
By his Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Louis XIV most unintentionally bestowed upon the British-American colonies priceless gifts of citizens exiled from France for conscience sake. Of this noble and notable category none served his adopted country and humanity itself with greater devotion or greater good than Anthony Benezet of Philadelphia, friend of the friendless, anywhere, everywhere. Pennsylvania owes a special debt of gratitude to Mr. George S. Brookes for his comprehensive and comprehending biography of this gentle but unwearied crusader.

As a Quaker, Benezet naturally detested war and effectively inveighed against it, but it was slavery which called forth his ablest polemics. Of all his contributions to the betterment of mankind none accomplished more than this stirring of the sluggish conscience of his time. Nor must his work in the field of education be ignored. He himself set a shining example of selfless and tireless devotion to the task of instructing those who otherwise would have lived and died in unrelieved ignorance.

One of the most moving of his manifold activities for relieving the sufferings of the unfortunate and distressed was his persistent exertions for those Arcadians dumped uninvited at Pennsylvania's door. Charity, both private and public, could not turn a deaf ear when Benezet called.

Unquestionably the chapter which contains matters of greatest moment for history is that on the "Crusade Against Slavery." In this work Benezet's contributions were of outstanding importance in leadership, in influencing and converting individuals, and in writing and publishing treatises against slavery and the slave trade.

The author merits much praise for his painstaking and successful search for material concerning Benezet. The 265 pages of letters of which those written by Benezet occupy 204 pages, the rest being those to or about him, throw invaluable light on a great and noble character.

The biographical portion which occupies somewhat less space than the letters is truly a labor of love. Yet to the reviewer there appear from time to time certain blemishes which mar the general excellence of the work. Claims, too sweeping for the evidence presented, occur. Materials are sometimes used without apparent justification. To describe the answer of the Venerable Society to Benezet concerning his letter to them regarding slavery as one of "crushing brevity" is anything but correct, as the letter itself shows. Furthermore the quotation from that letter greatly misrepresents the reply of the society.
Statements of much interest to the historian are sometimes made without reference. We are told that "Through the instrumentality of Anthony Benezet a group of kidnapped black people passing through Philadelphia on their way South secured their freedom." There is no date nor further information concerning this notable affair.

Despite the imperfections of workmanship this biography is a valuable contribution to a man whom Pennsylvania should delight to honor. Temple University

A. E. Morse.


A Pulitzer prize biography is invariably of interest to historical students. This volume, last year's winner, is of special interest to Pennsylvania readers because Pennsylvanians had no small part in the Grant administration.

Hamilton Fish, before the appearance of the present volume, was one of the giant ghosts in our history. His name was associated with the Washington Treaty and the Virginius affair, but the rôle that he played in a disorganized and fluctuating political administration is a new story. Not only has the author set forth the sturdy and vigorous career and character of Hamilton Fish, but he has also revealed for the first time the interplay of influences and personalities about President Grant.

Fish came from the New York aristocracy and grew up in the conservative Federalist-Whig tradition. He really had two political careers separated by twelve years of retirement (1857-1869). A term in Congress, governor of New York, and six years as colleague of Seward in the Senate were finished before the Republican party rose to power. He supported the new party, but was not of the enthusiastic inner circle.

The bitter struggle over reconstruction was painful to Fish, but he had no part in it. The election of Grant, he hoped, would bring peace and happier days for all. His appointment as Secretary of State, March 12, 1869, was no less a surprise to him than to the public at large.

Several major facts and conditions created difficulties for the new Secretary of State. A guileless President and his military associates believed that most of their impertinent relatives should represent the nation in remunerative positions. The government was dominated by egoistic Congressional leaders who wanted to dictate all policies and take the credit for every governmental act. The unsettled Civil War claims against Great Britain had become a menace to the peace of the two countries. Spanish-American relations were threatened by the agitations of insurrectionists and filibusterers. Throughout eight turbulent years, while twenty-eight other cabinet ministers came, and most of them went, Fish watched by the rudder of state.

Despite the backstairs influences and the eavesdropping at Grant's cabinet meetings, of which Fish became well aware, he stood by the President and on occasion, took severe measures to see that the President stood by him. Fish seemed to see in Grant those peculiar streaks and spots of purity and
of dross which produced remarkable manifestations of both strength and weakness. The President was open to many influences, and the Secretary did not always win his way. But the details of the struggles are at last set forth, and the responsibilities may be assigned. This long account records the seemingly invariable result that all which was sound and worthy in the Grant administration, the Secretary of State battled for, and its numerous blunders, he opposed. Such claim to virtue would hardly be acceptable, were not the evidence so conclusive.

This work gives us President Grant as he has not appeared before. The Fish Diary and Papers show the President often reflecting the color of the dominating influences at the moment of decision. Once his mind was made up there was slight prospect of its being changed. No President has suffered more from unworthy impostors and flatterers, but even Fish could not shake his devotion to his army associates or to Mrs. Grant's friends, though evidence of their unworthiness had accumulated into judicial charges.

