

Pennsylvania History

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of Hilary Lloyd Yewlett.

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Send books for review and announcements to Patrick Spero, Dept. of Political Science, Schapiro Hall, Williams College, Williamstown, MA 01267.

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On the cover: Smith house before demolition. Photo courtesy of Chris Witmer.

EARLY MODERN MIGRATION FROM THE
MID-WALES COUNTY OF RADNORSHIRE
TO SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THREE
MEREDITH FAMILIES

Hilary Lloyd Yewlett

*I*n 1971 the Honorable Thomas M. Rees of California observed that “very little has been written of what the Welsh have contributed in all walks of life to the shaping of American history.”¹ In 1979 historian David Galenson maintained that “the issue of the composition of America’s early immigrants is an important one and will continue to receive considerable attention from historians who seek to understand the social and economic history of colonial America.” However, Douglas Greenburg’s examination of the historiography of the middle colonies revealed that Pennsylvania, which witnessed the immigration of many early modern Welsh Quaker migrants, has not attracted as much attention from researchers as has its neighboring states. In 1992, twenty-one years after Rees’s observations, Aaron Fogelman noted, “there is little literature on Welsh immigration in eighteenth-century America and quantitative estimates

are virtually non-existent." In 1994 Wayne Bodle showed that, during the preceding fifteen years, the *William and Mary Quarterly* had "published fewer articles with specific Middle Colonies themes than had been published in the previous fifteen years." Bodle highlighted Barry Levy's study of Quakers in the Delaware Valley. Levy undermined his argument by conflating north Wales and Cheshire, thereby ignoring their cultural and linguistic differences. Boyd Stanley Schlenker too asserted that no adequate account of settlement of the Welsh in colonial Pennsylvania exists. James T. Lemon later declared that while many studies on early Pennsylvania have appeared since the 1970s, much remains to be written about the contribution made by emigrants from Wales to the development of the colony.²

Among Welsh historians of the period, John Davies pointed to the distinctive local identity embraced by many Welshmen. He observed, "to be Welsh in America was to be from Wales; to be Welsh in Wales was to be from Carmarthenshire or Anglesey or Glamorgan or Denbighshire." Studies by Arthur H. Dodd, J. Gwynn Williams, and Geraint H. Jenkins are examples of this localism.³ Their research concentrated on Quaker migration from the counties of Merioneth and Montgomeryshire. While the majority of the early modern Welsh who migrated to southeast Pennsylvania did come from these two counties, a number also migrated from Radnorshire.

The Radnorshire local historian, Frank Noble, briefly addressed the issue of eighteenth-century Radnorshire-Pennsylvania emigration fifty years ago. In expanding on Noble's work, I observe Geraint Jenkins's warning that for this period in Welsh history "there is a woeful lack of either primary sources or secondary material on topics such as demography, size of households, social structure, foreign trade and much else besides."⁴

In the eighteenth century, Radnorshire (now part of the larger county of Powys) was the second smallest county in Wales, measuring twenty-eight miles from north to south and twenty-seven miles from east to west. With 16,270 inhabitants, it also had the second-smallest population.⁵ There is a significant diversity of cultures and communities between people who live in the different upland and lowland areas of Wales.⁶ There are also wide regional variations in both spoken and written Welsh, which may have made for some communication difficulties among early migrants from Merioneth, Montgomeryshire, and Radnorshire.⁷ Even today it is alleged that the difference in Venedotian dialect (north) and South Wales Welsh is as distinct as that between the English spoken in Alabama and New England.⁸

There were religious differences, too. The Radnorshire families who left for Pennsylvania were Quaker, Baptist, or Anglican. Quaker migration has been more thoroughly documented than migration by the other two groups. Mary K. Geiter pointed out that research on the Baptists in the middle region of North America has been relatively neglected.⁹ Thus, I will endeavor to trace the religious, economic, and social contribution that Radnorshire Baptists and Anglicans, as well as Quakers, made to early Pennsylvanian development under William Penn's 1701 Charter of Privileges that guaranteed religious freedom to all.¹⁰ As Dissenters from the Established Church, early Baptists anticipated the Quakers in emphasizing a biblical rather than a liturgical form of worship.

