

## Book Reviews

By Charles R. Morris. *American Catholic. The saints and sinners who built America's most powerful church.*

(Times Books, New York, 1997. Pp. xi + 511. \$27.50.)

*American Catholic* is an unusual attempt of a history which is both journalistic and encyclopedic. The journalistic tone is not vulgar, and the aim at an encyclopedic coverage is commendable. The topic is difficult: a history not only of the American Catholic Church, not only of its cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, not only of "American Catholicism," but of the masses of American Catholics: of their provenance, of the evolution of their social status and of their habits and beliefs. And this is very difficult: the history of religion in the democratic age. How can the historian understand, let alone ascertain, what and how people believed and still believe? Belief and faith are, after all, matters of quality, not of quantity. Yet by their behavior people do give some indication of what they believe; and it is Morris's merit that he is concerned with such themes.

Of particular interest to *Pennsylvania History* is his long chapter dealing with the Cardinalate of Dennis Dougherty. Morris is a native West Philadelphia Catholic; his personal recollections are concordant with his researches. Beyond this, he regards Cardinal Dougherty as a prototypical figure of the rise of Catholics and of "triumphalism" during Dougherty's Cardinalate (1918-1951)—a kind of paradigm of American Catholic life, at least in the metropolitan areas of the Northeast. His portrait of the Cardinal is balanced and telling, and he adds many details to Dougherty's astute financial and building record ("God's Bricklayer"). There are a few errors. Unlike in New York or Boston, the influence of Irish financiers in Philadelphia was negligible (p. 167). Irish Catholics in Philadelphia did not begin to move into the suburbs until well after World War II (p. 168). *Commonweal* was emphatically *not* "mandatory reading" among the "younger clergy" (p. 279). Morris does not mention that Monsignor John Tracy Ellis's important article ("American Catholics and the Intellectual Life" 1955) was violently attacked in the official *Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times* by its editor, Father Anthony Ostheimer—a prime example of the anti-intellectual populism of many Catholic churchmen, years after the Dougherty period.\*

Morris expands considerable detail on Dougherty's condemnation of movies, but the question may be raised: "Legion of Decency" notwithstanding, to what extent had that influenced the actual moviegoing habits of Catholics in Philadelphia? This brings me to the main shortcoming of the book, which is its last one-third, dealing with the "Crisis" after 1960. Here Morris—surely with the best of intentions—slips from history into sociology, while at the

same time he attributes far too much influence to theological debates and not enough to the vast gradual changes in the existential patterns of the Catholic population. Nor does he write enough about the sources of the great contradiction: the dramatic fall in priestly and sisterly vocations at the very time when the “conservative” respect for the Church and the Pope has not declined at all. Yet he is right in at least suggesting that the election of John Kennedy in 1960 was not the beginning but perhaps the end of the great rise of Irish-Americans to the middle and upper strata of American society, numerically as well as existentially. Imperfect as it is, this book is an example of how religion must be seen by historians in the democratic age, moving from ecclesiastical history to social history, though of course not at the expense of the former. It does accord with the now fashionable study of “mentalités”—but then there *is* a difference between “mentalités” and “croyances”, between mental structuring and matters of faith.

\* “What is meant by an intellectual anyway? Is he one who uses sesquipedalian words? Is he the one who is considered profound because no one can understand what he’s saying? Are we to sing the praises of the individual who isolates himself from the rest of the world, buries himself in his books, and becomes fogbound to everything around him, while we look down our noses at people with the common touch? Are we to belittle the tremendous contribution of the great body of good, sound citizens as we go about searching for a poet laureate?”

John Lukacs, *Phoenixville, Pennsylvania*

**Edited by Renate Wilson. Special issue, vol. XIII, no. 1 of *Caduceus: A Humanities Journal for Medicine and the Health Sciences*: “Eighteenth-Century Traffic in Medicines and Medical Ideas.”**

(Available from the Department of Medical Humanities, Southern Illinois University, PO Box 19230, Springfield, IL 62794, for \$20. 80 pp.)

The spring 1997 issue of *Caduceus* bills itself as a contribution to the “history of medical ideas and medical resources that became available to the North American population over the course of the eighteenth century.” The authors realize this goal by providing an interesting study of how eighteenth-century German medical ideas and consumer goods were developed and marketed. The contributors also discuss how the medical culture of the German-speaking inhabitants of North America depended upon German medical theory and merchandise for the preservation and re-establishment of health. The collection balances these two themes rather nicely. The first three articles expose the reader to German medical philosophy and material culture while the remaining essays consider how these ideas and goods were appropriated by

German-speaking medical practitioners and their patients in colonial America and the early Republic.

The first half of the issue concentrates on German medicine, paying particular attention to the influence of the Francke Foundations in Halle. Thomas J. Muller's "Education and the Cabinet of Curiosities at the Francke Foundations" briefly discusses the cabinet of curiosities built at the Halle Orphanage complex by founder Hermann Francke. Muller argues that this cabinet of curiosities symbolizes one of Pietism's goals, the extension of useful knowledge. The author notes that the cabinet included telescopes, an observatory, anatomical figures, lathes, salt manufacturing equipment, a printing press, and models of chemical stoves to be used for the edification of Francke students. Of special interest to Muller is a drug display table with compartments of materia medica that ranged from powdered bones to exotic coffee beans. Muller concludes his essay with a paragraph focusing on the structure and perceived function of this drug display table.

Muller's final paragraph is a clever transition for leading the reader to the following article, Renate Wilson's "The Traffic in Halle Orphanage Medications: Medicinals, Philanthropy, and Colonial Mission." Wilson shows how the manufacture of medicinal remedies by the Francke Orphanage Foundations generated profit for the Foundations and helped to support philanthropic ventures including missionary work abroad. Wilson also documents the distribution of promotional literature by the Halle Foundations. These books advocated Pietist medicine (with its emphasis on the Stahlian principle of the soul as prime mover of the body and mind), and the use of Halle medications in place of traditional remedies. Finally, Wilson turns her attention to the actual trade in Halle Orphanage medications. She indicates that the remedies were popular medical items in Europe until the closing decades of the eighteenth century when pharmaceutical and medical reform protected apothecaries from irregular competition. Yet, as Wilson shows, the United States offered a fertile market for German medical ideas and goods as a result of the efforts of "a loyal group of clerical providers and merchants dealing through Holland and Hamburg."

