566p. Vol. 2: xxvi, 646p. Index. \$55.00 each).

George Washington came home to Mount Vernon at the end of his presidency in March 1797. On two previous occasions he had renounced public life, presumably forever. In 1758 he resigned as commander of the Virginia Regiment to marry and begin life as a planter. In 1783 he returned home after surrendering his commission as commander of the Continental army. After only five happy years in Virginia, he once again abandoned private pursuits to assume the presidency. Intending to turn over his responsibilities to Vice President John Adams as soon as the new government was established, Washington had contemplated an absence from home of only a few months. However, he remained in office through a first term, then a second. He never considered serving a third term. Washington turned sixty-five just days before the expiration of the second term. Few men in his time lived beyond that age, and few males in his family even reached middle age. Fearing that he had little time remaining, and anxious to spend that which he was allotted in the comfortable, easy surroundings of home, Washington eagerly bade farewell to his public responsibilities.

Although Washington often used the word "retirement" to characterize these final years, he remained a busy man. Today, in fact, he probably would not be considered to have retired. He not only oversaw day-to-day operations at Mount Vernon, where more than three hundred persons lived and worked, Washington was a businessman with diverse interests. Furthermore, he did not succeed in remaining aloof from public service. During the Quasi War crisis in 1798 he was called from home to command the new provisional army.

Washington had barely arrived home before he discovered just how "sadly out of repair" Mount Vernon had become in the course of his protracted absences (vol. 1, p. 50). A mantel was in danger of falling out of the wall in the parlor, the fireplace in the dining room had to be rehabilitated, the main staircase was unsafe, and the roof leaked. He hired work crews and soon was beset with "the Music of hammers" and the "odoriferous smell of Paint" (vol. 1, p. 71).



Yet, even with the interruptions occasioned by the artisans, Washington, as these papers demonstrate, soon fell back into the same daily routine that he had enjoyed during his previous residences at Mount Vernon. He rose before sunrise, shaved, dressed, inspected the weekly reports submitted by his farm managers, and tended his correspondence. He emerged for breakfast around seven o'clock, after which he rode about his farms until midafternoon when he returned to the mansion for the largest meal of the day, a repast with family and visitors that routinely consumed two hours or more. Thereafter, he walked for exercise, often looking in on the stables near the house. Later he returned to his study to make his daily diary entries and to read or perhaps write another letter or two. In the evening he relaxed with his wife and close acquaintances, before going to bed around ten o'clock.

Washington was inundated with mail. Hardly a day passed, moreover, when he did not write a letter, and on many days he wrote three or four lengthy missives, each meticulously crafted in what had become his correct, even graceful, style. Unlike John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, both of whom also conducted a voluminous correspondence in their retirements, Washington's letters eschewed philosophy, religion, and science, and he seldom reflected on his youth or the events of the American Revolution. Virtually all his letters dealt with current public affairs or personal pecuniary interests. Little evidence of true friendship is apparent even in letters to old acquaintances. The most painful letter to read is from Henry Knox who, after years of loyalty and "invariable friendship," felt betrayed when Washington did not recommend him to be second-in-command of the provisional army (vol. 2, p. 469). The most curious letter raises questions about Washington's relationship with his wife Martha. Soon after returning home, Washington wrote Elizabeth Willing Powel, a Philadelphia widow with whom he had a close relationship during his presidency, candidly acknowledging that he and Martha had never exchanged love letters, but merely "expressions of friendship" (vol. 1, p. 52).

Many of Washington's letters were filled with advice. He offered abundant counsel to relatives, especially his stepgrandson, George Washington Parke Custis, whom he vainly sought to help "overcome an indolent habit" (vol. 1, p. 168). Like many parents and grandparents today, Washington found it difficult to fathom the younger generation. For instance, it was incomprehensible to him that young Custis, a student at Princeton College, had little interest in attending the commemorative festivities on July 4. He also frequently passed on policy suggestions to Timothy Pickering and James McHenry, who served in President Adams's cabinet as secretary of state and secretary of war respectively.

Much of the correspondence concerns his farming and multitudinous business affairs. Although he employed a farm manager, Washington micromanaged the farming operations at Mount Vernon. He devoted as much time or more to his business endeavors. Washington had long been connected with the Potomac River

Company, which sought—unsuccessfully—to link Tidewater Virginia with the transmontane West via a Potomac canal. He operated a fishing enterprise on the Potomac and for a time had investments in a lumbering venture in the Great Dismal Swamp. He manufactured cloth, sold liquor distilled at Mount Vernon, and operated several successful gristmills. However, none of his business pursuits rivaled his land speculation activities. He relentlessly sought to acquire more property. Letter after letter is devoted to leasing or selling his lands. Few salesmen have improved on Washington's ability to make deplorable land appear desirable. In these papers he can be observed seeking to convince prospective buyers that mountainous land in present-day West Virginia was a farmer's haven.

These papers provide an excellent source for the study of slavery and slaveowners. His chattel married, had children, fell ill (including one who was bitten by what was mistakenly thought to be a rabid dog), ran away, and died. The owner faced tribulations with his laborers. Washington complained that his "Negroes will either idle or slight their work if they are not clearly attended" (vol. 1, pp. 194–95). He investigated a new threshing machine, but worried that it might be "easily put out of order in the hands of ignorant Negroes" (vol. 1, p. 381). When his trained cook fled to freedom, Washington fretted that his escape "has been a most inconvenient thing to this family" (vol. 1, p. 469). Although he had pledged never again to purchase a slave, Washington actively searched for one with "knowledge in Cookery, & understands ordering, and setting out a Table" (vol. 1, p. 455).

The editors of the Washington papers project are to be commended for their expedition. More volumes in this series have been published in twenty years than have appeared in the Jefferson papers within the past half century. The editors deserve credit as well for having made the unconventional, but prudent, decision to forgo a strictly chronological approach. The result will be that all of Washington's papers for the colonial, confederation, and final retirement years, together with perhaps 15 percent of his papers for the war and presidential years, will have been published within the span of one generation. Four generations of historians in all likelihood will have come and gone before the Jefferson papers even commences the lengthy retirement of its subject.

The editors would have been wise to have included essays that introduce and clarify matters for the readers, a tool used with great effectiveness by the editors of the Jefferson and Adams papers. Such an essay, for instance, could have shed light on Washington's role in the selection of officers for the provisional army, a complex and disputed matter. Otherwise, the editors have made an extraordinary contribution to our understanding of Washington and early American history.

*The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series. Volume 4: 8 October 1802–15 May 1803.* Edited by MARY A. HACKETT, J.C.A. STAGG, JEANNE KERR-CROSS, SUSAN HOLBROOK PERDUE, and ELLEN J. BARBER. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988. xli, 673p. Index. \$65.00.)

Only the editors and perhaps a handful of scholars read a volume such as this from cover to cover. This is unfortunate because to do so is to gain insight into the nature of the federal government and the workday of the secretary of state at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As secretary James Madison was involved in the minute details of two very different worlds. One consisted of the various domestic responsibilities assigned to his department because the First Congress failed to create a home department, leaving Madison to oversee such matters as patent and copyright, communication with the states, the upcoming Lewis and Clark expedition, and territorial affairs (including the District of Columbia). The other, and more demanding, was overseeing foreign affairs. This meant at least acknowledgment, if not resolution, of major foreign policy issues as well as irritating clashes among members of a sometimes petty diplomatic corps whose loyalty to the Jefferson administration was no given. In addition to the duties imposed on the secretary of state by the laws governing his department, Madison was also a leader of his political party and a close advisor to the president—though one would hardly know so from the documents. One must assume that the virtual absence of a personal life indicates that the documents did not survive rather than that Madison lacked one.

Madison is no longer dealing with the profound issues and hardball politics involved in the creation of a new federal Constitution and its implementation. Nevertheless, one is struck by the fact that the issues dominating the volume are not new to anyone familiar with the Madison of the 1780s: the potential stranglehold over American commerce held by those nations which controlled New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi River and the straits of Gibraltar at the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea. At least in the case of the latter, Madison knew which nations those were—Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco—and just how much in annual bribes was required. Whether France or Spain actually controlled the port of New Orleans and the contiguous Floridas was not so clear when the United States lost its treaty right of deposit at the port, spurring the United States to attempt to purchase it and the Floridas. How the American ambassador to France, Robert Livingston, unhappily cooperating with special envoy James Monroe, acquired New Orleans and with it the Mississippi River's vast western watershed is the most important story in the documents. It's a cliff-hanger because the volume ends before news of the purchase reached the United States, leaving the reader to await treatment of the domestic reaction.

How the editors of documentary editions select which documents to include,

decide which of these to print, excerpt, or abstract, modernize the text, and render the information more accessible through annotation and indexing varies according to editorial project and available funding. The editors of this volume should be especially complimented for their solution to the complex problem of selection and the light they thereby shed on the rich and often untapped public record held by the National Archives. Also striking is the almost ten-page preface which provides the background and context of the diplomatic issues confronting Madison as well as critical information not available to the secretary of state because it did not come to light until a century later. Volume 4 of the secretary of state series is well edited, but like so many of their colleagues in the field, the editors have produced an index, which despite its more than seventy pages, does not provide ready assistance to someone seeking information about concepts rather than persons, places, and things. Missing from the editorial apparatus is a CD-ROM copy of the intriguing film *Dangerous Liaisons*; viewing it would help users of the volume better appreciate the challenge of what Livingston accomplished in the spring of 1803.

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KENNETH R. BOWLING

*The U. S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study.* By ROBERT S. QUIMBY. (2 volumes, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997. viii, 105p. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$89.95 set.)

