

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITED BY MICHAEL P. WEBER
CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY

Pleasure and Business in Western Pennsylvania: The Journal of Joshua Gilpin, 1809.
Edited by Joseph E. Walker. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania
Historical and Museum Commission, 1975. Pp. vii, 156. \$6.00.)

Joshua Gilpin was the scion of a famous Pennsylvania family of the nineteenth century. His son, Henry, became the Attorney General of the United States in 1840, and a second son, William, was appointed the first territorial governor of Colorado. The journal recorded in this volume recounts his experiences on a trip to western Pennsylvania in 1809. On 14 September 1809, Gilpin, his English-born wife, Mary, and their eight-year-old son, Henry, embarked on a journey which took them to the western portion of the state to view some of their land holdings. A man of means, Gilpin was accompanied by some of his servants on his venture into the Pennsylvania frontier.

About one-half of this diary was published in three volumes of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, between 1926 and 1928, but the full *Journal* is published in this book for the first time. The editor has used the original version rather than the portion previously published for a part of this volume. Some minor differences will be found when comparing the portion of the Gilpin *Journal* which was published from 1926 to 1928, and the present edition, but they will not seriously detract from the final total project. Professor Walker is to be congratulated for his diligence and scholarship in completing this assignment.

The diary is not just another gazeteer compiled by an individual unqualified to report what he observed. Gilpin studied botany for seven years in Europe and exhibited the ability to report accurately and concisely. In addition, he was able to predict the future value of the country. He was an optimist, but he did not allow himself to be carried away by promotional schemes and the rhetoric of the day. After an extensive discourse on the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys, Gilpin sums up the possibilities for the development of Pittsburgh under four headings. He lists them as "1. The market it furnishes to the neighboring counties both for their own produce and for their supply with foreign articles. 2. The trade up the rivers Monongahela and Alleganey. 3. Its trade down the Ohio and Mississippi. 4. The manufactures of Pittsburgh itself and its vicinity." (p. 74) When commenting on steamboats he notes, "they have attended with so much success and profit to the proprietor Mr. Fulton that it is extremely probable some way will be discovered to improve them either by widening or extending their size so as to carry burthens with a small increase of depth or to extend the power which works them." (p. 100)

The documentation is extensive and represents a scholarly effort by the editor. Walker, a professor of history at Millersville State College, has brought to the reader a diary which is a significant contribution to our examination of life in Pennsylvania during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Not only will the volume be welcomed by historians, but it will also be of value to geologists, geographers, and all individuals interested in the early development of the western portion of Pennsylvania.

Missouri Southern State College, Joplin

ROBERT E. SMITH

Gettysburg: A Journey in Time. By William A. Frassanito. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975. Pp. 248. \$12.95.)

Among the helpers, scavengers, and curiosity seekers who descended on Gettysburg in the aftermath of the great battle were some of America's outstanding photographers. For more than a century, the melancholy images recorded by Alexander Gardner, Timothy O'Sullivan, and Matthew Brady, along with the scenes captured by less well-known artists, have provided visual access to the hallowed ground. Now *Gettysburg: A Journey in Time* presents more than 100 of the best wet plate photographs produced on the field between July 1863 and 1866. The volume also includes modern counterparts of the Civil War photographs, along with the findings of William A. Frassanito's patient inquiry into the dates, locations, and authorship of the pictures.

Familiarity with the battlefield and careful attention to detail make it possible for Frassanito to correct a number of long-lived misconceptions about the Gettysburg pictures. A prominent rock, an unusually tall tree, a number scratched on the corner of a negative—such clues enable him to fix locations and identify photographers with impressive accuracy. He reminds readers that no images were recorded during the battle and, while concluding that the scenes constitute “an amazingly well-balanced photographic record of great historic interest” (p. 232), effectively disposes of the notion that the views include representations of every major portion of the battlefield. The site of Pickett's Charge, for example, later widely regarded as the most awe-inspiring spot on the war's most famous field, was almost totally ignored by early photographic visitors.