Jürgen Kornet's "Academic and Practical Medicine in Halle During the Era of Stahl, Hoffmann, and Juncker" offers the reader a survey of the men and institutions responsible for Halle's fame as a center of medical innovation and reform. Kornet argues that Halle became renowned for its clinical training and therapeutic success despite (or perhaps because of) the varied theoretical leanings of its most famous men.

John K. Crellin's "How Shall I Take My Medicine? Dosages and Other Matters in Eighteenth-Century Medicine" signals the collection's thematic change. Crellin takes up the question of dosage in the context of recent discussions on the effectiveness of eighteenth-century therapy. Crellin not only

investigates textbook recommendations on dosage but also considers a medical manuscript attributed to an immigrant physician who practiced in colonial Pennsylvania, George de Benneville. This attempt to consider how a practicing physician in colonial America mediated the issue of dosage is a fine piece of historic sleuthing. Crellin concludes that the author of the manuscript had concerns over standard dosage similar to other eighteenth-century medical practitioners as well as an affinity for medical eclecticism.

“Illness and Therapy in Two Eighteenth-Century Physician Texts” by Jacob Woodrow Savacool, likewise, considers the de Benneville manuscript. Savacool examines the de Benneville text and a more academic but widely used European self-help book, *Die Höchst-nöthige Erkenntnis vom Leibe und natürlichen Leben* by Christian Friedrich Richter. Savacool provides much more biographical information about de Benneville than the preceding article, which makes the reader wonder why this article did not appear before Crellin’s essay. Savacool’s comparison of the two texts leads him to the conclusion that, despite differences in theory, de Benneville and Richter embraced nonheroic therapy and conservative dosage, two approaches that have elsewhere been characterized as representative of Pietist medicine.

The most interesting work in the collection is the final article, “The Traffic in Medical Ideas: Popular Medical Texts as German Imports and American Imprints,” co-authored by David L. Cowen and Renate Wilson. Cowen and Wilson show that the impact of the Richter self-help book in the Pennsylvania-German communities of colonial America was overshadowed by the popularity of folk medicine books especially domestic and veterinary guides. These guides, which included information on superstition, charms, incantations, and sympathetic magic, appealed to commoners and rural folk. Wilson and Cowen’s article is an important contribution to the history of Pennsylvania medicine, especially the history of medical ideas of the common man and woman.

Karol Weaver, *The Pennsylvania State University*

By George David Rappaport. *Stability and Change in Revolutionary Pennsylvania: Banking, Politics, and Social Structure.*

(University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

Pp. ix., 276, \$37.50.)

This is an unusual book, as history monographs go. As George David Rappaport points out in his introduction, most historians engage in “covert” theorizing, organizing their narratives around unspoken and unidentified theories or, at best, consigning their theoretical perspectives to the margins of their work. *Stability and Change in Revolutionary Pennsylvania: Banking, Politics, and Social Structure* is a different sort of book, one in which theory is an integral part of book and argument alike.

In the first (and longest) part of the book, Rappaport develops a theoretically informed depiction of Pennsylvania's "social structure" in the immediate post-Revolutionary years, examining in turn the state's economic, social, and political systems. According to Rappaport, all social structures rest on economic foundations and he characterizes Pennsylvania's productive system as one in which capitalism had not yet fully emerged. Late eighteenth-century Pennsylvania was, he claims, a complex social formation "in which a ruling class of merchants coexisted with artisans and a class of numerically dominant petty-commodity producers" (42). Refining this idea further, Rappaport depicts Pennsylvania as a traditional rather than a modern society, a claim that structures the remainder of the book. In short, Rappaport explains the nation's first bank war as a clash between the supporters of a new and thoroughly modern institution (the Bank of North America) and the traditional small-producer values held by the majority of Pennsylvanians.

The bank wars of the 1780s were contentious and they were so because they called into question the guiding philosophies and the fundamental social organization of Pennsylvania society. Organized through the medium of cross-class voluntary associations and the state's emerging political party system, public debate over the charter and operation of the Bank of North America was ultimately refracted through the lens of class, albeit an unusual class system based in circulation rather than production and one that Rappaport claims was devoid of exploitation.

These largely theoretical conclusions are integral to the second part of the book, which deals in detail with the struggle over the Bank of North America. Chartered by the Pennsylvania legislature in 1781, the Bank proved instantly successful, at least for those in the state's financial and mercantile communities. Its success inevitably brought forth potential competitors and in 1784 legislative debate over the chartering of a second bank placed the whole notion of banks and large, modern institutions on the public agenda. According to Rappaport, the essential divisions were between traditionalists and moderns and the issues were fought out by representatives of the state's Constitutionalist and Republican parties. Thus were the fortunes of the Bank entwined with the fluctuations of political power. In 1785, with the traditional Constitutionlists in political ascendancy, the Pennsylvania legislature revoked the Bank's charter; in the following year, with the modern Republicans in power, the Bank received a new charter. In the end, Rappaport claims, the bank war reveals both the protean nature of post-Revolutionary society and the ways in which associations, parties, and class came together to move Pennsylvania decisively toward a fully capitalist social organization.

There is more subtlety in Rappaport's arguments than this brief review can suggest. While some may disagree with his depiction of post-Revolutionary society and others may find the explicitly theoretical thread which unites his

story disquieting, most readers will agree that the bank wars lay at the heart of the economic and social transformation of Pennsylvania—and indeed American—society.

Ronald Schultz, *University of Wyoming*

By Jesse Lemisch. *Jack Tar vs. John Bull: The Role of New York's Seamen in Precipitating the Revolution*. Introduction by Marcus Rediker.

(New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1997.)

Thirty-five years after his dissertation, written under the direction of Edmund S. Morgan, was accepted by Yale University, Jesse Lemisch has finally published it. The text is unchanged except for a bibliography of his writings and an introduction by Marcus Rediker. This manuscript served as the starting point for Lemisch's three seminal articles on early American history.<sup>1</sup> I applaud the decision to publish *Jack Tar vs. John Bull* in its original form without the addition of fruits of further research or the incorporation of a historiography Lemisch has largely inspired himself. For as Rediker notes, the book itself is the historical document through which Lemisch inaugurated the New Left view of the American Revolution.

