**BOOK REVIEWS**


In this short book, based on the Curti Lectures presented at the University of Wisconsin, Professor Bailyn introduces the theme of “Peopling British North America” and challenges the reader to think about the processes involved in the mass movement of people from Europe and Africa to British North America in the colonial era. The details of the story have begun to appear with the publication of *Voyagers to the West* (Knopf, 1986). This thoughtful work is more than a synthesis of writings on the history of immigration. Bailyn delineates all aspects of “Peopling” and leads the reader to consider the complexities of internal migration in the immigrants’ lands of origin, the dynamics of movement to various destinations in the New World, and the patterns of settlement and community development in British North America. The purpose is “to open up the questions and identify major themes of a very large area of history which we still only vaguely understand.” The author defines “Peopling” in a comprehensive manner and provides a reinterpretation of early American history within the context of Western history.

The author offers four major propositions as organizing devices to assist in making the complex problem of pre-industrial population movements more comprehensible and “to illustrate the dimensions of the subject.” First, the “Peopling” process “was an extension outward and an expansion in scale of domestic mobility in the lands of the immigrants’ origins.” Second, settlement patterns and community development in British North America demonstrate “highly differentiated processes, which form the context of the immigrants’ arrival. The fortunes of the arriving newcomers must be seen against this varied and shifting background.” Third, “the continuing need for labor” and “land speculation” promoted “much of the influx of people” from Europe and Africa. Finally, American society in the pre-industrial era is best understood “when seen as the exotic far western periphery, a marchland, of the metropolitan European culture system.” In this manner Bailyn brings order, unity and clarity to a story often told only in part.

Bailyn draws several conclusions from the sources. He connects internal migration in England to movement to the New World. Short-distance migration everywhere in the English countryside, mobility from the countryside to provincial towns, and movement to London fed into a growing stream of people headed for North America. The earliest phases represented a “spillover” of existing internal movements in England. North America became “simply another destination available to people in motion.” Labor recruiters and land speculators accelerated the pace and expanded the scope of migration. The first attracted the young, the poor and the single, who became indentured servants in the colonies. Simultaneously, land speculators attracted families to the colonies as owners or tenants. For the most part they arrived free and independent, became both consumers and producers and were the major force at work in...
BOOK REVIEWS

contributes to rapid population growth in the colonies. New England, the Middle Colonies, the Chesapeake and the Carolinas and Georgia developed differently in consequence of immigration patterns. In all regions, however, one sees the "mingling of primitivism and civilization" in the "outback," or periphery of European civilization.

A serious question concerns Bailyn's discussion of the dynamics of the Malthusian limits of population growth and the related problem of poverty in England and early America. He first concludes that "nowhere in this thinly settled land did stable communities approach Malthusian limits to population growth; yet people moved continuously as if there were such pressure" (p. 17). Elsewhere, however, the author notices that in New England people migrated into the interior "when some kind of threshold of optimal town population and maximal morselization of land was reached" (p. 94). In other words Malthusian limits operated to promote migration when population grew beyond the levels of economic opportunity in a community.

The question of the extent of poverty and its influence on the social development of America remains unclear. In England, "poverty or the fear of poverty" motivated people to move to find employment (p. 23). Many of the poor found their way to Philadelphia. Most eventually migrated to the interior but "there was a permanent and constantly renewed stratum of poverty that otherwise would not have existed" (p. 55, 56). Nevertheless, poverty levels remained low even in the late eighteenth century (p. 56). In New York the poor either "became tenants on wilderness land, or drifted into the city's labor force" (p. 57). In the Chesapeake arable land became more unevenly distributed. Larger portions of white people possessed fewer of the most productive acres and so turned to tenancy or moved "to more easily accessible frontier lands" (p. 102). Bailyn rightfully points out the misleading and clearly mistaken notions Frederick Jackson Turner held about the role of the frontier in pre-Revolutionary America. What he presents here does not seem to be a more satisfactory substitute.

