

# *PAH* *Pennsylvania History*

A JOURNAL OF MID-ATLANTIC STUDIES

VOLUME 77, NUMBER 4 • AUTUMN 2010

NEWS FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES VII

## ARTICLES

A Tumultuous People:  
The Rage for Liberty and the Ambiance of Violence in the  
Middle Colonies in the Years Preceding  
the American Revolution

*Joseph S. Tiedemann* 387

The Delaware River Revival:  
Four Centuries of Historic Water Quality Change  
From Henry Hudson to Benjamin Franklin to JFK

*Gerald J. Kauffman Jr.* 432

## ROUNDTABLE

The PHMC Scholars in Residence Program:  
A Roundtable Assessment  
The Sixteenth and Final Class of Scholars in Residence at the  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

*Joshua Stablman* 466

Archaeology without Excavation:  
Digging Through the Archives of the Pennsylvania State Museum

*April M. Beisaw* 467

Following Ulysses:  
The Search for Keystone Union Veterans at the Pennsylvania State Archives  
*J. Adam Rogers* 476

Perfecting Space:  
J. Horace McFarland and the American Civic Association  
*Julian C. Chambliss* 486

#### BOOK REVIEWS

*David L. Preston*. The Texture of Contact:  
European and Indian Settler Communities on the Frontier of Iroquoia,  
1667–1783.  
Reviewed by *James Kirby Martin* 498

*Janet Moore Lindman*. Bodies of Belief: Baptist Community in Early America.  
Reviewed by *Susan Hanket Brandt* 500

*John Gilbert McCurdy*. Citizen Bachelors:  
Manhood and the Creation of the United States.  
Reviewed by *Matthew Rainbow Hale* 503

*Richard K. MacMaster*. Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America.  
Reviewed by *Kenneth W. Keller* 506

*Diane E. Wenger*. A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania:  
Creating Economic Networks in Early America, 1790–1807.  
Reviewed by *David A. Latzko* 508

*Gary B. Nash*. The Liberty Bell.  
Reviewed by *Jill Ogline Titus* 511

*Robert M. Sandow*. Deserter Country:  
Civil War Opposition in the Pennsylvania Appalachians.  
Reviewed by *Eric D. Duchess* 513

*Robert P. Wolensky and Joseph M. Keating*. Tragedy at Avondale:  
The Causes, Consequences, and Legacy of the Pennsylvania Anthracite Coal  
Industry's Most Deadly Mining Disaster, September 6, 1869.  
Reviewed by *Joshua Stahlman* 517

*James L. Flannery.* The Glass House Boys of Pittsburgh:  
Law, Technology, and Child Labor.  
Reviewed by *James C. Kosban* 519

*Lee Stout.* Ice Cream U:  
The Story of the Nation's Most Successful Collegiate Creamery.  
Reviewed by *Michael Milligan* 521

ANNOUNCEMENTS 524

CONTRIBUTORS 527

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS OF THE PHA 529

#### SUBMISSION INFORMATION

The editor invites the submission of articles dealing with the history of Pennsylvania and the Middle Atlantic region, regardless of their specialty. Prospective authors are urged to review past issues of *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, where they will note articles in social, intellectual, economic, environmental, political, and cultural history, from the distant and recent past. Articles may investigate new areas of research or they may reflect on past scholarship. Material that is primarily of an antiquarian or genealogical nature will not be considered.

*Pennsylvania History* publishes documents previously unpublished and of interest to scholars of the Middle Atlantic region. The Journal also reviews books, exhibits, and other media dealing primarily with Pennsylvania history or that shed significant light on the state's past.

Please conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style* in preparing your manuscript and submit an electronic copy in Microsoft Word format to the editor via email at [pnewman@pitt.edu](mailto:pnewman@pitt.edu). News of meetings, projects, exhibits, manuscript collections, and related matters for the Announcements Page should be sent to the editor at the e-mail address above. To reach the editor by mail, send communication to: Department of History, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA 15904.

Send books for review and names of individuals who wish to review for the Journal to Dan Barr, Department of History, Robert Morris University, 6001 University Boulevard, Moon Township, PA 15108, or by e-mail: [barrd@rmu.edu](mailto:barrd@rmu.edu). The editors wish to remind reviewers of their responsibility to disclose any conflict of interest before accepting an assignment to review a book, website, museum, or exhibit.

Send suggestions for exhibit reviews and names of individuals who wish to review museum exhibits for the journal to Jeffrey A. Davis, Department of History, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, 128 Old Science Hall, Bloomsburg, PA 17815, or by e-mail: [jdavis@bloomu.edu](mailto:jdavis@bloomu.edu). Also contact Jeff for matters relating to the journal's annual "special issue" that appears in summer.

#### IMPORTANT NOTICES

*Pennsylvania History* (ISSN-0031-4528) published quarterly by the Pennsylvania Historical Association and the Pennsylvania State University Press.