Lemisch's insistence that the seamen and lower orders were not "puppets" of their betters seems so obvious today as to be hardly worth arguing. Nowadays, even the most conservative of consensus historians (I hope!) would not deny that seamen and their landlubbing cohorts had grievances of their own and acted accordingly in the revolutionary crisis. However, the current debate, the extent to which class divisions corresponded to the split between extreme and moderate revolutionaries and the nature of the interaction among different sorts of protesters, only exists because Lemisch raised the question here. (For those who have forgotten their historiography, he went beyond the Progressive historians by denying their simple formula that the upper classes "stirred up" the lower only to find themselves struggling over who was to rule colonial society.<sup>2</sup>) And for those who might dismiss Lemisch as searching for class divisions under every shoebox, there is this caveat in his bibliographical essay. Having read Robert E. Brown's *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955), he writes "there seems no reason why the Revolution should not have been one thing in Massachusetts and another in New York. Only further research will tell which of these polar cases is nearly typical" (p. 169).

Lemisch shows the seamen had numerous grievances. They suffered kidnapping, brutal discipline, and sometimes death because of the long history naval impressment (of extremely dubious legality) in American waters. Competition with British soldiers for jobs in New York City and massive unemployment in the wake of an economic depression Lemisch convincingly

shows followed the Seven Years' War also explains the prominence of seamen in New York City's Stamp Act riots, protracted conflict over its several Liberty Poles (ships' masts, whereas Boston's was an elm tree), and the 1770 Battle of Golden Hill. Lemisch's descriptions of the seamen's lives and "mob" actions (George Rudé and E. P. Thompson<sup>3</sup> had not yet made "crowd" the P.C. term) will introduce those who have never read his work to just what a thorough researcher and exciting writer he is. He not only is writing about history "from the bottom up," his colorful, forceful prose (I think Edmund Morgan deserves some credit here) is the perfect vehicle to preach what his seamen practiced.

And yet, in retrospect, it is also understandable why this book was not published earlier. Lemisch's work is a torso which gives short shrift to the period after 1770. Also frustrating is his confession in the bibliographical essay that he compiled extensive notes on the lives of individual seamen, few of which seem to be used in the text. And what seamen were doing as opposed to others is sometimes lost in his descriptions of the crowds. This is understandable because everybody and everything were all mixed up in these tumults, but perplexing because his frequent mention of ships' captains such as Isaac Sears and Alexander McDougall as leaders of their men blurs rather than clarifies the questions of class and agency.

This dissertation ought to have been rewritten and revised in the 1960s. One can imagine a Lemisch history of seamen sitting proudly on the shelves among the works of Alfred Young, Gary Nash, and Marcus Rediker,<sup>4</sup> and, for Pennsylvania, the books by Richard Ryerson, Steve Rosswurm, Billy Smith, and Ronald Schultz<sup>5</sup>, which follow in his footsteps. Yet although it was not to be, Lemisch can proudly claim the title of the founding father of the "New Left" school of historians. Even those who disagree with him have had to deal with him: the work of few scholars in early American history, has generated such controversy. I am sure Lemisch would have it no other way, and is proud to be known by his enemies as well as his friends.

William Pencak, *Penn State*

## Notes

1. "The American Revolution Seen from the Bottom Up," in Barton J. Bernstein, ed. *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (New York: Pantheon, 1968), 1-45; "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 25 (1968), 371-407, reprinted in 1993 as one of the dozen most significant articles the *Quarterly* had published in fifty years; and "Listening to the 'Inarticulate': William Widger's Dream and the Loyalties of American Revolutionary Seamen in British Prisons," *Journal of Social History*, 3 (1969), 1-29.
2. See, for example, Carl L. Becker, *The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776* (Madison: Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, Historical Series, 1909); Arthur Meier Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1918).
3. George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (New York: Wiley, 1964); E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd," *Past and Present*, 50 (1971),

76-136.

4. Alfred F. Young, *The Democratic Republicans of New York, 1763-1797, The Origins* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967); Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

5. Richard A. Ryerson, "The Revolution is now

*Begun": The Radical Committees of Philadelphia, 1765-1776* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); Steve Rosswurm, *Arms, Country, and Class: the Philadelphia Militia and the "Lower Sort" during the American Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Billy Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Ronald Schultz, *The Republic of Labor: Philadelphia Artisans and the Politics of Class, 1720-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

**By Len Travers. *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic.***

(Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997. x Pp. 277, Cloth \$29.95.)

*Celebrating the Fourth* examines Fourth of July festivities between 1789 and the mid-1820s in Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston. Fourth of July celebrations, Travers argues, served four major purposes: to connect America "mystically" to "an increasingly legendary past" (p. 6); to foster a sense of nationalism amidst a welter of local and sectional interests; to permit periodic reevaluation of Americans' interpretations of the past; and to "mask disturbing ambiguities and contradictions in the new republic, overlaying real social and political conflict with a conceptual veneer of shared ideology and elemental harmony," (p. 7). Travers provides a wealth of fascinating anecdotal evidence to support his arguments, and to illustrate the differing patterns and meanings of celebrations in the three cities.

Less satisfactory is the book's conceptual and theoretical framework. Exploring the ritual aspects of the Fourth is a fine idea, but to do so through extensive recourse to ritual theory requires a conceptual and bibliographic grounding that Travers lacks. From his mis-identification of ritual studies pioneer Ronald Grimes as an anthropologist (5) to his uncritical overutilization of Victor Turner's notion of *communitas*, Travers' employment of ritual theory leaves much to be desired. He relies far too heavily on a few classic and introductory works, ignoring any studies of ritual published since 1990. In addition, his use of ritual theory narrows rather than broadens the range of analysis.