In recent years War of 1812 historiography has been enriched by a number of general analytical texts. These include Donald Hickey's *War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (1989), and John R. Elting's *Amateurs to Arms! A Military History of the War of 1812* (1991), which address that conflict from numerous political and military perspectives. However, a long-standing lacunae in this body of literature is a study analyzing the principal instrument of that conflict, the U. S. Army. In fact, material on the administration, training, and recruiting of "Mr. Madison's warriors" is sadly lacking, especially in contrast to similar studies on revolutionary, Civil War, and, most recently, even Mexican War armies. With the publication of the *U. S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study*, author Quimby has done much to close that gap, but work remains to be done.

This exhaustive two-volume study touts itself as the first detailed study of American military operations in the War of 1812 in more than a generation. Quimby presents a comprehensive narrative of the objectives, strategy, and persistent mismanagement befalling one of America's least heralded conflicts. He proffers his narrative from an operational perspective, that is, grand tactical in scope, which examines and describes military policy making at the highest levels of

government, but also allows for discussion of battlefield concerns. In this manner, *Quimby* chronicles a well-known tale of woe: the Americans' goals were unrealistic, their forces unprepared, and the quest for competent military leadership prolonged. Special emphasis is placed on misjudgment originating in the inner circles of power, with analyses of the behavior of Secretaries of War William Eustis and John Armstrong, the detached leadership of James Madison, and the meddling of presidential aspirant James Monroe. *Quimby* is quite good at illustrating how all these variables conspired to defeat military operations before they were even launched. To this litany of grievances are added the gross incompetence of generals such as William Hull, James Winchester, Henry Dearborn, James Wilkinson, and Wade Hampton. Furthermore, *Quimby* underscores the military implications of poor training, the overreliance on militia troops, poor or nonexistent logistical arrangements, and the folly of fighting without public support. These are abject lessons on how not to wage a war, painfully rendered. The author writes with both clarity and conviction, and is quick to point out disagreements with scholars of the conflict, notably Henry Adams, whose verdict on figures like Andrew Jackson frequently borders on a personal vendetta. *Quimby's* book is a stinging indictment of both military folly and clouded historical judgement long accepted as fact.

*Quimby* has adopted a rather logical geographical/chronological approach to his subject which examines military priorities and activities of both sides on a theater-by-theater basis. Not surprisingly, the West (where the war was mostly fought) forms the largest segment of his narrative. But *Quimby* also dissects the myopic American fixation with the Niagara frontier, the Champlain Valley, the burning of Washington, and the conquest of Maine. Nor are events in the South neglected, with special attention paid to the clandestine Patriot War in Florida, the Creek War, and the Gulf coast struggle ending in the battles of New Orleans and Fort Bowyer. The author goes to great lengths pointing out that the much maligned Creek nation fought with a tenacity equal or surpassing the vaunted tribes of the Old Northwest. Other strategic-level studies do exist, but *Quimby* downplays internecine party politics associated with decision making in favor of more military-oriented considerations. Thus readers are subjected to the totality of warfare from the Canadian border to Spanish Florida, with concise analysis and commentary on United States, British, and Native American strategic prerogatives.

*Quimby's* title however, is somewhat misleading. His book purports to study the U. S. Army in the War of 1812, but it is overwhelmingly concerned with strategy and decision-making processes, and this at the very highest echelons. Military engagements are described in moderate detail, but at no point does the author concern himself with regimental command, administration, organization, weapons, or even the basic quest for a uniform system of drill (not achieved until the postwar period). Thus we learn a good deal about the men who planned the war, and almost nothing about those called upon to wage it. The author does occasionally address

tactical issues from time to time, and elucidates upon the difficulties of pitting citizen soldiery against professionally trained British adversaries and their determined Indian allies. But, overwhelmingly, this is a study of leadership, of conflict between leaders, and conflicts arising over differing perceptions of strategy. Quimby's book successfully addresses the strategic continuum in all its various dimensions, but its very nature precludes the kind of tactical detail enabling readers to "smell the powder."

On a subjective level and given the magnitude of his work, I find the choice of primary and secondary sources inadequate. A number of recent battle studies, such as Donald E. Graves's *Battle of Lundy's Lane* (1993), Joseph Whitehorne's *While Washington Burned: The Battle for Fort Erie* (1992), and Patrick Wilder's *Battle of Sacket's Harbor* (1994), are all several years old, widely circulated, yet curiously absent from consideration. Hence, Quimby's battlefield evaluations are rendered in the absence of the latest interpretations. Moreover, he has failed to consult such useful works as Theodore J. Crackel's *Mr. Jefferson's Army: Politics and Social Reform of the Army, 1801-1809* (1987), and William B. Skelton's landmark study, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784-1861* (1992), both of which could have added greater context to pre- and postwar army considerations, respectively. The manuscript sources are also, in the present reviewer's opinion, uninspired. These include all the usual suspects from the National Archives and Library of Congress, but very few new sources are cited. For example, Quimby makes imaginative use of Record Group 107, the Office of the Secretary of War, but without any corresponding utilization of Record Group 94, the Adjutant General's Office, where day-to-day administration of the army at a divisional, brigade, and regimental level, was kept. Several recent dissertations on the army's War of 1812 performance might also have been consulted, but have been overlooked. The cumulative effect of these oversights is that Quimby's comprehensive treatment, the book's greatest merit, is questionable in terms of recentness and originality.

In sum, this is a competent and workmanlike effort, which subjects military actions of the War of 1812 to intense strategic scrutiny. It is a potent reminder of American inadequacy as well as the delusional tendency of contemporaries and historians alike to treat the war as some kind of "victory." The War of 1812 was, in truth, a horribly squandered affair and as close to disaster as the United States ever endured. However, by failing to examine the army as an institution, or as an instrument of national policy, Quimby's book becomes simply the latest in a long line of strategic studies. The historical community would be better served by a detailed treatment of the Republican military establishment, 1812-15 or, even better, 1808-21, with all its weaknesses, ideological baggage, and capacity for self-

correction, to finally set the record straight. Sadly, that work remains to be written.

*Salem, Massachusetts*

JOHN C. FREDRIKSEN

*Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley.* By ELIZABETH A. PERKINS. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. xiv, 253p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$45.00; paper, \$17.95.)

Backcountry studies have emerged as one of the most dynamic fields in early American history. Elizabeth A. Perkins's *Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley* is a worthy addition to this evolving scholarship. In exploring "what they themselves knew," Perkins reconstructs the mental world of Kentucky settlers in the 1770s and 1780s. She asserts that scholars should not let the new much-needed focus on Native American points of view transform white settlers from "cardboard heroes to cardboard villains without a stop in between" (p. 5). But Native Americans are central to her story; Perkins focuses on a society engaged in two decades of war. Interaction with Ohio Valley Indians affected the white settlers' sense of space and shaped their regional identity.

Perkins's sources are interviews of the survivors of Kentucky's pioneer period collected by minister John Dabney Shane in the 1840s and 1850s. The first chapter puts Shane and his subjects in perspective and outlines the way in which the author intends to use an interdisciplinary approach to mine the memories of people well past their prime who are recalling the events of their youth. Appendixes list the interviews and provide a transcription of a typical example.

Perkins begins by analyzing competing views of the West. Travelers either wrote of rude cabins and backwardness or conjured up visions of future wealth and prosperity. But if we look at the landscape from the point of view of residents, a different picture emerges. Perkins writes that settlers "employed a distinctive spatial metaphor—the concept of 'in' and 'out'" when describing their new home (p. 78). Inside fortified stations lay safety among people like themselves, outside lay the wilderness and danger from people of a different culture. Conflict with that other culture lay at the heart of their sense of place.

However, the people who forted up together were hardly a homogenous group. Perkins next analyzes interaction between settlers of different ethnic and regional backgrounds. In evaluating strangers, they sized up clothing, skin color, words, folkways, and foodways. Disagreements sometimes led to violence. But "westerners would forge new social identities from these mixed materials, based on the evocation of place and a shared history of border warfare" (p. 115). Again, conflict with Native Americans shaped identity.

Perkins also explores political conflict. Although Virginia extended a rudimentary political framework westward by establishing courts, enough of a power vacuum existed to create "an initial jostle for prerogative and advantage" in local politics (p. 122). Westerners ranked members of society based on skills and how others wielded authority; popular leaders might be wily woodsmen, militia captains, men who successfully fought absentee landowners, or men who performed acts of physical bravery. In the 1790s, formal electoral politics stabilized the system, but new leaders among the emerging elite had to adopt the "egalitarian styles of public participation" that had "challenged habits of social deference and the premise of gentry leadership" (p. 146).

Finally, Perkins explores the variety of ways Kentucky settlers reckoned time. Cycles of seasons and war shaped tasks throughout the year. Chronologically, they tracked the transformation of life under siege to the commercial world that emerged later. Historical memory included tales of hard winters and military victories. Later, the settlers' history wound up in the hands of scholars bent on creating narratives of national triumph. But Perkins believes that Shane's interviews reveal that the "patriotic narratives that characterized the 'winning of the West' did not originate with the participants" (p. 175).

*Border Life* is not a study of the certainty and conviction great men can bring to events of national scope. Instead, it is a study of ambiguity that utilizes the voices of ordinary people in order to understand how they coped with frontier life. Perkins seeks to explore "the linkages between experience, perception, memory, and historical text . . ." (p. 175).

*Kent State University*

KIM M. GRUENWALD

*Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America.* By DIANNE ASHTON. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998. 329p. Illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$39.95.)

Rebecca Gratz, the best-known Jew in nineteenth-century American history, richly deserves a biography that helps us understand the important role she played. Ashton's portrayal of Gratz's life does just that. Gratz was a significant figure primarily because of the many institutions of Jewish education and social service that she built in Philadelphia, which were models for similar developments in other cities. But Gratz also played a role as part of an American Jewish elite that shaped and defined American Jewish life throughout the nineteenth century.