Scholars of Pennsylvania history may complain of the lack of detail about the "Peopling" of Pennsylvania. That topic alone probably represents an entire field of study. One must, according to Bailyn's prescriptions, consider the origins of the Colony's population, the process of immigration, the course of out-migration, population growth and social development. Such a presentation exceeds the author's purpose. Indeed specialists in the study of colonial and Revolutionary Pennsylvania have known for years the significance of migration of people of various denominations and national groups to the formation of a culturally diverse, pluralistic society as an outpost of the British Empire. One will not find here much that is new, either in conceptualization or detail that has not already been more elaborately presented by Marianne Wokeck, J. Potter, James T. Lemon, Donald H. Yoder, Duane E. Ball, Billy G. Smith, Gary B. Nash, Sharon V. Salinger and Charles Wetherell, among others, including Wayland F. Dunaway. Clearly, the materials are available for construction of a narrative interpretation of probably the most important event in Pennsylvania's history before industrialization. The value of Bailyn's work lies in the fact that it presents the Pennsylvania experience in the context of the "whole" process of "Peopling," it is excellently written, it is an intriguing synthesis of the
components of "Peopling," and it is a challenge to rethink our understanding of those components in light of some sensible propositions.

The Pennsylvania State University—Fayette Campus

RODGER C. HENDERSON


This is a reprint of a book published in 1976 under the title The Pennsylvania Dutch: A Persistent Minority. With the exception of the change in title, a new introduction by the author, a new preface, and the omission of the bibliography, this book is the same as that published in 1976.

This reviewer would concur in the observations made by Professor Russell S. Nelson, Jr. in the April, 1978 issue of Pennsylvania History (pp. 184-185) about the first edition. Suffice it to say, he would agree that this book is important to everyone interested in Pennsylvania history and ethnic history as a balanced and perceptive synthesis of the voluminous literature dealing with the history and culture of the Pennsylvania Germans. To this literature the author has added the results of his own research in this field. He has written the book with several audiences in mind: college classes such as those which he teaches at Ursinus College, general readers seeking an authoritative introduction to the Pennsylvania Germans, secondary school students searching for a helpful reference work and specialists in the culture who feel the need for a broad view of the entire field. All will find this book useful.

Two comments may be in order. First, Parsons may have overstated the degree of hostility directed toward the Pennsylvania Germans by the English-speaking people among whom they lived. Admittedly, this is a highly subjective matter. Certainly, at times most Pennsylvania Germans have felt some criticism and dislike of their background, manner-of-speaking-English and values from non-Pennsylvania German neighbors. On the other hand, many have also experienced a high level of acceptance and understanding which they were happy to reciprocate in their relationships with their neighbors. Second, Parsons tends to equate the Pennsylvania German culture with an agrarian way of life. He notes the migration of large numbers of Pennsylvania Germans from the countryside to the city since the Civil War, but he has little to say about the Pennsylvania German in town and city or about an urban Pennsylvania German culture. In all probability, this is a matter which requires extensive research.

We are happy that Professor Parsons took the initiative to keep this book in print. He has performed a valuable service to all concerned with the Pennsylvania Germans. They are still a cultural minority which persists in the United States. This book helps us to understand that this persistence is due to distinctive cultural traits which enable the Pennsylvania Germans to make positive contributions to their nation.

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

MAHLON H. HELLERICH

This paperbound volume contains a collection of articles and illustrations dealing with several facets of the German migration to Pennsylvania in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the development of the Pennsylvania German culture from about 1750 to about 1900. These materials were culled from other publications. Most have been out of print for many years.

Among the items is Samuel W. Pennypacker's account of the contributions of the Crefeld Mennonites and the Frankfort Land Company to the founding of Germantown, F.J.F. Schantz's description of the domestic life of the Pennsylvania German pioneers, and William H. Richardson's delineation of the qualities of Pennsylvania German rural life which he observed as he traveled the countryside late in the nineteenth century. Reproduced is a copy of an eighteenth-century voyage contract, Christopher Dock's one hundred necessary rules of conduct for children, and illustrations depicting farm life from the 1879 edition of Henry Lee Fisher's volume of Pennsylvania German dialect poetry. These materials will help the reader develop a fuller understanding of Pennsylvania German cultural roots.

