
William Penn was a remarkable man in his own period of history, and he stands out as one looks back over the years. Close adviser to one king of England and friend of others who sat upon the throne, he was also associated with the republican, Algernon Sydney, the Whig philosopher, John Locke, and the democratic mystic, George Fox. Powerful advocate of religious toleration, vigorous defender of the natural rights of man, he was privileged to try some of his ideas in the "Holy Experiment" in Pennsylvania.

Penn was a very persuasive man. He could persuade the Crown to give him the freedom of a prisoner, or return him a colony which had been seized during a war emergency. He could convince a jury that he was not guilty as charged and that the entire framework of the Common Law would come tumbling down if he was not acquitted. He could woo and win a much younger woman who had strong doubts about marrying a widower in his fifties. He could pacify a colony which had been wrangling with him for fifteen years, and have it eating out of his hand in a matter of weeks when he was on the scene to put his magnetic personality to work.

Penn also suffered from some weaknesses. Perhaps his greatest failing was his inability to judge his subordinates. Philip Ford duped him outrageously for years before he became aware of what was happening. Two of his choices as Deputy Governor, John Blackwell and John Evans, were utterly unsuited to govern Pennsylvania. On the other hand, he was fortunate in the choice of James Logan as his representative in the province after 1701. He was a dedicated Quaker, gave a great deal of himself to the Society, but he sometimes allowed expediency to interfere with his principles, which weakened his position among Friends. For example, he promised the Crown that Pennsylvania would share in the common defense of the English colonies against the French, in order to regain the province in 1694, despite the fact that Quakers did not believe even in defensive wars. His last biographer before the present one, William Wistar Comfort, wrote: "He was not careful enough in money matters to have served as the treasurer even of a sewing circle." He was a great man despite his failings, his weaknesses are proof of his humanity, and give ordinary mortals who know their own inadequacies hope that they may yet accomplish something worthwhile.

The present biography of William Penn will be useful and enlightening
BOOK REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

It is in no sense a scholarly work, but does show clearly that the author spent a great deal of time and effort upon it. There is a great deal of detail in the book, much of it interesting, some of it repetitious, and it probably describes the day-to-day events in Penn's life in greater detail than any previous biography. For example, sixteen pages are devoted to a very complete report on his second visit to Holland and Germany in 1677. The day by day examination of his activities is sometimes quite revealing.

In addition to describing the important public life of this seventeenth century figure, the author has made an effort to portray Penn the family man, father of fifteen children, the patient suitor in his twenties, and the less patient suitor in his fifties. The fact that Penn had little influence upon his children despite his persuasive personality has never been explained in a satisfactory manner, and the present biographer has not come any closer than her predecessors. The letters which Penn wrote to Hannah Callowhill during their courtship scarcely justify the description found on the dust jacket of the book. "My best love embraces thee, which springs from that fountain of love and life, which time, distance nor disappointments, can ever wear out, nor the floods of many and great waters ever quench." He wrote nearly the same words to the Quakers in Philadelphia. None of Hannah Callowhill's letters from this period are extant.

As the reviewer read the chapters in which Penn's connections with Pennsylvania were discussed, a number of questions were raised. Two of these will be mentioned. On page 335 the author writes of the wealthy Philadelphians who would not lend Penn money in 1694. Philadelphians eventually became wealthy, but they were not wealthy in 1694, a dozen years after the province was founded. Business letters of the period indicate a definite shortage of currency as well as credit in England. The author discovers this fact herself fifty pages later in the Penn-Logan Correspondence. In discussing the Great Law passed in 1682, the author is not aware of the research done on this subject by Marvin W. Schlegel which was published in Volume XI of Pennsylvania History. In fact, she gives no indication that she is aware of this journal which has published a number of important articles related to her topic. While there are no footnotes, sources are noted for at least some of the quotes and factual data on each page in extensive notes at the end of the book. Nearly one hundred items are listed in a selective bibliography of the more important of Penn's writings.

The book will provide a very interesting portrayal of William Penn for the general reader. The author has made Penn come to life, and she leaves the reader with a definite feeling of identification with one of the great men of the seventeenth century. Certainly this new study should be on the shelves of every school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and it will find its way to a great many other shelves as well.

