

## Book Reviews

By James R. Williamson and Linda A. Fossler. *Zebulon Butler: Hero of the Revolutionary Frontier*.

(Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 1995. Pp. 184. \$49.95).

Second-tier figures in Pennsylvania's colonial and Revolutionary history are sometimes not given the attention historians of other sections of the country, such as New England, might give people of comparable importance. This volume's foreword quotes nineteenth-century Wyoming historian Charles Miner: "The life of Colonel Zebulon Butler is the history of Wyoming. Almost every letter of our annals bears the impress of his name, and is a record of his deeds." Yet Williamson's and Fossler's work is the first full-length biography of Zebulon Butler.

Readers will not find major new interpretations of Butler's role in the history of the Wyoming Valley, an area in northeastern Pennsylvania bordering the Susquehanna River, about twenty miles long and three to four miles wide, centered on Wilkes-Barre, now in Luzerne County. They will find a detailed narrative of Butler's life, based primarily on the papers of Zebulon Butler, a thousand-item collection of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society in Wilkes-Barre, and on the published papers of the Susquehannah (sic) Company.

Williamson and Fossler show how Butler's background in a substantial Lyme, Connecticut, farming family, and his experiences in the French and Indian War, including service in the campaigns against Montreal and Havana, made him a natural leader among the Susquehannah Company settlers in the Wyoming Valley. The Connecticut Assembly had authorized the Susquehannah Company's settlement under the Connecticut Charter of 1662, which gave Connecticut the right to settle what is now northern Pennsylvania, an area also granted to the colony of Pennsylvania under its charter in 1682. As hundreds of settlers from Connecticut poured into the valley after the French and Indian War, Pennsylvania settlers in the surrounding area tried to repel them through a series of military skirmishes that are known as the three Pennamite Wars, launching decades of legal and political wrangling among the settlers from both colonies, the Susquehannah Company, the governments of Connecticut and Pennsylvania, and occasionally the Continental Army and the Continental Congress. Williamson and Fossler describe Butler's role in the actual settlement and in the Pennamite Wars in considerable detail. Less well fleshed out is the relationship of the settlers to the Susquehannah Company, and the Company's political relationship with the Connecticut Assembly, crucial for understanding the settlers' practical situation in Wyoming.

The most spectacular event in the early history of Wyoming was the Wyoming massacre, July 3, 1778, when approximately one thousand British, Indians, and loyalists attacked Forty Fort, a stronghold of the Connecticut settlers. Williamson and Foster point out that Butler and other senior officers tried unsuccessfully to restrain the three hundred settlers defending the fort from the folly of marching out to engage the attackers. Williamson and Fossler also justly criticize Butler's failure to organize and defend the settlers' flight from the valley after the massacre.

Williamson and Fossler have written a detailed and judicious biography of Zebulon Butler, a figure important enough to warrant such treatment long since.

Rosemary S. Warden, *Penn State Ogontz*

By Judith A. McGaw, ed., *Early American Technology: Making and Doing Things from the Colonial Era to 1850*.

(Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994. Pp. x, 482. Cloth. \$49.95. Paper. \$19.95.)

This useful work consists of an editor's introduction, nine essays (eight original, one reprinted), and two bibliographies with commentary. The first three items are general: McGaw's excellent introduction demonstrates the prescience of Brooke Hindle's seminal 1966 article, "The Exhilaration of Early American Technology." After indicating barriers to research and writing about technology before 1850, she argues for expanding Hindle's definition of technology, "making and doing things," to include the techniques, skills, and knowledge needed to make and do things. A thoughtful review by Robert C. Post of changing themes and ideas in technological history since 1966 follows. The section concludes with a reprint of Hindle's landmark article.

The contributions that follow illustrate neglected themes and techniques of early American technological history and expand its usual scope. Several are by and about women, all deal with the era before 1850, all but one centers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania or the Middle Atlantic Region. In a study of contraceptive and abortive know-how in the colonial period, Susan E. Klepp probes that era's indirect language and definitions to explode convincingly the notion that West European and early American society had few effective techniques for controlling human fertility. Michael McMahon's discussion of urban technology along Dock Creek in eighteenth-century Philadelphia reveals more about political, environmental, and philosophic matters than technology or techniques. While Patrick W. O'Bannon's account of commercial brewing in Philadelphia before 1840 deals more with technological change, it chiefly explains why brewers clung to old ways prior to the introduction of German lager beer after 1840.