Some Radnorshire Dissenters were "pushed" into the decision to emigrate because they faced discrimination, not only on religious but also on ethnic grounds. While under the terms of Henry VIII's 1536 "Act of Union" between Wales and England, Welshmen received full citizenship alongside the English, the Act also contained a clause, not repealed for 457 years, that "no person or persons that use the Welsh speech or language shall have or enjoy any manor office or fees . . . unless he use and exercise the speech or language of English."¹¹ Thus monoglot Welshmen were barred from all public office in their own country as well as in England. Nevertheless, more than one hundred years later, monoglot Quakers still inhabited Radnorshire's uplands. Writing to George Fox in 1654, Westmoreland preacher Thomas Holme noted: "I staid the first dayes in radnersher in the mountains where I had divers meetings . . . there is a great convincement in that part, but the most are Welsh and some cannot understand English."¹² In 1669, when Richard Davies, one of Penn's Welsh agents, visited the county he commented that John ap John "was . . . the first Friend that I had heard declare in a meeting in the English tongue; though he was not perfect in that language."¹³

In Wales, Dissenting churches flourished in the country's isolated, harsh, highland northern and central regions, including Radnorshire, for there the Anglican Church suffered most as a result of poor parochial organization and the absence or indifference of its spiritual leaders. Historian Roy Porter observed that "the province was left to itself: some of its Anglican bishops never set foot within the principality [of Wales]." In Britain, separatist congregations of Baptists and Quakers came into being after the Civil War, when they campaigned for liberty of conscience and an individual interpretation of the Bible. At that time, Baptists were "among the most vigorous and enterprising of the sects which emerged in Wales."¹⁴

Both Baptists and Quakers maintained strongholds in Radnorshire.¹⁵ There was a Baptist community in Olchon on the Hereford/Radnor border as early as 1633. Quaker meetings also flourished in the area. In 1657, after first visiting Radnorshire, George Fox recalled in his journal, "We passed through Montgomeryshire into Wales, and so into Radnorshire, where there was a meeting like a leaguer [a besieging army]."¹⁶ Fox made many converts among the county's Baptist population for Baptists, along with Quakers, emphasized direct experience of God rather than ritual and ceremony. Baptists, like Quakers, were persecuted under a series of laws springing from the 1661 Clarendon Code. Dissenters were barred from the universities and from all public office. They were punished for their refusal to swear any oath of allegiance and for their refusal to pay tithes to "the steeple house"—the established church.

Welsh as a medium of worship continued to be undermined by the appointment to Welsh livings of monoglot English clerics. Coupled with religious victimization, ethnic discrimination against the Welsh also persisted. In 1606 a parliamentary diarist recorded that an English member of Parliament viewed the Welsh as "the most base, pesantly, perfidious peoples of the world." In 1682 the satirist William Richards referred to the Welsh language as "native gibberish."¹⁷

The majority of those "gibbering natives" who chose to participate in Penn's Holy Experiment were not poor farm laborers, but came from that stratum of society known as the middling sort.¹⁸ Some, indeed, described themselves as "gentlemen," basing this assertion on their descent from the families of the ancient Welsh princes. The term "middling sort" covers a wide socioeconomic spectrum.¹⁹ In Welsh rural society, the social hierarchy was comprised of the gentry, followed by yeomen who were frequently substantial farmers. Below yeomen came husbandmen, who were "middling to small peasant farmers." On a par with husbandmen were rural craftsmen. These included blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers, tailors, wheelwrights, saddlers, coopers, turners, and thatchers. Beneath the craftsmen were laborers, "the workhorses of the Welsh economy." Figure 1 shows the status or occupation of those resilient Radnorshire emigrants.²⁰ Clearly, gentlemen and yeomen predominated. Nevertheless, the Welsh held craftsmanship and manual skills in high regard and the artisan class played a fundamental role in the social, cultural and economic evolution of their new society.

Some Radnorshire farmers lived well, though the desire to keep taxes low undoubtedly motivated at least a few to undervalue their property.