The serious scholar will continue to rely upon the biographies by William...
I. Hull and Edward C. O. Beatty, but there has been a need for a more popular biography and the present work fills that gap admirably.

Temple University

Edwin B. Bronner


This small volume is an excellent study in business history. It is an economic and statistical account of the development of the Wetherill companies of Philadelphia, whose control and management remained in the hands of the Wetherill family from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.

The author, who is Research Associate of the Industrial Research Unit, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, has had long experience in the field of economic history, having collaborated in a number of Industrial Research Studies sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania.

In the late eighteenth century, Samuel Wetherill of Philadelphia, a merchant and importer, established a store in which were sold paint, drugs, and other commodities. During the “Restrictive Period” which preceded and accompanied the War of 1812, Wetherill and a son (Samuel, Jr.) set up their own factory for the manufacture of white lead and paints. The store gradually became a subsidiary enterprise and eventually was sold. During the three following generations of Wetherill entrepreneurship, the lead factory became the principal and finally the exclusive function of the family-controlled companies. In the early years of their industrial development, the Wetherills engaged in a variety of manufacturing activities; but by the late nineteenth century they were “colour men,” specializing in the production of white lead and paints.

Although the Wetherills did not become “Captains of Industry,” they did succeed in conducting a successful business of intermediate or moderate size for five generations. The remarkable thing is that during this entire period, through war and fluctuating peacetime economic conditions, they retained the ownership and most of the managerial functions of their enterprises within their family circle. The Wetherills specialized in products of high quality, conducted a basically honest if shrewd business, and pioneered in technological advances in their field. They were not involved in war profiteering to any considerable degree. Nevertheless, they were not averse to occasional sharp business practices: by secret competitive agreements among their own selling agents they played one agent against another; they held their employees’ wages to a minimum after 1876; and as late as 1882 they discharged employees who went on strike.

Miriam Hussey’s book is based on the business records and letter books of the Wetherill companies, consisting of over eight hundred volumes and ranging in dates from 1762 to 1933. The author emphasizes the nineteenth century activities of the company and terminates most phases of her study.
Miss Hussey has summarized admirably and concisely the history of the Wetherill companies from this complicated and extensive data. She has performed with distinction the difficult and tedious task of preparing statistical tables and summaries, and has drawn careful conclusions. Her immense undertaking was made heavier by the absence of much vital information from the records and by the changing and often unorthodox bookkeeping methods employed by the companies' accountants. These considerations should be borne in mind if some passages in the text appear somewhat complicated (for example, on pages 27, 30-32). She has identified clearly the twelve Wetherills (often with similar names) who appear in the records, and the thirty-six titles used by the companies over the years.

Business history can be written from a variety of approaches. Miriam Hussey's approach is, as one would expect, concerned with the statistical and technical aspects of her story. Her book is intended for the specialist in such areas as economic history, business administration, and statistics. She devotes careful attention to the local, national, and world historical background of her period, but mainly for the purpose of explaining changes in profit and loss, prices, wages and other production costs, sales, technology, etc. Thus her approach can be contrasted with that used in another excellent Philadelphia business history of recent years, Nicholas B. Wainwright's *A Philadelphia Story* (1952), the history of the Hand-in-Hand fire insurance company, which places more emphasis upon the history of the Philadelphia area and less upon the technical aspects of the business.

Since Miss Hussey's work rests primarily on the business records of the Wetherill family, she is quite in order in omitting a bibliography. Her detailed footnotes demonstrate wide research in additional sources and secondary materials. The illustrations in the book consist of reproductions of contemporary prints showing mainly the companies' physical properties and samples of their advertising matter. They add authentic bits of local color to the narrative.

*West Virginia University*

WILLIAM D. BARNES


Jacob Weiss (1750-1839) lived in Northampton and Lehigh counties and during his service as supply officer with the Revolutionary Army wrote from eight different camps some 250 letters which date from June, 1778, to December, 1781.

The Weiss letters were produced during two distinct periods of service.
From 1778 to September, 1780, he traveled with the Continental Army as a civilian deputy to General Nathanael Greene. At this time it was his business to requisition such diverse items as canteens, wagons and harness, ink powder, camp kettles, and for some unexplained use, hundredweights of chalk. Apparently he procured every sort of item except munitions, food and clothing. His assignments were often troublesome. "'Tis enough to puzzle a Priest," he writes at one point, "to know what an Army is constantly wanting."