In demonstrating how the celebrations he presents conform to or deviate from the models of ritual he employs, Travers neglects other avenues of theoretical inquiry and slights rigorous historical analysis of some aspects of his subject. In the former case, for example, Travers fails to consider how the

interplay, and often conflict, between regular toasts (those prepared in advance by a committee) and volunteer toasts (those offered spontaneously by participants) at Fourth dinners might confound or at least blur the distinction between ceremony and celebration he derives from ritual theory (pp. 16, 50-54). In the latter case, *Celebrating the Fourth* pays only cursory attention to several areas of current historical concern, such as the relation of women, African-Americans, and ethnic groups to the rites of nationalism, and the impact of expanding market relations and the commercialization of leisure on Independence Day celebrations. Historians of rural life may also take issue with Travers' claim that "Independence Day was largely an outgrowth of early national urban culture" (p. 13). Again, bibliographic oversights appear to have led to historiographic lapses. Travers does not cite several secondary sources that would have added depth and perspective to his analysis, among which are Diane Carter Applebaum's flawed but still useful survey of the Fourth's history, *The Glorious Fourth*; Fred Somkin's study of the malaise generated by Americans' waning connection to the Revolutionary generation, *Unquiet Eagle*; and this reviewer's own work on the Fourth in western Pennsylvania. In short, *Celebrating the Fourth* offers an abundance of detailed and evocative anecdotal material that should interest general readers and students of festival, holiday and popular culture. It is also a marvelous source of material to enliven lectures. Travers' book will be of less value to specialists in ritual studies or social and cultural history.

Scott C. Martin, *Bowling Green State University*

**By Dale B. Light. *Rome and the New Republic: Conflict and Community in Philadelphia Catholicism between the Revolution and the Civil War.***

(Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.

Cloth \$48.95.)

In this cogent and compelling study of the creation of an "American" Catholic church, Dale Light recenters the story by simultaneously examining the internal dynamics of church-building in Philadelphia and the applications and adaptations of Rome-based authority and ideas to an American setting. He does so by looking closely at the lay and clerical dissenters in Philadelphia, especially in St. Mary's and Holy Trinity churches, among the most important sites for an emerging "American" Catholicism during the late eighteenth century and a metaphor for the ways Catholics came to understand their faith, order their church, and present themselves to the larger public.

Light divides his account into three periods. The first period, stretching from the era of the Revolution through the War of 1812, was a time when the "American" church under Bishop John Carroll adopted a "republican" style that conformed by implication to the nascent American political and cultural

identity, but led to division within the church. Ideological, ethnic, and personal interests clashed with ecclesiastical ones. The paternalistic Carroll understood “freedom of religion” to mean tolerating some latitude in liturgical practices and forms of worship, not in governance. While Carroll argued for greater autonomy from Rome, at home he began to assert older church arguments of ecclesiastical authority to quell dissent from lay trustees and priests who insisted, in the language of the Revolutionary age, on self-determination. In microcosm, the “American” Catholics were also acting out the struggles between Federalists and Jeffersonians regarding sovereignty and sensibility. While Carroll emphasized the corporate obligations to church, lay trustees and dissidents cloaked themselves in democratic language and appeals in efforts to control their particular parishes.

In the second period, after Carroll’s death in 1815, the bishops became less conciliatory in their efforts to “monarchize” church governance and impose greater unity in worship and complete control over church offices and property. At the same time that Philadelphia’s basic character changed from a commercial to an industrial city, with its attendant complex, and clashing, class and ethnic identities and interests, the church entered its own period of instability. A generation of emigré priests from revolutions in Europe added to the volatility within the church. Modernists invoked the American civil culture of nationalism, democracy, and progress to justify local control, while traditionalists increasingly turned to monarchism, romantic views of medieval Christianity, and mysticism, to insist on authority residing in Rome and its bishops. In the end, the bishops “won” when the American courts and legislatures, under the principle of separating church and state, left it to the church to define its own terms for membership, ownership, and authority.

With the First Provincial Council in 1829, the church entered a new phase, the third period by Light’s reckoning. The united voice of the bishops signaled the “emergence of an American Catholic establishment organized around Roman universalism, institutional authoritarianism, and intense supernaturalism” over the liberal, nationalist, and materialistic values of Philadelphia’s lay leadership (pp. 243-44). Irish-born Francis Patrick Kenrick played the decisive role in implementing the church’s reforms. Through ambitious building programs, missions (revivals), calls for temperance and self-discipline, the establishment of Catholic schools and asylums (to insulate Catholics from an increasingly hostile Protestant America and to inculcate Catholic belief), Kenrick and his successors reinforced church authority and spirituality by making the church a physical presence in every parish. The reformers used popular methods of lay organizations, the press, and preaching to attack unbelief and invigorate *Roman* Catholicism. The clergy was “tamed,” liturgy made uniform, and cultural diversity suppressed in the name of Catholic reform and renewal. Wealthy and powerful laity, like their Protestant

counterparts, were drawn to such programs, accentuating in some ways the class and ethnic divisions within the Catholic community even as the church sought to impose unity and order.

But even as the goals of establishing a respectable church fit the ambitions of middle-class Catholics, their own materialistic values and associations with non-Catholics caused them to chafe under Kenrick's demanding rule. Class ties tugged at religious solidarity. A resurgent nativism threatened Catholics, while the social and ecclesiastical imperatives of the bishops distanced the church from many immigrants. By the time of the Civil War, the Catholic church in Philadelphia, as in America, was neither a republican model sprung from American revolutionary experience nor an extension of Irish "nationalism" or European peasant cultures, as many writers have argued. It was all of that and more. In sum, it was not even a specifically American church, inasmuch as its character derived from "the institutional imperatives emanating from restoration Rome and the class imperatives of industrial society."

No short review can do justice to Light's nuanced interlacings of social, cultural, political, and ecclesiastical history, or his revealing portraits of a host of clergy and lay people in Philadelphia. Nor can it even summarize the full range of issues Light raises about the process whereby a church gains identity and authority. To be sure, in his remarkable excavation of the meaning and implications of church authority and party, Light does not so fully realize what it meant to be Catholic. His is a story of power and parties more than piety. Pew rents count more in his analysis than what went on in those pews. This said, Light offers a major corrective to recent literature that has ignored the ideas and values of the priests and given too much "authority" in defining faith to the laity. Light's essential book reminds us that a church is an institution as well as a culture. Therein lies a great truth.