In reminding readers of the historical axiom that they must judge the acts of the Grant administration by the moral standards of that day, the author almost leaves the impression of attempting to mitigate official degradation.

The picture of Hamilton Fish—keeping the peace with Great Britain and with Spain, attempting to preserve peace between the President and Sumner, allaying the strife within his party, excluding graft from the recommendations to the committee on appropriations, rejecting unworthy favorites for appointments even against Presidential pressure, striving for a sound currency, arguing for moderation in behalf of the carpet-baggered and military dominated South, attempting to save the public and the party the penalties of dishonesty and graft within the cabinet and within the President's personal staff, and standing unsuspected and respected, and at the same time keeping the respect and devotion of a President whose advisers came and went in rapid succession—such a picture constitutes the major part of this book. In addition the author has given in neat touches the private life of an attractive character.

Professor Nevins was able to make this significant contribution because of the wealth of new evidence revealed in the Fish Diary and Papers. His remarkable mastery of this period has enabled him to give the public the full import of their contents.

University of Nebraska

J. L. SELLERS.

Dr. Bodo Otto and the Medical Background of the American Revolution.

By James E. Gibson. (Springfield, Illinois, and Baltimore, Maryland: Charles C. Thomas, 1937. Pp. 345. $4.00.)

Dr. Bodo Otto, who achieved distinction as a leader in the American medical profession during the late Colonial and Revolutionary periods, was born in Hanover, Germany, in 1711 and died in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1787. He received an excellent medical education in various schools of his native land and settled in Luneburg where he was accepted as a member of the "College of Surgeons." He emigrated to America in 1755 and
opened an office in Philadelphia in that year. In 1760 he moved to New Jersey where he developed an extensive practice in Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland counties. In 1766 he returned to Philadelphia and resumed practice. In 1773, however, he removed to Reading, a town that “was conceived, located, plotted and exploited, to serve a large number of already settled people who had no convenient place in which to sell their products, or where they might obtain their necessities.”

Otto became a leader in the patriot cause, serving upon the Berks county Committee of Safety and as a delegate to the Pennsylvania Provincial Congress of 1776. Later in that year he was appointed senior surgeon of the Middle Division of the Continental hospitals. In February, 1777, Congress ordered him to Trenton to establish a military hospital for the treatment of smallpox. In September of the same year he was assigned to a hospital in Bethlehem. In the spring of 1778 he was placed in charge of the hospitals at Yellow Springs where many of the sick from Washington's army at Valley Forge were treated. When the medical and hospital departments were reorganized by order of Congress in 1780, Dr. Otto was one of fifteen physicians selected for the hospital department and was among the last doctors to leave the service, February 1, 1782. His term of hospital duty from 1776 to 1782, between his sixty-fifth and seventy-second years, indicates both a robust constitution and immunity from disease, or perhaps a better knowledge of precautions than other doctors. After the war Dr. Otto reopened his Philadelphia office, but soon returned to Reading where he engaged in practice until his death.

Mr. Gibson has reproduced many hitherto unpublished documents which shed new light on the medical history of the Revolution, such as lists of medicines used, statements of fees charged, “cures” for various diseases, and descriptions of hospitals during the Revolutionary era. There is no mention of Dr. Otto from page 87 to page 123, and the latter half of the volume has only occasional references to him. Nevertheless, this portion of the book gives much valuable information about the medical department of the army—a “story of intrigues from within and attacks from without.” Chapter XIV, which deals with the care of the sick at Valley Forge, does much to explain the weakness of the American military organization and the ineffectiveness of the medical department. Mr. Gibson has a number of chapters about the professional feud between Dr. John Morgan, Dr. William Shippen, Jr., and Dr. Benjamin Rush. Morgan was director general of the military hospitals and chief physician of the Continental Army, 1775-1777. He was removed from office and was succeeded by Shippen. Rush was appointed physician general of the hospitals of the middle department of the Continental Army in 1777. Morgan and Rush were jealous of Shippen and found fault with the Continental hospital organization and management from the moment Shippen took office. Finally, in 1780, Shippen was tried by a court-martial on charges of fraud, speculation for his own profit, keeping no regular set of books, neglect of hospital duties, and “scandalous practices unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.” Morgan appealed to the public and Shippen answered his charges in detail. Shippen was acquitted, but
Morgan and Rush continued to make charges against him for several years after the war.

A number of the documents used by Mr. Gibson are irrelevant to a biographical study of Dr. Otto and quite a number have no bearing on the medical history of the period. It is unfortunate that he uses no footnotes, indicating his sources of information. He says he "has taken the liberty of doing some editing" of documents "for the purpose of clarity." The reviewer wonders if an author is justified in doing this without indicating the nature and extent of the editing. A few minor errors have been noted. "Arcadian" should be "Acadian" (p. 56); "carry" should be "carrying" (p. 37); "Salomen" should be "Salomon" (p. 130), and "State" should be "colony" (p. 60). One would like to know the authority for such statements as "when the war was over 10,000 mercenaries, who came to fight England's battles, remained to become United States citizens" (p. 131). One might also question the statement that "Washington's correspondence with Congress throughout the war, indicated a reluctance to try to influence legislative action" (p. 137). The book contains a number of excellent illustrations and an addendum which reproduces extracts from the Journal of Rev. Dr. James Sproat. There is an index but no bibliography.

