BOOK REVIEWS


Volumes of the Franklin Papers continue to be published with admirable regularity. The latest, and last under the editorship of the late William B. Willcox, covers the spring and early summer of 1778, the period immediately following the completion of the Franco-American alliance.

During these months, Franklin's position as one of the American commissioners in France changed. Some older problems—the fate of American prisoners-of-war in Britain, for example—continued to concern him and his correspondents. The French alliance, however, provided new opportunities and responsibilities for Franklin and the other commissioners. Formal correspondence with French officials now became greater. Messages of congratulations poured in. Schemes of all sorts were submitted, ranging from suggested plans of government for the United States to commercial proposals. At least three feelers about reconciliation, designed to undermine the new alliance, came from the British.

In dealing with these concerns, Franklin also found his position changed within the commission. John Adams replaced Silas Deane, with whom Franklin had worked closely and well. Franklin had also become so estranged by this time from Arthur Lee, the third commissioner, that he resorted to writing him angry letters, which the Franklin Papers editors believe were never sent. Franklin's language in these drafts recalled his exchanges with Thomas Penn twenty years previously. On April 4, he objected to Lee treating him, "as if I had been one of your domestics," with a "jealous, suspicious, malignant and quarrelsome temper."

This new personnel dynamic within this commission, the editors point out in their thoughtful introduction, reduced Franklin's influence. Adams assumed most of the commission's administrative responsibilities, freeing Franklin to cultivate his public image—on April 29, for example, Franklin and Voltaire publicly embraced to the applause of the Academie des sciences. Adams scorned such activities as frivolous, however, and the negative evaluation he seems to have quickly made about Franklin encouraged him to side with Lee and create a new majority faction within the commission. An immediate consequence of this alignment was the commission's abrupt conclusion of the controversy about who was to be American agent at Nantes. On April 13 the commissioners curtly endorsed the appointment of Jean-Daniel Schweighauser and later summoned the incumbent agent, Franklin's grand-nephew Jonathan Williams, Jr., back to Paris to settle his accounts. Franklin apparently prepared a more softly-worded directive, which the commission did not endorse. Franklin's emerging position within the commission was perhaps indicated by his June 1 letter to John Paul Jones, which contained a proposal Jones was instructed to keep secret from the other commissioners. It had been this practice of unilateral action, specifically keeping secret the details of Deane's departure, that had already alienated
Franklin from Ralph Izard, Congress's commissioner-designate to Tuscany, whose angry correspondence is prominent in this volume.

The new structure of the commission also permits the Franklin Papers editors to introduce an important change in their procedures. Since most of the commission's correspondence has been recently printed in the Adams Papers, they have wisely chosen to begin summarizing it in the Franklin Papers rather than printing it in full. The editors have also expanded their practice of printing one example and summarizing the remainder of routine types of correspondence which Franklin did not reply to, such as that from consulship seekers. As a result of these editorial practices, this volume contains about 860 documents in about 750 pages, compared to about 725 documents in about 775 pages in volume 25.

Franklin was not in close touch with Pennsylvania during these months. A handful of letters to and from his son-in-law, Richard Bache, were short and unrevealing. Franklin seemed unconcerned about the British occupation of Philadelphia, even his property and papers in the city. In a note to Bache and his wife on March 31, Franklin offhandedly admitted "I know not whether . . . you have a house left." It appears that Franklin did not receive a detailed, first-hand account of the capture and occupation of Philadelphia until he received Thomas Paine's letter to him written on May 16.

The Bache correspondence, and that with other Pennsylvanians such as Benjamin Rush and Thomas Bond, Jr., largely concerned introductions and recommendations for trans-Atlantic visitors. Indeed, from his correspondence it must have seemed to Franklin that his chief connection with Pennsylvania was Europeans' conception of his influence there. For example, on March 4, he was sent an application from a person interested in the German Reformed pastor's job in Philadelphia. On April 24, Dr. John Fothergill sought his intervention in favor of neutralist Philadelphia Quakers. On May 31, the widow of William Neate wrote asking assistance in collecting money owed her husband by Philadelphia correspondents. Similar intercessions came from Pennsylvanians seeking Franklin's assistance in Europe. In letters written on March 5 and May 31, Richard Peters, Jr., asked for help in locating his father in England. On June 5, Amelia Barry, the daughter of Franklin's old associate Lewis Evans, wrote begging for a consul's job in Europe for her impoverished husband.