Randall M. Miller, *Saint Joseph's University*

**By Roger Waldinger. *Still The Promised City: African-Americans and New Immigrants in Post Industrial New York.***

(Harvard University Press; Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1996. Pp. x, 374, Cloth \$35.)

It is only within the last decade that historians and social scientists have intensified their attention upon what is known as the "postindustrial era." Changes in American immigration law in the 1960s accelerated the influx of immigrants, turning many urban areas into "majority minority" cities. No other American city is more representative of this phenomenon than New York.

Roger Waldinger, a professor of sociology at the University of California at Los Angeles, addresses an important socio-economic question regarding

postindustrial urban life: “why have African Americans fared so poorly in securing unskilled jobs in the postwar era and why have new immigrants done so well?” Against the two popular explanations, namely the decline of manufacturing jobs and the phenomenon of “globalization” or shipping industrial jobs overseas, Waldinger offers a third theory: the labor queue. “The instability of America’s capitalist economy subjects the labor queue to change. Growth pulls the topmost group up the totem pole; lower-ranking groups then seize the chance to move up the pecking order; in their wake, they leave behind vacancies at the bottom, which employers fill by recruiting workers from outside the economy—namely migrants” (p. 3). Immigrant workers invariably desire better jobs and this sparks competition between “newcomers and insiders” over the so-called “ethnic turf.” Due to the prevalent use of temporary labor and minimal wages within the service economy, where minorities are most likely to be employed, the lack of well-paying, full-time jobs “relative to the surplus of job seekers guarantees that competition never disappears” (p. 4).

*Still The Promised Land?* examines the numerous issues resulting from competition among postindustrial ethnic workers. The author looks at the transformation of the ethnic division of labor and how the so-called “ethnic niche” is continually changed. He asks “who gets the ‘lousy’ jobs” and “who gets the good jobs?” Fascinating chapters are also devoted to an analysis of “the ethnic politics of municipal jobs,” and the ethnicity of urban small businesses. *Still The Promised Land?* ends with a thoughtful essay entitled “Beyond Black and White.” Waldinger appears to be more interested in exploring the “job competition model of the labor market” than offering solutions to the racial problems resulting from competition. More disturbingly, Waldinger tends to treat New York City as a “single” community whereas in reality, it consists of five boroughs, each with its peculiar ethnic makeup.

Waldinger’s book has implications for students of Pennsylvania’s urban giants: Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh has become more ethnically diverse since the 1980s with the settlement of many Spanish-speaking and Asian immigrants. Likewise, Philadelphia has new communities of Asians, Russians, Spanish speakers and persons from the Middle East. Both cities have large African American populations. Although Waldinger’s study is about postindustrial New York City, social and urban historians in Pennsylvania will find Waldinger’s study worthwhile reading.

Eric Ledell Smith, *Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission*

Edited by Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson. *The Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays*.

(Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997. Pp. 284, \$32.95.)

The most useful studies in Civil War history in recent years have been the homefront studies. They have shown the interaction between the boys in the field and the folks back home. Additionally, these studies have demonstrated the effects of the war far beyond the battleground.

“Homefront studies” is the genre to which this collection of eleven essays belongs. The essays offer a comprehensive coverage of the Civil War in the mountainous counties of the Confederacy. The volume provides a great diversity of interests and analysis that represents the best of current Civil War research. The historians have presented stories that embody social, demographic, economic, gender, racial, and educational history. The common thread that ties everything together is regional, namely Appalachia’s people and society.

One sees in these pages, too, a theme that runs through the history of our Civil War, namely, the tug between localism and nationalism. Geographically isolated and confined, Appalachian culture was intensely localistic. The war, consequently, became a battle not so much of ideology but kinship, local rivalry, retaliation, and revenge. Physically, the Civil War in Appalachia comprised guerrilla tactics, irregular units, and a disregard for noncombatants. At times, the war degenerated into acts revealing the basest human qualities, for example, the executions in Lumpkin County, Georgia. Like Missouri, the Civil War in Appalachia was messy and stunk like a can of worms.

One set of essays includes demographic analyses of Unionist volunteers and Confederate leaders. Peter Wallenstein and Martin Crawford examine East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Unionists and agree that “the lower their economic standing the more likely [they were] to fight for the Union” (p. 18). Crawford also argues that neighborhood and kinship ties help explain Appalachians’ loyalty to the Union. W. Todd Grace provides a social analysis of colonels, majors, and captains who commanded East Tennessee Confederate units. Interestingly, he concludes that these Confederates were outsiders (young farmers, merchants, and lawyers) from the traditional leadership of East Tennessee. One of the few quarrels I have with the essays lies here. I wish Grace had carried his analysis farther to include the social origins of the ordinary soldier in Confederate units.

Another set of essays focuses on economic aspects of Civil War Appalachia. Robert Tracy McKenzie takes a familiar, but still worthy, examination of the economic impact of the war on East Tennessee. This area, a hotbed of Unionism, suffered as both armies traipsed through the area. Union and Confederates alike ravaged the area for food and military supplies. Especially disastrous for residents was the loss of livestock. Postwar trends, i.e., the increase in farm population on smaller farm units, intensified the impoverishment in the area.

Gordon B. McKinney's essay on "premature industrialization" in Appalachia looks at a Confederate attempt to establish a munitions factory in Asheville, North Carolina. The effort was a failure because of unskilled labor and bad management. Appalachia was not ready for industrialization.

Finally we have a potpourri of studies that (1) relate the life of a runaway slave's experience in the federal service in Appalachia, (2) denote that guerrilla warfare was the most common type of war in the region, and (3) detail the image-making of Appalachian residents and culture from Union prisoners who wrote of their escape experiences in the area and (4) postwar educational fundraising. The book makes a sound contribution by detailing the war in the remote backcountry of the South.

W. Wayne Smith, *Indiana University of Pennsylvania*

By Hans L. Trefousse. *Thaddeus Stevens: Nineteenth-Century Egalitarian*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. Pp. xv, 312, \$39.95.)

Contrary to Disney, Pocahontas did not save John Smith and Davy Crockett wasn't the last man to die at the Alamo. But myths die hard. Consider the case of "vindictive Thaddeus Stevens," stomping on a prostrate South, eager to destroy a president who wanted to make a generous peace after four years of bitter war.

