
This is the best biography of Stephen Foster yet written, and the author is the best equipped person to write such a biography. He knows how to use source material. He is skeptical about using any material that cannot be documented. This skepticism, or rather his doubt about many Foster traditions, impresses the student of history. The author has brushed aside many of the purely fictional, legendary stories, has gone directly to the documents, and has made the real Stephen Foster live again. Much attention has been given to Foster's early environment and his childhood days. But there is a reason. Without this setting one cannot understand the true Foster. Contrary to common belief, we learn that Foster came from the pioneer aristocracy of Pittsburgh. His family moved in the most exclusive circles of Pittsburgh society. By training, by profession, and in business, the Fosters associated with the most prominent people of Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania. James Buchanan was an intimate friend of the family.

Stephen Foster and his work form an integral part of the history of mid-nineteenth century America. His songs came nearer giving national expression to the things the masses were doing, and thinking, than the productions of any other song writer. While Foster was growing up in Pittsburgh, the people living west of the Allegheny Mountains were not affected by foreign music. Foster was distinctly American, both in life and in his music. Many of his songs reflect the spirit of the pioneers. "Oh! Susannah!"—the most typically American folksong ever written, became something of a national anthem, since it was so widely sung and advertised by the "Forty-niners." Then, too, Foster loved his home—his boyhood home. His "Old Folks at Home" is probably his greatest song. It was rapidly carried to Europe and sung around the world. And this song is America's most important contribution to the songs of the world.

There runs throughout this entire biography the background of a young, frontier America. Here one finds much of the history of Pittsburgh, of Cincinnati, of life on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Also, here is an appreciative understanding of the institution of slavery, of negro minstrelsy, and finally the heartaches that accompanied the conflict between the north and the south. The last portions of the book deal with Foster's life after he moved from Pittsburgh to New York in 1860. No reliable records are available following this date. Just the same, we are indebted to the author for clearing up many silly rumors, stories, and gossip relating to Foster's last years.

A final word may be added regarding the revival of interest in Foster. The work of J. K. Lilly, in Indianapolis, Indiana, in assembling the greatest collection of *Fosteriana* in existence; the work of the Pittsburgh Tuesday
Musical Club, and the University of Pittsburgh, in erecting a beautiful memorial to the memory of Foster; and the recent purchase by Henry Ford of an old house which he thinks was Foster's birthplace—all add interest to the nationwide movement honoring Foster's memory. A true biography of Foster is therefore most timely. Students of American social history will read it with pleasure and profit.

John W. Oliver


While perhaps not as valuable as his first journal, this second journal of Philip Vickers Fithian, young Princeton graduate, is extremely worthwhile and deserves consideration by both the social historian and the student of local history in Pennsylvania. Fithian, three years after graduation, entered the Presbyterian ministry as did so many of his Princeton fellows of that day, and became temporarily a Presbyterian circuit rider. In this capacity he visited the frontier sections of Virginia, then central Pennsylvania from Northumberland to Huntingdon and returned to Virginia, all in 1775 and 1776. The first part of this volume deals with the account of these travels as set down by Fithian during the course of his journeys. The second portion concerns the brief services of the young man as chaplain with a New Jersey brigade in and about New York from July to September, 1776.

The peculiar interest of this book to those interested in Pennsylvania history naturally lies in the account of the journey from Philadelphia into central Pennsylvania and return by way of Sunbury, Williamsport, Lockhaven, Milesburg, present Lewistown and Huntingdon. Undoubtedly Fithian presents us with one of the best pictures of frontier society on the eve of the Revolution obtainable for this area. The portrayal of the life of the people, conditions of travel and frontier religious experience will intrigue the student of social history. The descriptions of early settlements and copious comments on early settlers will attract the local historian and genealogist. More general historians will find equally worthwhile the account of journeys in frontier Virginia. Evidence on the infiltration of Pennsylvanian settlers into back country Virginia is to be found in the journal. Considerable information on the state of revolutionary feeling and its rise and fall on the frontier finds a place in Fithian's account. Life in the army and much material on the campaign about New York in 1776 is contained in the chaplain's record.