To this reviewer the most important articles were the most recent. Both are the work of the editor. In the first Parsons translated from a Palatinate dialect the "Westricher Pfalzisch," a narrative poem written by Ludwig Schandein, entitled "Die Auswannerer" or "The Emigrants" dealing with the departure for America of a young farmer of the Palatinate. The first version of this poem was written in 1848; over the years it was polished by the author and Parsons has translated the version published in 1892. This poem describes the trauma of emigration for the person departing and those whom he left behind. It also describes the social and economic conditions which impelled many to leave their homes and loved ones. Parsons has also published the dialect original, thus providing the reader with a basis for comparison of the Pfalzisch dialect of the nineteenth century with the Pennsylvania German dialect of the same time. The other article, written by Pasons and his wife Phyllis, deals with the use of indentures in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, as approved by Judge Peter Rhoads, to provide for the custody and education of boys and girls. Indentureship was probably the most important form of education provided by Pennsylvania society at that time. The value of this article was enhanced greatly by the authors in providing information about the persons involved in each case taken from tax records, Rhoads's account books and genealogical articles. This article introduces the reader to an important chapter in Pennsylvania social history.

This volume could well be added to every school and college library in Pennsylvania. Parsons has chosen well from a wide range of materials in bringing together in this convenient form illuminating materials about the Pennsylvania Germans.

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

MAHLON H. HELLERICH
The latest volume of the Franklin Papers focuses on the events surrounding the long-awaited accomplishment of what Franklin and his fellow American commissioners had sought for over a year: a Franco-American alliance. Two treaties, one commercial, one political, were agreed upon on January 27, 1778, and signed on February 6.

Precipitating the rapid resolution of what had become, for the commissioners, a desperately frustrating situation was, of course, the American victory at Saratoga. News of Burgoyne's surrender reached Franklin in Paris on December 4. The documents in this volume show how Franklin and his colleagues used the subsequent sudden British interest in a negotiated settlement of the Revolution to encourage the French to move swiftly towards agreement.

The best-known of these British efforts was carried out by Paul Wentworth, who was sent to Paris in mid-December authorized to offer the Americans almost anything short of complete independence. The climax of this initiative was a lengthy conference with Franklin on January 6. Reprinted in this volume is an extract from Wentworth's report of that—to him—unsatisfactory interview in which Franklin (intentionally?) spoke, in the words of the editors, in an uncharacteristically "diffuse and querulous" manner.

The British seem to have made at least two other efforts to reach the commissioners. One of them was through David Hartley, whose correspondence with Franklin about working to improve the conditions of American prisoners in Britain is another major component of this volume. Franklin rejected Hartley's suggestions about the possibility of reconciliation in an angry letter of February 12. Franklin's reference here to Britain as a "cruel Mother-in-Law," and to America as making France as "good and useful a Wife as she did a Daughter" in the British "Family from which she was so wickedly expelled," may interest historians who are trying to expand upon the recent ideas of scholars like Melvin Yazawa and Jay Fliegelman who have written about the role of familial ideology in the Revolution.

Franklin was equally unencouraging towards his old acquaintance James Hutton, the Moravian leader who was also living in Paris but had made no effort to contact him until December, 1777. Hutton's correspondence ostensibly focused on requesting Franklin to use his influence in Pennsylvania to protect pacifist Moravians. In reality, as the editors explain, Hutton's mission was political, but he was no more successful than Wentworth or Hartley.

Franklin does not appear to have intervened in Pennsylvania's treatment of Moravians; indeed, the documents in this volume suggest his connection with Pennsylvania at this time was limited. Letters from William Bingham, John Cadwalader, and even son-in-law Richard Bache were generally uninformative and did not elicit, at least in this volume, a reply from Franklin. Similarly, Franklin made no reply to an interesting commentary on the Pennsylvania Constitution in 1776 which was sent to him on December 17 by the philosopher Charles Millon.

There is one exception to this pattern: Franklin's letter to Robert Morris of
December 21 is perhaps the most candid in the volume. "Our being together together seems of no Use," Franklin lamented about his relationship with his fellow commissioners, and "is attended with many Inconveniences." Indeed, this volume is full of correspondence, carefully annotated by the editors, which is essential background to understanding the conflicts among the commissioners that soon led to the Lee-Deane imbroglio in Congress.