Civil War photographers were well aware of civilian fascination with likenesses of fallen soldiers, and perhaps the most noteworthy discoveries to emerge from the study involve images of the men who died at Gettysburg. It has often been assumed that these unforgettable pictures were made at widely separated locations, but Frassanito persuasively argues that they were all recorded in a relatively small area by Gardner, O'Sullivan, and James F. Gibson, the first photographers to arrive upon the field. When they reached the Southern end of the battlefield, almost forty-eight hours after the end of the fighting, Gardner and his crew found Union gravediggers in the final stages of their grim labors. The three men quickly set to work photographing the groups of bloated corpses which had been gathered for burial. Many of the bodies were photographed from several different angles—which later facilitated confusion about their location—and in at least one instance a picture

was carefully staged. The body of a Confederate soldier was dragged forty yards in order to be presented, in a suitably pathetic position, as a dead sharpshooter in Devil's Den!

Civil War specialists will welcome the documentation Frassanito has provided for the pictures. But both experts and the nonspecialists who will be attracted to a book which joins such perpetually popular subjects as Gettysburg and photography are finally likely to find his study disappointingly limited in scope. While he sensibly insists that the photographs have "a fantastic story to tell" (p. 15), Frassanito makes only a limited effort to explore their value as historical sources. His work relates the pictures to a good many anecdotes about the battle and the field on which it was fought, but it adds surprisingly little to our knowledge of the three day struggle. What was the relationship between the battle and the devastated landscape—peopled so largely by the dead—which it left behind for photographers to record? How have the Gettysburg photographs affected the generations of Americans who have viewed them since the time of the battle? What does the existence of such images do to our conception of war? Sustained critical attention to such questions might have added considerably to the depth and usefulness of what is, as it stands, an intriguing but decidedly limited bit of historical detective work.

Capitol Campus
Penn State University

JOHN S. PATTERSON

The Philadelphia and Erie Railroad: Its Place in American Economic History. By Homer Tope Rosenberger. (Potomac, Maryland: The Fox Hills Press, 1975. Pp. 748. \$18.00.)

Railroads, despite, or perhaps because of, their present-day liquidity crises, bottom line difficulties, and low-priority status among transportation planners, continue to attract the study of historians. This volume is a worthy addition to our understanding of Pennsylvania's nineteenth-century railroad efforts.

The proposal for a railroad connecting Philadelphia and Erie emerged prematurely from the long-standing competition among New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore for control of the western trade. The P&E was built and financed by Philadelphians who were envious of New York's success with the Erie Canal, and who sought the shortest route for carrying freight and passengers between the seaboard and the inland waterways for their city's economic gain.

Authorized by a liberal charter granted by the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1837, the Sunbury and Erie Railroad Company (it became the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad Company in 1861) enjoyed virtually every advantage and endured every shortcoming characteristic of this kind of project. The proposed line, 287 miles in length from Sunbury to Erie, was the shortest available for joining Erie with Philadelphia and New York. But the right-of-way was located across some of the harshest terrain and through the least populated sections of north central and northwestern Pennsylvania. Because of certain land speculators' involvement, the line was built over a difficult summit in McKean County rather than via an easier grade in Clearfield

and Jefferson counties with their rich bituminous deposits. The company survived the panics of 1837 and 1857 (as well as those of 1873 and 1893), the decline and death of Nicholas Biddle, its most prestigious backer, and a continuing shortage of capital even after the City of Philadelphia purchased large blocks of shares in the 1850s. Construction, not begun until the early fifties, proceeded unevenly for the next decade.

A favorable tax climate for its stock and real estate (virtual immunity), and the fact that the line was well managed and its stock not watered, should have enhanced its profit potential. But the P&E was a poor investment. It was heavily mortgaged and paid only limited dividends on common stock prior to its absorption into the PRR in 1907. The P&E promoters, always conscious of potential competition from the Pittsburgh & Susquehanna, the Catawissa, the Susquehanna & Erie, and others, soon recognized that their most powerful enemy was the Pennsy. The latter, by other than gentlemanly agreements, gained control by lease of the P&E in 1862 and, hence, of two routes across the state. Rosenberger convincingly argues that the PRR, having secured the monopoly, "did little to develop traffic" on the P&E and treated its lessee like a "stepchild" and "orphan," but always made sure that the P&E never went bankrupt and thus liable to a competitor's takeover. To the Pennsy, the P&E was an "exceedingly valuable possession," for by 1905 the latter had a better ton miles of freight per mile ratio and lower fixed charges per mile than the former.