Finally, the care with which the editing has been done deserves commendation. Copious editorial notes add to the understanding of the journal as well as provide much useful information in themselves. An excellent bibliography will aid the searcher after further facts, while a map clarifies the record of Fithian's travels.

S. K. Stevens

Mr. Nolan is to be congratulated upon the excellent quality of his workmanship in the preparation of this volume to commemorate the passing of Lafayette one hundred years ago. Under the auspices of the Society of the American Friends of Lafayette a nation-wide celebration is now in progress. This is as it should be for Lafayette inspired the patriots of 1776 as no other Frenchman did or probably could. It was he, through his magnetic and intriguing personality, who did more to bind America to France in ties of enduring friendship than any man of his day or since. Although France might have regarded him as a deserter, America hailed him as a noble patriot and adventurer.

The purpose of this study is clearly stated by the author in the following words: "This volume purports to be a chronology and not a history, but to avoid the drab monotony of a bare recital of dates and places, a typical sentence has been quoted from many of the letters." The lack of space doubtless made it impossible to give more liberal quotations from the letters of Lafayette, but the reader nevertheless earnestly craves for additional excerpts.

Lafayette visited this country in 1777-79, in 1780-81, in 1784, and in 1824-25, spending approximately five years in America. Accordingly, Mr. Nolan has divided the study into four parts, corresponding to his visits to the United States. No thorough and reliable study had been made before the appearance of this volume to trace day by day Lafayette's visits and campaigns during the Revolutionary period; therefore the present chronology is quite timely.

Although Lafayette kept no connected diary of his American campaigns, he did write letters profusely and many of them exist today for the use of historians and biographers whose work has been greatly simplified through the painstaking care of Mr. Nolan in recording and locating these invaluable materials.

GEORGE D. HARMON


In May of 1831, Poe was living in Baltimore, with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, whose charity had extended itself beyond her meager means to care for the impoverished poet, recently dismissed from West Point. He felt very acutely the responsibility to find some manner of paying his own way, and John Allan, his foster-father in Richmond, was still maintaining an obdurate silence toward the young genius whom he regarded as an ingrate and wastrel. It was under such circumstances that Poe turned to the writing of the short story, which promised at least some financial recompense in
contrast to poetry, which, apparently, offered none whatever. The Philadelphia Saturday Courier, in its issue of May 28, 1831, offered a prize of one hundred dollars for the best American tale submitted. Poe contributed a story. He had probably tried his hand at the prose tale as early as his student days at the University of Virginia, but thus far he had not published any prose fiction.

The judges of the contest lent immortality to the name of Delia Bacon of New York, by preferring her story to that of Poe. Miss Bacon's story was called "Love's Martyr" and it was said to be "strongly characterized by taste, genius and feeling."

Whether the contest served to introduce Poe to the Courier or not, is not established, but certainly that magazine accepted five of his stories for publication during the next year. They were his first tales to be published: "Metzengerstein," "The Duc de L'Omelette," "A Tale of Jerusalem," "Loss of Breath" and "Bon Bon." They represent his initial efforts in the short story, and they underwent considerable revision before being republished in the Southern Literary Messenger in 1835-36. Still further revised they subsequently appeared with other stories in a volume.

A comparison of the text of these stories in their first form with the subsequent versions is naturally of interest to the student of Poe's literary development and thus this little volume of Professor Varner has its place and its value. The editorial work has been carefully and accurately done. The introduction is full, and well documented. The text is in enlarged photolithographic facsimile of the origial columns of the Courier, thus preserving the original spelling, typography and punctuation with a faithfulness otherwise unattainable. Slight as it is, this volume has its value in bringing us closer to a complete record of the most important American literary man of his times.

Sculley Bradley


Originally published in 1930 as A Gentleman Rebel, The Exploits of Anthony Wayne, this inexpensive, unabridged edition bears on the outside the latter part of the above title, which is also the title of another biography of the same figure by Thomas Boyd (1929). As a better balanced book than that of the latter or than the older work of Charles J. Stillé (1893), it deserves a wide circulation.