This volume ends at a time of change for Franklin. The composition of the American commission is changing, with Deane preparing to leave for America within a few days and John Adams already on the way to replace him. The legitimacy gained by the conclusion of the treaties makes Franklin an even more active figure socially in Paris (despite hints to his physician about growing physical problems; pp. 77–80). He and his grandson met Voltaire and his relationship with Madame Brillon deepens emotionally, at least on her part. It is appropriate, therefore, that a new editor is coming to the Franklin Papers at this time. Barbara Bowen Oberg, who most recently, and fittingly, edited the correspondence of David Hartley, will have the task of continuing the fine editorial work of the late William B. Willcox. In the meantime, this volume also marks another change: it is the first to be produced with the aid of on-line computerized editing and production methods, a procedure which the Yale Press hopes will expedite publication of the remaining volumes.

University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire

ROBERT J. GOUGH


Like the bicentennial of the American Revolution, the two hundredth anniversary of the federal Constitution will stimulate a spate of historical studies, some more worthy of our attention than others. Professor Kammen has contributed two works which promise to be more rewarding than most. Kammen is an astute observer of American culture. His People of Paradox (1972), a work which focused primarily, though not exclusively, on our nation's colonial experience, won a Pulitzer Prize. A Season of Youth (1978) analyzed the Revolution in terms of the "historical imagination." Both are marvelous contributions to our understanding of American culture, character, and style. Kammen now offers us two studies which concentrate on post-Revolutionary America: one describes changing perceptions of liberty in American society; the other focuses on the document which for most Americans best embodies their liberty—their Constitution.

A Machine That Would Go of Itself (a title based on a metaphor of the Constitution provided by James Russell Lowell in 1888), is a natural sequel to A Season of Youth. In both, the author cares less about the truth that what Americans perceived as truth. It is not the scholarly analysis that preoccupies
Kammen but, rather, the popular observation or characterization whether it surfaces in a speech, obituary, editorial, painting, or on a commemorative plate. He is every bit as interested in surface impressions, and even ignorance, as he is in scholarly interpretations.

Kammen wants readers to see their Constitution "in the public consciousness and symbolic life of the American people" (xi). To that end he traces the growth of the Constitution as a national symbol, discusses conflicts surrounding its origins and meaning, and identifies developments which have rendered the Constitution ambiguous to the public. By doing all this with sophistication and style, Kammen achieves his goal of producing "a substantial, original, serious yet engaging work for nonspecialists" (xx).

The American love affair with the Constitution began slowly. The constitutional jubilee of 1837, the centennial of 1887, and the sesquicentennial of 1937 elicited little public response. There was a growing acceptance of the Constitution as a national symbol by the late nineteenth century, but public awareness of its contents and meaning failed to increase commensurately. Americans have found it easier to worship the Constitution than to comprehend it, easier to laud it than to read it. When not actually indifferent ot the Bill of Rights, ordinary Americans generally have been myopic and ungenerous in applying its guarantees. For the most part, efforts to educate the public regarding the Constitution's form and meaning have failed. Undaunted by their ignorance of the Constitution, Americans nonetheless have debated its meaning endlessly, clashed repeatedly over its role in their lives, and have persistently sought to change it. Some of the Constitution's most ardent promoters also have been those most intent on amending it, or misrepresenting it for partisan purposes.

_spheres of Liberty_, which originated as the Merle Curti Lectures for 1985-1986, is the briefer, yet more impressive of the two books. Here Kammen seeks to define liberty, a task that has frustrated scores of scholars, teachers, and observers before him. He does so in terms of how liberty has been perceived by Americans over time. He argues that the meaning of liberty cannot be defined or appreciated as a singular quality; it must be, and has been, understood in relation to complementary or contrapuntal values. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Americans understood liberty as part of a struggle between it and authority, or in connection with property. In the nineteenth century the 'coupled concepts' were liberty and order. By the early decades of the twentieth century liberty was debated in association with concepts of justice and, to a lesser extent, equality. The connections he establishes are treated in the context of shifting moods and patterns which permits readers to observe the conditions which shaped each era's ideal of liberty.