These concerns must have seemed small to Franklin in the celebratory atmosphere of post-alliance Paris so well documented by this volume.

University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire

ROBERT J. GOUGH


In Public Housing, Race and Renewal, John F. Bauman chronicles the evolution of the public housing projects of Philadelphia from "way stations" for the industrial working class during the late 1930's and 1940's to "welfare centers" for the urban underclass in the 1960's and 1970's. Bauman argues that this shift in the mission of public housing which took place in the 1950's did not occur by accident. The public housing projects of Philadelphia became "islands
of poverty" and places for the distribution of welfare services when the public housing became an appendage to urban renewal.

In Part 1, "A Vision of Modern Housing," Bauman traces the history of Philadelphia's public housing to 1945. He finds that the dismal living conditions of Philadelphia's working class concerned local reformers long before federally subsidized public housing came into being in the 1930's. Unfortunately, these reformers did not agree on the means by which working class housing should be improved. Nor did they share a concern with the even more complex problem of finding decent housing for the city's growing numbers of black workers.

"Professional" housing reformers such as Bernard Newman of the Philadelphia Housing Authority remained convinced that private enterprise could be persuaded to build decent, low cost housing. They favored strict enforcement of building and health codes relating to housing by local governments.

The "communitarian" housing reformers "traced social conflict to the dissolution of community wrought by industrialization, and proposed modern housing and planning as tools to restore moral order." (p. 5) They had no such faith in private enterprise. They believed that the improvement of working class housing conditions would only occur if the federal government addressed the working class housing problem in the manner of many European nations. Catherine Bauer, Henry Wright, Clarence Stein, and others who were members of the loosely organized Regional Planning Association of America, advocated the construction of well-designed residential communities that would provide the working class families with affordable housing and access to educational and community facilities.

World War I and the Great Depression forced the federal government to address the housing problems faced by workers. Residential communities were built for the city's shipyard workers during World War I. It was during the Great Depression, however, that the federal government really began to have an effect on the working class housing market in Philadelphia. By 1936, advocates of low-cost housing all over the world had their eyes on the city's Carl Mackley Homes which were cooperatively owned by the American Federation of Full-Fashioned Hosiery Workers. The Carl Mackley Homes were built under a loan program sponsored by the Public Works Administration (PWA) for limited dividend or non-profit housing corporations, under Title II of the National Recovery Act of 1933.

Bauer and other communitarian housing reformers hoped that the Carl Mackley homes would inspire working class activism in the field of housing, but a militant working class housing movement never materialized. As a result, the low income public housing program that was created with the passage of the Wagner Housing Act of 1937 was top-down in its bureaucratic structure and did not seek the involvement of the persons it was targeted for. From the time of its establishment through the immediate post-World War II period, public housing was an acceptable "temporary refuge" for the working class family that had hit upon bad times. A brief period of residence in publicly assisted housing would enable the economically distressed family to get back on its feet financially and return to the private real estate market.

In Part II, "Public Housing and Urban Renewal," Bauman demonstrates how the public housing program's original "way station" mission was under-
mined by the urban renewal program in the late 1950's and 1960's. Like earlier housing reformers, advocates of urban revitalization did not share the same vision of a renewed Philadelphia. One thing that most had in common, however, was a fear of large concentrations of blacks in center city Philadelphia. As a result, urban renewal constituted black removal in Philadelphia just as it did in other major American cities.

Business interests, represented by the Greater Philadelphia Movement, were especially concerned with arresting what they saw as the decay of the city's downtown area. Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania were among those eager to see the effects of major renewal projects such as Penn Center spill over into areas outside of the central business district. Each renewal project had its supporters and its opponents among the multitude of committees, panels, and advisory groups formed by the city's redevelopment and housing authorities and concerned citizens groups. The renewal plans that created the greatest turmoil, however, were those which involved the construction of new low income public housing projects.