MIGRATION FROM THE MID-WALES COUNTY

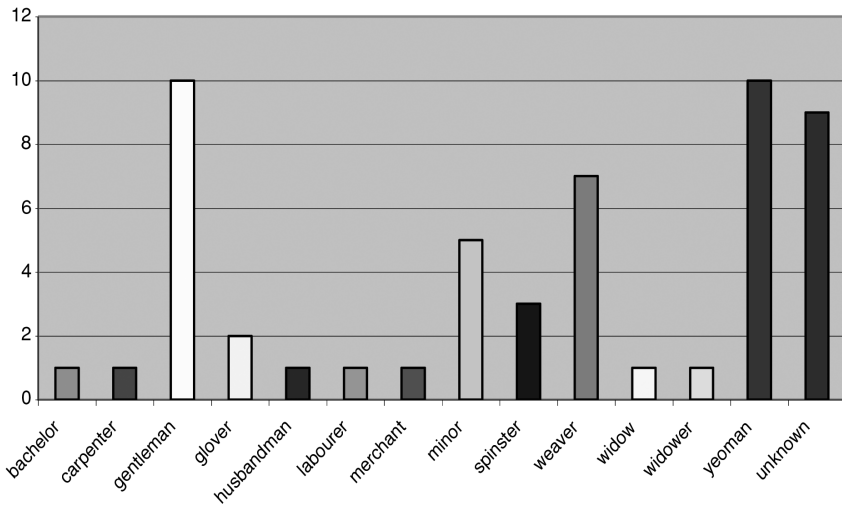


FIGURE 1: Immigrants by occupation or status.

Historian Keith Parker pointed out that “it is difficult to believe that Evan Davies of Llanddewi Ystradenni, sheriff of the county in 1636–7, had a landed estate accurately reported at £8.6 shillings in 1630, when his estate was valued at £600 per annum in 1660.” Barry Reay noted that the wealth of yeomen farmers varied enormously between counties and within them. He highlighted discrepancies in eighteenth-century English Hearth Tax returns: “In Essex and Somerset a return of one hearth almost certainly guarantees that the occupant of the house concerned was poor, the same is not true of Cheshire.” Welsh houses of the period relocated at the National History Museum, St. Fagans, reveal that a one-hearth farmhouse, such as Abernodwydd from Montgomeryshire, could have three spacious rooms on the ground floor. A one-hearth cottage like Nantwallter, also at St. Fagans, was a much more primitive affair. As the home of a farm laborer, it was a small, mud-walled, two-roomed, one-hearth cottage, with a roof thatched with rushes.²¹

It was mainly from the ranks of Radnorshire’s freeholders, yeomen, and craftsmen that Pennsylvania’s Quaker and Baptist migrants were recruited. They were a self-reliant people, for their farmsteads and cottages were scattered over Radnorshire’s remote uplands. The migrants took this pattern of settlement with them to Pennsylvania. Reverend Robert Weyman, an

Anglican missionary there, commented on the different settlement patterns the Welsh, as opposed to the English, adopted in the colony: “the number of inhabitants . . . are dispersed over a large compass of ground and lie not together as our towns in England but scattered and remote.” Scholar Alwyn D. Rees held that, given the hilly terrain of upland Wales, the native way of life there was inimical to the growth of nucleated settlements.²²

In those scattered mid-Wales communities, the family, the primary social group and unit of economic production, was of paramount importance.²³ When additional labor was required, it was usually available from relatives. Help also came from neighbors who invariably lived some distance away. Radnorshire migrants carried this practice with them to their new land, where it was continued for generations, for “no matter what the region or time period, where production was concerned the typical Pennsylvania farm unit was family-based.”²⁴

Between 1682 and 1730, approximately fifty Radnorshire families left for Pennsylvania, out of a total of 2,000 Welsh emigrants who came to America.²⁵ Figure 2 shows the proportion of Baptists, Quakers, and Anglicans among them.

In 1683 six Baptists from the congregation in Llanddewi sailed from Milford Haven to Philadelphia. All six names are recorded in the minutes