In both books Kammen ends on positive notes. He concludes that despite everything, the Constitution has "held up remarkably well and has ... provided stability for the majority as well as shelter for aggrieved groups and individuals" (399). Our view of liberty also has broadened dramatically to embrace more groups and issues. Readers might argue Kammen's own evidence belies his optimism. One also can quibble with the timing he attaches to changes, his omissions, or his slighting of cause and effect relationships. But for those accustomed to Kammen's erudition and wit, and his eye for the interesting anecdote, these books will satisfy. Both are important contributions to this
nation's intellectual and cultural history. They will bring pleasure to the layman and challenge the specialist. One cannot ask more of an author.

_G. S. Rowe_


The first of these pamphlets (they can hardly be called books) was commissioned by the Library Company of Philadelphia—which was already a half-century old when the great Constitutional Convention met. By showing the extensive holdings of the Library Company, which the delegates were formally invited to use, Professor Greene depicts the intellectual heritage available to that remarkable assemblage, but unfortunately he cannot say which delegates read what books. He indicates the books that were actually present in the Library Company at that time, but also discusses other parts of the delegates' heritage, as quoted from time to time in their speeches and letters.

Thus he gives in brief outline the political, economic, and legal background of the Framers of the Constitution of 1787, emphasizing the liberal tradition, the much older jurisprudential tradition of England, the Scottish moral and historical tradition, and everything that could be included in the general term Enlightenment. Many names are dropped, but attention is directed to the key figures: Sir William Blackstone, John Locke, Tom Paine, Baron Montesquieu, and a few others. The reader gets a clear and concise summary of the intellectual climate of opinion in Philadelphia two centuries ago.

The second pamphlet deals with the historical writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially the latter, and includes citations as recent as 1985 and 1986. It was commissioned by the Friends and Independence National Historical Park, and is intended to cover the entire constitutional era. But it omits some of the classics such as Scharf and Westcott's three-volume _History of Philadelphia_. At the end of 1987 Professor Greene will contribute an addendum to the _Bicentennial Bookshelf_. Both of these works, and the addendum, will be of interest to serious scholars and librarians, but they are too inclusive and encyclopedic for light reading.

_John M. Coleman_


A unanimous tribute to Dr. Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., who retired in 1986 as Librarian and Executive Officer of the American Philosophical Society, is embodied in the twelve historical essays included here. In light of Bell's own scholarly interest in the collecting and editing of Franklin papers it is appropri-
ate that this volume opens with an essay on Benjamin Franklin—"The Old England Man." Wright stresses the strong ties Franklin maintained with friends and scholars abroad, and his many visitors of "sensible, virtuous and elegant minds." Indeed, "it was his fortune to be at the crossroads at a dramatic moment: it transformed the Old England Man into the last Anglo-American."

Edwin Wolf's essay on "Frustration and Benjamin Franklin's Medical Books" explores Franklin's concern in regard to dividing his medical library among contentious nephews and grandsons. Conflicting claims often were left to arbitration and indignation as the old patriot reluctantly yielded his precious library to the claims of mortality.

In "The Men of '68: Graduates of America's First Medical School" Randolph Shipley Klein traces ten fledgling graduates of the College of Philadelphia from their sedate Latinized graduation ceremonies to often grim medical employments on battlefields and during yellow fever epidemics. By the end of the war with England four of the seven remaining graduates had found politics equally as interesting as was medicine.

The transit of Venus on June 3, 1769, spurred intense interest on the part of the newly founded American Philosophical Society, whose members hoped by its study to gain recognition from European scientists. An observatory was built on the State House grounds from whose platform the Declaration of Independence was read before delegates to the Second Continental Congress. Silvio A. Bedini, Keeper of the Rare Books of the Smithsonian Institution, traces the subsequent efforts to locate the old Rittenhouse Observatory—a task frustrated by the ravages of time and the confusion wrought by later exploratory excavations.

