Notable Women Of Pennsylvania. Edited by Gertrude B. Biddle and Sarah D. Lowrie. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1942, pp. 307. $3.00.)

Many of the two hundred brief biographies here presented were assembled in 1926 by Mrs. J. Willis Martin and her sesquicentennial committee. Printed in the Public Ledger, they were mounted at the direction of its editor, the late Cyrus H. K. Curtis, in a Book of Honor. Other biographies have been added, and from the sum those which form the collection were carefully selected.

The first two sketches present Madame Printz, wife of Governor Printz, and her capable daughter, Armot Papegoya, and the last four, Maud Conyers Exley, physician; Christine Wetherill Stevenson, actress, playwright, and founder of the Philadelphia Art Alliance; Marion Reilly, dean of Bryn Mawr College; and Caroline Tyler Lea, organizer and supporter of projects for human welfare.

Between the two periods represented is recorded the expanding sphere of women's activities. Here are pioneer housewives who became perforce the defenders of their families. Here are Mary Jemison and Frances Slocum, exhibiting strength of character in long captivity. Here are Madame Ferree, Esther Say Harris, Maria Theresa Homet, Susanna Wright, Anna Eve Weiser. Here are patriots and soldiers—Lydia Darragh, Margaret Corbin, Molly Pitcher. Here are mothers of famous children—Anne West Gibson, Frances Rose Benêt. Here are early diarists—Elizabeth Drinker, Sarah Eve, Sally Wister. Here are philanthropists—Rebecca Gratz, Helen Fleisher. Here are engravers and painters—Anna C. and Sarah Peale, Emily Sartain, Anna Lea Merritt, Mary Cassatt, Florence Este, Alice Barber Stephens, Jessie Wilcox Smith. Here is Blanche Nevin, sculptor. Here are educators—Agnes and Sophia Irwin, Mother Connelly. Here are physicians who were also pioneers—Ann Preston, Harriet Sartain, Anna E. Broomall. Here is a brilliant woman of business, Rebecca Lukens; here are eloquent advocates of great causes—Lucretia Mott, Sarah Josepha Hale, Anna Dickinson. Here are historians—Deborah Logan of early days, Louise Welles Murray of later.

The volume is good reading; it is also a unique and indispensable work of reference. The reviewer, frequently called upon by young friends to serve as an encyclopedia of Pennsylvania affairs, now with relief places the responsibility for one department of history upon Gertrude D. Biddle and Sarah D. Lowrie, able editors of Notable Women of Pennsylvania.

Gettysburg, Pa.

Elsie Singmaster
Ploughs and Politicks: Charles Read of New Jersey and His Notes on Agriculture, 1715-1774. By Carl Raymond Woodward. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1941. Pp. xxvi, 468. $5.00.)

This volume is divided into two almost equal parts. Part one is chiefly biographical and is itself divided into two parts or phases. The first phase emphasizes Read's personal life and his life as an industrialist and the second his public career. The amazing versatility of the subject of this study is to be seen in the following chapter headings: Customs Collector, Land Speculator, Ironmaster, Secretary, Legislator, Councillor, Colonel, Indian Commissioner, and Jurist. In each of the chapters the author briefly sketches the career of Mr. Read in the respective field. Much of this section of the book follows the thoughts contained in the diary of Aaron Leaming, a contemporary of Read's, who, upon learning of the death of Read, wrote in his diary "an appraisal of Read's character as well as an interpretation of his activities which could not be drawn from any other source."

Although the biographical sketch of Read is interestingly done, the reviewer cannot refrain from expressing the hope that Mr. Woodward may find additional papers sufficient to warrant the preparation of a full-length biography. The chapters here presented are so interesting that a fuller "life" seems highly desirable.

Part two of the volume is based on Read's notes on agriculture which he wrote in his copy of John Worlidge's Systema Agriculturae (London, 1681). The research involved in establishing ownership of the volume and in identifying the author of the notes has resulted in a fascinating story which as told in the foreword is well worth reading. As for the notes themselves, they have been most carefully edited with many annotations. Here may be found source material of unsurpassed value concerning early agricultural history in America, for there are registered not the haphazard jottings of a traveler but the results of experiments carried on by an intelligent American. The notes, rearranged according to subject matter, have been almost completely reproduced. They open new avenues for research into the agricultural history of the colonies, especially New Jersey, and it is likely that they will come to be quoted in subsequent agricultural studies as frequently as American Husbandry has been quoted in the past.