Sarah F. McMahon's work on the technology of household food preservation in New England is revealing and provocative. Food storage and dietary technology are interestingly presented. She softens the arguments of some feminist scholars regarding rigid gender divisions of everyday labor. By stressing more the role of stark survival she could have made even clearer both how male and female task spheres were established and why they frequently yielded to cooperation. Most women worked in house and garden rather than fields because they were pregnant and/or nursing small babies much of their lives between puberty and menopause. Heavy field work and frequent commuting from field to house would have been impractical if not impossible. When necessity dictated, however, all household members worked together to save the food supply.

The importance of turnpikes to the development of southeastern Pennsylvania is Donald C. Jackson's subject. After justifying study of this long-neglected topic, he discusses generally the planning and construction of turnpikes. He concludes with the Germantown-Perkiomen Turnpike Company as a specific example.

One of the stronger studies is Robert B. Gordon's exploration of the origins of environmental and social costs of anthracite mining. He shows how early technological design decisions, once made (such as a narrow canal to reduce costs), set patterns and created problems that became increasingly costly and difficult, even impossible to remedy. He goes on to show how the technology that enabled anthracite to fuel American industrialization also moved manufacturing from its rural origins to urban settings, in the process creating both major social and environmental consequences. Carolyn C. Cooper uses inventories for mech-

anizing Philadelphia's woodworking industry to trace how patent management resulted in the reconstruction of the industry. The importance of her findings is sometimes obscured in a forest of detailed deals and litigation.

Judith McGaw's essay on the ownership of agricultural tools by ordinary farmers reveals a first-class mind at work. A thoughtful discussion of her research strategies and techniques is followed by significant findings that will force a reassessment of much that has been written about early American farmers and farming. McGaw's skill in teasing practical information on agricultural technology from hundreds of inventories of farmers' estates is itself a model of technique for historians.

A comprehensive bibliographic discussion and list of books on early American technology since 1966 by Nina E. Lerman, and an abstract of Hindle's "Bibliography of Early American Technology" complete the work. Over all this collection should be invaluable for specialists and non-specialists alike.

Gerald G. Eggert, *University Park, Pennsylvania*

### By Joyce Lee Malcolm. *To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an Anglo-American Right.*

(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994. Pp. 232, \$29.95.)

The Second Amendment to the Constitution states: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed." Read one way, this text ties the private possession of firearms to militia service. In that sense, it guarantees a collective right to bear arms in defense of the state, not an individual right to possess weapons for personal purposes. Joyce Lee Malcolm, a scholar of seventeenth-century English history, challenges this view. She argues that in both England and America, the right to bear arms guaranteed the individual possession of firearms for both personal and collective purposes. This understanding, she concludes, informed the thinking of the framers of the American Bill of Rights, "profoundly, albeit not exclusively" shaping their views (p. 135).

For Englishmen, bearing arms began as a duty. Both custom and statute demanded that they defend themselves, their families, their property, their communities, and their sovereign. Before the seventeenth century, legal restrictions might limit the use, but never the possession of firearms. The turmoil which began with Charles I and ended with the Glorious Revolution in 1688 transformed this duty into a right. In that half century, Englishmen at all levels grew ever more aware of the links between power and the possession of arms.

During the Civil War of the 1640s and early 1650s, for example, each side sought to disarm those it saw as dissidents or malignants. At the same time, armed civilians united to defend their communities against both Royalist and Parliamentary forces. In 1656 James Harrington, writing in *Commonwealth of Oceana*, linked land-holding, arms-bearing, and virtue with independence.

After 1660 the restored Stuart monarchs built up their income and their military force. When James II used both his money and his standing army to advance the cause of Catholicism in England, his Protestant subjects drove him out. William and Mary, the new monarchs, confirmed traditional English civil liberties in the Bill of Rights in 1689. This document included, for the first time in English history, a specific guarantee of the right to bear

arms. Fear of standing armies and of governmental tyranny had converted a duty into a right.

In the next hundred years Englishmen demonstrated that they understood this guarantee to include the individual's right to bear arms for private purposes. Parliamentary maneuverings, the government's justifications of efforts to disarm Catholics, court decisions, Blackstone's *Commentaries*, and publications by such Whig polemicists as John Trenchard, all confirm this view.

Englishmen in America believed much the same thing. A brief survey of seventeenth and eighteenth century practices in British North America, as well as an analysis of state and federal bills of rights suggest that the founders intended also to protect the private possession of firearms for personal, albeit legal, purposes. Here the Pennsylvania case is particularly revealing. Its Declaration of Rights [1776] offers one of America's most explicit statements "That the people have a right to bear arms for the defense of themselves and the state." (p. 148).

Professor Malcolm disclaims polemical purposes, defining her task as opening up a long neglected area of historical inquiry. However, she takes a solid position on a contemporary political issue and argues her case vigorously. Those interested in the current debate over "gun-control" as well as the evolution of civil rights in seventeenth-century England will find this book useful, possibly provocative, and certainly stimulating.