The University of North Carolina

HUGH T. LEFLER.


Dr. McCadden has collected, in this volume, a mass of evidence, much of it from primary sources, sufficient to place the name of Roberts Vaux high on the roll of social and educational reformers of the early nineteenth century. The records show that he was a leader among leaders in some of the great reform movements of his time, particularly in that for free public schools in Pennsylvania.

The author, however, probably exaggerates the personal contribution of Vaux when he bestows upon him the title "Founder of . . . Philadelphia Public Schools." Vaux was not a "genius before his time," for the time was ripe, and the co-founders with Vaux of the Philadelphia public schools were numerous. Nor does Dr. McCadden's limited investigation, of historical records warrant any but a very modest claim for the influence of Vaux in the state at large. His account of Vaux's rôle in educational progress will, apparently as hoped, cast further doubt upon the tradition regarding the leadership of such men as Stevens and Breck, a tradition long questioned in informed circles. While the author has examined much important evidence and has found that it points to Vaux as pre-eminent among the builders of our public school system, he has not examined, as claimed, "all the evidence available" (p. 178).

It is possible that an examination of Quaker records might have resulted in interesting disclosures. There are contemporary records of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, of Girard College, of the Pennsyl-
vania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and of the Philadelphia Society for the Establishment and Support of Charity Schools, in all of which Vaux was active, and which this reviewer has failed to find cited in footnotes or listed in the bibliography. Some of these, but not all, were probably re-published in Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania and in educational journals, but the author ought to have listed them separately and individually in his bibliography. As it is, he just says that "other official reports" than those listed were found in Hazard's Register, and lets the matter rest there. The bibliography does not show that all the contemporary manuscript records of the Philadelphia public schools were examined. Some titles referred to in footnotes have not been found in the bibliography.

It is to be regretted that a study which is excellent in many important ways, should be marred by disregard for good form in documentation, bibliography and abbreviations. Its chief excellence lies in the bringing together and in the effective use of much primary historical material bearing upon the works of Vaux as a social and educational leader in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the formative period of our public school system. And it does throw some light—a part of it new—upon the struggle for free schools in the state. But its title, Education in Pennsylvania 1801-1835 and its Debt to Roberts Vaux, implies a claim which the study does not justify.

Such defects as those mentioned, while they weaken, do not, however, destroy the many unquestionable merits of the study as an account of the works and influence of Roberts Vaux.

University of Pennsylvania

James Mulhern.

Through One Hundred and Fifty Years: the University of Pittsburgh. By Agnes Lynch Starrett. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1937. Pp. 581. Illustrations. $5.00.)

The University of Pittsburgh Press, newest of American university presses to enter the general publication field, begins its career auspiciously and appropriately with a history of the University on the sesquicentennial anniversary of its founding. Reflecting excellence of design and craftsmanship, the volume has a solid dignity well adapted to its subject.

When describing the growth of a typical American university—in this case from Log Academy to Cathedral of Learning—the historian is confronted with a difficult problem of organization; for the simple annals of the one-room school grow complex with the years, as the idea of a university begins to develop, and various graduate and allied schools are added to the college.

Miss Starrett has solved this problem most satisfactorily. The first half of the book is an historical account, with short biographical sketches of the persons involved when their names are first mentioned, and runs from 1787 to 1937. It falls into three natural divisions: the Academy, 1787-1819; the Western University of Pennsylvania, 1819-1890; and the University of Pittsburgh, 1890-1937. The last half of the volume takes up, one by one, the several schools and research divisions of the University. Except for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, these chapters are in the order
of the foundation of each school. The last chapter deals briefly with student and alumni organizations and other extra-curricular activities.

The author had to surmount another obstacle; for in 1845 and again in 1849 the University buildings, with all their equipment and records, were destroyed by fire. She has therefore been obliged to refer to newspapers, letters, diaries, etc., for her main, instead of supplementary, source material in the early part of the history. Perhaps, from the reader's viewpoint, this has its advantages, for minutes of trustees, and faculty meetings are dull reading, and the official records might have exerted a stultifying influence on a style which is agreeably light and direct. In a pretty thorough sampling, this reader has not found a dull page. The biographical sketches are introduced gracefully where they are needed, and there is a happy minimum of eulogy and sentimentality. There are no references to "alma mater" or "dear old Pitt." Footnotes are dispensed with, the more important sources of information being given in the bibliographical notes following the text.

One incident in the University's recent history which Miss Starrett has handled perhaps too delicately is the alleged suppression of academic freedom in 1929. Possibly she was wise to recite only the bare outlines—without naming names—and to give only the administration's point of view; but the affair received so much publicity and had so much more significance than an ordinary departmental quarrel that it seems as if an opportunity had been missed to tell the whole story frankly and fully.

University of Pennsylvania Press

PHILPS SOULE.