Ashton leads us through a detailed depiction of Gratz's life and contributions. Her portrait seeks a balance between Gratz the woman and Gratz the institution builder. We learn much not only about Gratz herself, but also about the life of



wealthy Jews in nineteenth-century America and about Philadelphia Jewry. Although this social history is important for scholars of American Jewish history and for the history of Philadelphia, it is the final chapter on Gratz the legend that I found to be the most compelling. Ashton's analysis of the legend that Sir Walter Scott modeled Rebecca in *Ivanhoe* after Rebecca Gratz reveals much about the changing roles and values of Jewish women in the nineteenth century. Despite Ashton's painstaking detective work, she concludes that we will never know whether or not the legend is based on historical reality. But what Ashton makes clear is that the legend itself can teach us about American Jewish life nonetheless. Ashton's insight that the legend was used by later generations to explain Gratz's status as a single woman, which had come to be considered suspect, is important for understanding how changing views on marriage and family influence how history is written.

This excellent analytic chapter left me wishing that the book focused less on a detailed narrative and more on the larger issues that Gratz's life reveals about nineteenth-century Jewish women. I wish she had focused more on social issues such as slavery, anti-Semitism, and the development of Jewish religion. But regardless, Rebecca Gratz was an important figure and Ashton's account is a vital contribution to the study of American Judaism, women's history, and the history of Philadelphia, and it should be read by anyone interested in any of these subjects.

Temple University

REBECCA ALPERT

*A Measure of Perfection: Phrenology and the Fine Arts in America.* By CHARLES COLBERT. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. xvi, 441p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$55.00; paper, \$24.95.)

Charles Colbert's *A Measure of Perfection* offers readers an engaging and most revealing view of "half-world" nineteenth-century American cultural politics, especially of the antebellum period. In detailing the history of the vogue for phrenology which gripped Americans in the 1830s and 1840s, and especially in probing the interconnectedness of phrenology with a variety of other cultural discourses, Colbert makes a fascinating contribution to our understanding of the way antebellum Americans conceived of themselves and their world. His particular concern with the influence of phrenology on the fine arts provides, moreover, a substantial corrective to, as well as an enhancement of, our interpretation of nineteenth-century sculpture and, to a lesser extent, painting. We are treated, in sum, to a tour of the largely neglected byways of the "progress" of middle-class culture.

As the book's title implies, interest in phrenology was tangled in fundamental

contradictions, at the source of which was the impulse to measure—to quantify—what was by definition fundamentally immeasurable. The rising middle-class ethos was committed to materializing conceptions of social and cultural perfection which had traditionally been the province of the spirit, an endeavor viewed by many as reflecting an overweening ambition and hubris. Colbert begins his account with the complaint of John Quincy Adams against “phrenology and animal magnetism” as movements which, among other “new revelations and prophecies” of the day, furnish “some plausible rascality as an ingredient for the bubbling cauldron of religion and politics” (p. 1). Colbert links the interest in phrenology to the Enlightenment’s desire for transparency in all things, a desire fulfilled in the particular notion that “external bodily attributes”—bumps on the head, facial features, body types—“disclose unambiguous meaning” (p. xi). Yet, as he goes on to note, the romantic worldview was by contrast one which necessarily embraced diversity. The Enlightenment dream of a monolithic truth, of an all-encompassing mind by which to validate experimental evidence, was clearly an impossible one. So phrenology and its ideological confreres—including the study of physiognomy, mesmerism, spiritualism, and Swedenborgianism—were left to fight for attention and acceptance within the expanding marketplace of ideas and causes that constituted the crucible of the bourgeois worldview.

Nonetheless, as Colbert makes blindingly clear, the idea that thought could be compartmentalized, that particular faculties such as “Amativeness,” “Acquisitiveness,” “Veneration,” and “Benevolence” could be located at specific points along the convolutions of the brain (p. 3) and that the head could thus be mapped with an extraordinary exactitude, found very fertile ground in America. Seeds sown by Johann Caspar Lavater and Franz Joseph Gall in Europe and transported to America in the 1820s and 1830s by Johann Gaspar Spurzheim and George Combe quickly took root in a loam fortified by nationalistic pretensions to exceptionalism, progress, and perfection. They were watered by the doctrine of correspondence, as distilled most distinctly in the writings of Swedenborg. There was a literalism and underlying materialism about the pervasive tendency to mirror the spiritual world in the material to which Ralph Waldo Emerson took great exception. Emersonian Transcendentalism, as Colbert points out, put mind and spirit first and promoted a dynamic and dialectical approach to experience. By contrast, the popular culture of the period was profoundly committed to collapsing the intangible aspects of life into categories accessible to a nascent scientific outlook. For all their seeming wackiness in our eyes, phrenology, physiognomy, phrenomagnetism, and kindred strains of pseudoscience clearly paved the way for the ascendancy of positivism, Social Darwinism, and the “somatic” style of medicine in the late nineteenth century, issuing in the likes of S. Weir Mitchell’s notorious “rest cure” as well as the popular water cure and mind cure movements.

Colbert doesn’t follow up on all of these implications and repercussions but his

account does provide abundant evidence for the notion that physical health was the key to a national character which would usher in the millennium. If physical condition both sustained and reflected moral condition (according to the prevailing doctrine of correspondence), then healthy bodies represented the primary agency whereby the body politic of the nation would be transformed and perfected. Yet this optimistic worldview included a dark side. Phrenology and physiognomy both asserted a hierarchy of physical types and moral characteristics which in effect shut down on diversity in the social field even as it cultivated a democratic ethos among middle-class Americans. If physical culture was presumed to put democratic self-realization and success in the rapidly growing market economy within the reach of all Americans, it did so at least in part by effectively consigning women as well as blacks and other ethnic groups—by virtue of their physical attributes—to subordinate, even marginal status, in effect excluding them from full representation in the republic. Colbert is clearly aware of the racist as well as sexist implications of phrenology and related belief systems and social practices but he makes less of the latter than he might have. His emphasis tends to be on their instrumentality in providing aspiring middle-class men and women with compelling models of appearance and clear standards of behavior.

This is one place, according to Colbert, where art played a forceful role. At the heart of Colbert's interpretation of the dynamics of antebellum culture is his lengthy reinterpretation of the significance of Hiram Powers's famed *Greek Slave* (1846). Colbert dismisses standing accounts of the statue's amazing popularity as founded on prurient interest, establishing instead that the Greek slave's body served to model the healthy and spiritually chaste qualities advocated by various health reformers, phrenologists, and physiognomists of the day. Their fulminations against the corset and other modes of constricting and deforming women's bodies in the interest of an increasingly tyrannical fashion gained a powerful objective correlative in Powers's marmoreal wonder which drew women in far greater numbers than men to its crowded showings. Smaller copies of the statue eventually made their way into many a bourgeois home as a reminder of the proper subordination of the physical to the moral and spiritual. On the whole, the white sepulchers (to twentieth-century eyes) of nineteenth-century American sculpture come alive in Colbert's recasting of the meaning of works like Erasmus Dow Palmer's *White Captive* or Harriet Hosmer's *Zenobia in Chains*. Such works, as he convincingly shows, were profoundly informed by a knowledge of phrenological and physiognomic signs as well as a deep commitment to the utopian culture of health.

Of course this positive program, shared by middle-class spokespersons of all stripes, depended for much of its energy on the rising insecurity of Americans concerning the fate of their republic at the hands of the market economy and the emerging cityscape, constituting a world of strangers. Deformities in the bodies along with oddities in the cranial structures of individuals appeared as a constant

reminder of such threats to Americans' collective mission and sense of exceptionalism. Colbert places the landscape painting of Asher B. Durand, influential member of the so-called "Hudson River School," in this context. Scenes of a "healthy" nature functioned in a way that paralleled Powers's *Greek Slave* in their capacity to correspond to the healthy body. Under the personal influence of George Combe, Durand's close observation of nature—championed in his "Letters on Landscape Painting" of the early 1850s—went hand-in-hand with an environmentalism which undergirded his dedication to the role of nature in formulating the national ego. Even more revealingly, the cycle of life and death so commonly depicted in Durand's forest interiors takes on its fullest repercussions here: death emerges as a vital part of life, indeed the mainspring of social and cultural progress, as expressed in the doctrine of successive generation. This was obviously reassuring to Americans anxious to believe that apparent evils must have some ulterior purpose in God's providential plan. Finally, by virtue of correspondence, *part* in these views of nature is implied to be an integral aspect of *whole*, just as nature mirrors broader human concerns. Somewhat surprisingly but—along these lines—perfectly reasonably, this naturalism was reconciled to an anthropomorphic, even distinctly allegorical, interpretation of nature in which natural forms voiced the divine monologue promising the ultimate redemption of the New World. Such analysis reveals the merits of Colbert's imaginative historical recuperation of a previously undervalued aspect of nineteenth-century American culture.

*Allegheny College*

DAVID C. MILLER

*The Selected Papers of Thaddeus Stevens. Volume 1: January 1814–March 1865. Volume 2: April 1865–August 1868.* Edited by BEVERLY WILSON PALMER and HOLLY BYERS OCHOA. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997, 1998. Vol. 1: xxxii, 549p. Vol. 2: xxii, 488p. Illustrations, index. \$37.50 each.)

For historians of nearly every aspect of nineteenth-century American history the loss of the greater part of Thaddeus Stevens's papers must be deemed a tragedy. Not only was Stevens the fascinating kind of character that fiction writers, moviemakers, and pop historians would have had to invent had he not existed, but he was in fact both a key player in several of the primary episodes in the story of the development of American democracy and an iconic figure whose portrayal reflects the underlying prejudices of historians who are forced to confront him. Undoubtedly his most important role was as the archetypal Radical Republican during Reconstruction after the Civil War. Unfortunately, as the editors of these volumes know only too well, the modern memory of Stevens continues to be structured by the characterization

of a hypocritical and oafish Jacobin with a clubfoot, ill-fitting hair piece, and mulatto mistress as portrayed in D. W. Griffith's racist classic *Birth of a Nation*, who the Progressive historians made into something of a robber baron, increasing the returns from his iron foundries by supporting "greenback" inflation. Despite fine biographies by Fawn Brodie and Hans Trefousse and the generation of scholarship synthesized in Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, the can tied to Stevens's tail continues to rattle and bang.

