

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITED BY MICHAEL P. WEBER

William Penn. By Harry Emerson Wildes. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974. Pp. ix, 469. \$14.95.)

William Penn is probably the least known of all the colonial proprietors. Both in his own time and since his death he has often seemed a mysterious as well as a paradoxical person. It has been two decades since we have had a major biography of this man, and during the intervening years there has been a considerable body of research and writing that deals with one or another of the many facets of Penn's life and times. It is, indeed, time for a new and full-length appraisal. The publishers claim that the present work "renders obsolete all other existing biographies . . . [and provides] a human and revealing portrait of a man hitherto almost hidden by myth."

Dr. Wildes opens his volume with an intriguing introduction entitled "Man of Paradox." To the present reviewer, this was the most exciting chapter in the book. The author then approaches Penn's long life in a chronological fashion. Twenty chapters cover his life up to the time of his first arrival in Pennsylvania. His leadership role in the colony is discussed at length. Wildes then turns his attention to Penn's return to England and his role as a man of both political and religious stature, often analyzed in a well-balanced and critical fashion. His second trip to the New World receives extensive treatment, followed by seven chapters that deal with his final return to England, his debilitating shock in 1712, and the pathetic last years.

The author succeeds in developing the personality as well as the mind and activity of William Penn. A man of numerous contradictions, he is often made to seem less admirable and less wise than he really was. The author avoids such pitfalls, and the reader will close the book with a feeling of understanding and conviction. While a long book, it reads rather well and it should prove popular with interested and intelligent laymen.

The author has provided a detailed index and nine appendices. These latter vary in significance. For example, one deals with the previous biographies that have been written about William Penn and has both interest and merit. Another deals with "The Grave of William Penn" and leaves this reviewer very cold. There is also fairly extensive documentation: thirty-six pages of notes, arranged by chapter.

Unfortunately there are negative aspects. Most serious is the neglect on the part of the author to incorporate and note much of the fairly recent research into isolated aspects of Penn's life and career. While the general reader may well find this an entertaining and rewarding book, the scholar is likely to be both annoyed and disturbed by the author's documentation and by numerous, if perhaps minor, factual errors and inconsistencies. The publisher must share the blame for careless proofreading.

In summary, this is an interesting biography of a significant and paradoxical figure, one of the more neglected persons of the colonial period. The delineation of the man's personal life and the analysis of his personality deserve commendation. It certainly is not the definitive life of Penn, and the publisher in claiming that it renders obsolete all other existing biographies is making an absurd statement. The cause of scholarship and the pursuit of truth are not advanced by such statements.

State University College at Cortland

RALPH ADAMS BROWN

Colonial Delaware. By Gardell Dano Christensen and Eugenia Burney. (New York: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1974. Pp. 160. \$5.95.)

The authors of this history of Delaware designed their book primarily for a juvenile and general reading public. They included for example at the end of the text a short tour guide to Delaware. This guide gives a breakdown by towns of the various historical sites to see.

The main part of the book is simply written and contains many illustrations to depict the early history of Delaware. The authors included in their discussion chapters dealing with the early Indians, the Swedish, Dutch, and finally the English involvement. The strongest parts of the book are concerned with the early Swedish and Dutch settlement. Here the book is interesting and contains an enjoyable commentary on the attempts by these two nations to colonize what is now Delaware.

When the authors reached the period of the proprietorship, they have a hard time separating the history of Delaware from Pennsylvania. Through the eighteenth-century part of the history to the revolutionary period the authors devote considerable time to discussing the cultural and economic development of the colony. Various aspects of the new industrial development including tanning, milling, and papermaking are also developed. Short discussions on the culture of Delaware also make the book valuable as a quick reference.

The remaining chapters of the book are devoted to the coming of the Revolution and the war itself. Here the chapters are spiced up with bright little stories about various heroes of Delaware. There is a very short discussion of the internal strife in the state during the Revolution.

When the authors become involved in the development of Delaware, the reader is left with a very simple, straight-forward study with little interpretation of events. Because of the many anecdotic stories that the authors include, one is also left with an unbalanced feeling about the history of Delaware. Two pages are devoted to the romance of Mary Vining and Anthony Wayne and less than one page to Delaware in the confederation period. This unbalancing of the history which is reflected through much of this book leaves the reader with a collection of interesting short tales and a lack of an over-all interpretation of the history of Delaware.

Even though it is a study primarily designed for younger readers, they should have the best that can be written in history. History is fascinating, history can be literary, and history designed for younger readers should be both. Somehow a sentence like "Things rocked along until 1701" (p. 70) does not leave a particularly good example of writing to the readership.

Authors writing for this market should be careful to create an image of the past that can motivate younger readers. Somehow this factual, short study of Delaware does not quite come over as this stimulating.