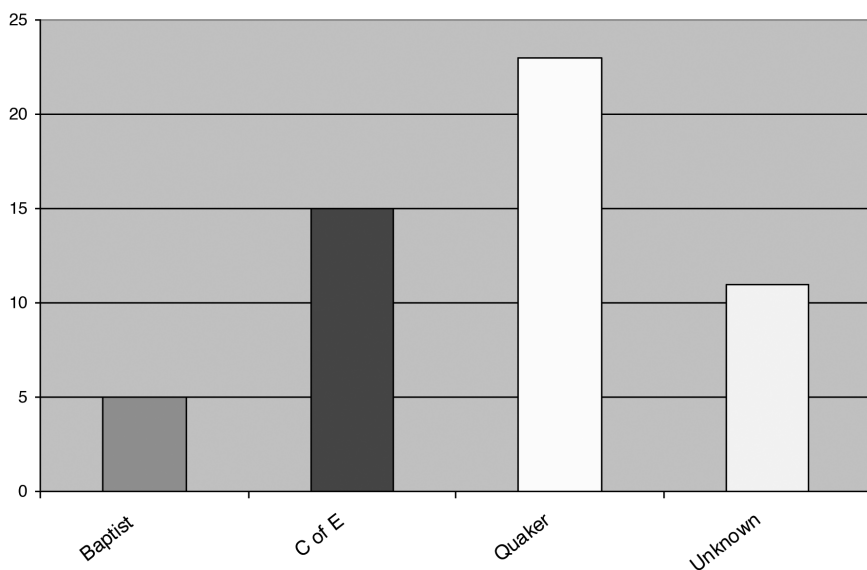


FIGURE 2: Emigrants by religion.

of the church they founded at Pennepeck—the fullest set of minutes for any colonial congregation before 1730. The site of the church they founded near the Schuylkill River at Pennepeck was beautiful, for overhanging branches of trees provided shade for the pastor and the candidate about to be baptized in the river’s “softly meandering current” (see fig. 3).

The region must have been reminiscent of the Baptists’ home parish in Radnorshire, of which Reverend Jonathan Williams said: “the vale of Llanddewi is narrow, but singularly beautiful and fertile. No part of the county surpasses it in abundance and variety of produce.”²⁶ It must have been the search for religious and civic freedom that motivated these Baptist farmers to migrate to Pennsylvania, for in Llanddewi they were accustomed to fruitful soil.

The majority of Radnorshire’s Quaker and Baptist migrants came from the upland parish of Nantmel where even today farms scattered across the parish’s 20,000 acres contain extensive areas of uninhabited moorland. Pastoralism has dominated the area for centuries. The first emigrants in the Delaware Valley named the areas where they settled “Nantmel” and “Radnor” to remind them of that homeland. Their river “Ithan” was named for Radnorshire’s own “Ithon.”

Welsh migrants were frequently obliged to start literally “from scratch,” so craftsmanship and manual skills became increasingly important to the social, cultural, and economic evolution of their new society.²⁷ Accustomed as they

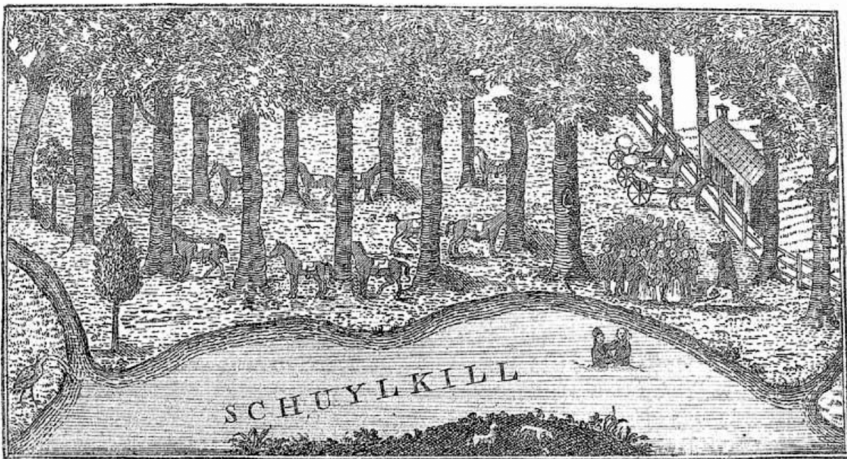


FIGURE 3: Baptizing in the Schuylkill River, Welsh Tract. Source: Joseph Cruikshank and Isaac Collins, printers, “Baptism in Schuylkill River,” woodcut (Philadelphia, 1770).

had been to working the acidic soil of the mid-Wales uplands, Radnorshire farmers must have believed that the fertile farmlands of the Delaware Valley were truly heaven-sent. They became good wheat farmers, for historian James Lemon noted that in relation to their numbers, the Welsh became wealthier than other immigrant farmers. The names of those first purchasers have been preserved in the Pennsylvania State Archives.²⁸