The same students and journalists encouraged by present-day prurience, who can find nothing better to ask about Thomas Jefferson than, "What about Sally Hemings?" continue to suspect an improper relationship between Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith. In these documents the only evidence of this relationship is a brief innocuous note. The editors are circumspect to the point of being disingenuous, noting that "he did not treat her like a servant, but (at the least) as a highly regarded friend" (vol. 1, p. 176).

More importantly, however, these two volumes of letters and speeches, which include very little from Stevens's career before 1850 and nothing on his private life, will be of tremendous use not only for specialized scholars, but generalists and students of the Civil War era who desire a glimpse into the world of the antislavery and Radical faction of the Republican party. Old Thad Stevens was not a religious man nor an abolitionist of either the Garrisonian or Weld stripe, but a politician—a radical version of A. Lincoln, the Illinois lawyer whom Stevens had met at the Whig presidential nominating convention in 1848 and with whom he corresponded during his successful campaign for Congress that year. All of the material presented in these volumes deals with his political battles.

Born in Vermont in 1792, Stevens moved to York, Pennsylvania, after graduating from Dartmouth College in 1814. He then removed to Gettysburg where he established himself as a lawyer, a businessman, and local politician, being reelected as a member of the borough council four times over the next decade. Local politics led to state and national prominence when Stevens became embroiled in the Antimasonic movement. Historians have too easily caricatured Antimasonry and the "Buckshot War," and only grudgingly acknowledged Stevens's significant contribution to the creation of common schools in Pennsylvania. Thus, the handful of documents reprinted here are crucial to understanding this truly populist entrepreneurial reformer. It is extremely hard for modern Americans, especially those on the left, to acknowledge that his commitment to democratic goals was of a piece with his bourgeois liberalism. The letters such as those to Nicholas Biddle talk about his business enterprises. At the same time he distrusts public secrecy, advocates public education for the common man, and protests against both racism and slavery.

After the period of his exile in the 1840s when Stevens was out of politics, he was elected to two terms in Congress from 1849 to 1853, during which he dealt

primarily with questions concerning fugitive slaves and the tariff. These letters reveal that Stevens's commitment to racial justice included support of Indian rights as well as those of free blacks and slaves. Although he was denied renomination in 1852, Stevens remained active in politics and supported independent Anthony Roberts, the candidate of the Know Nothings, for Congress in 1854, and Simon Cameron for the Senate in 1856, once he was convinced that his former opponent had become "a genuine republican" (vol. 1, p. 156). Although the evidence is a bit ambiguous, it seems that Stevens moved from the Whigs through the American Party on his way to becoming a Republican in 1855, but in this he continued to oppose the spread of slavery.

Stevens returned to Congress in 1859 as a Republican and would remain there until his death. Unfortunately there are only a few documents from the last years of the 1850s, although these include a fascinating, if brief, note to Horace Greeley on how the Republicans should deal with the matter of John Brown. Included also is a speech made during the fight over the election of a Speaker of the House in early 1860 in which Stevens describes the essence of the Republican program on slavery.

During the Civil War, Stevens played a crucial role in Congress where he served as the chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee. Nearly two-thirds of volume 1 is made up of letters and speeches from these years. His two main areas of interest involved finance and the process of reconstruction of the Union without slavery. Stevens was a controlling force in the passage of the legal tender legislation creating the "greenbacks," the first federal income tax law, and the eventual creation of the national banking system. These formed the core of the Republican economic program and a crucial part of "the blueprint for modern America" that was laid out by the Thirty-Seventh Congress. Of equal importance were Stevens's efforts to end slavery which he connected from early in the war with "subduing the Rebellion" (vol. 1, pp. 241-53). This and his faith in the supremacy of the federal government led to Stevens's constitutional justification of Congressional Reconstruction based upon the idea that the southern territory had legally become a "conquered province" (vol. 1, pp. 384-96).

The entire second volume of this collection deals with Reconstruction from April 1865 through Stevens's death August 11, 1868. During these years he served as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, the House chairman of the joint Committee on Reconstruction, and one of the seven managers of the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson. He pressed for radical Reconstruction in line with his revised version of his conquered provinces scheme, presented the Fourteenth Amendment to the House and defended its necessity, and moved toward the acceptance of universal male suffrage, which he embodied in a plan Congress found too radical. Disheartened at its rejection Stevens complained that

it was "easy to protect the interests of the rich and powerful; but it is a great labor to guard the rights of the poor and downtrodden" (vol. 2, p. 3).

While Stevens has been portrayed by those hostile to Reconstruction as the vengeful genius orchestrating the Radical's "harsh" program, he was not able to gain Republican support for his most radical policy that would have confiscated Confederate lands and redistributed them to the freedmen to "make them independent of their old masters, so that they may not be compelled to work for them upon unfair terms" (vol. 2, p. 183). This proposal, defended in his long speech "Damages to Loyal Men," which is reprinted here (vol. 2, pp. 276-96), came as close to the offer of "forty acres and a mule" as the freedmen would get from Congress.

From the beginning Stevens had been suspicious of Johnson's efforts to encourage self-reconstruction, and his correspondents convinced Stevens that the traitors were being put back into control. Consequently, he was one of the earliest and most vigorous exponents of impeachment, and when Johnson was not convicted Stevens even tried to reverse the verdict by introducing new articles. At the same time, he continued to press for further action on the greenbacks and education. Stevens remained a reformer to the end.

While hardly a hypocrite or a coward as often portrayed, the gruff, sometimes illogical, and often vengeful Stevens was hardly a model man, but throughout his career he stood publicly in favor of racial justice. Stevens forces us to come to terms with questions of class, ideology, and race in ways that are not particularly comfortable. There is a developing literature, a debate in the profession, involving the question of the meaning of race in nineteenth-century America, which should shake everyone's complacency. It was not the intention of the publishers, the advisory board, nor the editors to get into this fight, but they have, because Thaddeus Stevens was. It is a shame that we do not have more of his letters and speeches, especially from the early years, that might help us understand better this world which we have clearly lost.

The editing of these volumes is exceedingly spare. There are six very brief essays on periods of Stevens's life used to separate the sections of the volumes. These are not particularly scholarly or informative. The footnotes usually help set the context of the documents and identify individuals mentioned, but again they do not show much scholarly depth and at times reveal less than sure understanding of issues and events. Stevens deserves better, but at least the editors, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and the National Endowment for the Humanities have made this useful selection available to scholars and students.

*A Woman's War: Southern Women, Civil War, and the Confederate Legacy.* Edited by EDWARD D.C. CAMPBELL JR. and KYM S. RICE. (Charlottesville and Richmond: University Press of Virginia and Museum of the Confederacy, 1997. xv, 264p. Illustrations, index. \$24.95.)

The explosion in women's history that took place in the 1970s and early 1980s left the study of the Civil War almost completely unaffected, but since then a new crop of investigations has begun to transform our understanding of this critical event. The volume under review here, published to accompany the Museum of the Confederacy's 1996-97 exhibition "A Woman's War: Southern Women, Civil War, and the Confederate Legacy," testifies to the ferment initiated by the exploration of the war's social and cultural history. Featuring work by museum staff and prominent historians in the field, *A Woman's War* illuminates not only the impact of southern women on the war but also the war's effect on women, both in the short and long run.

Although this book seeks to see the war through the eyes of poor and black women as well as the Confederate ladies who helped craft the myth of the Lost Cause, it tends to emphasize the experiences of elite white women. Most successful in furnishing new perspectives are Joan E. Cashin's lucid discussion of white women who fled their homes as the war approached, and Thavolia Glymph's suggestive look at the lives of female slave contrabands. The introductory essay, coauthored by Drew Gilpin Faust, George C. Rable, and Glymph, sketches out in broad strokes the diversity of women's experiences, making clear how the war complicated the issue of gender in the South.

Reflecting recent interest in the study of collective memory, John M. Coski and Amy R. Feely provide an intriguing reconsideration of the founding of the Confederate Museum, placing it in the larger context of "how southern women remembered and commemorated the Confederacy, the war, and their own wartime experiences." Marjorie Spruill Wheeler continues the exploration of the Confederate legacy in her essay on the fate of female suffrage in the postwar South. She argues convincingly that the rhetoric and values of the Civil War and the Lost Cause profoundly shaped the debate over the so-called "woman question" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

*A Woman's War* includes a rich assortment of supplementary resources that adds significantly to the volume's value. The editors have compiled a fascinating array of excerpts from letters, diaries, memoirs, and other primary sources, as well as an extensive bibliography and a survey of relevant material in the Confederate Museum's Brockenbrough Library. Over one hundred black-and-white illustrations and color plates, with detailed captions, punctuate the text.

The illustrations, vivid as they are, underscore the difficulty of capturing the past in all its diversity. Not surprisingly, the surviving cultural artifacts favor the lives of



upper- and middle-class white women. Simply put, there are many more photographs of the Daughters of the Confederacy than there are of black laundresses. But this imbalance does not account for the sort of jarring juxtaposition that one occasionally encounters in this volume: opposite a hospital matron's moving description of a dying soldier's last moments, for example, is an illustration of a young lady who apparently had no association whatsoever with hospital work. Accompanying this illustration is a caption about the impact of inflation on southern women. The lack of connecting thread between the narrative, the image, and the caption is particularly puzzling in this instance given the availability of visual material regarding Civil War nurses.