Owen S. Ireland, *SUNY College, Brockport*

*EDITOR'S NOTE: We inadvertently sent two copies of this book out for review. Given the work's importance and the reviews' different perspectives, we are printing both.*

**By Richard J. Carwardine. *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America.* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993. Pp. 487. \$45.00.)**

In recent years the realities of contemporary conservative politics have forced a new interest in evangelical religion on American historians who are overwhelmingly secular in outlook and left/liberal in ideology. While Alexis de Tocqueville noted the omnipresence of churches and the religiosity of the American people in the 1830s, many students of antebellum America have assigned a limited role to religion in the politics of the era and rejected the so-called "ethno-religious interpretation" in favor of an emphasis on "the market revolution" in which evangelical Christianity is only an element in the ideology of the emerging middle class, serving primarily as a mechanism for social control of the masses.

In *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* Richard J. Carwardine, a senior lecturer at the University of Sheffield and author of a previous book on popular evangelicalism in Britain and America from 1790 to 1865, attempts to redress the balance by taking the evangelicals seriously and arguing that they "were amongst the principle shapers of American political culture in the middle years of the nineteenth century" (p. ix). Beginning with the entrance of the evangelical ministers and their ideas into the politics of the second party system in the election of 1840, Carwardine follows the evolution of the politics of piety through subsequent presidential elections and political debates that led to the American Civil War.

He insists that not only did religious differences divide antebellum Americans, but religious rhetoric and emotion entered into all aspects of American life: "thinking about national mission and purpose; about entrepreneurialism and economic individualism; about the

relationships between men and women, parents and children, blacks and whites, immigrants and native Americans, rich and poor; about public and private morality; and most important of all . . . about the political responsibilities of the moral individual in a democracy and a republic" (p. 48). According to Carwardine, evangelical Protestantism was "the principal subculture in antebellum America" (p. xv) and splits within this group, combined with its effects on anti-evangelicals and "nothingarians" structured both the political coalitions and political discourse of the era.

Initially the division between the Puritans and the Pietists, the postmillennialists and the premillennialists, "reinforced the institutional pressures towards polarized two-party, adversarial politics" (p. xvii) in the form of the Whigs and Democrats. Eventually concern over immigration, temperance, and slavery undermined the second party system in the North and led to the establishment of the Republicans as the equivalent for the evangelicals of a Christian party in politics. This drove a wedge between northern and southern evangelicals until "northern and southern evangelicals could barely communicate across the sectional divide" (p. 323).

Employing traditional methods and something of a disdain for quantitative analysis, Carwardine's conclusion "that evangelicals' party preferences reflected a world view conditioned by their religious beliefs and church associations" is, as he says, "very largely consistent with the ethno-culturalists' argument" (p. xvi). Liberally acknowledging and appropriating the work of these students of voting behavior, Carwardine unfortunately leaves far too many loose ends and fails to handle with any precision the influence of the various ideas that he discusses. His book nonetheless adds immeasurably to the depth of our understanding of the role of religion in antebellum politics, and encourages the quest for a new synthesis of the causes of the Civil War.

William G. Shade, *Lehigh University*

**By Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America.***

(New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993. Pp. 487. \$45.00.)

From cover to cover in this long and prodigiously documented work, British historian Richard Carwardine argues that "evangelical Protestants were amongst the principal shapers of American political culture in the middle years of the nineteenth century" (p. ix). His purpose is "to secure for evangelicalism a more salient place in the historiography of the 1840s and 1850s, and of the coming of the American Civil War" (p. ix). Defining evangelical Protestantism as "the principal subculture in antebellum America," it is thus not surprising that he argues that Americans of the period took political positions "most in tune with their religious concerns and with the material ambitions which their religion fostered or sanctioned" (p. xvii).

This argument sets Carwardine's contribution apart from most of his predecessors and contemporaries. A book by American historian Mitchell Snay appearing simultaneously with this one, *Gospel of Disunion* (Cambridge), maintains the traditional line that Americans took religious ideas and used them in politics to argue about ideals such as the morality of slaveholding. For Carwardine, by contrast, political parties in America became virtually religious institutions. Indeed, the second party system "derived much of its force from the thrust of evangelical religion." Political campaigns took on the look and sound of religious revivals.

Campaigners began to sound much like the preachers they heard on Sunday.

Religious images, ideas, and rhetoric also infused the messages of politicians. They spoke of their party as seeking "a higher cause." The republic they would build sounded much like the Kingdom of God. And they marched lock step toward the "grand and glorious destiny" that would see "the introduction of [the] Political and Civil Millennium" (p. 19). Politicians themselves had best become evangelicals or they would be defeated at the hands of an electorate expecting them to practice Christian duties. The election of 1840 was the first of several where it became fundamental for candidates to portray themselves as being "good men."