Rosenberger is especially effective in his biographical studies. In addition to the better-known Biddle, William Bigler, Samuel Vaughan Merrick, and William G. Moorhead, incisive accounts of the roles of Thomas Struthers of Warren, lawyer and land speculator, and Thomas Leiper Kane of Philadelphia, resident agent of the McKean and Elk Land and Improvement Company, are given. While this is not technological history, there is ample discussion of construction details, locomotives, freight cars, and rails. The author adequately examines the economic impact of the P&E on the evolution of Williamsport, Renovo, Ridgway, Warren, and other towns along the line.

This volume is a pioneer effort, produced in spite of a paucity of the usual primary sources. Rosenberger skillfully analyzed annual reports, legislative journals, judicial opinions, newspaper and magazine articles, and county and local histories in order to write his account. The illustrations, a chronology, annotated bibliography, appendices, and a superior index add much to the work's value.

West Chester State College

ROBERT E. CARLSON

Scott Nearing: Apostle of American Radicalism. By Stephen J. Whitfield. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974. Pp. ix, 269. \$10.95.)

Who is Scott Nearing? Anyone who does not know and is interested in twentieth-century American thought ought to read Stephen Whitfield's excellent biography of this fascinating radical. Nearing was born in the Pennsylvania coal country during the administration of Chester Arthur and has excoriated the policies of every president from McKinley to Ford. Whitfield does not exaggerate when he claims to have examined "the

intersection of . . . [Nearing's] career with the travail of dissent in this century."

The chronicle of Nearing's radical activities reads like an encyclopedia of twentieth-century American dissent: he opposed child labor in 1905, participated in the Arden, Delaware communitarian experiment, denounced male dominance in American society, became a cause célèbre for academic freedom in 1915, was indicted under the Espionage Act of 1917 for his anti-war activities, ran as the Socialist party candidate for Congress against Fiorello La Guardia in 1918, taught at the Rand School, served as president of the Garland Fund, became a Communist in 1925, began a back-to-nature movement, was an outspoken pacifist during World War II, had his passport revoked in 1958 for Russian boosterism, and wrote scores of books and pamphlets condemning American society.

Whitfield's well-written study is not, however, a mere catalog of radical names and events. It is a sensitive, evenhanded treatment of Nearing's variegated career. Readers of *Pennsylvania History* should be especially interested in Whitfield's discussion of Philadelphia politics and reform during the Progressive era. The author's fast-paced, felicitous style makes this chapter, as well as those which follow it, a delight to read.

My only criticism of this book is that while the public aspects of Nearing's career are interestingly narrated, the private side of his life is almost completely ignored. We are told that Nearing was the "darling of his mother" and that "warmth between father and son . . . could not be kindled," but Whitfield fails to explore the significance of Nearing's family constellation or any other possible personality determinants. Instead, Whitfield begs the question of motivation by asserting that Nearing's social conscience was "a burr under his skin that none of his relatives acquired and that no interpretation satisfactorily explains." Perhaps a closer scrutiny of Nearing's childhood and adolescence than the three pages Whitfield devotes to the subject would suggest the source of the "burr" that made Scott Nearing an apostle of American radicalism.

San Jose State University

MICHAEL R. GRECO

The Mind of America 1820-1860. By Rush Welter. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975. Pp. xvi, 603. \$14.95.)

A decade ago Richard Welter in *The Journal of American History* (January 1965) called for a reintegration of social and intellectual history and set forth strategies by which the mind of a period might be examined most profitably. We now have from his pen an illustration of how productive the methods he espoused can be. But *The Mind of America* deserves attention not merely because it happens to be a methodological paradigm but because it reveals the multifaceted interrelations of the American mind in the middle period. The goal for this book was set long before the recent rush to write the history of the inarticulate. Its objectives are "to overcome the rationalist bias that affects most studies of intellectual history" and to discover through the use of printed statements by ordinary spokesmen what was thought about the issues and values of society between 1820 and 1860. The focus is on thought about the state and institutions of society, the citizen and his values, and

the contrasting perspectives which derive from observation from a conservative "Whig" or liberal "Democratic" view of an epoch. Although some of its critical judgments will spark controversy, this is not an exercise in revisionism. It is rather an in depth explication of well known central themes in the social thought of the period.