These are small matters, however, in light of the book's notable contribution to the integration of women's history and Civil War history. All in all, *A Woman's War* provides a fine introduction to the multifaceted story of female southerners during the Civil War and its aftermath. As Warren Beatty's recent movie *Bulworth* reminds us, there is a world of difference between ghosts and spirits; southern women, contrary to William Faulkner, were clearly the latter.

*Goucher College*

PETER W. BARDAGLIO

*American Locomotives: An Engineering History, 1830–1880.* By JOHN H. WHITE JR. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. xxvi, 593p. Illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, index. Revised and expanded edition. \$49.95.)

Since the original publication of this book in 1968, John H. White has become the leading chronicler of American railway history, with subsequent works on passenger, refrigerated, and freight cars. Now Johns Hopkins University Press has reprinted this handsome and profusely illustrated volume with ninety-two pages of additional text. Those who already own the original edition will likely decline to buy a new copy simply to acquire White's two new sections. But they extend the original portrait in useful ways, reinforcing this book's status as the authoritative source on locomotive design from 1830 to 1880. For the entire generation of rail fans who have come of age since 1968, this new edition will provide marvelous riches.

The book is divided into five parts. Part 1 provides an overview of the locomotive industry, materials used in engine construction, locomotive types, operation, and fuels. In part 2 White takes engines apart, treating the design evolution of all the major individual components. Mechanical descriptions of twenty-three "representative" American locomotives occupy part 3. A new part 4 provides additional portraits of eleven engines, dating from 1843 to 1885. In the new part 5, White provides thirty pages of additional information and commentary, keyed to the

original text. The eight appendixes (from the original volume) include very useful sketches of locomotive designers and builders among other topics.

The original edition and the new material hew very closely to White's chosen goal: to provide an engineering history of the American locomotive in its first half century of development. When the book came out, its only competitor in that field was Angus Sinclair's *Development of the Locomotive Engine* (1907), an idiosyncratic and error-ridden book by a technical journalist. In contrast, White researched his subject painstakingly, he exercised judicious care in his selections, his original text proved incredibly accurate (the scant corrections necessary appear in the new part 5), and his account eschews recollections and anecdotes in favor of documented facts.

The truly stunning accomplishment, however, lies in the illustrations—all 278 of them. Culled from exhaustive original research, complemented with a profusion of line drawings rendered by White himself, reproduced well in an oversized format, the illustrations and their erudite captions are a model for all technological historians. Thirty years after its publication, this book still has very few rivals (outside of White's subsequent works) in the quality of its illustrative treatment of technological development.

Those illustrations heighten the book's appeal to rail fans and its value to technological historians. But historians today may find White's text somewhat wanting. Showing its origins in the historiographic approach common among technological historians three decades ago, the book is primarily concerned with recounting the facts, accurately and completely. In part 1 and at scattered points throughout the text, White does give some attention to the social, organizational, and economic context of locomotive design and operation. He largely eschews analysis, leaving the book with no analytical theme(s) to structure its 524 pages of text.

Since 1968 contextualist and analytical approaches have come to dominate technological history. But perhaps White was wise to avoid imposing his own analytical interpretation on his subject. As a museum curator writing in large measure for general readers animated by railroad history, White had little incentive to enter the fray of academic debates with his own interpretative or analytical themes. If he had done so in 1968, that thesis would likely appear outdated by 1998, undercutting the rationale for republication.

Yet the collection and collation of fact alone is a Sisyphean labor, one that can never end and never amount to much if that is the only end. White implicitly acknowledges this in his new preface, noting "this book does not answer all questions regarding early American locomotives . . . [and] I can only hope that historians in the future will produce a more complete history" (p. xxi). That seems unlikely, as no writer could hope to match, let alone exceed the extent and quality

of White's research. Furthermore, few historians today believe a "complete history" is even possible to achieve.

If there is a fruitful venue for further studies in locomotive history, it lies not in more facts, but in more context. White explores the context of locomotive development in part 1, and contextual issues dominate in the new part 5. But in approaching the locomotive as an engineered artifact, the book leaves many fascinating issues unexplored. Why and how did the railway master mechanics take the initiative for locomotive innovations away from the established locomotive builders? Why did former machinists dominate among early locomotive engineers? Why did the railways originally assign individual engineers to particular locomotives, often for a long period of time? How often did locomotives derail in service? With what consequences? When did the practice of scheduled repairs come into common use and why?

In sum, the twin subjects of locomotive operation and repair remain largely unexplored territory. This republication could have profitably given a full chapter on these topics, particularly as White would be a superb guide on the foot plate and through the roundhouse and back shop. Indeed his 154-page chapter on freight car operations in his award-winning book, *The American Railroad Freight Car* (1993), is the best summary of railway operations ever written anywhere. But perhaps I am unfair in comparing White's 1993 work to his approach in 1968. By most other measures, *American Locomotives* is a model of research, a feast of illustrations, and an essential volume for anyone interested in nineteenth-century railroading.

*University of Virginia*

JOHN K. BROWN

*Without Fitting, Filing, or Chipping: An Illustrated History of the Phoenix Bridge Company.* By THOMAS R. WINPENNY. (Easton, Pennsylvania: Canal History and Technology Press, 1996. xviii, 154p. Illustrations, notes, index. \$19.95.)

Many historical works have examined the lives of bridge builders and the evolution of bridge designs; fewer have explored the business side of bridge building. Thomas Winpenny's history of the Phoenix Bridge Company, which covers the period from its origins in the aftermath of the Civil War to its closing in 1962, is therefore a welcome addition to a small but much needed body of literature. The significance of the business history approach to bridge building is that it highlights issues that other approaches tend to leave in the background: how economic cycles affect bridge building; the impact of the rise of big business, mass production, and vertical integration; the evolving market for bridges; the evolution of labor relations. Winpenny's study addresses all of these themes.

Throughout its history, Phoenix Bridge was a subsidiary of the Phoenix Iron

Company (located northwest of Philadelphia). The latter was founded in 1790 as a nail-making firm; by the 1840s it had become a vertically integrated iron producer with a booming rail business. Princeton-educated Samuel Reeves, who took over the leadership of the company in the 1860s from his father, David Reeves, established a subsidiary for bridge building after the Civil War. Through it, Samuel Reeves hoped to achieve higher profit margins than could be achieved from the production of rails, a guaranteed outlet for the parent company's iron production, and, Winpenny suggests, a place to hide profits and absorb losses. Phoenix Bridge was also created to exploit Reeves's invention of the Phoenix column, patented in 1862. This was a hollow, circular, wrought-iron column formed of four or six flanged, riveted segments. Phoenix columns, noted for strength in compression, were used until the 1890s for bridges (including the renowned Kinzua viaduct), elevated railways, and tall buildings.

Winpenny describes the life cycle of the Phoenix Bridge Company. From its origins in the 1860s, it grew in the 1870s into one of the most successful, respected, and innovative American bridge firms. The period from 1898 to 1909 saw the company at its peak, with prestigious contracts for the Quebec cantilever bridge and the Manhattan suspension bridge, and large projects in Mexico, Japan, China, and Russia. Following World War I, however, Phoenix Bridge declined. By 1923 it had become mainly a producer of routine steel structures: schools, factories, garages, apartment buildings, warehouses, etc. During World War II, the company built ships and floating docks, but the end of the war brought further decline. Efforts to sell the company failed, and after a decade of modest contracts and repair work in the 1950s, Phoenix Bridge folded in 1962.

Winpenny cites four main causes for the decline of Phoenix Bridge. A contributory cause was the 1907 Quebec bridge disaster, in which one cantilever arm collapsed during construction, killing or injuring eighty-three workers. Although this accident did not destroy the company's reputation—which was bolstered two years later by the successful completion of the Manhattan suspension bridge—it accentuated an increasingly difficult competitive environment. It also revealed the limits of a company whose success had been built partly on a reputation for "working cheap." This approach, while successful for routine structures, proved unsuitable for the record-breaking pioneering structures that the company began to take on in the late 1880s. The primary causes for the company's decline, however, were structural economic and technological changes. First, the rise of big business altered the competitive environment. In the field of bridge building, this change was epitomized by J.P. Morgan's creation in 1900 of American Bridge, a wholly owned subsidiary of U.S. Steel that brought together twenty-five bridge companies and controlled between 50 and 90 percent of the bridge market. Significantly, American Bridge was awarded the contract to replace the collapsed Quebec bridge. A second factor in the decline of Phoenix Bridge was the rise of reinforced concrete. Phoenix

Bridge never took up this technological opportunity, apparently because of its subservient relationship to its parent steel company. The third factor was the decline of the railroads and hence of the need for steel railroad bridges (at the very time that emerging highway builders were moving to reinforced concrete). Finally, the demise of Phoenix Bridge was linked to the decline of leadership in what was essentially a family-run company. The Reeves heir of the 1920s, Samuel Reeves II, was more interested in foxhunting and European tours than in iron and steel; his lack of initiative speeded the company's demise.

The story of the Phoenix Bridge Company highlights the extent to which bridge construction in America participated in the national trend toward mass production, a trend characterized by standardized, patented designs, economies of scale, constant efforts to increase throughput, and mechanization to eliminate skilled labor. In the realm of bridge building, this trend occurred within the context of the "catalogue bridge movement" of which Phoenix Bridge was a leader. Although Winpenny does not acknowledge it, the origins of this movement go back to the early nineteenth century when bridge designers like James Finley and Ithiel Towne developed and promoted standardized, simple, and cheap bridge designs that could be built by nonspecialized labor. By the 1870s, bridge companies like Phoenix were distributing catalogues that inventoried the company's most popular standardized designs. Prospective clients could receive by mail price quotations for a standard design adapted to a particular site simply by answering "six basic questions" (p. 21). Phoenix Bridge sought to increase throughput and eliminate the need for skilled labor by using pin connections rather than rivets and by preassembling all of its bridges at the shop to insure proper interconnections. The pieces were then disassembled, match-marked, and shipped with a guarantee that they could be quickly erected by unskilled labor "without fitting, filing, or chipping." Eric DeLony, head of the Historic American Engineering Record, points out in his foreword to Winpenny's book that, because of the emphasis on standardization and mass production, American truss bridges were significantly cheaper per linear foot than their European counterparts, and could be erected in about a tenth of the time.