Before a slum was razed, federal law required that provision had to be made for the rehousing of residents affected by the demolition. Since most of the residents in targeted neighborhoods qualified for public housing, on a theoretical level, it seemed simple enough to relocate those families to public housing. In reality, however, the Philadelphia Housing Authority was hardly equipped to rehouse residents displaced by renewal. It gave little more than lip service to the fight for the construction or rehabilitation of homes for low income families in neighborhoods that were not already blighted. Areas such as Manayunk, Overbrook, and Roxborough, were successful in resisting public housing because they enjoyed “high rates of home ownership and the presence of a stable neighborhood employment base.” (p. 162) Public housing projects were located in areas where the residents lacked the resources to resist attempts to build public housing in their communities. Further complicating the efforts of the housing authority to relocate displaced families was the fact that many refused to move into public housing and presumably vacated one slum for another.

Bauman is convincing in his argument that the poor reputation that public housing suffers from today is a result of racism and the use of public housing to warehouse low income persons by urban renewal. The books, maps and diagrams provided help to illustrate his argument. On the other hand, the absence of photographs is surprising. Outside of a visit to Philadelphia's public housing projects, there is no better way to convey the difference between the ambiance that surrounds the wartime Abbotsford Homes which were built in a suburban like setting and that of the Raymond Rosen Homes, which “exuded an air of regimentation, evoking the worst of the Bauhaus.” (p. 114)

More significantly, however, Bauman’s treatment of the relationship between federal housing and renewal policy and how it affected Philadelphia is sometimes uneven. For example, if the Housing Act of 1954 was primarily responsible for making public housing the “handmaiden of urban renewal,” (p. 140) we need to know more about the law, who supported it, and whether its disastrous effects on the public housing program were anticipated in Congress, particularly by Pennsylvania Congressionalmen. Despite these minor shortcomings, Bauman’s book deserves the careful attention of historians and urban policy makers. It provides a painful portrait of the failings of our forebears to house
persons of low income. As Bauman pointed out, the task we are now faced with is finding an alternative to the warehousing of low income families in public housing.

_Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission_ KRISTIN SZYLVIAN BAILEY


One of the ironies of recent historical scholarship is the paucity of attention given campaigns to organize workers in the highly industrialized Pittsburgh region in the early twentieth century. In _Less Than Forever_, Professor Carl I. Meyerhuber recounts these efforts with a meticulously researched, painstakingly detailed collection of local studies focusing on the struggles of workers in the Allegheny and Kiskimenitas river valleys between the turn of the century and the end of World War II. Exploring their experiences in electrical machinery, coal, steel and aluminum, Professor Meyerhuber highlights both their militancy in fighting corporate domination, and their lack of adherence to radical movements such as the IWW, the National Miners Union, and the Communists. He does so, however, without examining the factors underlying these apparently contradictory political postures. Ultimately, this approach leaves the reader with a thorough knowledge of the outlines of western Pennsylvania labor battles, but with few insights into their causes or outcomes.

Based on the experiences of workers in four industrial sectors, the book can be divided into several sections. The organization of bituminous coal miners in the Pittsburgh seam between 1901 and 1933 receives the most detailed treatment—five chapters in all. This is preceded by a glimpse at electrical workers’ efforts toward industrial unionism during the bitter Westinghouse strikes of 1914–1916, and is followed by a chapter on the Amalgamated Association and SWOC at Apollo and Vandergrift between 1933 and 1937, and by a final chapter exploring the formation of the Aluminum Workers’ Union, its purge of radicals, and its eventual amalgamation with the United Steel Workers. Each “section” stands independently, and no attempt is made, until the epilogue, to relate the experiences of the different groups of workers. They are tied thematically, nonetheless, by several threads: anti-labor violence, “the region’s proletarian conservatism” (p. 201), the failure of craft unionists to relate to workers’ needs and demands, and the extraneous, ephemeral character of progressive and radical leaders and movements.