In twenty-two interesting chapters, usually with vague titles, the extraordinary career of this Pennsylvania surveyor, farmer, soldier, and politician is unraveled. These chapters may be divided into four sections corresponding to periods of the life of Wayne. The first part gives a more detailed account of his early life than appears in any other biography of him. Here we get an entertaining picture of a gay youth whose ambition to be a soldier was frustrated by his residence in the colonies where there were no professional soldiers, but those of the king. With the Revolution came his
opportunity and he was among the first to urge military organization. To his important exploits in this long struggle the major portion of the book is devoted. As colonel and brigadier-general of the Pennsylvania Line he participated in the campaigns in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania from 1776 to 1778. Superseded by St. Clair in command of that body in January, 1779, he returned to the army as commander of the Light Infantry with which he successfully stormed Stony Point on July 15, 1779. Until 1781, when he was ordered to Virginia, he continued to serve with Washington in the Middle States. From Cornwallis, whom General Greene had been pushing north, Wayne effected a spectacular escape at Green Springs, Virginia, in July. Then with Lafayette he edged the British commander into Yorktown and when Washington arrived, took part in the reduction of that place. Well aware of Wayne's craving for action Washington sent him in 1782 to Georgia where he subdued the Creek Indians and obliged the British to surrender Savannah in July, 1782. The third period of his life was passed in managing his estate at Waynesborough, adventuring in politics, and developing a rice plantation in Georgia. But another period of fame awaited him, for as commanding general of the army he conquered the Indians of the Old Northwest during 1792 to 1796, thus opening up that region to the advancement of civilization. It was while returning from the scene of his victory that he died at Presqu' Isle (Erie, Pa.) on December 15, 1796.

In a sympathetic manner the author has presented a popular, well-written story in which he not only narrates, but interprets and criticizes. So far as the sources permit, he depicts the personal side of Wayne's life. Severe characterizations are made of men who ever opposed the rise of Wayne. Thus we learn of the machinations of the "gutter-rat Wilkinson" (p. 132), of the "cowardly, vain, and inordinately stupid" St. Clair (p. 102), who "was as incompetent in the rôle of major general as a donkey in a breeding stable" (p. 253). To enhance further the literary effect, considerable use is made of similes, adjectives, and exclamation points. It is difficult to see how some scenes can be attributed to anything but imagination.

When he comes to Wayne's campaign against the northwestern Indians, the author is less sure of his ground. Mistakes appear in the account of the earlier campaigns. Josiah Harmar commanded in the Old Northwest from 1785, not from 1787 (p. 275); the Six Nations were not the important Indians of that section, for they did not live there; Harmar could not have sent "regiments" against the Indians because he did not have them (p. 276); proof being absent from the author's account, his defense of the Indians is weak; the British did not have forts on the Ohio at that time (p. 280); "Maumees" should be Miamis (p. 280). But of Wayne's campaign itself the account is adequate and correct. No attempt is made to give a general description of Wayne's administration of the army in the Old Northwest.

Though undocumented the book shows evidence of considerable work. The serious student must regret Mr. Preston's too zealous efforts to make his story entertaining. But it is entertaining.

Henry Putney Beers
Delaware County can well be proud of such an historical review. Naturally, it exalts its relations historically to William Penn in order to secure some of the glory that too often is thought of in terms of Philadelphia alone. The editor has preserved in excellent form the anniversary celebration in the setting of the original happenings 250 years ago, giving to us in true form the early records, people, and landmarks so that they live anew in our day and generation. Suitable rebukes for our day as well, are included, such as the “water of Chester Creek, then sweet and pure, now polluted and foul.”

The book illustrates problems encountered by the historian in his endeavors to preserve the landmarks of the past. “Thoroughly modernized,” is the explanation of an old building, “yet thoroughly spoiled.” It cries out in shame against such ruthless destruction of historical landmarks. Appeals for missing records are also heard.

The introductory paragraphs carry the reader smoothly through a connected story, yet consisting of many and varied parts written by several persons. The splendid index adds much to its value as an historical reference book. The stories, though brief, are full of material for future research, if desired, as well as thoroughly useful even to the uninformed.