The current tribulations of the common soldier are vividly reflected in Weiss's comment regarding a certain lot of army shoes: "The Soals are made of Green Leather & such as are obliged to wear them have their feet constantly wet, and consequently their Lives are thereby Endangered. The Sewing of the Shoes are [sic] so very Wretched, that they Rip in the course of three or four Days wear."

From September, 1780, on to the end of the War, Weiss served in Pennsylvania, being stationed at Easton as an assistant to Colonel Samuel Miles, Deputy Quartermaster General for the Commonwealth. During this period Weiss's correspondence was limited to the transportation of supplies and the billeting of half-starved army horses. His letters end in December, 1781.

The Letter Book is well edited and throws light on a subject too much neglected. Its preface is by Dr. Victor L. Johnson, a scholar whose own valuable study of the Revolutionary system of army supply is now unhappily out of print. The editor's introduction contains a useful biographical sketch of Jacob Weiss, who was obviously a man of parts, both with the army and later as an entrepreneur. The latter part of the text may especially interest the specialist because of its administrative relationship to a 1781-1782 volume now at the Library of Congress, an unpublished letter-book produced by Samuel Miles, Weiss's superior.

Such of the publication as is devoted to reporting the business of the Lehigh County Historical Society, pages 137 to 156, is less successful. It would seem that this chaotic series of lists should have been organized and enlarged or, as an alternative, should have been omitted. The schedule of library accessions is deficient in bibliographic detail, and there is included no statement of finances.

*Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission*

HENRY J. YOUNG


To the mind of the average American there is one battle of the American Civil War, and probably of our entire history, that stands out above all others—Gettysburg. Over the years there has grown a vast literature on the campaign. Probably more Americans visit the battlefield itself than any other and there obtain their first taste of military history. Out of all the welter of books, pamphlets, and articles arises the fact that there still remains work to be done on Gettysburg in two general categories.
First, there should be a lengthy, scholarly, detailed, yet lively study of the campaign from all possible facets, as was done for Chancellorsville by John Bigelow, Jr. The other book is much more easily obtained. It has already been attempted in some form several times. That, of course, is the readable, general account of the campaign and battle for the average history-minded individual, and for the thousands who have and will visit the battlefield. A guidebook to understanding a battle is almost essential; some, quite successful, have been written for Gettysburg. So, when this reviewer first heard of Mr. Stackpole's *They Met at Gettysburg* he asked the question—why another general history? It seemed there was nothing left to relate unless one went very deeply into it.

These doubts were in large part erased by the book itself. There still is a feeling that this is a guidebook with nothing really new—no new interpretation, no new diaries or letters, and, in fact, it does not even make use of some of the literature available. However, evaluating the volume in total aspect, the reviewer unhesitatingly recommends it to the questioning novice who asks, "What should I read about Gettysburg?"

For the hobbyist or the student there is little or nothing new although the book provides a worthy refresher course. But in accomplishing the admirable aim of a first-rate guidebook there are things omitted which would have increased its present value. For instance, there are relatively few eyewitness accounts, especially of privates, and little recourse to regimental or personal histories. There is a dismally brief bibliography of only twenty-four titles, one or two of which are dubious. But perhaps this is meant as only a partial bibliography, which it must certainly be. No one wants to load a book down with reader-killing annotations, but even the general reader deserves access to other material. The book is quite well illustrated, mainly with familiar drawings. The maps are not what would be expected. Some of them are very hard indeed to read.

Mr. Stackpole, who is to be congratulated for his many worthy publishing ventures in military history, is to be further credited with excellent overall accuracy in *They Met at Gettysburg*. Personally acquainted with the ground, he has obtained the help of some of the best authorities on the battle, and the results are gratifying. The style of the book is readable; it moves along with a smooth and easy pace. More first names and biographical background of leading characters could clear up some questions the uninitiated cannot answer for himself. The art of writing military history simply and readably is a difficult one, but to a large extent Mr. Stackpole has achieved it.

The author very wisely sets the stage with the invasion of the North by the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia early in the summer of 1863. He is aware of its overconfidence, its mistakes, the lack of secrecy, the bad logistics. There is a good, objective analysis of Stuart's ride around the Union Army, along with a discussion of Lee's failure to make full use of his cavalry.