Lest we forget that Pennsylvania’s rise to world industrial prominence took place within the context of a civil war waged by capital against labor, the first seven of the book’s nine chapters document the relentless repression of workers’ basic civil liberties by the giant, Pittsburgh-based corporations that came to dominate the local, national, and global economies in the twentieth century. In the cattle chute for returning electrical workers in the Westinghouse strikes, the vigorous suppression of steel workers’ public gatherings at Vandergrift, and the indiscriminate violence meted out to miners by company thugs, state militia, and local constabularies (vividly portrayed in a superb recounting of the murder of UMWA organizer Fannie Sellins), workers and activists clearly faced overwhelming odds in their attempts to organize viable unions. The extent of their
persecution, and the degree to which it was initially sanctioned and ultimately regulated by the state, is analyzed in Chapter Six, appropriately entitled "The Arbiters."

Nonetheless, Professor Meyerhuber argues, "(f)our generations of American labor radicals, including the IWW, the Socialists, and the Communists would discover that official and corporate repression were not necessarily the most formidable obstacle they faced." (p. 20) To be sure, radical presence was not wanting in any of the episodes studied. The IWW, Socialists and Communists were highly visible in the Westinghouse conflicts. The coalfield battles involved the Progressive Miners Bloc, the Save the Union Committee, and the National Miners' Union. Battles over Socialists and Communists determined the outcome of aluminum workers' organizational struggles during and after World War II.

In episode after episode, however, radical organizers lost critical support to far less aggressive trade unionists, or encountered workers whose industrial militancy masked a profound political conservatism.

Without explaining the sources of this conundrum, the author concludes with a harsh postmortem on the political failures of organized labor. Although the New Deal offered the CIO unions a chance for political as well as economic power, they instead turned inward and "practiced traditional unionism on an industrial scale." (p. 204) Not only did they fail to seize city hall, but they also neglected to recognize the implications of the region's industrial decline for the unions and their rank and file. Such an evaluation, however, appears premature in the absence of an analysis of the formative influences on workers' values and their views of the world. Professor Meyerhuber does offer tantalizing possibilities: in the political and economic power of giant corporations; in the affinity of workers for conservative religious groups; and in the strength of community institutions and traditions. Nonetheless, the extent of their influence in shaping the political consciousness of various groups of workers remains unexplored, as does the local significance of labor's political involvement.

If this is a weakness in the present volume, however, it is precisely the strength of recent historical scholarship, which has sought, in the nexus of work, family, community and local politics, the sources for workers' political consciousness. The author's readily acknowledged detachment from the questions and concerns of "the new labor history" (p. 12), however, both weakens his conclusions about Pennsylvania workers, and limits the applicability of his analysis to the wider arena of capital-labor conflict.

Nonetheless, Professor Meyerhuber's book has made a strong beginning in filling a gaping chasm in the labor history of Western Pennsylvania. It relates in convincing detail the organizing experiences of many Western Pennsylvania workers, and sets the stage for exploring in greater depth the factors shaping their outcomes.

University of Pittsburgh

Richard O'Connor


My initial reaction to this volume is that the author's 135 pages of text are inadequate to deal with such a complex subject. The first four chapters of the
book treat the Pennsylvania iron industry from 1750 to 1800. Chapter 5 is
devoted to the 1800-1850 period and Chapter 6 discusses the 1850-1860 era.
Chapter 7 is the conclusion. The result is that a much clearer picture of the iron
industry emerges for the 1750 to 1800 period than for the 1800 to 1860 period.
Admittedly, the eighteenth century iron industry has been little studied,
justifying a more in-depth discussion. I do feel that a fuller discussion of the later
stages of the history of the iron industry would have added to a more complete
picture of the development of this industry.