Annual subscription rates: \$30 for students, \$40 for individuals (\$55 if outside U.S.), and \$50 for institutions (\$65 if outside U.S.). Payments should be directed to Business Secretary Karen Guenther, 216 Pinecrest Hall, Mansfield University, Mansfield, PA 16933. Address changes should also be directed to Karen Guenther.

Periodicals postage paid at Mansfield, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Pennsylvania History*, Business Secretary Karen Guenther, 216 Pinecrest Hall, Mansfield University, Mansfield, PA 16933.

Claims for missing or damaged issues should be directed to Karen Guenther.

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ublication of *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* is made possible by deeply appreciated support from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the University of Pittsburgh of Johnstown, Bloomsburg University, and Robert Morris University.

*We thank Karen Guenther for keeping our membership lists in order.*

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**THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

The Pennsylvania Historical Association endeavors to stimulate scholarly activity and arouse popular interest in the Commonwealth's history. It sponsors *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, a publication series, and annual meetings held successively throughout the state.

[www.pa-history.org](http://www.pa-history.org)

*On the cover:* Henry Mercer tile, number 303, "Reading the Declaration of Independence," part of the floor tiles of the Grand Hall at the Pennsylvania Capitol building.

## NEWS FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES

The State Archives is part of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and is responsible for maintaining the permanently valuable records of the Commonwealth. The Archives' web page is accessible by going to the PHMC website at: [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us), and click on the left navigation link, "PA State Archives." The Archives' web page includes descriptions of its holdings.

### Archives Receives NHPRC Grant for Basic Processing of Holdings

To help preserve Pennsylvania's rich documentary heritage, the Pennsylvania State Archives was awarded a \$166,298 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) in July of 2010. The grant will enable Archives to increase public accessibility and intellectual control for its records holdings, specifically to create an estimated 2,000 online series descriptions and document shelf locations for 26,000 cubic feet of unprocessed records (44% of the Archives' Record Group

holdings), as well as establish new accessioning procedures to eliminate future backlogs.

Over the course of the past three decades, the quantity of records accessioned into the Archives holdings has steadily increased, while the number of employees available to process them has steadily decreased. Traditional processing techniques have become cumbersome and are no longer viable. With this grant, the Archives will embrace in part the “more product, less process” concept, whereby a minimum standard for processing is accepted and made a benchmark for all future accessions. Two full time archivists have been hired for the eighteen month project. They are writing series descriptions of the unprocessed material and placing these descriptions on the State Archives website, accessed via [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us). By the time the project is finished in early 2012, this information will be readily accessible to the public.

### Itinerant Archivist Program

The State Archives, working in conjunction with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) and the Pennsylvania State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB), has been running an innovative project that will substantially impact the archival and records management infrastructure within Pennsylvania’s county governments. The project calls for an itinerant archivist to visit participating county courthouses to help prioritize and address their archival and records management needs and issues. The Archives received an NHPRC grant in December 2007, concentrating on two regions of the state, commencing in the southwest region in 2008 and continuing with the northeast region in 2009. The Archives has just received another grant in July 2010 to continue the work, this time for other counties throughout the state. The assistance the archivist, Heather Heckman, provides will vary among participants based upon each county’s unique situation and priorities. She is available on-site for up to eight weeks at each participating county and addresses a full range of archival and records management issues, including, but not limited to:

- consultation and training on archival/records management principles
- assessment and advice on improving physical storage areas
- inventory and identification of records for destruction, microfilming or permanent storage



- aid in compiling a records disaster or vital records plan
- help with identifying possible grant projects

So far, Ms. Heckman has accomplished a lot of critical work specific to each county's needs, including inventorying tens of thousands of cubic feet of records, creating floor plans for storage areas, drafting disaster and vital records plans and county records manuals, as well as writing reports and recommendations for many individual county offices.

Participating counties must complete a short application and self assessment, be able to allocate a staff member(s) to help the itinerant archivist and PSA staff along the process, and must undertake a financial commitment of at least \$2,500 towards records preservation within their county.

For more information, interested counties should contact Susan Hartman, Project Coordinator, at 717-787-3913 or e-mail RA-LocalGovernment@state.pa.us.

## State Budget Crisis Affects Archives

Due to budgetary cutbacks, the State Archives has lost several staff members and is now closed on Tuesdays, as well as Mondays.

## MARAC in Harrisburg

The State Archives will be the center of attention when the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) holds its fall meeting in Harrisburg on November 11-13. The theme is "Politics of Archives," and program sessions elaborate on this. Kathleen Roe, Director of Operations, New York State Archives, is the Plenary speaker. She has led a vigilant campaign to raise awareness and funding for historical repositories through "Partnership for the American Historical Record" (PAHR). The luncheon speaker is Jackson Taylor, author of "The Blue Orchard." Based on the true story of his grandmother who lived in Harrisburg, "The Blue Orchard" tells the story of a woman born in destitution who rises to comfort. Taylor's novel evolved from hundreds of interviews and research in local historical institutions. For more information on the conference, please check the MARAC website at: <http://www.marac.info>.