Winpenny devotes significant attention to labor relations at Phoenix Bridge and its parent company, Phoenix Iron. His analysis shows that the bridge-building business also mirrored broader trends in American labor history. Luddism, deskilling, strikes and wage disputes, struggles over unionization—all figured in the history of Phoenix Bridge. The company was not a model employer. It paid below-average wages, fiercely resisted unionization, and was the object of a Luddite-like dynamiting attack. In its decline, it sought to lay the blame for its poor showing on labor; a local newspaper account of the company's closing cited declining productivity and labor-management differences as the causes for its demise, while ignoring factors like technological stagnation and lack of creative leadership.

This richly illustrated exploration of an important American bridge-building company will benefit scholars and general readers interested in economic and business history, labor history, and the history of engineering.

*University of Ottawa*

EDA KRANAKIS

*Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1850–1925.* By PHILIP SCRANTON. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. xiv, 417p. Illustrations, tables, index. \$39.50.)

In *Endless Novelty*, Philip Scranton declares his intention as no less than “to recast the history of the Second Industrial Revolution.” He seeks to do this by expanding our notions of the relevant events of that late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century revolution in production, management, and marketing to include industries other than the large, highly centralized ones, such as steel, automobiles, and chemicals, that are the typical exemplars of modern American economic power. Scranton’s attentions instead are directed toward industries that were not dominated by mass and bulk production, but rather by specialty and batch manufacturing. Only by including these manufactures in our overall picture of American industry at the turn of the twentieth century can we hope to achieve an accurate and fully informed sense of what gave the American economy its twentieth-century form and power.

By “specialty” and “batch” manufacturing, Scranton is referring to the making of goods that require either careful customizing to the specific needs and applications of purchasers (ranging from locomotives to tailored suits) or routine redesign of products produced in large numbers for a limited time (again with a range extending from machine tools to costume jewelry). That manufacturing in these sectors is an important segment of a modern industrial economy is obvious, but Scranton contends that the particular forms of technology, management, labor organization, and marketing required by these sectors has been neglected, to the detriment of our understanding of the modern economy. This is an argument easily subject to overstatement, and Scranton runs some risk of beating dead horses as he tries to argue for the significance of his subject.

This should not detract, however, from the usefulness and weight of this work. Scranton has used a wonderful host of sources to delve into the workings of industries ranging from shipbuilding to printing. Machine tools, jewelry and silverware, textiles, and furniture receive the most attention, and this justifies particular geographic emphasis on the industrial development of Cincinnati, Providence, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. Students of the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century industry will learn a great deal simply

by perusing the footnotes in this work, where company histories and catalogs, obscure trade journals and memoirs, business records, government studies, and legal proceedings all are cited in profusion, along with sure and thorough references to the extensive secondary literature of American economic, business, and technological history.

The readers of this journal will perhaps find most engaging Scranton's particular attention to Philadelphia, where developments in textiles (especially carpeting) and metalworking (driven in large part by locomotive and shipbuilding) "exemplified the dynamics of specialty manufacturing" (p. 260) better than those of any other industrial center. To those who think of the industrial history of the commonwealth in this period largely in terms of the shift of gravity from the old eastern centers to the new robust large-scale capitalism of Pittsburgh's steel, oil, electrical, and aluminum industries, this will come as a revelation of the real complexities of economic change and growth at the turn of the century.

*Endless Novelty* is not a particularly easy read, replete as it is with tables and data and a constant shift in the cast of characters and locales, and the prose—generally a model of clarity and precision—occasionally approaches the florid and lapses into self-referential preciousness. But those who would understand the full significance of the economic and technological changes that remade America in the decades between the Civil War and the Great Depression will not be able to ignore the lessons of this book.

*University of Maryland*

ROBERT FRIEDEL

*The Miners of Windber: The Struggles of New Immigrants for Unionization, 1890s–1930s.* By MILDRED ALLEN BEIK. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. xxx, 447p. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, selected bibliography, index. Cloth, \$60.00; paper, \$22.95.)

*Miners of Windber* is much more than a fine community study; it is the best book available on the Pennsylvania bituminous coal industry. Unfortunately, that industry has received substantially less attention than anthracite, primarily because it is more difficult to study. Bituminous coal was and is mined across a much larger territory, generally in numerous small communities. While the men who worked in Pennsylvania's bituminous mines experienced a full range of labor struggles, those disputes generally lacked the notoriety of the Molly Maguire episodes, the Lattimer Massacre, or the anthracite coal strike of 1902. Overall, archival resources have been less plentiful and less readily available for bituminous. Thus, Beik deserves considerable credit for assembling and using sources creatively. That process was facilitated by the fact that the author was writing about her hometown.

Windber and the nearby communities of Paint Borough and Scalp Level in northern Somerset and southern Cambria counties provided most of the coal for one of the nation's leading producers in the first half of the twentieth century, the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company. That these were company towns like so many bituminous communities adds to the representative nature of Beik's study. Opening in 1897, the mines developed rapidly, employing some five thousand by 1908. Beik splits her book into two nearly equal parts: the story of the Slovaks, Italians, Poles, Carpatho-Rusyns, and Magyars who immigrated to Windber and an account of their efforts to induce their employer to sign a union contract with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). Beik first shows how those immigrants built their community by sensitively combining oral-history research (some thirty interviews), church records, and the report of the Congressional Immigration (Dillingham) Commission, which specifically profiled Windber. Beik's study confirms the central role in eastern European immigration to industrial America of immigrants from the northern and southern foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. She also details "women's work" amidst the limited possibilities offered by a mining town. In an important finding, Beik emphasizes one attitude the Windber immigrants shared with the Berwind-White company—a relative lack of interest in assimilation. As of 1920, only 27 percent of Windber's foreign-born adult population had become citizens. The company was perfectly willing to encourage ethnic division as the centerpiece of its antiunion strategy.

But the immigrants' wariness toward Americanization in no way detracted from their fervor for the union. Beik attributes Windber's failure to win a union contract until the New Deal not to any lack of militancy or lack of readiness for unionization by the immigrants, but to two other factors: the bitterness of Berwind-White's antiunionism, especially as reflected in its nearly totalitarian control of the community, and the reluctance of the UMWA to do all it could to organize the unorganized. Despite the death of four and wounding of several times that number by company guards in an incident during the strike of 1906, the miners of Windber were excluded from that year's settlement with the bituminous industry. Unorganized workers in Windber again struck in response to the UMWA's call in the nationwide 1922 walkout. In one of the most remarkable protests in American labor history, they stayed on strike despite a growing number of evictions by the company. They refused to quit after being left out of the settlement negotiated by union president John L. Lewis. For one more year they held out, receiving aid from their district, headed by progressive Lewis foe John Brophy. The plight of Windber's workers not only split the UMWA but also attracted national attention, as a delegation of workers visited New York City to show its residents at what cost coal was being dug to power their transit system. The strike finally was abandoned in Windber after sixteen months, but the local leaders of that effort would reemerge in unionism's triumph in 1933.



Like any ambitious study, this one invites a number of questions. First, given the immigrants' suspicions of assimilation, how, when, and to what extent did they assimilate, and did the various "new immigrant" ethnic groups do so in different ways and at different rates? Second, could the Berwind-White company be viewed in a broader context, perhaps by noting the economic imperatives facing bituminous firms outlined in analyses like Price Fishback's *Soft Coal, Hard Choices: The Economic Welfare of Bituminous Coal Miners, 1890-1930*? Third, might closer attention to the workplace add to Beik's discussion of labor protest? Fourth, did second-generation immigrants dominate the ranks of the "new ethnic leaders" (p. 282) who mobilized community support for the 1922 strike and the "spraggers and motormen" (p. 272) who mobilized men in the mines? Still, these are issues perhaps just as well addressed in future works. Before this book's publication, it was no easy matter to tell those interested in studying the bituminous coal industry where to begin. Now it is simply a matter of urging them to build upon this fine work.

Duquesne University

PERRY K. BLATZ

*Coal and Coke in Pennsylvania.* By CARMEN DICICCIO. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1996. 223p. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$16.95.)

Carmen DeCiccio's *Coal and Coke in Pennsylvania* provides a sweeping overview of the bituminous coal and coke industry in Pennsylvania from 1740 to 1945. The book emerged from a coal and coke context compiled as a guide for the nomination of extractive facilities of western Pennsylvania to the National Register of Historic Places, and is intended as an introductory guide to the industry as it emerged and developed in that region.

DiCiccio divides the history of the coal and coke industry into four chronological periods: (1) "The Emergence of Coal in the Age of Wood, 1740-1840"; (2) "Transportation, Iron, and Railroad as Impetus for the Expansion of the Coal and Cole Industry, 1840-1880"; (3) "The Golden Era of King Coal, Queen Coke, and Princess Steel, 1880-1920"; and (4) "Retrenchment, Decline, and the Mechanized Mine, 1920-1945." In each of these periods, DiCiccio explores a number of themes including the development of technology, the growth and changes of the industry, the development and impact of transportation systems on the industry, and the expansion of new industries and their relation to coal and coke. Despite DiCiccio's primary focus on the technological and business history of coal, significant information is provided on the daily lives of miners and their families, both at work and in the community, and on the changing nature of the workforce in what is correctly termed "a dangerous and often repressive industry." Although DiCiccio

may at times wax poetic regarding the development of such technological wizardry as the by-product coke oven and the business acumen of Henry Clay Frick, the author does not shy away from the autocratic and exploitative nature of the corporate giants who dominated the related industries of coal, coke, railroads, and steel.