Newcomers with excellent European engineering preparation found ready acceptance in America. Edward C. Carter II notes Benjamin Latrobe's remarkable achievements in engineering such projects as the Philadelphia waterworks. A "learned engineer"—first of his kind in the United States—Latrobe was also an active member of the American Philosophical Society.

Thomas C. Cochran and Brooke Hindle re-examine the pre-1850 American industrial revolution by reference to English experience. The rise of the corporation in America, a cultural acceptance of practical work and in improving productive physical devices, security for private investment, and ingenious workbench technology together embody the elements underlying economic expansion in both countries. Hindle stresses the need for historians to emphasize the significance of physical remains when assessing technological and entrepreneurial development because "objects express deeply the purpose and manner of their manufacture."

Science rather than technology directs Joseph Ewan's comments on his bibliographic explorations of Benjamin Smith Barton's botanical library which at the time of Barton's death in 1815, was the largest in America. That credit in biological sciences was more easily granted to English scientists than to now recognized greater names is suggested by Bentley Glass. Jane M. Oppenheimer's evaluation of the achievements of Swiss-born embryologist Louis Agassiz suggests that the persona may eclipse true scientific merit. Agassiz's lectures achieved wide popularity in the United States where he was naturalized in 1861.

Less directly related to science in this otherwise intensely organized volume are the substantial essays by Marvin E. Wolfgang on "consensus and conflict"
relating to early prison reform, and William W. Abbott's "William Byrd Reports on his Mission to the Cherokee in 1758." Abbott exemplifies the historian's skill in exploiting contemporary sources, notably the letters of William Byrd III of Westover relating to the recruiting of Indian allies against the French.

A complex but carefully written and edited series of essays, *Science and Society in Early America* is a valuable contribution to the scholar's bookshelf.

*Pennsylvania State University*  
HUGO A. MEIER


The quests for a national literature and, on another track, a distinctively American artistic sensibility during the early nineteenth century are common themes. Less well appreciated is a concurrent effort to Americanize scientific enterprise, particularly what we today know as natural history. This important, if less than triumphantly realized movement, is the main focus of *The Eagle's Nest.*

Porter's opening into the world of natural history will be familiar to most readers. She outlines the theory of degeneration, associated with the Comte de Buffon, which fascinated Europeans and infuriated educated Americans during much of the eighteenth century. Also familiar, due largely to the work of the late Charles Coleman Sellers, are the efforts of Charles Willson Peale to stimulate public interest and broaden public knowledge in the "book of nature" through the establishment of a museum in Philadelphia. Peale's museum and its sister institution, the Academy of Natural Sciences, helped to preserve valuable bird and mammal specimens, and to promote public interest in nature. As Porter shows, this was a case of necessity being the mother of invention, since the federal government was a notably stingy benefactor of natural science until the 1840s.

Porter's accounts of the degeneracy controversy and Mr. Peale's museum occupy roughly one-third of this slender volume. The rest of the book is devoted to a variety of related themes: detailed accounts of pioneering ornithological work in the new nation; the varied and only partially successful efforts of illustrators to preserve and disseminate field observations; debates over taxonomic systems; the vision and philanthropies of businessman-turned-geologist William Maclure; the scientific impetus at Robert Owen's experimental community of New Harmony, Indiana; and the importance of Mr. Peale's museum to the influential work of Edward Hicks, the popular folk artist whose many versions of "The Peaceable Kingdom" connected the natural world to a moral landscape that was not nearly so fixed as a cursory view might suggest.

Porter treats these discrete subjects with intelligence and balance. She does not try to press her evidence into molds it will not fit—for example, to argue that Americans were, overall, noticeably innovative and sophisticated in their ideas on classification. Her debts to other scholars are amply recorded, and her endnotes provide historians of American science with bibliographical leads that can be readily and fruitfully exploited.
Less successful is Porter's attempt to connect her subject to broader currents in American society, to analyze it in a social, political, or economic context. An uninitiated reader would not easily grasp from her account what the New Harmony Experiment, for example, was designed to accomplish or what became of it. Elsewhere, Porter's assertions are not always reliable. She states, as the basis for her proposition that scientific enterprise was at times retarded by national economic problems, that between 1819 and 1829 national per capita income declined by 20 percent (p. 135). Yet the "fact" underlying the premise is both unverifiable (given the data available) and highly implausible. The years 1819-1823 were indeed "hard times," but the American economy gradually picked up steam and between 1825 and 1830 the economy thrived. Indeed, during this period the federal government made significant progress towards retiring the national debt. So much for a simple cause-effect relationship between national prosperity and the health of scientific enterprise.