The data available concerning the Pennsylvania iron industry are fragmen-
tary and often contradictory. Paskoff made a superb effort to collect the data and
synthesize it in such a manner to make it accessible to the reader. His analysis is
enhanced by 49 tables, 13 figures, and 3 maps. He also takes the time to explain
fully the nature of the data used and how he made his calculations for his tables.
The value of this is that other researchers will be better able to use his data for
comparative purposes and also may be able to refine his figures as new
information comes to light. The tables cover such topics as: Wages and Prices in
Pennsylvania, 1730-74, Selected Years; Labor Time Necessary to Produce One
Ton of Bar Iron, 1730-73, Selected years; Travel Times for the Philadelphia-
New York Post; Effect of Slope on the Drawing Power of a Horse; Business
Organization of Production Facilities, 1716-1800, 1830 and 1849; and Engi-
neering Efficiency of Anthracite Blast Furnaces, 1840-50, by Volume. The
point is that the iron industry was affected by a variety of factors and to
understand fully the evolution of the iron industry one must also understand all
of those factors which affected the iron industry through the course of its
development. Paskoff shows an excellent grasp of how these many factors
interrelate.

One of the more interesting facets of the iron industry treated by Paskoff is
how the business organization of production facilities is related to the develop-
ment of the industry. He distinguishes three levels of organization: individual,
partnership, and company. He shows very well how these types of organization
are related to iron-making technology and the state of the market for iron. He
also demonstrates that even the adoption of the more advanced technology of
anthracite furnaces was done only on a modest scale and served to inhibit the
technological change of the iron industry and limited the amount of change in
the organizational structure of the industry. His discussion of these points
certainly adds to one's understanding of a very complex series of conditions.

The value of any study of this nature lies not only in how well it treats the
subject matter, but also in its ability to point the way for further research. This
volume can very well serve as a jumping-off point for a more in-depth analysis of
the many factors relevant to the iron industry. This can readily be done due to
the fact that Paskoff has carefully documented his sources and methods of
analysis in the end-notes of the book. This can, hopefully, provide the impetus
for other researchers to build on his work and provide a fuller understanding not
only of the iron industry, but also of the myriad other phenomena which affected
the development of the iron industry and presumably affected other aspects of
society at this time.

The book is well-researched and written. While it appears that the author
should have considered narrowing the scope of his research, the broadness of his
approach very effectively points the way to some intriguing research possibili-
ties. The study provides a basis of solid research and analysis from which many more studies can be undertaken.

Wyoming Historical and Geological Society
Wilkes-Barre, PA

RICHARD A. KASTL


Beyond Confederation is but one of many titles to be published as a consequence of the celebration of the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. Ten of the twelve essays appearing in this volume were initially presented at a conference “The Creation of the American Constitution” held in Philadelphia in October 1984. This conference, in many ways, was an inaugural event for historians on the Bicentennial observance.

The book opens with a useful “Introduction” by Richard R. Beeman, who establishes the tone for the essays, organized in three parts, that follow on the current scholarship on the heritage of eighteenth-century thought. The motives of the founding fathers, “always a source of controversy among scholars,” Beeman notes, “seem no clearer to us” in the 1980s. Perhaps this collection of essays, which does not hang together very well, reflects the aforementioned differences among scholars noted by the editors.

Part I entitled “Ideologies” contains three articles by Stanley Katz (emphasizing the traditions of American legal thought), Ralph Lerner (challenging nearly the whole of the “ideological school” interpretation), and Gordon Wood (exploring the nature and legacy of Antifederalism). The most thought-provoking article in this section, if not for the entire volume, is Wood’s “Interests and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution.” Modifying and building upon his classic, The Creation of the American Republic, he claims that “maybe it was the Antifederalists who really saw best and farthest” and who may have been “the real harbingers of the moral and political world we know” (pp. 69-70). What lay behind the Federalists’ “sense of crisis,” Wood concludes, was not the defects of the Confederation government but instead a decade of excesses of democracy. According to Wood, the need for “disinterestedness” in public officials and for less preoccupation with “interest” was on the minds of the Founding Fathers. Pennsylvania’s William Findley is singled out as representing modernity in Antifederalist thought and as being a spokesperson for the future-oriented, liberal tradition.