University of Georgia

JAMES ANDERSON

The Politics of Diversity: Essays in the History of Colonial New York. By Milton M. Klein. (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1974. Pp. xi, 220. \$10.95.)

Politics of Diversity provides an opportunity to renew one's acquaintance with Milton Klein's provocative insights into the history of eighteenth-century New York. Published between 1958 and 1972, the nine essays collected in this volume demonstrate the characteristics that have made Klein's work such rewarding reading: thoughtful conceptualization, extensive research, a flair for the well-turned phrase, a belief that New York politicians and penmen clashed not simply over personal and family interests but over important political, intellectual, and economic issues, and a conviction that the history of the middle colonies and of New York in particular is rich in content and suggests more about the kind of society that America was becoming than does the history of New England or the colonial South. Klein has organized his essays into four main groups and an epilogue. He has provided a brief introduction to each section as well as a general introduction to the volume. In addition he has made some minor changes in the original texts of the essays and has updated the footnotes to include references to recent works.

In perusing Klein's essays as a whole, one sees how sustained has been his attack on Progressive historiography and how much he has contributed to a new view of eighteenth-century New York politics and culture that can be characterized, at least partially, as neo-Whig. In the two essays that compose Part I (The Politics of Aristocracy and Democracy), Klein describes a political process in which New York politicians formed alliances and fought one another over genuine issues and employed "much of the paraphernalia of the modern political process"—pamphleteering, speechmaking, the rounding up of voters—to enlist the support of a widely enfranchised citizenry. Gone are Carl Becker's aristocrats, who pranced about the New York political stage at will, forming factions based on personal ties and operating with little concern for a citizenry that was stilled by disenfranchisement or by economic dependency on the elite.

In Part II (Culture and Politics), Klein explores the "bold assertions of civil and religious liberty" enunciated by William Livingston and his associates in the *Independent Reflector*. Where Progressive historians often discounted statements of principle as abstractions which served to cloak real motives, Klein uses Whiggish rhetoric to unlock the meaning of events. Livingston launched a journalistic attack on Anglican plans to control King's College for the very reasons that he said he did: to protect the civil and religious rights of New Yorkers against Anglican encroachments. And Livingston imaginatively proposed instead a "liberal system of higher education"—nondenominational and publicly controlled—that would suit New York's religious diversity. Gone is the Livingston depicted by Beverly

McAnear in the 1930s, a Livingston who used the *Independent Reflector* largely as a device to gain public support for the Livingston party.

As for the American Revolution in New York, Klein notes in Part III (Law and Politics) that we have come "full circle back to the view that the conflict between England and her American colonies was primarily political and constitutional." Thus Klein deftly examines how the climate of opinion which the Sons of Liberty turned to ready advantage in the Stamp Act crisis was shaped by two judicial controversies which preceded it: the first over whether judges should sit for life or at the Crown's pleasure and the second concerning whether the governor in council could review the substance of jury verdicts.

Viewing Klein's essays in this light hardly conveys the full extent of his contribution to the rewriting of New York's colonial history, but it does provide one way to think not only about the historiographical significance of his work but also about its limitations. One can raise of Klein's essays the same questions that Gordon Wood and other historians have asked of neo-Whig history in general. For example, in reasserting the importance of principles and of the rhetoric through which they were expressed, does Klein rely on them too heavily to explain events, and does he tend to see those groups who were the objects of rhetorical attack through the eyes of its authors? The latter would appear to be an issue in Klein's discussion of the King's College Controversy, where the Anglicans whom Livingston assailed are depicted by Klein much as Livingston perceived them, as schemers. As for the popular appeal of the principles propounded by Livingston and his associates in the King's College Controversy and in the contests over judicial tenure and jury trials, the explanation undoubtedly lies partly in the objective message of the rhetoric itself, as Klein suggests. But what were the social and psychological factors that made some New Yorkers so responsive to the message? The answer is not particularly clear, in part because so much basic research remains to be done in the demographic, social, religious, and economic history of eighteenth-century New York.

Historians of Pennsylvania may well find Klein's most instructive essay in Part IV (The New York Tradition), for in it he offers a "frame of reference into which to fit the variegated pattern of the Middle Colonies' economic, social, and political development." The homogeneous communities of New England and the South may appeal to those searching for an Arcadian past, writes Klein, but it was colonies like New York, characterized by a "disordered, complex, heterogeneous population," which represented, "in germinal form," the nation that emerged in the nineteenth century. In Pennsylvania and New Jersey, too, a "mixed economy, social diversity, political contentiousness, and pragmatic culture" made them prototypical of the latter United States. For historians of the middle colonies this could prove an extremely useful perspective, but the determination of its truth awaits careful comparative analysis and more thorough research on the middle colonies than has yet been done. This, of course, is just what Klein is trying to stimulate, and one hopes that it will be pursued with the skill that Klein has brought to his investigations of New York politics and culture.