Moving into the battle itself, the author not only makes the action clear
but sets forth the several major controversies such as those over action, or lack of action, by Lee, Longstreet, Ewell, Meade, Sickles and others. Of the famous difficulties involving Longstreet and Lee he says the two Confederates were "far apart in their military thinking," but he does not exonerate either man. He points out that Lee could have won between 3 p.m. July 1 and 3 p.m. July 2, "had Longstreet, Ewell and Hill reacted individually and unitedly as a team in response to Lee's wishes and in accordance with his plans." Mr. Stackpole shows that the principles of war are the same in this atomic age as they were in the '60's. His policy of indicating corps sometimes by numbers and sometimes by the commander may muddle the less discerning reader.

Presented here is the battle from the early movements to the lost Federal opportunities during Lee's retreat. With that story is a clear, usually impartial dissection and evaluation of the many problems, criticisms and reriminations that arose after Gettysburg. For, if Americans never look at another battlefield or read another book on the Civil War, this retelling of the "massive slugging match between heavyweights" will add considerably to their appreciation of their nation and, we hope, will lead them on to further reading, enjoyment and understanding.

Oak Park, Ill.

E. B. Long


In mid-December, 1776, Washington resolved, according to the historian Bancroft, "to attempt a stroke upon the forces of the enemy, who lay a good deal scattered, and to all appearances in a state of security," as soon as he could be joined by the troops of Lee. After gathering the exact accounts of New Jersey and its best military positions, Washington ordered all boats to be seized far up all the little streams that flowed into the Delaware, and strengthening his forces he waited for the opportune moment to launch an attack on Trenton. The final decision to march against Trenton was made in the Thompson-Neely House, headquarters for Lord Stirling, at present Washington Crossing Park, Pennsylvania, where the Commander-in-Chief met with Generals Stirling, Mercer, Sullivan, and Greene. Thus the Thompson-Neely House "had become forever—A House of Decision."

Mrs. Hutton, using the Thompson-Neely House as a focal point, writes entertainingly about colonial life in the late seventeenth as well as the eighteenth century. She introduces us to John Pidcock, the original owner of the rude cabin from which developed the "House of Decision," and leads the reader through the haze of litigation and trouble surrounding that unfortunate man, his heirs, and successors, until the property came into the hands of Robert Thompson on April 10, 1761. By tracing the ownership and development of this property, the author is able to describe and comment on such things as the want of good roads in colonial Pennsylvania, the abundance of wild life, the variety of hardwoods in the forests, the friendliness of the Lenni-Lenapes, the Swedish influence on log huts, the house-
hold furnishings of the day, the mode of dress, the intricacies of colonial
currency, medicinal practices, and anecdotes and legends surrounding some
of the inhabitants of the country in the vicinity of Bowman's Hill, including
a document dated May 31, 1723, “possibly the oldest American mining lease.”

Lord Stirling, to whom Washington entrusted the task of protecting the
west bank of the Delaware, chose the Thompson-Neely house—“the best
one along the Delaware between the Yardley ferry and Coryell’s”—as his
headquarters. In describing General Lord Stirling and others who visited
him at his headquarters in those fateful days of 1776, Mrs. Hutton shows
her skill in making history come to life. Her vignettes of those who
gathered at the “House of Decision” are clear and sympathetic. One admires
the daring and dependable Lord Stirling; the patient but determined and
humane Washington; the brave and impetuous young officers, William
Washington and James Monroe. Other notables are brought into the pic-
ture, among whom are John Fitch, Drs. John Warren and William Shippen,
Jr., the Dickincsons, Generals Mercer and Cadwallader, Alexander Hamil-
ton, John Marshall, James Alexander, Tom Paine, and on the side of the
opposition, the English commander, Grant, and the commanding officer
of the Hessians at Trenton, Rall.

The book is illustrated with six excellent pen drawings by Henry T.
MacNeill. The format is good, but there is no index. There is an introduc-
tion by Colonel Cumming, curator of the Bucks County Historical Society.
and a six-page acknowledgment by the author in which she gives credit
to many individuals and organizations which helped to restore the Thompson-
Neely House. There is also a brief, uncritical bibliography.