Part II titled “Issues” contains five articles, representing 40 percent of the volume’s contents. The key articles are by Janet Riesman, Lance Banning and Drew McCoy. In “Money, Credit, and Federalist Political Economy” Riesman concludes that Americans in the 1780s were as much concerned with prosperity as they were with virtue. She traces the important changes in the way in which Federalists and Antifederalists viewed the benefits and the perils of credit, indebtedness and wealth itself on the eve of the Federal Convention. In particular the Antifederalists are given credit for having seen that “the security of the forms of money the nation used was far less important to the future than
the Federalists supposed” (p. 161). The Antifederalists argued instead that “true wealth was grounded upon the contribution of the energies and labor of all citizens to the prosperity of the Republic” (p. 161). Thus, Riesman, like Gordon Wood, sees the Antifederalists as having fashioned forward-looking, modern ideas. So too, Lance Banning, in “The Practicable Sphere of a Republic” analyzes how Madison’s ideas had been significantly remolded by the framing of the Constitution. He tried, Banning contends, “to secure a general government whose authority would be effective or complete from his opinion of the quantity of power, the nature of the duties, that ought to be confided to federal hands” (p. 174). Here we have a corrective to Irving Brant and others, since Banning depicts two themes rather than one in Madison’s defense of the Constitution. In contributing to our understanding of the “middle ground” occupied by Madison, who believed in both governmental energy and freedom, Banning clarifies Madison’s conception of “federalism.” Drew McCoy also sees a Madison who held onto “classical politics.” In “James Madison and Visions of American Nationality in the Confederation Period,” McCoy examines the country’s regional and sectional divisions by looking more closely at the relationship between ideology and interests. According to McCoy, “the political history of the post-Revolutionary era is less a story of ideological controversy . . . than it is a reflection of the daunting challenge of fashioning political coherence from the recalcitrant materials of a regionally differentiated colonial past (p. 229). In treating the optimistic assumptions held by Southerners, and James Madison in particular, about the region’s role in the new Republic, McCoy reminds us that Madison had gravely miscalculated the demographic implications of economic development, inasmuch as the superior power of trade and manufactures of the North outstripped the agricultural South in terms of growth and power by 1820. Although well-crafted, the pieces by Richard D. Brown on how Shays’ Rebellion actually strengthened Antifederalism in Massachusetts and by Paul Finkelman on how racism and a slave-based agricultural system shaped the Constitution offer ideas stated in their previous writings.

Part III titled “Aftermath” contains essays by Jack Rakove, Richard E. Ellis, and Stephen Botein. In “The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George Washington,” Rakove, like Drew McCoy, moves beyond the insights of the “republican synthesis” school. Contrary to the Founding Fathers’ belief in classical republican notions of distinterested public service, Rakove concludes that the new frame of government did not produce a new, more virtuous and insulated political elite. He also accounts for the political continuities and discontinuities during Washington’s first administration. Less important is Richard E. Ellis’s essay on “The Persistence of Antifederalism After 1789” because it does not cover new ground. Yet, it does offer a positive view on the Antifederalists, whose locally oriented principles were “truer to the spirit of 1776 than their Federalist opponents” (p. 314). On the other hand, Stephen Botein’s essay, “Religious Dimensions of the Early American State,” might be considered the place to start when studying “the place of religion in early American constitutional law” (p. 315). In revealing just how radically different the framers’ notions of a Christian republic were from the present conception of the church-state relationship, Botein concludes that “it cannot be denied that the Constitution was a perfectly secular text” (p. 317). This fact, of course, explains why the church-state issue was conspicuously absent in the debates over
ratification of the Constitution. This secularity was furthermore a departure in western political culture. In either event, Botein traces how the religious dimension of public life at the federal level of government was redefined, and how certain tensions with the original secular constitution were created as a consequence of redefining the religious dimensions of public life.

In the Epilogue titled “A Roof Without Walls: The Dilemma of American National Identity,” John M. Murrin writes about how the U.S. Constitution after the drafting and ratification became an important symbol of national unity. But the Federalists, he concludes, “were building a roof without walls” (p. 334). Given the fact that American nationalism was “distinct” from that of others, Murrin sees the Constitution of 1787 as something of a miracle; the frame of government “became a substitute for any deeper kind of national identity” (p. 346).