In writing about Stevens, Trefousse has taken on a historical rescue mission of considerable importance. Stevens was a significant figure in antebellum politics, and a formidable player in wartime Washington. Myth or no myth, the "Great Commoner" was at the forefront of the effort to win the peace after Appomattox, and to assure that ex-slaves had a fair stake in American society. Stevens failed, but his memorable advocacy in the years 1865-1868 lives on both as history and myth.

The premise of this admirable biography—our first really satisfying study of this complex and elusive figure—is straightforward. Stevens, Trefousse argues, was strong-willed and sharp-tongued, but he was not aiming to humiliate the South or even President Andrew Johnson, whose Reconstruction policies he believed were an abomination. Rather, Stevens was focused on realizing the mission of the war defined by Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg: establishing a new birth of freedom for this nation by including African Americans in the social compact. He failed in his main labors, but through his words and deeds he laid the foundation for the Second Reconstruction of the 1960s.

Stevens did not make it easy for biographers. His handwriting was atrocious, he did not keep much of his correspondence, and in any case he was not a highly reflective individual. Still, relying on a wide range of sources, including contemporary newspapers and the Stevens Papers Project directed

by Beverly Wilson Palmer, Trefousse has excavated important new material about his subject.

A graduate of Dartmouth College who saw better prospects for himself in Pennsylvania than his native Vermont, Stevens was a success from the start both in law and politics. He was a long-time representative of Adams County in the House of Representatives. Following his move to Lancaster in the early 1840s, Stevens was repeatedly elected to Congress from a generally Whiggish/Republican district. Friend and foe alike agreed that he had a formidable intellect and a talent for legislating. From his earliest days in politics Stevens championed the underdog, and opposed those interests—Masons and southern slaveholders, most particularly—he believed were hostile to democracy. He was an ardent and persuasive champion of public education, and he played a key role nurturing Pennsylvania College in Gettysburg.

Because he played the game of politics with no holds barred, Stevens made enemies over the years, some of whom accused him of crimes ranging from fornication to murder. Trefousse recounts the various charges made against Stevens, then weighs their merits. Almost always, he clears Stevens of the most serious allegations, for example, that he tried bribing members of the state legislature on a railroad matter and, what was similarly venal, sought passage of a bill in Congress relating to foreign expansion. In any case, none of the charges seriously impacted on Stevens' political career.

Trefousse is no hagiographer. He notes that Stevens' sarcasm could be brutal, that he was probably culpable of railroad logrolling when it served his interests (as witness the "Tapeworm" railroad controversy), and that he would not let go of the Johnson impeachment even when it was clear to dispassionate observers that most of the articles against the president were legally flimsy. Still, the overall impression one gets from this book is that Stevens was a man of principle and decency.

Consequently, history will remember Stevens and his political allies as a vanguard for racial justice—a theme effectively pressed some two decades ago in Trefousse's *The Radical Republicans* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968]. Reconstruction, in this perspective, was a compromise between Stevens's advanced vision for American democracy and the South's determination to maintain white supremacy whatever the cost. In practical terms, Stevens represented a minority wing in his own party. Reconstruction was at best an incomplete triumph for those who believed in racial justice.

This is by now conventional wisdom, well argued. By showing the fundamental consistency of Stevens's life work and by demonstrating his small acts of kindness amidst a larger vision, Trefousse has enriched our understanding of a too-readily-pigeonholed character. As scholarship, his fundamentally sympathetic rendering of the Great Commander's life is likely to become the standard work for the next generation. It probably will never overturn the

myth of a sneering Thad Stevens, sticking his knife into the wounded South, but we need to start somewhere.

Michael J. Birkner, *Gettysburg College*

By Philip Stevick, *Imagining Philadelphia: Travelers' Views of the City from 1800 to the Present.*

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, Pp. 204, cloth, \$22.95.)

"Philadelphia is not as bad as Philadelphians say it is," insisted an official city slogan a few years ago. Not all visitors have agreed. In 1950 Hollis Alpert complained that "the city is poorly lighted, horribly dirty, and badly kept, particularly in regard to the cleaning of the streets." That may have been why a year later John Gunther found "a dinginess to it that years alone cannot account for." Lafcadio Hearn, on the other hand, concluded in the 1880s that Philadelphia was "the best old city in the whole world." Charles Francis Adams a half-century earlier confided to his diary that he was "on the whole pleased with the appearance of Philadelphia. There is something solid and comfortable about it, . . . I think I should like to live in Philadelphia." Making sense of the babble is a challenge, because, as Philip Stevick points out, "there are as many Philadelphians as there are observers of the city." Yet patterns do emerge, among them a fact that today plagues the city's tourist bureau and other local promoters: Philadelphia was almost never a destination for travelers but only a place to pass through, usually after having been in incomparable New York.

Once travelers arrived in Philadelphia, however, they saw what they had anticipated and read about—"a Quakerized cityscape" dominated by Penn's grid pattern. The city's plan and reputation left it a city easy to master, and importantly an inviting one to walk about, as is still the case. This latter aspect has set Philadelphia apart from most American cities and has given it its "imageability." Great cities are known not only for the images they project but also for the myths and icons they possess, which for Philadelphia became Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. Stevick's engaging examination of these now intertwined icons is curious (but probably necessary), because most visitors treated Independence Hall with condescension or at best brevity—if they referred to it at all. And they ignored almost totally the Bell, the most sacred of the city's icons.

Nineteenth-century travelers were drawn instead to Philadelphia's contemporary monuments, reflecting the present-mindedness of the nineteenth century. None generated more interest than the gargantuan Eastern State Penitentiary, a new kind of building that embodied a controversial new penal philosophy. The prison became one of America's "sacred places," which, like Niagara Falls or Yosemite, could evoke a sublime experience among its viewers.

Stevick demonstrates Eastern State's effect on foreign visitors, how it transformed some into Gothic romanticists who forsook their customary distance from their subjects and introduced anecdotal and psychological components. In the process, acute observers, such as Charles Dickens, saw the prison's benign isolation for the cruelty that it was. A more attractive alternative was the Fairmount Waterworks and its surrounding gardens and sculpture. It was a happy marriage of technology and nature. Victorian travelers enjoyed the landscaped grounds but were more fascinated by the machinery as both a powerful force and an aesthetic object, reflecting what historian John Sears calls "the industrial sublime." The waterworks served as the fountainhead for the city's plenitude of water that visitor after visitor found to be especially characteristic of Philadelphia.