Lastly, it not only tells us of the past, preserves the present facts of the celebration with its programs, but it sets a goal for the future. It offers an opportunity to be of service to the cause of Delaware county and William Penn. An appeal is made for a park surrounding the spot where Penn first set foot on the land of his new possession, now well away from the water and unattractive. A suggestion is offered to obtain and preserve the Townsend Pusey House, still standing in Upland, perhaps the oldest building intact in our state. Thus we have been projected into the scenes of long ago through the deplorable sordidness and materials of our present surroundings in order that conditions may be remedied and present plans insured of greater success through the enthusiasm and deeper interest created by such a volume.

GILBERT S. BAILEY

A Picture Tour of Wilkes-Barre and the Historic Wyoming Valley. Published by Herbert E. Atkins. (Wilkes-Barre: The Craftsmen Engravers, Inc., 1932. $2.00).

This book of fifty-seven photographs of “Wyoming Valley’s principal spots of scenic, romantic and historic interest” differs from the usual commercial picture book in the accuracy of its historical summary, in the fine technique of photography and engraving of large two-color plates, and in the comprehensive selection of the subjects covered. The book is, indeed, “a most effective pictorial argument for pride in the lovely scenery of the Wyoming Valley.”
The historical importance of the book lies in the views of the present appearance of such places as the old French refugee settlement at Azilum (Asylum); the route of Sullivan’s Expedition along the Susquehanna River from Wilkes-Barre to Athens; and Tillbury’s Knob, one of the last holdings of the Penns. Of local interest are the historical markers shown in the pictures; the elm trees along the river, grown from seed brought from Connecticut by early settlers; and the aerial views of the city and valley, giving a definite record of present development.

Workers in historical societies know that good illustrations are constantly sought. As time goes on, these excellent views will become more and more valuable historically and therefore all owners of the book will do well to preserve it for future reference.

FRANCES DORRANCE


This first volume of the Sugarloaf Historical Association, which was organized in 1933, includes a number of stories dealing with the early history of old Sugarloaf township. Some of the stories have appeared in newspapers, but in this volume are preserved in a more permanent form the historical compositions of the local writers. There is also an account of the commemoration ceremony of the Sugarloaf Massacre, when a memorial tablet was dedicated on September 9, 1933, and also church and burial records. The book is a worthy contribution to local history.


 Appropriately bound in Quaker gray, this scholarly monograph is an excellent contribution to Quaker history. The volume is well documented and contains a valuable list of Sewel’s published writings and translations. The correspondence between William Penn and Sewel is discussed and excerpts from the letters are quoted. There are many references to Pennsylvania throughout. The book is the first of a series of ten monographs on Quaker history by the same author.


The period of Indian wars and uprisings in Pennsylvania comprises a tragic chapter in our history. Dr. Sipe has made an important contribution to Pennsylvania history and to the history of the nation as a whole in this detailed account of Indian events, leaders and wars in Pennsylvania down to 1795. The work is based primarily, but not entirely, on the Pennsylvania Archives and Colonial Records. The style is interesting and absorbing throughout. The appendices contain valuable information and data.
The notes on the chapters are enlightening and of much value to the reader. The few slips or typographical errors have been corrected by the author, from whom the book may be ordered at Butler, Pa.


Designed to meet the requirements of the new _Pennsylvania Course of Study in Social Studies_, for grade five, this textbook tells the story of the episodes, developments, places, and personages in the history of the New World from the beginnings to 1789. The part played by Pennsylvania in the history of the nation is woven into the work and the last section of the book gives a special treatment of Pennsylvania settlements, the history of literature, art and education in the state, and a discussion of the natural beauty and resources of Pennsylvania, together with the laws for their preservation. The language is simple, the illustrations are attractive and the class activities are good.


This textbook has been designed to meet the requirements of the new _Pennsylvania Course of Study in Social Studies_, for grade six. It maintains a fine balance of national history and the part Pennsylvania played in the making of the nation. It covers the period from 1789 to the present, although there is an introductory section, relating to the earlier period of American history. The book is written in simple language and style, the many illustrations are good, and the class activities direct study and stimulate thought.