The book is obviously a work of love, but at times the author takes
liberties with the subject matter, which mars the complete accuracy of the
book. Too often she uses such words and phrases as “probably,” “perhaps,”
supposedly,” “undoubtedly,” “may well have,” “possibly,” “it is entirely
logical that,” “which may have”—all which create a doubt in the mind of
the reader as to the authenticity of the statements or claims. In order to
show Washington’s compassion for his men, the author describes a ground
floor room in the Thompson-Neely House where the sick and wounded were
nursed, and has this comment about the General’s encounter with the sick
and dying Captain James Moore: “Washington probably said quietly,
‘General Stirling and I feel that you should be taken upstairs to his room.
I would have a few words with you in private’” (p. 133). There is a grist
mill near the “House of Decision” and she writes, “Washington undoubtedly
took a special interest in this process because he was an experienced miller
himself. He no doubt discussed with them the ways by which they could
stretch the flour by mixing the “seconds” with the superfine to make a
palatable bread for his troops” (p. 116). This is interesting but extraneous
material and seems to have been incorporated as a bit of propaganda to
have the old mill restored to working order. Moreover it is stretching the
point a bit, too, when she introduces alleged discussions (like college “bull
sessions,” she writes) between the principals at “Decision House” and then
adds (p. 109) : "Who knows but that the intense discussion which must have
taken place here, kindled in Monroe the belief which led to his famous
Monroe Doctrine, the doctrine that was to influence American foreign policy
right up to the present day?" The Monroe Doctrine was a policy
stated forty-seven years later and was largely formulated by John Quincy
Adams. The author has projected an interesting bit of speculation but it
is not good history.

Wilson Boro Area Joint High School
Easton, Pennsylvania

Richard I. Shelling

History of American Technology. By John W. Oliver. (New York, The

This long-awaited volume on American technology is a general and
comprehensive survey of an important and broad field of knowledge. It
begins with the first artisans and their European tools in a few of the
earliest British settlements in America and ends with brief discussions of
atomic power and the significance of automation. The major theme of the
work centers in the advances achieved by Americans in developing "tools
and techniques, inventions and devices to provide themselves with food,
clothing, shelter, transportation and communication in abundance never
before seen on the earth."

Professor Oliver's treatment of technology is a broad one and the objectives of his study go beyond the usual concept of technology as the systematic
knowledge of applied science in agriculture, industry, mining, transportation
and power production. The book, especially the first half, therefore, includes
information on many subjects that do not ordinarily come within the scope
of technology and touches on such topics as Captain Kidd and other pirates
of the colonial period, the rise of the postal system in British America,
medical contributions of some early American physicians and the work of
David Rittenhouse in astronomy, which led to the "observation of the solar
and lunar eclipse, the transit of Mercury and Uranus, and to the discovery
of a comet in 1793" in addition to other aspects of his scientific endeavors.
This procedure is in keeping with the author's broad objectives. The last
half of the book is more in accord with the usual definition of technology.

The scientific background is well treated and many organizations, from
the American Philosophical Society to the American Association for the
Advancement of Science, are described, while a number of scientific pe-
riodicals are quoted or mentioned. However, little space has been given
to the relationships between science and invention which have resulted in
social change. On the other hand, examples are given of the effects of in-
vention upon society, as for instance, a few of the results of air conditioning
upon society and the changes brought about in the steel industry by the
adaptation of the Thomas-Gilchrist process in using iron ores with a high
phosphorous content. One would wish that Professor Oliver had carried
his analyses of such aspects of invention much further, such as the stimula-
tion, brought about by air conditioning, on the growth of factories in the
warmer parts of the United States, and the influence of war planes and projectiles on international relations. Such a treatment no doubt, would have made a large book much larger and perhaps would have led to a multi-volume set, such as "The History of Science" which is in progress in England at the present time.

Little attention has been given to some aspects of the subject of technology. There is no discussion of the development of machinery made of wood, as in the gristmills and sawmills of the eighteenth century, nor is mention made of the advances in wooden machinery in textile and other industries during the first part of the nineteenth century when American firms became noted in this field. The many inventions, such as various types of wooden gears, helped to prepare the way for iron and steel machinery in which Americans were to exhibit so great a proficiency. A chapter on "American Technology Goes Abroad" chiefly treats American triumphs—particularly agricultural, such as the McCormick reaper—in European expositions in the decade after 1850. The contributions of European immigrants and technology to American development are given brief notice in spite of the fact that many important changes had their beginnings in ideas imported from foreign countries.