The book has a number of important strengths. Geological and technological information is written in a clear and accessible style and accompanied by diagrams, drawings, and photos. The first chapter includes, for example, an excellent discussion of the rationale and methods of grading coal, while the second chapter includes a discussion of working conditions underground and an enlightening description of the various "damp" gases and methods of ventilation. The book also contains a wealth of data on topics including production statistics and any number of demographic topics accompanied by useful tables, charts, and graphs.

Another strength lies in DiCiccio's ability to contextualize—to link the development of the coal and coke industries with emerging scientific discoveries and technological innovations (both here and abroad) as well as with the growth of railroads and industry. In addition, DiCiccio is aware that the development of Pennsylvania's coal and coke industry occurred within a larger national political, economic, and social landscape. Thus, the nature of European immigration as well as World War I and its aftermath are important elements of chapter 3, which covers the period from 1880 to 1920.

If the book has a weakness, it is in the area of social and union history. Although, the changing ethnic structure of the workforce and the development of unions representing the mine workers is described in each chapter, the author lacks a thorough grasp of the relationship of the union to the industry and the nature of politics within the union. However, DiCiccio's ability to describe the economic and social impact of technology and to integrate the development of the industries related to coal—railroads, iron, and steel—fills an important gap in the history of coal and coke. In sum, Carmen DiCiccio's *Coal and Coke in Pennsylvania* provides an excellent introduction for the novice and a useful tool for anyone interested in the history of coal and its related industries in Pennsylvania.

*Indiana University of Pennsylvania*

ELIZABETH RICKETTS

*Technology and American History: A Historical Anthology from Technology and Culture.* Edited by STEVEN H. CUTLIFFE and TERRY REYNOLDS. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. 448p. Illustrations, tables, index. Cloth, \$37.95; paper, \$18.95.)

"Context, Context, Context" is crucial in understanding technology in American

history, the introduction to this volume explains. In the late 1990s, most academic historians of technology would probably accept this as a truism. While a willingness to peer inside the "black box" of technology is still a prerequisite to serious study in the field, litanies of nuts and bolts are now largely left to buffs and antiquarians.

Under marching orders from the Society for the History of Technology's executive council, the editors have chosen fifteen articles representative of this approach. All were originally published in the society's journal, *Technology and Culture*. These selections, the editors tell us, are meant to represent "the scope of the history of technology in American society" (p. 1). In practice, that scope is traditional rather than comprehensive, encompassing the transfer of European industrial techniques in the eighteenth century to electron microscopes and electrical systems in the post-World War II era.

Although the volume is aimed at both students of the history of technology and a general academic audience, readers interested in the history of the Mid-Atlantic will find the essays in the first half of the volume of greatest interest. It is a pleasure to rediscover Norman B. Wilkinson's elegantly crafted essay on the transfer of European technology to the Brandywine Valley published nearly thirty-five years ago. Other essays of regional interest include Richard Schallenberg and David Ault's essay on the charcoal iron industry, and David Jardini's more recent piece on the Jones and Laughlin iron and steel mills.

Unfortunately for the broad ambitions of the editors, a casual reader might gather the impression that antebellum scholarship in this field focuses almost exclusively on widely studied forms of industry such as textiles and iron. This bias results from the scarcity of articles in *Technology and Culture* on this period and reflects the necessity of avoiding pieces that have already been anthologized.

In contrast, essays in the second half of the volume cover a much wider range of topics. Ruth Schwartz Cowan's classic essay on domestic technology, "The 'Industrial Revolution' in the Home," is included, as is Claude Fischer's more recent article on telephone users and telephone companies. For those with a more traditional take on the field, scientists, engineers, and various kinds of hardware from electron microscopes to electrical utilities are also covered.

Introductions to anthologies are crucial because, like information about society in a study of technology, they provide context, context, context. The introduction to this volume is its weakest feature. More guidance to the reader would have enhanced the usefulness of this book. The editors provide adequate summaries of each article in a chronological framework. However, the reader receives little help in putting the articles into historiographical context. Most distressingly, the publication dates of individual essays are not given in any obvious way, making it extremely difficult to trace intellectual developments in the field. Many of the older essays represent issues or schools of thought that had their moment at center stage before giving way to other debates: technology transfer, the origins of mass

production, science-technology relationships, and more recently, deskilling, batch production, and consumer cultures.

I also would have appreciated a fuller explanation of why each of the essays was chosen, even perhaps incorporating references to articles that, for whatever reason, could not be included. The editors' introductory essay has no footnotes at all. As a result of these silences, the nonspecialist will get a very strange sense of what the history of technology is about.

*University of Delaware*

ARWEN MOHUN

*American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field.* Edited by ANN SMART MARTIN and J. RITCHIE GARRISON. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press for the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997. vii, 428p. Illustrations, notes. \$39.95.)

For material culture studies there is no lack of flagship anthologies with claims for charting the waters of scholarship. The impulse is understandable. As a multidisciplinary field, it needs categorization, organization, clarification. As scholarship, its methods and theories require identification, and its goals demand proffers of significance. As a cause, its history and sociology warrant reflection. Asked to provide a foundational set of essays, most adherents to the material culture label would probably quickly blurt out *Material Culture and the Study of American Life* (1978) edited by Ian M.G. Quimby. The anthology was published by W.W. Norton for the Winterthur Museum and suggested the "coming of age" contribution of material culture to historical scholarship. Many Winterthur conferences and publications have come and gone since, but most arguably owe their inspiration to the broad agenda established in Quimby's edition.

*American Material Culture*, coming out of another Winterthur conference, sets up Quimby's collection as a springboard to "canvas the current state of American material culture study, explore emerging questions, and see how the field had changed since 1975" (p. 1). It is a review worth doing at this time. Material culture studies have matured with a core of journals, a bookshelf of reference works and seminal titles, academic programs touting education in material culture, and a host of new students of the field. For some the assessment is about rekindling excitement for material culture, particularly within American history. For others it's about establishing theoretical principles that give the field scholarly unity and provide direction for a new generation of scholars and students. Whereas in 1978 Quimby addressed the revelation of material culture studies for document-oriented historians, Smart and Garrison appear to direct the volume at the crowded arena of cultural studies, gender studies, minority studies, and other interdisciplinary

audiences coming out of social consciousness of the last two decades. They hope to position material culture studies within the high-level discourse of postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postwhateverism sprouting in today's dissertations.

Martin and Garrison's introduction is indeed useful to chart the pressures on material culture studies as a viable field. Backing away from a unified interdisciplinary vision of material culture studies, they outline the multiple disciplinary approaches to the study of objects as part of culture. They perceptively note the shift since 1978 from a focus on the object itself to one of context, and appear themselves to favor consideration of cultural landscapes encompassing artifacts as the connecting thread. They easily could have gone on to discuss the questions of patterning behavior and thought underlying contextual approaches, but instead they return to the historical rather than ethnographic issues with the summary: "Less certain about the existence of deep structural patterns by which a people organized things into meaningful relationships, we have become more interested in the role of human agency in particular historical circumstances" (p. 20). Judging from the contents of the volume, the "we" mostly refers to American historians, although the editors at least mention the broad interests of folklife, anthropology, and geography in material culture studies. Other volumes such as *American Material Culture and Folklife* (1985), edited by Simon Bronner, and *Living in a Material World* (1991), edited by Gerald Pocius, tend to bring to the fore the latter group.

The title of the Winterthur volume suggested to me that there would be more historiographical and philosophical essays than appeared in the contents. To be sure, Cary Carson, a prominent figure involved in the conference of 1975 that launched *Material Culture and the Study of American Life* and the present volume, anchors *American Material Culture* with a personal commentary that is often cutting, even sarcastic some may say, on the last twenty years of effort. Ellen Paul Denker perceptively examines exhibitions as a form of scholarship and the ways that reviews communicate their significance. A group of writers from the Education, Public Programs, and Visitor Service Division at Winterthur philosophically explores the interpretive models used to explain objects in the museum. The remaining eleven chapters use case studies to demonstrate methods, approaches, and theories applicable to explaining objects in the American experience.

The stimulating perspectives that emerge from the group of eleven probably offer less the shape of the field than they suggest some of its trajectories. Maybe some organization of the group into categories of analysis would have helped. Calling upon American Studies scholarship, Gary Kulik's accessible essay on the American axe takes up the issue of Americanism (or "exceptionalism") of American material culture. Bernard Herman's more obtuse chapter borrows from structural anthropology to examine the creative process evident from estate property documents of the early nineteenth century. Continuing the challenge of material

culture as about objects per se, Katherine C. Grier brilliantly applies rhetorical analysis to animals portrayed and preserved as artifacts in Victorian America. Dorothy Washburn in her study of doll play suggestively, if not originally, enters into psychological interpretations of children's behavior with objects. Joseph Corn's survey of nineteenth-century owner's manuals moves material culture studies into the orbit of objects by opening to scrutiny the response of consumers to objects (the subject of another Winterthur volume, *Consuming Visions*, edited by Simon Bronner) as well as paying attention to the ephemeral representation of objects. For many, this "reading" joins visual culture to material culture, a theme that is picked up in the next chapter by Anne Verplanck on "The Social Meanings of Portrait Miniatures in Philadelphia, 1760–1820." At once of interest to readers of *PMHB* because of its Philadelphia focus and to theoreticians of material culture because of the application of semiotics, Verplanck's essay uses objects to decode a system of communication and social relationships within elite Philadelphia society. The message here that resounds through other chapters is the analytical attention to users, viewers, and consumers of objects as much as to creators or to the objects themselves. If material culture studies in the 1978 volume consisted largely of analytic *presentations* of objects, this volume dwells more on their *representations*. And it is there that future students may extract a path to follow. In other readings on the contexts created by and for Tupperware or the images of leatherstockings and hunting shirts in art and narrative, the object becomes a sign and reference for ways of performing, thinking, and viewing. One ultimately has to wonder whether too much is made of "reading" objects when a more appropriate term might be "perceiving" or "imaging" them.