Debtors and Creditors in America: Insolvency, Imprisonment for Debt, and Bankruptcy, 1607-1900. By Peter J. Coleman. (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1974. Pp. xiii, 303. \$17.50.)

Debtor-creditor relations have been a central theme in American history since the initial plantings at Jamestown and today the nation's economic well-being, as well as that of nearly every citizen, depends heavily on credit. For these reasons the subjects of Peter J. Coleman's book—insolvency, imprisonment for debt, and bankruptcy—ordinarily would be of more than passing interest to both general readers and professional historians. Unfortunately the geographic and chronological limits that he sets for his study greatly reduce its appeal to the nonspecialist. Coleman has restricted his study to the original thirteen seaboard states and Vermont and ends in 1898 when Congress enacted a satisfactory federal bankruptcy law.

The main strength of Coleman's book lies in its last two chapters which deal with the rise and fall of imprisonment for debt in America and the evolution of bankruptcy. Although these chapters purport to rest upon the detailed findings of the preceding chapters, I found little necessary connection. Many of Coleman's more challenging ideas in the final chapters lack documentation and cry out for substantiation, but it is not to be found in the preceding chapters. Rather Coleman relies on logic and inference instead of fact to support many of his ideas. Even the interesting statistics about imprisonment for debt on page 254, which are not documented, do not appear to be drawn from the earlier chapters.

Coleman observes that although the British colonies in North America began with a strong bias in favor of debtors, by the end of the seventeenth century the colonies reversed their position and enacted such procreditor measures as imprisonment for debt. From the beginning, locking up debtors served no useful purpose beyond assuaging that era's sense of morality and justice which required that something be done about persons who did not pay their debts. Unfortunately the system made no distinction between dishonest debtors who concealed assets to escape their obligations and honest debtors who simply lacked the means to satisfy their debts. All were treated as criminals. In the end, imprisonment led few of the dishonest to disclose their hidden wealth and honest debtors, so long as they were confined, could not earn money needed to pay their debts. The system also worked hardships on the community. In an era when labor was in short supply, imprisonment for debt diminished the number of available workmen. Moreover, prisoners had to be fed, clothed, and otherwise provided for, and their dependent families were often thrown on relief.

As might be expected, no sooner did states adopt imprisonment for debt than amendments were introduced to modify it. Some colonies (later states) allowed debtors to substitute indentured servitude for imprisonment. Others gave prisoners "liberty of the jailyard" (sometimes stretched all the way to the county line) and permitted them to carry on their usual occupations. Most states eventually required creditors to pay the lodging of the debtors they wanted kept in jail, while others adopted a provision that debtors who took an oath of poverty could be released from custody.

Early in the national period reformers began pressing for abolition of

debtors' prisons as cruel and inhumane institutions. Coleman says the reformer's propaganda exaggerated the evils of the system. Yet what positive views can one entertain toward a system in which—again according to Coleman—60 percent of those imprisoned during the post-Revolutionary era owed less than ten dollars? A systematic statistical study to determine how many persons were imprisoned, for how long, and under what conditions would have been more helpful than any number of assertions on the degree to which imprisonment for debt was human or inhumane.

Space does not permit similar treatment of Coleman's excellent chapter on bankruptcy. It too is thoughtful, informative, and provocative. Coleman's interpretive views seem reasonable enough, but again substantiating evidence is thin. One can only regret that he devoted only 47 of the book's 293 pages to these chapters.

The balance of *Debtors and Creditors* is disappointing. It begins with an overview which sketches out the main lines of development in the fields of bankruptcy and related problems in the colonies, and at the national and state levels between independence and 1898. A discussion of the philosophical dimensions of these problems, which an overview would seem to call for, is not provided.

The body of Coleman's book consists of fourteen chapters—one devoted to each of the states under study. In each he takes up in strict chronological order the laws and court proceedings related to imprisonment for debt and to bankruptcy and/or debtor relief from the founding of the state in the colonial era to the close of the nineteenth century. By the time the reader has reached perhaps the third state, a sense of *déjà vu* begins to take over and even the liveliest quotations from legislative debates and judicial rulings seem to be paraphrases of one another. Yet in spite of the repetitiveness, the enormous number of variations from state to state, year by year, leaves one with no sense of over-all development or general trends. If Coleman had assembled his data on one large chart with parallel columns for each of the states, the reader might discover interrelationships that are not obvious from the narrative account. Having devoted his research only to *what* happened, Coleman, in answering questions of *why* it happened, finds it necessary to resort to maybes, might-have-beens, and must-have-beens.