In a pioneer work of this type, which treats the general history of American technology, it is perhaps inevitable that some errors should creep in. Generalities and inaccuracy of detail are usually responsible for these. For example, fulling shops or mills—where cloth was fulled—go back to the earliest colonial days and were not an innovation of the Industrial Revolution; but more serious are some of the statements about military and naval technological advances of the Civil War. Serious students of technology will bemoan the lack of a bibliography in so important a work. There is occasional documentation and a brief list of references is placed at the end of each chapter. A carefully selected bibliography would have been of great value.

The volume is written in a simple, concise and readable style. One feels the enthusiasm and fervor of the author for his work in his presentation of the many topics discussed. He does not disguise his zeal for the belief that "Yankee ingenuity" has been responsible for the changes that have taken place in the period from the crude life of wilderness days to the American way of life today. He concludes that in spite of its long history, American technology is still in its infancy and that recent developments are merely indications of what is to come in the future. The book is a contribution to American history.

University of Pennsylvania

ARTHUR C. BING


The exploits of many obscure individuals who widened the bounds of United States enterprise and trade, accumulated information, and disseminated the blessings of democracy and freedom in remote parts of the
world, deserve illumination. These men were the advance agents, the path-
markers, the progenitors of the American mission, in the Caribbean, the
Pacific, and in Latin America for statesmen of later generations who ex-
tended United States responsibility to these areas.

In this interesting, readable little book Professor Nichols has chosen to
review the activities of merchants who tried to establish trade contacts
along the Spanish Main in the 1770's and 1780's; the first United States
consuls in Spanish Cuba; Richard Cleveland, trader to Spanish America;
William Shaler, merchant, propagandist, diplomat, and scholar; the pros-
pectors for guano on Caribbean and Pacific islands; and the officials of
the United States Division of Territories and Island Possessions who estab-
lished stopping-places for commercial airliners in the Pacific.

Attention appropriately has been centered upon William Shaler and the
guano prospectors—eight of the eleven chapters in the book deal with their
remarkable exploits. Shaler was a trader and a diplomatic agent who sought
"advantages for the new republic and spread the gospel of its newly forged
liberties" in Spanish America and in the African Barbary state of Algiers.
He visited the Spanish colonies first in 1802, with Richard Cleveland, when
they took a cargo to Valparaiso, Chile. The ostensible purpose of this
voyage was trade, but, as Dr. Nichols emphasizes, "they had a mission as
well, a mission to scatter a few seeds of liberty." Shaler carried with him
copies of the Declaration of Independence in Spanish, as well as samples
of American federal and state constitutions.

Spanish officials refused to allow the Americans to sell their cargo, but
this did not inhibit them from becoming acquainted with discontented
Creoles, to whom Shaler presented his documents and explained his ideas
of "rational liberty." Following his discussions of rights and the potential
profits of free trade, "almost, the star of liberty seemed gleaming in the
Chilean heavens." Later, as a diplomat, he did not enjoy the same success
when he attempted to induce dissatisfied planters in Cuba to rebel, and tried
to aid the republican cause in the revolution in Mexico.

As peace commissioner and consul in Algiers, William Shaler's contribu-
tion to his country's interests were far more substantial. With Captain
Stephen Decatur, he was able to conclude a treaty with the rascally Dey
in 1815, freeing his country from paying obnoxious tributes for protection
of American merchantmen in the Mediterranean. When the Dey refused to
ratify, the consul, with fortuitous assistance from the Royal Navy and a
United States squadron, concluded a lasting treaty with the Algerines.

But Shaler's activities in Algiers were not confined exclusively to diplo-
macy. During the thirteen years he spent there he pioneered in studies of
Berber languages for the American Philosophical Society, and prepared a
book entitled Sketches of Algiers, in which he advanced the idea that
Christians should wipe out the pirates. The French, whom he attempted to
influence, accomplished this task in 1830.

While William Shaler sowed seeds of liberty in South America and
improved United States-Algerine relations, the guano prospectors marked
the paths for imperialists in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific. These advance agents searched dreary, desolate atolls and islets for bird deposits (guano) in response to demand for this fertilizer in the upper South. Their most influential financial backer and leader was an indefatigable New York merchant, Alfred G. Benson, who organized the American Guano Company in 1855.