These, however, are minor flaws in a generally satisfactory tour of American natural history during its formative years. Charlotte Porter deserves great credit for wading through an immense mass of data and producing our first cogent overview of this hitherto neglected subject. And the University of Alabama press merits commendation for producing a most handsome volume at a reasonable price.

Millersville University of Pennsylvania

MICHAEL J. BIRKNER


For once we have a book that offers more than the title suggests! Joan Jensen has given us a work that not only addresses the role of women in the developing nation, but also helps us understand the dynamics of society in general. On one level, it is a history of the women who lived in rural communities of the Brandywine Valley (Chester County, Pennsylvania, and New Castle County, Delaware) during a period of great change. On a more important level, however, it helps explain the changes that transformed mid-eighteenth-century American agriculture into early nineteenth-century, pre-industrial, commerical farming and how these changes gave rise to the reform movements of antebellum America.

The author studies three "spheres" of rural women's lives: the household, the market place, and the public sphere—religion, education and reform. Through the interaction of their roles in these three areas of life, Jensen believes that, over the course of the century under study, women in the Brandywine Valley "loosened their bonds" (that is to say, decreased patriarchal power within the family). She also believes that they played a significant role in the commercialization and economic development of the region which then led to their being accorded a significant role in the reform movements of the antebellum period.

The author is ingenious in teasing material from common sources, as well as in using those sources in new and different ways. This is particularly true in her analysis of the household through the use of estate and church records, almanacs, and the diaries and records of doctors and midwives. Her use of the poorhouse
records is especially illuminating and gives us an excellent picture of the lot of poor women in rural Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Probably the most fascinating, as well as the most important, section of the work deals with the commercialization of dairy farming in the Brandywine Valley and the extensive international butter trade that developed at the end of the eighteenth century. American butter exports rose to 2.5 million pounds in 1796 and extended as far as China and East India. The author refers to the farming areas around Philadelphia as the “butter belt.” Clearly, as presented by Jensen, this butter trade was a preindustrial, commercial activity that was in the women’s “sphere.” Success in this area, then, gave women a way of lessening patriarchal power over other areas of their lives, such as education, religion and reform, in general, and abolition and the feminist movement, specifically.

The book is not without its problems, however. First is the inexcusable absence of a map. Unless one is very familiar with the area under discussion, it is impossible to place the Brandywine Valley in geographical perspective, let alone understand the references to places in the Valley.

Second, while the book does supply more than the title suggests, it can be misleading. It is not really a study of Mid-Atlantic women, but rather of two counties in the mid-Atlantic region. Whether they are “typical” of the region remains to be seen, and whether they were chosen because they were “typical,” convenient, or the only ones with records, is not explained.

Along the same lines, because of the nature of the records, it is primarily a study of Quaker women. Whether Quaker women were typical of other women in the mid-Atlantic region also remains to be studied. This reviewer remains convinced that they were not the typical rural women and their Quaker background may explain this “loosening the bonds” more than their commercial successes do.

Finally, there is the use of statistics and chronology. Many times the reader is not sure of the magnitude of the sample used as the basis for making assertions. While there is an appendix of tables and charts, it takes considerable digging to determine the number of people involved as the basis for many of the generalizations. Also, chronology is, at times, difficult to follow, and the reader is often unsure whether the discussion is of the mid or late eighteenth century or the early or mid nineteenth century.

In conclusion, Joan Jensen has given us an original and illuminating work that will prove useful not only to scholars interested in women’s studies, but also to any one studying the development of American society, economy, or reform.

Pennsylvania State University, Media, PA

GEORGE W. FRANZ