The chapter on Pennsylvania begins: "Viewed from the perspective of the twentieth century and against the record of other northeastern states, Pennsylvania never became a leading innovator in debtor-creditor relations." Those wishing to trace in detail the cautious conservatism, even timidity with which the commonwealth dealt with these problems are invited to do so in Chapter Eleven.

The Pennsylvania State University

GERALD G. EGGERT

Ethnic Alienation, the Italian Americans. By Patrick J. Gallo. (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1974. Pp. 254. \$10.00.)

The recent interest in American ethnic groups has stirred a number of controversies. Among the major questions being debated by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists is the process of adaptation to modern, urban American society by various cultural groups.

In this volume on Italian-Americans, Patrick Gallo claims his goal is to measure the extent American politics neutralized or sharpened an ethnic group's sense of exclusion from American values and institutions. By conducting in depth interviews with fifteen Italian-Americans, the author hopes to determine whether the American political system tended to integrate or exclude Italian-Americans.

Gallo argues that a sense of alienation and powerlessness characterized Italian immigrant political behavior. Much of this alienation, however, disappeared by the third generation in America. He argues that a number of variables explained Italian-American political behavior. Since it did not share in the decision making process, the southern Italian family did not prepare its members for participation in a democratic political structure. He found that an alteration of family structures over several generations resulted in the growth of shared decision making and a decline in the feeling of powerlessness. Besides family socialization, religion was an important determinant of political behavior. The first generation of Italians were strong Catholics and political conservatives. Their children were more moderate in both their Catholicism and politics. By the third generation Italians were often marginal Catholics and decidedly liberal.

While Gallo stresses cultural variables in explaining behavior, the impact of the larger society is not overlooked. He suggests that the transition from rural Italy to urban America produced a sense of loss of control over the environment. Because Italians were largely in a low position in the social structure, Gallo argues that they felt unable to achieve goals and desired ends. The fact that feelings of powerlessness were still noticeable in many third generation Italians was attributed to the lack of massive group advancement into the higher income, occupational, and residential categories.

Gallo's analysis of cultural and structural factors explaining Italian-American alienation is important. However, he never really answers his initial question. Lacking a consistent focus, the book never confronts its intended purpose: to determine the extent to which the American political system functioned as an integrative agent. Instead, the author discusses Italian-American political behavior in terms of cultural and structural variables such as the family, religion, and socioeconomic status. While suggestive, even these conclusions must remain tentative since they are based on an exceedingly small sample. The question of the impact of the American political system on Italians remains to be investigated.

*Pennsylvania Historical
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JOHN BODNAR

Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town. By Margaret Byington. (Pittsburgh: University Center for International Studies of the University of Pittsburgh, 1974. Pp. xxxiv, 292. \$3.50.)

This book was originally published in 1910 as a part of the Pittsburgh Survey, an analysis of social and economic problems of the early twentieth century in that highly industrialized area. The only new feature in this edition is an informative introduction by Samuel P. Hays, well-known historian of industrial America.

Ms. Byington obtained her information primarily by living in Homestead from October, 1907, to April, 1908. She gained the cooperation of many residents, including ninety women who agreed to maintain records of their income and expenses. From the budgets, Ms. Byington attempted to determine the life style of Homestead working-class families. Although her statistical methods will not satisfy all modern scholars, they produced significant data indicating that many of Homestead's families lived on the brink of financial disaster, that some ethnic groups consistently had lower incomes than others, and that some families handled their economic resources more efficiently than others. Ms. Byington also interviewed residents of Homestead, in some instances with the aid of an interpreter. These discussions led her to suggest that the residents of Homestead were dominated by impersonal forces over which they had little control. Since the strike of 1892, unions were impotent. Municipal governments never had met the residents' needs. Only the churches and lodges provided a measure of comfort and security. Escape from the steel mill and Homestead, she implied, required a rare combination of determination and ability.

As Hays points out in his introduction, this study is relevant to several current emphases in the study of history. Interest in the so-called common man has increased, and this is Ms. Byington's focus. This is one book on this period of American social and economic history in which Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and J. P. Morgan have been relegated to the background. They have been replaced on these pages by the workers and their families. Concern for ethnicity is more prevalent now, and Ms. Byington has described ethnic patterns in Homestead, including "native whites," "English-speaking Europeans," "Colored," and "Slavs." Indeed, she has devoted four chapters, constituting almost one-third of her book to the "Slavs," a label under which she discussed almost all of the eastern European immigrants. Although women are by no means newcomers to history, historians recently have increased their scholarly interest in sexual roles. Ms. Byington's book contains a revealing description of working-class women, demonstrating the importance of the wife and mother in managing the families' finances. Urban history has become popular, and Ms. Byington has included an informative passage on the early history of Homestead. Throughout her book she has described not only its development but also its relationship to its larger neighbor, Pittsburgh.