An extension of the Waterworks' gardens, both physically and historically, is Fairmount Park and its own extension into the Wissahickon Valley. Acquired by the city to preserve the purity of its water supply by preventing agricultural and industrial development along the Schuylkill River's banks (a point unfortunately that Stevick does not make clear), Fairmount Park's expansive and rambling acreage has given Philadelphia a "unique fusion of urban life and natural landscape." Jacques Offenbach was enchanted by the park's "streams winding beneath the trees, cool valleys, shady ravines, superb trees, thick woods," and Lafcadio Hearn found New York's Central Park "a cabbage-garden by comparison." More remarkable to many writers was the presence of wild life and scenic landscapes outside of the park, in other parts of the city.

While Stevick is alert to the continuity of writers' observations over nearly two centuries, he also acknowledges change. No one today would echo early-nineteenth-century suggestions that Philadelphia, with its fusion of political power, intellectual enlightenment, and neoclassical architecture, was the Athens of America. One aspect of local lore, however, has enjoyed a long and healthy life. "Speaking ill of Philadelphia," Stevick notes, "is so rich and extensive a tradition, so old and continuous, so clever and ingenious at times, so dull and predictable at others that merely gathering all of that bad mouth together would fill a book." He spares us that, but he does show that such behavior continues yet today, often subtly, in documentary photos, political commentary, and even such films as *Witness* with Harrison Ford.

Stevick weaves the many travelers' views of Philadelphia into an intriguing multi-disciplinary study that should interest more than Philadelphians or historians. His training as a professor of English (at Temple University) is evident, but he integrates into his analysis the works of such urbanologists and historians as William H. Whyte, Jane Jacobs, and John F. Sears. At every turn the city and its sites are put in intellectual and historical context. When discussing Eastern State Penitentiary, for example, he explains competing penal philosophies, and he introduces Fairmount Park with a short discourse on the

presumed polarity between city and countryside. If there is one weakness, it would be the few minor errors that result from failing to consult Philadelphia architectural texts more closely. A caption, for example, mistakenly identifies the Philadelphia Bank as the Second Bank of the United States, and at another point Girard College's Founder's Hall, a Corinthian temple-style building, is referred to as "that great Parthenon" (a Greek Doric temple). But these are minor errors indeed in a thoughtful and sensitive work.

Richard J. Webster, *West Chester University of Pennsylvania*

**Peter P. Hinks.** *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance.*

(University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 1997. Pp. 300, index, bibliography, appendices. \$45 hard, \$17.95 paper.)

Peter Hinks has written a subtly bold book. Under the innocent guise of telling David Walker's story, Hinks has challenged several of the underinformed assumptions upon which much of African American history—even enlightened African-American history—has been comfortably settled for many decades. The boldest of Hinks' arguments is his assertion that far from being ahead of, and apart from, his black peers, the ideas of black uplift and strategy which Walker published in his incendiary and controversial *Appeal to the Colored People* . . . were firmly set in, supported by, and known to such contemporary thinkers as Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, Maria Stewart and James Forten, and a wide community of "respectable" black folk in both the North and the South.

With an admirable and graceful economy of words, Hinks uses eight chapters (and five appendices in which we are given some descriptive information about Walker's world) to do more than just talk about Walker. He uses this platform to weave together the context and the networks of several historians (David Goldfield's antebellum urban South and Gary Nash's, Julie Winch's and James Horton's urban North) to make a seamless tapestry of revolutionary thought through complex communication networks. In the first three chapters we get a sense of Walker's external environment, experience, and context, with a rich discussion of the ways that the built environment, and the workers within that environment, reflected the power of African American skill and confidence. In this section the author makes a stab at recreating Walker's early life from scanty and obscure evidence about parentage, region, literacy skills, and socio-economic experience. These chapters are quite successful in recreating a context, less successful in the challenging project of recreating the character of Walker himself. Many sentences in this section begin with "Walker probably . . ." or "Walker must have . . ." or "It is likely that Walker . . ."

What follows are three chapters which chronicle the production and distribution of the 1829 *Appeal*. This is, I believe, the contribution for which Hinks will be remembered, for it is in this section (especially Chapter 5) that he investigates Walker's intellectual development, and makes a persuasive case for Walker's deep connection to previous and subsequent black nationalists as well as to his contemporaries. Then, in the final chapters, Hinks analyzes the intellectual content of the *Appeal* . . . and muses about why the skill and confidence which he has earlier described was insufficient to sustain full-blown revolution.

Hinks' attention to detail, and his lack of flamboyance, mean that many things about this study come off very well: the use of independent information about the date of the introduction of the steam-boat into the Cape Fear region, in order to ascertain the date of an undated reference in the *Appeal* . . . (p. 29); the close reading of the Denmark Vesey materials for similarities in language (p. 64); the addition of specificity to our ubiquitous generalizations about the importance of the "black church" and such organizations as the Masons (chapters 2-4). And he handles with balance and lucidity such historical complexities/ironies as class tensions within the black communities and the role stress endemic to a southern economy that needs, on the one hand, to encourage efficiency and stability among black workers (for the masters' benefit), and, on the other hand to curtail the logical extension of these attributes lest the slave begin to employ them for his own benefit.

This volume has some annoying small flaws. Hinks sometimes relies upon the assertions of secondary sources which are, themselves, not well documented. Lydia Maria Child and Maria Stewart are the only slightly significant women players on a stage where Walker's wife makes only a cameo appearance. Hinks sometimes roams across several decades as if the events therein were simultaneous. Nevertheless, he has, with this volume, opened another important channel into the dark and dense swamp which has, for too long, mired the story of America's social and intellectual minorities.

Emma J. Lapsansky, *Haverford College*

By Peter Way. *Common Labour: Workers and the Digging of North American Canals, 1780-1860*.

(Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Pp. 324, \$29.85 cloth.)