All in all, Beyond Confederation is a collection of essays for specialists studying the U.S. Constitution and late eighteenth-century thought. The volume, it seems, is at one time too limited and too broad. The Joyce Appleby and John P. Diggins critique of the “republican synthesis” is not integrated in the volume. Neither is there a celebration, a la Richard B. Morris, to be found here. To be sure, the anthology reflects current scholarship on the post-Revolutionary decades—which is fragmented and chaotic. Clearly a new synthesis is needed. Perhaps the fresh understanding of the Antifederalists and the impact the political economy had on society during the 1780s provided in this volume will begin this process.

Oberlin College

ROLAND M. BAUMANN


For years collectors of Pennsylvania decorated furniture have had few examples of Mahantongo furniture to study. Books on antiques have had to rely on the same examples time after time. One might have thought there were only a few existing examples from this region of Pennsylvania.

In 1980, the Reverend Frederick S. Weiser and Mary Hammond-Sullivan published their research in an article entitled “Decorated Furniture of the Schwaben Creek Valley.” This was an academic effort which complicated the life of a peaceful valley in Northumberland County. Extreme attention was given to the painting technique, in addition to the number of petals in the flowers. This in-depth analysis of the painting techniques and the moving of boundaries raised questions in the minds of many scholars. It was this article that inspired Henry M. Reed to pursue this interesting part of Pennsylvania folk art.

Reed selected Professor Don Yoder of the University of Pennsylvania to write a background essay for this volume. It explains the life, the relationships, and the furniture of the Mahantongo Valley. Those who were fortunate enough to see the exhibit at Bucknell University have a decided advantage in understanding the full spectrum of color. However, with over two dozen examples in color, the book aptly shows these color schemes which are so important to the study of folk art.
In his section of the book, Reed discusses the decorated furniture of the Mahantongo Valley by dividing the furniture into two categories. The first group comprises the blanket or dower chests. The second group is comprised of the "und so weiter," or the chests of drawers, desks and cupboards. Although there are examples that we have seen in the past, Reed introduces the reader to new pieces, as he calls his "new discoveries," and very clearly shows their relationship to others.

The discussion of the related pieces is done by both historical evidence along with similarities of design features. Reed has also been able to clearly relate the interaction of the taufschein and the decoration. Rather than getting into the symbolism that is so often done with decorated objects, Reed tends to show more how the localized culture was exhibited in their furniture, utilitarian items and decorative arts. This cultural influence was important, as Reed indicates, because although a majority of the early chests came from the Schwaben Creek-Himmel area, other chests show how widespread the painting technique was.

The use of color plates for many of the examples enables the reader literally to see the color combinations used by the decorators. When the color plate is juxtaposed to a black and white picture, the vibrance of the colors is even more obvious. Unfortunately there are no detailed pictures which could convey to the inexperienced person the real naivete of the painting. The imperfections of the fan corners and the pin-pricked angels cannot really be seen from the photographs. This knowledge would be important to understanding the untrained decorators who executed these works. This element of folk art could be more easily appreciated by those who did visit the exhibit. The reviewer would like to relate that the discovery of the desk in Plate 14, which Reed describes as "most skillful and spectacular" in folk art, was nearly lost to history. Had it not been for a driving rain in Pennsylvania, the four coats of paint would have been removed by commercial dip. Fortunately, we saw some of the ochre paint from the compass showing through—thus we get to enjoy this work of art today.

Reed, who obviously has a background in construction and refers to it for comparisons, unfortunately omitted some visual examples. Some specific photographs of construction of the back and recessed side panels of chests and desks would clarify his construction theories. Also, the use of measurements would help the reader to see the similarities mentioned by Reed. When measurements are identical, this strengthens the argument for pieces being done by the same hand.

Reed presents the reader with insight as to who may have been the actual decorators of the furniture. This discussion focuses on those involved in the art of fraktur writing. In this section Reed discusses such interesting personalities as Isaac Faust Stiehly and the relationship of fraktur motifs to the furniture decorations. This material, in addition to being interesting and logical, presents an excellent picture of how the different folk art decorators were influenced.

The last section of the book is the essay by Don Yoder. As usual, Yoder captures the flavor of the Pennsylvania Germans. As a native of the Mahantongo Valley, Yoder relates a unique understanding of life in the valley during its zenith of producing decorated furniture.