The volume's organization is conventional, opening with an analysis of the concept of American mission as a consequent of macro- and micro-historical processes. Successive sections of three chapters each investigate for the primary period of the 1830s and 1840s: society; the politics of parties and constitutionalism; and free institutions (religion, education and the frontier image). A fifth section, "Consequences" concerns the crisis of the fifties. It argues that a conjunction of intellectual phenomena—only in part fortuitously related to each other—caused the Civil War. Although the elements producing confrontation hold no surprises, they are read in terms of moral and ethical commitments by a generation which faced armageddon in 1861.

The volume is filled with important critical insights on the interrelation of ideas dominant in these years. Two examples will illustrate this dimension; the first is from the chapter on religion. "Taken at face value, these pronouncements had no specific religious implications, yet every appeal to moral principles presupposed some kind of religious influence, and many spokesmen who skirted the question of what form that influence should take were none the less certain that it was indispensable to liberty." (p. 255) The second from the appendices illustrates Welter's reactions to modern scholarship, here in a comment on a point in Heimert's *Religion and the American Mind*. "I think that much of his case remains to be proved—certainly it is questionable whether Whigs were exclusively 'legalists' and Democrats all loyal followers of Edwards—but it suggests a good deal about Democratic Beliefs as distinguished from Democratic facts." (p. 400a)

Although the Columbia University Press is to be congratulated for including the extensive and substantive critical notes found in the appendices, these might better have been set at the ends of chapters. Compounding the frustrations of placement is the fact that the reference letters which cite to these notes are so artfully unobtrusive that only the most alert and determined reader will consistently discover the note at the point at which it will do him the most good, *i.e.* as he completes the text to which the author wishes it to refer. Since some of the most incisive critical judgments in the volume are to be found in the substantive notes, it is particularly unfortunate that the economics of book manufacture shortchanged both the reader and the author's erudition.

Taken as a whole the study has marked similarities in its essential orientations to Parrington's classic *Main Currents in American Thought*. First, both writers express their liberal empathy but explore the thought of conservatives as well as democrats. Second, both seek to escape the stereotypical by using sources which are both fresher because they are less worked and richer because they reveal iconoclastic spokesmen cutting through polite facades. Third, Welter and Parrington recognize that one source of dynamic in American social thought is the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas as expounded by committed advocates. But attention to Welter's methods, and

skilled exposition of a massive secondary literature on this period demonstrate how far the discipline of American Civilization has moved in half a century. One ironic measure of that progress is that in fifty pages of bibliography there is no necessity for citation to Parrington.

Dickinson College

WARREN J. GATES

HOW WE WON THE WAR, REVOLUTIONARY STYLE

The State of Pennsylvania

To the Estate of A. Morris jur. Dr.

May 8th	For 10 Barrells midling Beer sent to Capt. Reed of the province ship for the use of the Men, on board the said ship	£ 5.....
24th	For ½ Barrell Ale sent M. Williams Boat Builder for Use of the Carpenters at Work at the Row Gallies	...9...
28th	For ½ Barrell Do. sent, & for, same Use	...9...
30th	For 3 Barrells Ale Sent to the Fort on Mud Island, for Use of Some of Col. Miles's Riflemen there on Fatigue	2..14...
June 17th	For ½ Barrell midling Beer sent to the same place for Use of the Smiths shop	...5...
26th	For ½ Barrell Do Do for Use Do	...5...
28th	For ½ Barrell Do Do for Use Do	...5...
July 1st	For ½ Barrell Do Do for Use Do	...5...
4th	For ½ Barrell Do Do for Use Do	...5...
6th	For ½ Barrell Do Do for Use Do	...5...
10th	For ½ Barrell Do Do for Use Do	...5...
		£ 10..12...

The Beer for the Fatigue Party and Blacksmiths at Fort Island was ordered by me agreeable to directions I received from the Committee of Safety in May 1776

Jacob Howell
Sept. 3rd 1777

[Executive Correspondence, "Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments, 1775-1790," Division of Archives and Manuscripts, PHMC.]

CONTRIBUTED BY ROLAND M. BAUMANN, PHMC.