To make a fortune digging guano, Benson and his associates realized government backing for their projects was indispensable. Consequently, they directed a part of their energies to lobbying, and in May 1856 Congress passed a law providing that guano interests could protect their discoveries by registering them with the government. If no other nation claimed the islands in question, they would become a part of the United States as long as the supply of guano lasted.

The Benson interests took immediate steps to make use of the law in the Pacific, but before they were able to file their discoveries with the State Department, one of their competitors put in a claim for Navassa, an islet "shaped like an oyster shell, . . . and so filled with holes as to have the appearance of a petrified sponge." It was in the Caribbean about thirty miles west of Haiti. When the prospectors proved that this island was not under Haitian jurisdiction, its occupation by the United States was proclaimed. "In this humble fashion, the American nation took its first step into the path of imperialism." Navassa "was the first noncontiguous territory to be announced formally as attached to the republic."

The objectives of the Pacific operators were dots on the map—Phoenix, Baker, Howland, Canton, and Enderbury Islands of the Phoenix Group north of Samoa, as well as Christmas and Jarvis lying several degrees to the east. Not only the American Guano Company, but the Pacific, Phoenix, and United States Guano Companies entered claims. So intense was the rivalry that the United States Guano Company, another Benson enterprise, claimed forty-two islands or groups, some of which did not exist. "It was suspected that these guano promoters . . . had taken old charts and listed as many islands as they could imagine were possessed of guano and thus attempted to monopolize any possible wealth."

But, alas, Benson's well-laid plans to control all the guano in the Pacific were not consummated. During and after the Civil War, British and Australian guano firms made serious inroads into his empire and the United States government showed little interest. Samoa occupied the imperialists, and nitrates were more desired as fertilizer than bird deposits.

Ultimately, the United States found uses for these guano atolls. Defense and commerce combined to renew interest and claims. During the 1930's the Navy Department used some as bases, while the Department of Commerce employed others as air service stations for Pan-American Clippers. Their names became part of the American vocabulary during World War II. Today, some of them are outposts in the far-flung United States defense system.

Professor Nichols has recounted the exploits of these intrepid Americans
in a vivid, straightforward manner. Yet the book lacks a major theme, owing perhaps to the fact that it is comprised largely of articles written earlier by the author. But this is said not to detract from a thoroughly valuable volume. By bringing together his earlier studies in book form, the author has rescued some advance agents of American destiny from an obscurity they did not deserve.

University of Pittsburgh

PHILIP I. MITTERLING


Here is a wandering excursion into the social history of a city. The reviewer has the distinct feeling he has passed this way before, led by the experienced hand of Leland Baldwin in his entertaining and popular history of Pittsburgh published twenty years ago.

Laura C. Frey contributes the woman's touch to the story of a city and persistently compares the growth of this important industrial and commercial metropolis with female development. In 1775 "Pittsburgh shed her pinafore for a young girl's dress." A few years later the city entered her "teen age." By the time of the Whiskey Rebellion "Pittsburgh was fast approaching womanhood," and was being "wooed" by young manufacturers. "Before the turn of the nineteenth century suddenly Pittsburgh announced her engagement! She was to be a great manufacturer's mate. . . ." At this point the reader inadvertently murmurs his congratulations, turns ten pages and discovers that the city has "skipped into the nineteenth century with all the earmarks of a young bride. . . ." At the close of the Civil War "Pittsburgh had become a woman of many talents," and one is at last relieved to discover in the final chapter that the sprawling hill city "had become a lady of note."

Miss Frey's style is verbally ornate, at times reminiscent of the style of the journals and editorials of the middle period from which she must have gained some of her material. This is impossible to substantiate, however, because the book contains no footnotes or bibliography of any kind.

The chapters are short, some only two or three pages. There is little continuity. Social habits or events which strike the author's fancy have been sketched. Throughout the book there is a strong evidence of Miss Frey's love, an admitted nostalgia, for the past of her native city. Possibly the best chapter deals with the glass industry. Another creditable section describes the medical facilities of Pittsburgh from the founding of the first hospital to 1914.

The Land in the Fork is not a book for historians or students of history. It provides rapid reading for those who have a mild curiosity and would have a glimpse into Pittsburgh's past.

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