Characteristic of many scholars during the Progressive Era, Ms. Byington attempted to be dispassionately objective. Consequently, her tone is restrained. The descriptive passages, whether based on household budgets or personal interviews, are factual. Additional information is presented in the book's four appendices which include relevant documents, forty statistical tables, and fifty-eight illustrations. The photographs are especially effective in depicting life in Homestead. Subtlety, however, should not be mistaken for blandness. Ms. Byington had a message for her contemporaries that there were serious injustices and inequalities in Homestead which needed to be corrected.

This book deserved republication. It was a classic in its own day, and the passage of time has not decreased its varied utility. Researchers can use it as a primary source. Teachers can find in it material for presentation in the

classroom. Undergraduate students can recognize and comprehend its insights into this phase of the nation's past.

The Pennsylvania State University

JOHN B. FRANTZ

The Papers of Woodrow Wilson: Volume 18. Edited by Arthur S. Link et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974. Pp. xvii, 672. \$22.50.)

This latest of the Wilson papers might well be taken as the first volume of his presidential papers. There is evidence in these letters that Woodrow Wilson was an anxious and active candidate for a place on the national ticket in July of 1908. Here are the theoretical underpinnings of his conception of the presidential office as contained in his published lectures, *Constitutional Government*. Here are the public addresses and press releases as he travels the speech-making circuit, taking issue with the Roosevelt administration's exercise of what Wilson believed to be a too discretionary authority. And here too are the written exchanges that hint at and peripherally document the personal doings that were afoot on behalf of Wilson's quest for national office in this year of Taft and Bryan.

The editors include the whole text of *Constitutional Government*—the thoughtful commentaries on our polity that Wilson delivered at Columbia University. He amplifies on his theme of an activist presidency. Asserting that "the war with Spain again changed the balance of parts," so that "foreign questions became leading questions . . . and in them the President was of necessity leader," Wilson notes a new conception of the office and its powers: "Let him once win the admiration and confidence of the country and no other single force can withstand him, no combination of forces will easily overpower him." Being so "irresistible a force," Wilson writes, "his office is anything he has the sagacity and force to make it." Wilson posited only one limitation: "men of ordinary physique and discretion cannot be President and live, if the strain be not somehow relieved." Perhaps conscious of his own physical limitations, Wilson here utters his often quoted call for "picking our chief magistrate from among wise and prudent athletes—a small class."

It is in the light of this rather favorable view of a strong presidency, Wilson's challenge to the Roosevelt administration sounds especially ironic. He criticizes the incumbent Republican for precisely the exercise of the executive power he had found vindicated by the test of "life" in his lectures. Wilson attacks Roosevelt's activism early and often. In an April address entitled "Law or Personal Power," Wilson laments the turn "from legal regulation to executive regulation . . . from law to personal power." Whence came this falling back on executive discretionary power when our country had been established precisely "to get rid of arbitrary . . . executive power?" Wilson shuddered at the latest Roosevelt proposal to "invite all corporations which wish to keep within the limits of the law to register with him and to submit all their contracts and arrangements for his sanction or disapproval." This was lawmaking by executive order. And as Wilson had earlier remarked before the Commercial Club of Chicago, once you have government "keep its hands in business by way of direct administrative regulation, through the instrumentalities of commissions . . . you

have adopted *in principle* government ownership itself." Little wonder that such comments endeared him to the coterie of conservative Democrats that were already supporting his candidacy to offset a resurgent Bryanism.

The seriousness of Wilson's candidacy cannot be measured by theoretical disquisitions and public addresses alone. There remains the question of evidence as to what was being done on his political behalf. There are hints from others and there are direct statements of his own. Henry James Forman of the *North American Review* corresponded with him about a feature article on his candidacy. Wilson wished that the editor would "disobey Colonel Harvey's instructions" because he did not "feel it is any longer true that I am being seriously considered as a possible recipient of the nomination at Denver this year." Modestly he wrote that "Colonel Harvey is carrying his generous loyalty to an idea and a high purpose further than the situation makes necessary." But Forman proved too insistent with his flattering belief that "you are a possible recipient of the nomination at Denver and my only anxiety is to have your claims properly presented." The article appeared. Invited to attend and address the National Democratic Club in New York City—described as having "close ties with Tammany"—Wilson wrote his prospective hosts that the "possibility of Bryan appearing . . . will entirely alter the character of the occasion and will render nugatory the plans which your committee had . . . arranged with regard to the impression it was desired to make upon the country." Such a confrontation with the now aging Boy Orator from the Platte would oblige Wilson "to take a position extremely antagonistic to Mr. Bryan . . . not . . . to him personally but . . . to all the loose notions which he puts forth as a party program." As it was Bryan did not attend the dinner and Wilson did—making a major address that evoked cheering when he mentioned Governor John A. Johnson of Minnesota and brought him into contact with such party luminaries as Senators Simmons of North Carolina and Owen of Oklahoma. Was this dinner the gathering of the conservative clans within the Democracy and meant to forestall another exercise in the desperation and futility of a Bryan nomination?