Evangelicals had a problem in how they would relate to slavery, but none on abolitionism. Abolitionists were infidels and Jacobins because they threatened orthodoxy, ecclesiastical institutions, and political stability. For southern evangelicals slavery came to look more logical and reasonable as they hoped to Christianize and, of course, control the slave population. Free Soil and early Republican Party campaigns fused evangelical ardor with moral principles. In both North and South evangelicals came to see the state itself—but particularly the eventual Confederacy—as the means of introducing the millennium. Political parties became Christianized tools for achieving it.

Carwardine covers every campaign, every disputed issue, and virtually every political event from 1840 through the Civil War. He documents exactly how a very large pool of evangelical ministers and citizens felt about every one of them. The primary and secondary source documentation in the 115 pages that constitute his notes is both phenomenal and quite useful as a vast index of religious literature and opinion of the era. Despite Carwardine's specific thesis, he manages to be quite comprehensive. But for all of the excellence of his work, it must be said that the book's plodding chronicle from election to election, now North, now South, votes cast, sample of literary opinion, etc. is very difficult to read and to follow. When all is said and done, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* is a book that will be utilized, not loved.

Larry E. Tise, *Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, Philadelphia*

By Nina Mjagkij. *Light in The Darkness: African Americans and the YMCA, 1852-1946.*

(Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994. Pp. 198. \$23.)

In 1949 Carl Murphy, president of the Baltimore *African-American*, angered that he could not buy a cup of coffee in the cafeteria of the Baltimore Central YMCA, demanded that the National Council of the Y "take the 'C' out of the YMCA sign and put it into practice." The year before the National Council had passed a resolution urging local associations to "work steadfastly toward the goal of eliminating all racial discrimination." The resolution had obviously not yet influenced the YMCA leaders in Baltimore. Nina Mjagkij, an assistant professor at Ball State University, describes both events in this slender volume devoted to the role of the YMCA in serving African Americans. It is a story of "separate but equal," for the Y, founded for whites only, began to establish separate facilities for African Americans in the 1870s. The YMCA remained segregated, even in such northern cities as Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia, until the 1950s. This book, which describes both the African-American leaders and the white philanthropists who supported the segregated YMCA, is

based on extensive research in a number of manuscript collections including the YMCA records at the University of Minnesota and the Moreland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University. Unfortunately, it too often reads as if it were written primarily from annual reports, promotional literature, and board minutes.

The most interesting chapter is on World War I and the YMCA's efforts to serve the 400,000 black troops, and especially the 140,000 who went overseas. African-American social workers and other leaders, including a few women, staffed the YMCAs near Army bases and accompanied the African-American soldiers to France. Like their white counterparts, they tried to provide wholesome entertainment, athletic activities, and even guided tours of historic sites. But their main purpose was to keep the soldiers occupied when they were off duty and to prevent them from getting into trouble. The YMCA leaders, along with those who worked for the Commission on Training Camps and Secretary of War Newton Baker, feared that the soldiers, both black and white, would fall victims to prostitutes and be disabled by venereal disease. But Arthur B. Spingarn of the NAACP, who investigated the problems of venereal disease among the African-American troops, charged that the policy of southern cities was to clean up the vice in the white neighborhoods but "to leave the colored part of town 'wide open'. . . ." The problem of poor education and illiteracy among the African-American soldiers was also greater. At one Alabama training center more than half the African-American recruits had to sign with a mark to get their first pay check. The YMCAs had some success in teaching elementary reading and writing, but their success was limited. Despite the policy of strict segregation in both the Army and the YMCA, for a brief time at a leave area in the resort community of Aix-les-Bains, France accommodated both white and black soldiers. The practice, however, was quickly stopped by white YMCA officials who explained that "men would be better satisfied among those of kindred feeling and types, and that the privilege of unlimited self-expression would put more into their leave, than could otherwise be gained if [they] associated with white troops."

Among the illustrations in the book is a photograph of an African-American Y basketball team, yet there is no discussion of basketball or of other sports in the African-American YMCAs. Nor is there any information on summer camps. I would like to know more about whether the programs for African Americans and the attempts to promote manliness and to build character mirrored the white YMCAs, or whether they differed. I would also like to know more about the role of the Y in the great black migrations to northern cities, and more about their role in easing tensions during race riots. I would also like to know more about the African-American leaders in the YMCA and more about the daily activities. But this is a well-researched and useful book. It takes its place alongside a growing literature on the YMCA movement in America.

Allen F. Davis, *Temple University*