Yoder's discussion of Johannes Haas's account book demonstrates not only
the productivity of one person, but poses the question as to why so much was lost. Yoder also uses the "Pennsylvania Dutch" dialect in this section along with the English. This adds to the interest and insight of the Pennsylvania German.

The book is a major contribution to the study of Pennsylvania-decorated furniture. It not only presents examples of their work but relates the decoration to their culture. Reed has presented evidence which answers many questions, yet stimulates the curiosity to search for more. The book will be of interest and value to both the collector and the student of Pennsylvania German culture.

The Pennsylvania State University

RICHARD W. PENCEK


The mechanics institute was an opportunity for young men of the early nineteenth century to further their own and others' understanding and adoption of evolving modern technology. The Franklin Institute is seen by some as "the most successful American representative" of that movement. (1) Founded in 1824, it initially conducted scientific investigations, held exhibitions of American manufactures and technology, offered lectures, and published a regular journal. Though later overtaken by the growth of industrial and university research and by the professionalization of scientists and engineers at the turn of the century, the Institute continued to play an important role in sponsored research and popularizing scientific education. It remains today an important element of Philadelphia's cultural universe.

The microfiche collection described in this guide is a sampling of Institute textual and iconographic documentation which reflects "the Institute's involvement with the growing, modernizing technological community." (xi) It is the most recent by-product of Bruce Sinclair's award-winning Philadelphia's Philosopher Mechanics: A History of the Franklin Institute, 1824–1865 (Johns Hopkins University, 1974). Sinclair's work stimulated an NSF-funded microfilm edition of the records of the Institute's Committee on Science and the Arts for the period 1824–1900 in 28 rolls of microfilm (Scholarly Resources, 1977), an NEH project to process additional Institute records, and an NHPRC grant to produce a 536-fiche collection and this guide.

The filmed documents are divided into "manuscript" and "iconographic" materials. Within the first group are the membership lists and minutes of the Institute, the records of various sections and committees, the correspondence files of the Institute, records of exhibitions, records of its Bartol Research Foundation, and commemorative volumes. The iconographic materials include images from glass lantern slides; photographs; maps; architectural, naval architectural, and engineering drawings; and lithographs. They are arranged by collection: Lecture Lantern Slides, Welsbach collection (gas light and steel making), Graff collection (Philadelphia public works), Lenthall and Cramp collections (naval architecture), and the Wright Brothers collection (aeronautical working drawings).

Unlike the earlier microfilm collection which displayed the work of hundreds of American inventors as submitted for review and testing by the Institute's
Committee on Science and the Arts, this fiche edition presents a broader sampling of the Institute's work and activities. As described in the guide, the collection illustrates the early growth of the Institute and its gradual adaptation to the changing world of scientific education and technological progress. Educational efforts, for example, are documented by lecture texts and the accompanying glass lantern slides; scientific investigations by the correspondence, meeting minutes, and reports of the results; and exhibitions by committee minutes, judges' reports, and catalogs.

The guide itself is organized as an archival finding aid. Each major grouping of material begins with a note describing the scope and content of the materials. The types of information contained, its arrangement and access methods, details of filming and format are covered as well as a brief history of the origins of the materials and topics for which they may prove useful. There under each original unit of material, be it a bound volume or a file folder, is listed in its appropriate order—usually chronological by form of material. The sequence of the fiche follows this arrangement and each file or volume is identified by its fiche and frame number. The existence of enhanced images (better copies done as retakes) are shown in the main listing under the file or volume in question, with their fiche and frame number references as well.

The descriptions of each file or volume are usually brief phrases although lectures and papers are cited by title, author, and date, with bibliographic citation from the Institute's journal. Unfortunately, the index includes only organizational and personal names. Perhaps it was felt that the brevity of the guide (47 pages of description) or the discrete narrow topics covered by the various record groupings obviated the need for a subject index. Nevertheless the detailed indexing present in the earlier guide to the microfilm of the Institute's Committee on Science and the Arts records is lacking here.

Although the fiche were not seen by this reviewer, it seems plain from the guide that much material of interest to historians of science and technology will now be made more readily available through this collection.

*The Pennsylvania State University*  
Leon J. Stout