Wilson would be far removed from the convention scene as the machinations commenced and climaxed. A voyage across the Atlantic and a stay in the British Isles served as heroic withdrawal from the tumult. Aboard the *S.S. California* he presents his political ambitions in a romantic aura. Writing his wife Ellen without the equivocation he used with other correspondents, Wilson stated that "I wish they would nominate me for *something*, with anybody, that I might be obliged to go back." By July 7 Wilson was still waiting for the lightning to strike. He admits "feeling a bit silly waiting on the possibility of the impossible happening." But there was one bit of reassurance even now—that something which "makes me think myself not altogether a fool for taking the impossible a possibility so seriously." What was this decisive factor? Wilson quickly pointed that "Colonel Harvey has gone out to Denver." So Wilson purchased copies of the Paris edition of the *New York Herald* "every day," stayed close to his cable contact in Edinburgh, and whimsically mused about "what Colonel Harvey has gone for, except his own amusement, I cannot imagine." While

the Democrats in Denver appeared "slow and silly," it was just as well that "since Col. H. is there I might as well be here."

The denouement was swift if not certain. Bryan was renominated. The national ticket was rounded off with John Worth Kern, twice-defeated candidate for the governorship of Indiana. The latter fact allowed Wilson the opportunity to pronounce him "an appropriate running mate" for the "Great Inevitable." To Stockton Axson who had been in Denver and whose letters to Wilson on the subject the editors label "missing," the nominee manqué expressed sorrow that "you had to worry about the Vice-Presidency." The editors immediately footnote this statement as a "mysterious reference." This reviewer was very disappointed that they did. Why the word "mysterious"? Are we about to cloak our hero with a mystical theology from which the critic will be turned away with hoots of "unbeliever"? Granted that any political maneuvering is difficult to document from personal letters, did not the editors of this series owe the readers of this volume an extensive commentary on the interest Wilson apparently possessed for a nomination to national office and on efforts that might have or have not been taken for his candidacy? One need not have speculated. One could have simply admitted lack of sources or materials too sparse for inference. But to write nothing at all about Wilson's political ambitions in this year and indeed to have invoked the shades of the "mysterious" to envelop them appears to this reviewer a sad failure on the part of editors from whom he had previously expected and received so much by way of researched annotations.

Whether "mysterious" or not, Wilson's ambitions were not to be slackened by the temporary disappointments of 1908. After the election he writes his friend Mary Hulbert Peck on the necessity to challenge the Bryanite domination of the Democrats. Unless individuals as "unlike as Mr. Bryan as principle is unlike expediency" acted, there would never develop a "successful party of opposition" to Republican supremacy. In this letter Wilson wondered whether he should lead such a movement. He was sure Mrs. Peck would urge him to do so. But with preening humility Wilson notes he did not "judge myself as partially as you judge me." He would be willing "to seem to take the initiative, to seem to venture upon the field alone and of my own motion" but then yield position to "one of the rivals who would certainly be drawn out by my action." A September speech to the American Bankers Association in which Wilson argued that the best way to meet the suspicions that fed Bryanism was for the bankers to "put the resources of the country at the disposal of every plain man to exactly the extent to which his credit is good" provides an omen of future campaign themes and later presidential accomplishments. Wilson would speak before the Southern Society of New York on the topic "Conservatism: True and False," accept an invitation from Rabbi Rudolph Grossman of the same city to address Temple Rodeph Sholom, and visit Chapel Hill at the behest of his undergraduate nephew to memorialize Robert E. Lee and to assure his audience that "The only place in the world where nothing has to be explained to me is the South."

And of the past? Wilson notes the death of Grover Cleveland, long resident of Princeton and involved in university affairs. He writes Ellen that

the former president had become "West's dupe and tool" and thought his death not untimely in that "the degree and the manner in which some of his early moral weakness had returned might soon have become generally known." Here the editors do not even footnote to some mysterious reference.

University of Connecticut

VINCENT A. CARRAFIELLO

Robert L. Vann of the Pittsburgh Courier: Politics and Black Journalism. By Andrew Buni. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974. Pp. xv, 410. \$12.95.)