While suggesting these lines of analysis and identifying new names in the material culture cause are to the editors' credit, the work of clarifying "the shape of the field" could have been made easier by more categorization of the historical case studies, more representation of ethnography and social science approaches, more historiographical background, more philosophical consideration. To be fair, maybe that task is a volume in and of itself. Or this volume is misnamed. Rather than charting the waters, this volume shows the number of ships put out into the material culture sea.

*Penn State University, Harrisburg*

SIMON J. BRONNER

*Nearly Everybody Read It: Snapshots of the Philadelphia Bulletin.* Edited by PETER BINZEN. (Philadelphia: Camino Books, 1998. xiii, 163p. Illustrations. \$22.00.)

It's a shame the defunct *Evening Bulletin* was never as lively and readable as this superb and affectionate obituary for the venerable newspaper whose presses went

silent more than seventeen years ago. The *Bulletin* was the quintessential Philadelphia institution: staid, resistant to change, never loud, never boastful, ever cautious, ever prudent. The newspaper exemplified the character and flavor of the city, and the city universally mourned its demise in January 1982. Sixteen former *Bulletin* writers and editors contribute their reminiscences and reflections to the book edited by Peter Binzen, an outstanding *Bulletin* reporter from 1951 until the newspaper's demise. Binzen writes that the *Bulletin* was tailored to Philadelphia, "but when the city declined in power and prestige and population, so alas did its evening newspaper stumble and fall."

The newspaper's public character was molded by owner William L. McLean and his son, Robert, known as "the Major." It was the smallest of sixteen city daily newspapers when McLean purchased it in 1895 for \$17,000. In only ten years McLean, remarkably, raised its circulation from 6,300 to 200,000. The McLeans eventually fashioned North America's largest afternoon newspaper with a daily of more than 700,000 in its heyday. It was a success built upon the blanket coverage of local news, scrupulous accuracy (even if it meant missing a scoop), and the principle that the *Bulletin* was a guest in the readers' homes that must never shout at them or offend in any way.

A stunning glimpse into the newspaper's obsession with avoiding controversy comes from science writer Pierre C. Fraley who spent a week in Bloomington, Indiana, with Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey preparing a story on the much-awaited study, "Sexual Behavior in the Human Female." Other newspapers played the story on page one. "But the *Bulletin's* huge readership never saw what I wrote," laments Fraley. "Prudish editors spiked my story fearing that its subject matter might offend the delicate sensibilities of Philadelphians." Newspaper artists constantly added clothing to skimpily clad comic page characters, especially those in Al Capp's *Li'l Abner*. A meeting of top-level editors once pondered whether or not to kill a cartoon character who was portrayed as pregnant.

If the newspaper was bland and inoffensive, the staff comes across as a remarkably colorful cast, replete with hard-drinking curmudgeons, gamblers, womanizers, and lovable eccentrics. There were some Ivy League types, but Philadelphia's ethnic neighborhoods—particularly Northeast High School at Eighth and Lehigh—was the prime spawning ground for *Bulletin* reporters. Reporter George Staab, a high school dropout from blue-collar Kensington drove a cab and worked construction before landing a newspaper job. Staab greeted Claude Lewis, the *Bulletin's* second African American writer by displaying "a gruesome looking gray pistol," and declaring, "I'm going to use (it) the first time one of your brothers pokes his big black nose through my window." There were reporters who couldn't write, and one who was famous for his malapropisms. But there was also a crew of crack rewrite men who "sat like oarsmen in a racing shell one in front of the other," talented wordsmiths who could make a story "sing."

James Smart, who started as a \$25-a-week copyboy in 1948 tells of the newspaper's squadron of "thoroughbred" racing pigeons used to transport photo negatives from sporting events to the newspaper office. Labor writer Harry G. Toland tells of an era when reporters and editors routinely accepted Christmas gifts from those they covered. Toland was eventually assigned to the *Bulletin's* notoriously bland editorial page. "Once in an election campaign, an aide brought word to Richardson Dilworth that the *Bulletin* had editorially endorsed him [as mayor of Philadelphia]. 'How could you tell,' Dilworth cracked."

While the contributors do not shrink from revealing the *Bulletin's* faults and foibles, an overwhelming sense of respect, affection, and pride in their product comes across. Adrian Lee quotes a *Daily News* editor who declared, "Don't believe it until you read it in the *Bulletin*' . . . the ultimate tribute to the *Bulletin's* insistence on not only getting the story but getting it right."

*Philadelphia Inquirer*

RONALD AVERY

*Stylin': African American Expressive Culture from Its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit.* By SHANE WHITE and GRAHAM WHITE. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998. xv, 301p. Illustrations, notes, index. \$30.00.)

*Stylin'* is a reminder of how much fine American history now comes from scholars in other parts of the world, including Australia, home of Shane and Graham White, brothers and colleagues at the University of Sidney. As the subtitle indicates, this book is sweeping in scope, moving by means of "a series of linked essays" across more than two hundred years to demonstrate that "ordinary black men and women developed a style that did indeed affirm their lives" (p. 2). Along the way, the authors consider such topics as clothing, hair style, body movements, dance, quilting, and, as a finale, the significance of the zoot suit. Pennsylvania readers may be particularly interested in Philadelphia's place in the story, thanks in part to Edward W. Clay's satirical works, beginning with *Life in Philadelphia* in 1828, which provide important—if thoroughly racist—visual evidence of African American self-representation in the antebellum North. Any reader, however, can pick up *Stylin'* at any point and find fascinating nuggets of information and intelligent commentary on such issues as what happened when slaves moved from consumers to producers of cloth and why blacks preferred some forms of bodily display to others.

In addition to roaming widely over time and space, *Stylin'* reaches across cultural forms to establish links between them and to connect them all to the authors' notion of an African American aesthetic. The Whites, for example, find stylistic elements in common in black quilts, music, and dance. The underlying aesthetic is both



"distinctive and identifiable" (p. 261) and "fluid," "polyvalent," and based on "a process of *bricolage*, or 'make-shift construction'" (p. 151). It is deeply rooted in the past, including the African past, and forward-looking (in the case of the zoot suit) to "a distinctly modern sensibility" and "the increasingly global nature" of late-twentieth-century culture (p. 252).

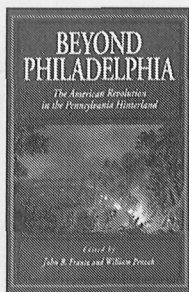
Some readers will find this notion of an African American expressive aesthetic useful in describing, classifying, and analyzing black culture. Others will find it hopelessly broad and possibly ahistorical. The authors are also open to the charge that they pay slight attention to less positive aspects of their subject: for them self-representation is more often than not affirmative, rather than costly in terms of resources and ambiguous in terms of the politics of race. The Whites also give little emphasis to variety, diversity, and cultural clashes among African Americans. Not that they ignore such issues entirely. Occasionally they touch on class conflict in black urban communities, with less to say about religious, regional, and other possible lines of cultural divisions. What matters most of all for the Whites, however, and what gives continuity to the book, is their belief in an African American aesthetic persisting from the eighteenth century to the postmodern present.

It is not necessary to accept such a homogenizing interpretation of African American culture to agree with other parts of the Whites' analysis or to appreciate the book. What they have to say about self-representation and the black body as a site of affirmation, for example, is both consistent with, and of potential interest to, scholars in a number of other fields. In addition, *Stylin'* is what a book should be—lest we forget—a great read. Although properly appreciative of other scholars, and sometimes chatty, the authors nonetheless give much room for their heroes, common black men and women, to speak and to create once again. Whether or not they drew upon a common African American aesthetic, their words and works are a joy to behold and give life to this book.

*Johns Hopkins University*

RONALD G. WALTERS

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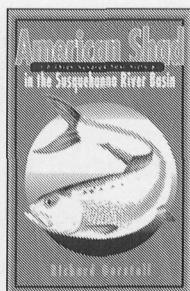
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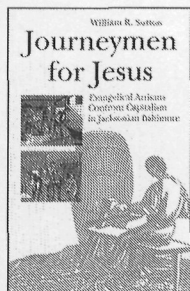
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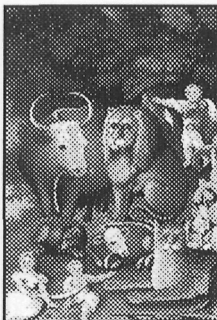
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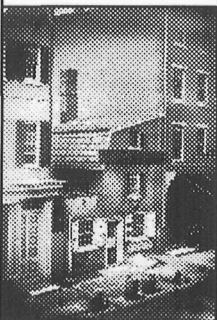
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## **The Historical Society of Pennsylvania Now Anticipates a Mid-July Reopening**

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which closed temporarily to members and the general public November 26 to complete the renovation of its 1300 Locust Street building in Philadelphia, will announce its reopening date in April. A mid-July reopening is anticipated. As with most projects of this nature, it is very difficult to predict with accuracy how long the renovation, followed by the relocation of a third of the Society's collection to the first floor, will take. The \$6.8 million renovation will include restoration of the reading room on the first floor; modernization of reader services, catalog, and microform areas; installation of environmental equipment for optimal preservation conditions; improvement of handicapped access; and repair of a portion of the building's exterior. While the Society will make every effort to accomplish these important changes efficiently, it would be best to call HSP or check its website before planning a summer visit. The Society can be reached at (215) 732-6200, and its web address is: <http://www.libertynet.org/pahist>.