In two appendices the "Sketch of Charles Read" taken from Aaron Leaming's Diary and "The Inventory of the Personal Estate of Charles Read IV" are presented. A very valuable bibliography, a glossary, and an index conclude the volume. Twenty-five illustrations and maps are of great assistance in properly understanding the life and times of Read.

Lebanon Valley College

Frederic K. Miller

The Administration of the American Commissariat During the Revolutionary War. By Victor Leroy Johnson. (Philadelphia, 1941. Pp. vii, 238, $3.00.)

As has been repeatedly stated, soldiers march on their stomachs. The problem of food supplies for an army engaged in war, especially in a war
of movement, is vital. But in the Revolutionary War it loomed into such importance as to threaten the American cause—more than once Washington suggested the possibility of having to disband his starving troops. It is therefore high time that some competent student approached the more undramatic side of the war in presenting a history of the efforts of the Continental Congress and its instrumentalities to establish and maintain an efficient commissariat during the period of hostilities. This Mr. Johnson has succeeded in doing in the volume under review.

The Administration of the American Commissariat in thirteen chapters carries the reader from the beginning of the war with its makeshift expedients up to the organization of the first American commissariat and then describes in great detail how this functioned under given conditions, some of them certainly most discouraging. The chapter entitled "Shadows in the Valley" is of particular interest, dealing as it does with the crisis faced by the commissariat at Valley Forge in 1778, with Washington clothed with power by Congress to impress supplies within a radius of seventy miles of the camp but very reluctant to use this authority. It was during this winter that force was employed against the resentful Pennsylvania farmers, that the doors of locked farms in the valley of the Susquehanna were broken down so that grain and cattle could be collected and processed for the starving troops, who, incidentally, might have fared much better had not the contractors during the Brandywine campaign sold the cattle to the British forces that had been promised to the American.

It was in July 1775 that the son of the Connecticut war governor, Joseph Trumbull, who had previously been supplying the Connecticut forces quite effectively, was appointed the first commissary general of purchases for the Continental army. Trumbull continued in office for a period of two years, after which, much to the regret of Washington, he felt impelled to resign as the result of dissatisfaction with the treatment he had experienced at the hands of Congress. William Buchanan of Baltimore, an honest, well-intentioned person, succeeded Trumbull but proved to be unequal to the great task confronting him and, to the immense relief of Congress, voluntarily gave up the post after he had filled it less than a year. He was followed by Jeremiah Wadsworth, who, like Trumbull, was a Connecticut man. In December 1779 Wadsworth gave way to Ephraim Blaine, a southerner, who carried through to the culmination of the war at Yorktown. It may be noted in passing that not one of the four men, with many avenues opened for dishonest practices, was ever accused by Congress of dishonesty.

In considering the work of the commissary general and his deputies one is apt to think that they could have guaranteed without much difficulty an abundance of good food for the American army. Most of the thirteen colonies in revolt had year after year produced large exportable surpluses—something that was particularly true of Pennsylvania, which in the middle of the eighteenth century could feed a hundred thousand people after meeting the needs of its own population. However, such a variety of difficulties had to be faced, as Mr. Johnson makes clear, that the troops not only at Valley Forge in 1778 but also at other places and during other periods of the war were forced to go on starvation rations. In fact,
it was the cattle driven from New England and the flour brought up from
the Chesapeake Bay region that for some weeks subsisted the perishing
troops at Valley Forge in a land of plenty!

What were these difficulties referred to above? First of all, the steady
depreciation of the currency made even seemingly patriotic farmers fre-
quently most unwilling to part with their grain and cattle in return for
the Continental bills; again, supply depots stocked with food through great
exertion were sometimes raided by the enemy; further, the troops, par-
ticularly in the southern campaigns, were obliged to cover such great
stretches of country that it was impossible for them to draw upon those
supplies intended for them, only too often bogged down with the supply
trains on distant and almost impassable winter roads. In fact, in view of the
almost unbearable conditions facing the troops in some of the campaigns,
it is to the honor of the Continental line that it remained as steadfast as it
did in supporting the cause.

Among other interesting points developed in this study is the work of
Robert Morris, superintendent of finance and head of the Continental
Treasury, in aiding the work of supplying the army with provisions. In-
deed, to him as much as to any one man credit is given for meeting the
problems confronting the commissariat. He used not only his personal
influence, which was very great at the time, but also his private credit to
see that the army was fed during the last years of the war.

While The Administration of the American Commissariat is not a book
intended to intrigue the general reader, it is a solid contribution to institu-
tional history that brings aid to the specialist who is seeking to understand
all the complex factors involved in the waging of the American war for
independence.

Lehigh University

LAWRENCE HENRY GIPSON