Richard Peters could be called a colonial bureaucrat. Among the offices, governmental and otherwise, which he held at various times in his life were Secretary of the Land Office (from 1737 to 1762), Secretary and Clerk of the Provincial Council, member of the Provincial Council, Rector of Christ Church in Philadelphia, and President of the Board of Trustees of the College of Pennsylvania. He served the Penns capably, if obsequiously, and was connected with much of what was going on in Pennsylvania from the 1730's to the 1770's. Although he cannot be credited with being an outstanding leader, he deserves easily the rank of first-class second-rater. This fact, perhaps, is what makes the book significant. It is a biography of Peters, but Peters did not dominate the period in which he lived; therefore, the author—"watching the history of Pennsylvania through the Secretary's office window," as Paul A. W. Wallace expresses it in the foreword—is able to write a pretty thorough history of the colony for some thirty years. Inasmuch as Peters's chief position was Secretary of the Land Office, it is strange that there is not more information on how the Penn land policy was carried out.

One of the virtues of the biography is that the reader sees many episodes through Peters's eyes, including the attempt to survey the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania in 1739; the Indian conference at Lancaster in 1744; the Association of 1747-48; the Albany Congress of 1754; the Braddock expedition of 1755; the Indian conference at Easton in 1758; the Indian conclave at Fort Stanwix in 1768; and many more. In the pages of the work are met numerous well known characters, such as Conrad Weiser, Shickellamy, Provost Smith, Thomas Cresap, Thomas Penn, Benjamin Franklin, Colonel Bouquet, and dozens of others.

In general it is an excellent book and the author is to be commended for a job well done. It has, however, a few annoying characteristics. The dust cover says that "the author's viewpoint is always subjective;" one could wish he had told the story straightforwardly and without any hocus-pocus. In an attempt to explain Peters, Mr. Cummings has permitted himself to write in a condescending style which sometimes sounds rather artificial. Perhaps this device was chosen in order to make the book readable and interesting. But it represents a straining for effect that has no place in a work of this type. For instance, Franklin is usually called "Ben," and the Pennsylvania-Germans are designated as "Dutchmen." At the very least the misnomer,
“Dutchmen,” could have been graced with quote marks. Furthermore, the author likes to tell what Peters was thinking and how his mind was working. How does Mr. Cummings know? Perhaps he does know, because he alone has seen the documents. But direct quotation is not often used, and footnotes are totally lacking; the reader has no way of knowing whether Peters's mental processes worked as described, or whether Mr. Cummings has an active imagination. This reader would favor the latter alternative. In spots the work reads much like fictionalized biography.

These annoyances, however, do not detract from the book's solid and valuable qualities. The scholarship seems to be sound, and the facts of Peters's life are portrayed satisfactorily. The author has done a workmanly job in this respect. The bibliographical note bespeaks the wide research that went into the book.

A word of appreciation is in order for the University of Pennsylvania Press which is placing the historians of the state so much in its debt by publishing Pennsylvania Lives. This is the ninth of the series. May its tribe increase! The fact that the reviewer caught only one typographical error is a tribute to both the author and publisher.

Susquehanna University.

WILLIAM A. RUSSELL, JR.


The person of moderate means, becoming interested in antiques, and desiring to study the subject, is at once faced with a perplexing problem. In the antique shops he discovers a baffling array of mediocre objects with no counterparts in museums or in the pages of authoritative literature designed to instruct and guide the budding antiquarian. He finds that books have been written for the collector of "museum pieces," and that such pieces are far beyond the reach of his budget. Hitherto the modest buyer has had to rely upon the ready information offered by dealers, which, it must be admitted, has been surprisingly accurate for the most part. But what new collector has not longed for a book which he could consult, then to go forth, armed with information about such specific items as "Lehnware" wooden buckets or "Ketterer" coffee pots of unpainted tin?

Such a book is Pennsylvania Dutch Stuff, by Earl F. Robacker. In fact, there is a striking similarity between the pleasant gossip of antique shops and the pages of this readable book. The author, obviously acquainted by direct experience with this most picturesque of all divisions of early Americana, has struck a completely new note by featuring the humble articles so long neglected. The book contains useful and common-sense hints for the beginner, a remarkably complete enumeration and description of available articles, and a good bibliography and list of museums for serious students.

While avowedly a guide to country antiques of the peasant type, it is perhaps unfortunate that such scant attention is given to the earlier and rarer pieces displayed in museums, which also have a peasant flavor. Not so avail-
able today as the more striking painted and decorated pieces of a later period, there are good grounds for believing that walnut furniture of fine craftsmanship and medieval feeling was more widely distributed in early times than the author seems to indicate. One cannot help wishing also that there were more illustrations, with approximate dates of the particular pieces indicated. However, this deficiency is partly offset by an unusual skill in description, and altogether the book is a most useful and thoughtful departure from the ordinary pattern of books on antiques.

Gwynedd Valley, Pa.

G. Edwin Brumbaugh


Peter Markoe's writings, though small in bulk, were important in their relationships with the controversies of that critical period in American history from the end of the Revolution to the ratification of the Constitution. Sister Mary Chrysostom Diebels asserts that "the particular purpose of this study seemed to justify a primary emphasis on the works of Markoe and only a secondary emphasis on his life." However, the reader is likely to feel that so minor a figure as Markoe merits study only if his life sheds light on his times and his contemporaries. For such a study, as the author asserts, certain relevant materials were not available to her at the Library of Congress because of wartime restrictions. However, there are other sources which might have served to render this account of Markoe's life more complete. "Strive to change your haughty sullen mind," was Markoe's advice, in The Times, to Freneau, who, nevertheless, is consistently represented in this study as a friend of Markoe. Apparently there is more to the story. One would like also additional information concerning the relations between Markoe and Joel Barlow, whom he criticized severely; and there are a number of such possibilities which intrigue the imagination.

In her literary appraisal of the work of Peter Markoe, the author is generally satisfactory. In certain cases, however, her investigation has been insufficient. For example, there is still question concerning the authorship of The Algerine Spy (1787), a work which comments upon American government, world politics, and other contemporary affairs. This was ascribed tentatively to Markoe in the second edition of William Allen's American Biographical and Historical Dictionary (1832). Allen's uncertainty has been expressed by all subsequent bibliographers except Lyle Wright in his recent American Fiction 1774-1850. Without giving documentary evidence, Sister Mary Chrysostom asserts that the work was that of Markoe. In discussing The Patriot Chief (1784), she asserts without evidence that in this play the portrayal of the king is a tribute to George Washington and that the allegorical kingdoms of Lydia and Persia are America and England. Markoe's preface makes it clear that he feared the development in America of an aristocracy—represented presumably by the Federalist Party. This is as far as A. H. Quinn, in A History of the American Drama, and previous writers
have gone in explaining the meaning of this allegorical play. If there is evidence for the extension which Sister Mary Chrysostom has made of the allegory, it should be given. Again, in an effort to prove that The Patriot Chief was not perceived to be political allegory in its own day, she makes the assumption that the theater manager, Hallam, with plenty of classical tragedy to choose from, rejected it as the result of prejudice against American playwrights. Had she assumed equally logically that Hallam feared its political repercussions, she would have defeated her own argument.

In spite of a few questions of the sort, the author gives the impression in this book of having conducted an earnest investigation, and her literary criticism is interesting. The comparison of Markoe's play Reconciliation (1790) with the German Erast of Gessner is lucid and convincing. The bibliography is good but would have been more easily used had one listing been made of the items which are divided into "Secondary Sources" and "General Bibliography."

University of Pennsylvania.                                      Thelma M. Smith