Professor Buni admirably accomplishes two goals in this well-researched and clearly written biography of Robert Vann (1879-1940), the influential black journalist, lawyer, politician, and entrepreneur. Drawing on Vann's public correspondence (his private letters were destroyed) and interviews with his contemporaries, Buni skillfully traces Vann's rise from a background of poverty in rural North Carolina to a position of pre-eminence among the nation's black journalists. He also shows how Vann's varied career embodied many of the same dominant attitudes, ideals, and myths that influenced the thinking of most middle-class Americans, white as well as black, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Probably illegitimate, the light-skinned Vann spent his early years in the homes of prominent white families in Hertford County, North Carolina, where his mother worked as a domestic and cook. Although born poor, the religious training he received from his mother, the gentility of these aristocratic white families, and the self-help philosophy of Booker T. Washington all combined to instill in young Vann strong Victorian sensibilities and a life long quest for material and social success.

In 1903, after working his way through Virginia Union University in Richmond, Vann joined the early phase of the great migration of southern blacks to northern cities in search of freedom and economic opportunity. Five years later at the relatively late age of 27 he graduated with a degree in law from Pittsburgh's Western University of Pennsylvania. Vann began his career in Pittsburgh as a criminal lawyer, but racial prejudice and discrimination soon forced him to turn to politics and the newspaper business to supplement his income. In 1910 he helped found the *Pittsburgh Courier* and eventually became its editor. Through hard work and diligence, the pragmatic-minded, but principled, Vann made the *Courier* the leading black newspaper in the country. When many black-owned papers and businesses were failing in the depression decade, Vann's paper increased its national circulation from under 50,000 to 250,000 papers weekly. The *Courier's* shrewd and exhaustive coverage of the Ethiopian-Italian War, the Scottsboro case, the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, and the rising career of Joe Louis greatly increased the paper's appeal among black Americans.

Articulate and strong-willed, Vann frequently altered his allegiances and had a number of disagreements with some of the leading white and black reformers, union leaders, and politicians of his time. Nevertheless, through his newspaper and his personal political influence he fought to obtain some positive changes for black Americans. In Pittsburgh he led the fight to

improve social and economic conditions in the black community. He spearheaded the campaign to integrate and to include blacks in significant numbers in the U.S. armed forces. In 1932 he played a crucial role in convincing blacks to abandon their traditional loyalty to the Republican party. His advocacy of a "liquid vote" as a bargaining tactic to keep both major political parties from taking black support for granted placed him well ahead of his time.

A mildly disturbing aspect of this study, however, is Buni's final assessment of the larger meaning of Vann's life. "What troubled me," he writes, "was a sense of lost potential. A man of his drive, capability, and eventually, power, could have done much more." The much more is never specified. At another point he finds Vann's unswerving loyalty to the American system perplexing since he was "little aided by the vast white segment of the country. Both his legal practice and his newspaper operated solely within the black community."

These judgments reveal the author's failure to fully comprehend the true nature of the historic dilemma confronting black leaders (and the black community) in a largely racially oriented society whose creed, nevertheless, guarantees freedom, justice, and equality to all. The dilemma Vann faced was: what alternative courses of action ought the leader of an oppressed and despised minority follow to counter the bigotry and indifference of a dominant white majority? Rightly or wrongly, depending on your point of view, Vann ruled out violence, radicalism, and back-to-Africa separatism as futile responses to the black predicament. Instead, he worked toward what he thought were practical ends, given the realities of his time and his belief in the American dream.

What Buni overlooks is that American society is held together by a diverse value system generally shared by both blacks and whites. Vann, like most blacks, rejected the racist aspects of that system, not the system as a whole. Contrary to Buni's assessment, this very pragmatism probably accounted for the success Vann experienced. True, he often changed his mind and quarreled, perhaps unnecessarily, with his contemporaries. But he remained optimistic until the end that American society would eventually renounce its racist tendencies and accord blacks the same rights and privileges enjoyed by other Americans. The fragile alliances he formed, reflected, in part, the frustration he, as well as other black leaders, who shared different philosophical outlooks, experienced in their quest for a viable strategy for achieving black uplift in the face of overwhelming opposition. To blame Vann for not totally surmounting these odds is like blaming a man thrust into a snake pit for becoming a snake bite victim.

Carnegie-Mellon University

ROLAND M. SMITH

Mountain Folks: Fragments of Central Pennsylvania Lore. By Homer Tope Rosenberger. (Lock Haven: Annie Halenbake Ross Library, 1974. Pp. 212. \$7.50.)

There are many forms of Americana that provide glimpses of the common people, their lives, hopes, fears, and superstitions. Probably none is more revealing and uninhibited than the folk tale. Folklore lacks the self-conscious

precision of the professional artist, but at the same time reveals more fully the common inheritance of the past. It is American primitive, perhaps the most spontaneous and genuine expression of everyday life in the United States.