The study of the construction of North American canals has long been neglected by historians. This scholarly oversight has been partially redressed in Peter Way's *Common Labour: Workers and the Digging of North American Canals, 1780-1860*. In this volume Way shows how canal construction played an important and catalytic role in the rise of industrial capitalism by opening

new markets, providing masses of workers, and creating the ties between government and capital that set a precedent for later stages of the transportation/industrial revolution. He reaches these conclusions through the study of the changing relationship between the workers who built North America's canals and the companies and governmental entities that financed their construction.

Way divides the construction of North American canals into three periods: the last decades of the eighteenth century, the canal building boom inspired by the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, and a final era of lessened construction activity that followed the "Panic of 1837." Each of these periods was characterized by an evolutionary change in the relationship between employees and laborers. During the first period of canal construction, companies used a variety of methods such as the employment of indentured servants on projects in northern states and the rental or purchase of slaves to build canals in southern states. Neither of these expedients was successful, and during the construction of the Erie and subsequent canals, the work force was largely composed of immigrant Irish laborers. At first the relationship between the canal builders and workers was paternalistic, with the companies or state authorities supplying workers with food, whiskey, and sometimes shelter as a supplement to their wages. However, this system was drastically altered with the introduction of contracting. Contractors, who were often squeezed between the costs of labor and delayed payments from the canal companies or state authorities, could only make a profit by reducing or eliminating the supplemental provisions and shelter that had previously been given to canal laborers. In many cases, even these cost reductions could not prevent the contractors from sliding into bankruptcy and abandoning their workers to face unemployment and often starvation. During the prolonged depression that followed the "Panic of 1837," the lot of canal laborers worsened due to a drastic reduction in the number of canal building projects and an overabundance of laborers attempting to fill a decreasing number of jobs. The result of these changes meant that canal workers could no longer feed their families or hope to accumulate enough savings to better their lot. In response, some workers attempted to organize strikes and other forms of mass protest only to be put down by the armed forces of the various states and Canada. This repression increased as governments identified their interests solely with management. The ultimate result of this process, according to Way, was the reduction of the status of canal workers to that of the proletariat, a process which would later occur in other North American industries.

In many respects, *Common Labour* is a pioneering work that looks at the canal age in North America in a way that is different from all previous studies of this subject. By restoring canals to their rightful place as America's first truly large business enterprise and by using the evolution of the relationship of the canal workers to management as a metaphor for the development of the laboring

masses who would later provide the brawn for the continuing economic growth of the United States and Canada, Way has successfully raised issues that will be of interest to transportation historians for many years.

Lance E. Metz, *National Canal Museum, Easton, Pennsylvania*

By William Irwin, *The New Niagara: Tourism, Technology, and the Landscape of Niagara Falls, 1776-1917.*

(University Park: Penn State Press, 1996. Pp. 304, \$45.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.)

Based on human perceptions, the cultural view of landscapes is fluid, varying with larger ecological, social and cultural patterns. From the era of the new republic through the 19th century no landscape represents a more disparate range of ideal visions than Niagara Falls. From an awesome example of the natural sublime to the dynamo for powering American industry, Niagara Falls' changing meaning reflects America's idea of itself through 1900. The dynamic chronology of this national symbolism is given its best coverage and insight to date by William Irwin in his fine history, *The New Niagara*.

Irwin creates a cultural history of this site, ranging from its imagistic importance to its utility as a power source. The chapters range through technological, cultural, and political history. In each chapter, the author gathers wonderful visual evidence, compiling the most complete record of maps, drawings, and photos to date. Irwin's narrative is strongest when he is discussing technological developments, and appropriately, this is the truly new contribution that he brings to the literature. The weakest part of his story derives from his attempt to analyze the deeper cultural meaning of this landscape. Despite its subtitle, *The New Niagara* fails to become a work of landscape history, and in these instances remains a cultural story of human idealization.

As a way of creating his synthesis, Irwin organizes his argument around the visions of progress that Niagara Falls has embodied. One could argue that in this fashion, the author furthers the cultural appropriation of this site, taking from it any natural meaning of its own. However, the objective is to create a tidy narrative, and this is accomplished. The innate appeal of the Falls is obvious when considering its natural wonder; however, Irwin writes, even as "...the artificial supplanted the natural in the Niagara landscape, engineers, developers, and entrepreneurs, like artists, found inspiration in Niagara Falls: for every visitor who hailed the Falls as a sacred, inviolate place of nature, another marveled at its raw power and dreamed of putting it to use."

While the vision of the Falls might remain static during the early 19th century, the American view of progress did not. Niagara Falls could exist as a tourist destination and international natural wonder through 1850, but

industrial development forced this status to erode quickly. The first volley in this assault came in the form of bridges, which Irwin uses figuratively and literally to mark the connection of this site to development. The most famous of these, of course, was a suspension bridge constructed by John A. Roebling (1852-55).

As the hydroelectric power of the raging Niagara attracted mills and other manufactories during the late nineteenth century, the blight of such development polarized initiatives to preserve the scene's beauty and sublimity. In the end, Irwin reports, the Niagara Preservation Movement of the 1880s only succeeded when Frederick Law Olmsted and others included business and tourist initiatives in their plans. Such development was considered a lesser evil, and in 1885 a state reservation secured a picturesque setting for the Falls in perpetuity. In this fashion, Niagara presented an American model for preserving its natural wonders.

With the viewscape secure, dreams of Niagara's role as a central power source took shape slightly above the Falls. Such ideas from 1880 to 1905, argues Irwin, define the New Niagara and ensconce it on the throne of the electric age. Just as the Falls were connected to a vision of natural beauty, so too they would be linked to the dream of a progressive future with electric power for every home. The technology of electric transfer took shape around the figurative and literal idea of using the Falls as the central power source for a significant area—possibly even the entire nation. The American imagination included the Falls in its vision of the electric future around 1900, as revealed by tales of H. G. Wells and King Champ Gillette as well as the inventive efforts of Thomas Edison and Nicola Tesla.

*The New Niagara* will delight a variety of readers, including scholarly and popular audiences. Irwin has created a book that goes a long way to securing the unique story of the national meaning of Niagara Falls.

Brian Black, *Skidmore College*