Homer Rosenberger's *Mountain Folks* contains some of the best tales in that tradition. First published in a series of articles in 1934 and 1935, and augmented by two articles by George Swetnam, Pennsylvania folklorist, these tales have been gathered into one entertaining volume. They are a welcome addition to a small but growing literature on Pennsylvania folk life and customs. Concentrated in the central third of the state, these tales range from stories of apple butter making, to hex practices and witchcraft, to the legend and ballad of Cherry Tree Joe McCreery, Pennsylvania's Paul Bunyan. Most of the tales relate to events in specific towns in the region, and in their telling relate how small communities survived in simpler times. Radio, television, and the automobile have destroyed the isolation of these areas and made the folklorist's preservation of such stories infinitely more difficult. Yet at the same time the concomitant homogenization of American culture heightens their appeal and significance. The increasing mobility of our population has also increased the fragility of such folklore.

Rosenberger's early chapters, moreover, provide a valuable introduction to the history of the region. In some ways this is his most useful, although least original, contribution; for these historical sketches allow the reader to understand the social setting for the tales that follow. In so doing they lend a historical context so often missing in volumes of this kind.

Anyone interested in central Pennsylvania folklore, or for that matter in some intriguing stories and legends, would do well to peruse this volume. The story of discovery, settlement, and development is here, lurking behind the walls of Horn's Fort or in the adventures of the witch of Werner's Mill. Since the 1930s, moreover, the sources for these stories have largely disappeared. Mountain farms have been abandoned, the isolation eroded. Rosenberger's volume reminds us how quickly oral traditions can be lost, and how easy their preservation can be for those that take the trouble.

Franklin & Marshall College

JOHN A. ANDREW III

Strife on the Waterfront: The Port of New York Since 1945. By Vernon H. Jensen. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974. Pp. 478. \$18.50.)

In 1950 Vernon Jensen produced *Heritage of Conflict*, an authoritative study of the tumultuous hardrock mining industry of the American West. With this present work, Jensen has shifted industries and locale to the New York waterfront, but the theme of turmoil and strife remains essentially the same, albeit for different reasons and within a unique context. This book covers the period from 1945 to 1972, an era marked by numerous strikes or near strikes, frequent use of the Taft-Hartly Act, and constant intervention by federal, state, and local governmental authorities in the bargaining process.

The author begins by analyzing the nature of collective bargaining and then proceeds to a brief historical sketch of bargaining on New York's waterfront, which includes descriptions of the industry, the port of New York,

and the principal parties involved in labor negotiations. The main portion of the book is devoted to an analysis of the major negotiating periods, starting with the strike of 1945 and ending with the settlement of 1972. His method is to present the main issues and demands involved in each negotiating period between the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the New York Shipping Association (NYSA), detail the course of negotiations, and describe the final outcome of the bargaining.

Jensen, who previously studied labor relations on the docks of several European ports, is at his best in weaving through the maze of intricacies and complexities that distinguish collective bargaining on the New York waterfront. He demonstrates conclusively that the inability of both the union and the employers to control their ranks complicated the bargaining process, frequently making it impossible to resolve the issues without some form of government coercion; the Taft-Hartly Act was invoked eight separate times. At best this disunity led to confusion and disorder—more often the result was chaos. Another strong point is the author's detailed analysis of the crucial issues such as the shape-up, seniority, the guaranteed income, and containerization which fueled the fires at the bargaining table. He deftly shows how the ILA and the NYSA attempted to outmaneuver each other over these questions, oftentimes resorting to machinations involving public officials, governmental bodies, the news media, and collusive deals with the other side. All this is depicted with insight and understanding.

In the final chapter Jensen measures the model of collective bargaining that he set forth at the outset against the historical record. He concludes that all of the ingredients necessary for successful bargaining have been present "but they have not all served effectively, at least not all the time." Consequently, collective bargaining as a private two-party rule-making process has been virtually nonexistent on the New York waterfront.

From his extensive bibliography, it is evident that Professor Jensen has consulted a wide range of sources in constructing his work. Although he relies heavily on the *New York Times* for his almost daily account of negotiations, he incorporates reports and documents from the ILA, the NYSA, and government agencies. The identity of some of his informants is not revealed, so it is impossible to evaluate their reliability or assess the author's interpretations.

It is obvious that Professor Jensen has accomplished his goal, having forcefully described the strife on the New York waterfront in the context of the institutional practices of collective bargaining. But his account raises some interesting questions which he either ignores or fails to examine systematically. Why, for example, are the ILA and NYSA so internally divided? Why has the chaos persisted for so long? Is it because of the nature of the industry or the composition of the labor force? Surely it cannot be due solely to a lack of leadership within both organizations as Jensen suggests. A comparison with the West Coast shippers and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union might provide some answers to these questions, since during the period covered by Jensen's book, labor relations on the West Coast have been characterized by stability and order.

Finally, the readers of *Pennsylvania History* may be disappointed with the infrequent references to the port of Philadelphia. The future historian of

Philadelphia's waterfront, however, will want to adhere to the high standards of scholarship set by Vernon Jensen.

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