The migrants' dream of creating their own Welsh "Utopia" in Pennsylvania did not live up to the reality. William Penn reneged on the agreement he made in 1681 with Welsh Quaker agents that their 40,000 acres were to be in an undivided tract west of Philadelphia. In February 1686 Penn granted 600 acres within the Welsh Tract to Richard Ingelo, son of Nathaniel Ingelo, the English Anglican clergyman who had arrived with Penn on the *Welcome*.²⁹ Thus, instead of one unbroken tract in Philadelphia County, the Welsh found themselves being apportioned between smaller tracts in Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex counties, now in Delaware, where they were a minority. In 1689 some of the initial purchasers appeared before the assembly in Philadelphia to present their appeal for the preservation of the Welsh Tract. They affirmed:

We desire to be by ourselves . . . that we might live together as a civil society, to endeavour to decide all controversies amongst ourselves in a gospel order, and not to entangle ourselves with laws in an unknown tongue; as also to preserve our language, that we might ever keep correspondence with our friends in the land of our nativity.³⁰

Clearly, becoming entangled "with laws in an unknown tongue" evoked memories of their difficulties with Stuart legislation, written in English, back home.

These pleas were of no avail. The civil authority, formerly exercised by Quaker meetings in Haverford, Merion, and Radnor, was replaced by township government. Vigorous protest was useless and the manner in which the situation was handled did not endear Penn to the Welsh. With what was clearly a jibe at Penn's unavailability because of his absence in England, they declared that he was *diwyneb* (faceless)—a description not far short of the modern "faceless bureaucrat."³¹

Though all separate privileges for the Welsh Tract had been lost, migrants from Radnorshire continued to arrive in Pennsylvania, for even after the passing of the English Act of Toleration in 1689, discrimination against Dissenters was not completely eliminated.³² In June 1698, Hugh Roberts, leader of the

1683 Merioneth Quaker emigrants, brought back word to Radnorshire about the good, as well as the Godly, life to be had in Pennsylvania. In 1699 David Powell of Nantmel, together with Richard Hughes, chartered the *William Galley* to take sixty-one people from Carmarthen to Philadelphia.³³ Among the passengers were John and Susannah Price of Nantmel, Quakers who had reconverted to Anglicanism. In Pennsylvania they attended fortnightly Anglican services in William Davies's home in Newtown, adjoining Radnor Township. There, Reverend Evan Evans conducted services in Welsh. For Evans, recouping of communicants like the Prices was crucial, as his 1707 report to the Anglican missionary Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (hereafter SPG) made clear:

The Welch of Radnor . . . require a minister to be settled among them who understands the Brittish language, there being many ancient People among those Inhabitants that do not understand the English . . . such a minister may be capable by the blessing of God to bring in a Plentiful Harvest of Welch Quakers that were originally held in the Church of England but were unhappily perverted.³⁴

Describing Radnor or "Welshtown" in 1708, John Oldmixon noted that "in this place is a congregation of the Church of England—but no settled minister."³⁵ Many of the inhabitants of Radnor Township were still monoglot Welsh speakers but Evans, like other clergy, had few Welsh books available.³⁶ The Welsh-speaking Thomas Jenkin wrote to the SPG in August 1708, emphasizing his linguistic and evangelical proselytizing intentions:

the congregation at Newcastle have never had a Church of England clergyman amongst them that could preach to them in their own language and most of them understand no other. . . . I therefore design to spend much of my time and paines upon them in order to reclaim them from their pernicious errors.³⁷

Not only was the Welsh language losing ground to English, but Baptists were losing ground to the Anglicans. From Pennepeck in 1712, Reverend Abel Morgan wrote to the Baptist congregation in Blaenau Gwent that "although many Welsh are in this country I fear but few are likely to keep up the true Protestant religion or their language. The English is swallowing their language, though assisted by religion."³⁸

In an undated letter to the SPG, the Radnor congregation of the Anglican Reverend Weyman requested that he “be permanently appointed as clergyman that we may have the . . . means of grace dispensed to us in our own Language which is more edifying to us than any other can be.”³⁹ The SPG complied and provided Weyman with a supply of Welsh devotional literature. However, use of the Welsh language slowly declined and in 1734 Reverend Griffith Hughes became the last Welsh-speaking incumbent at St. David’s Church, Radnor Township.

The Welsh language and culture were sustained for a time by Baptist and Anglican congregations. The silent worship of Quakers did not lend itself to Welsh devotional hymn-singing, however. In other churches, too, the use of Welsh slowly crumbled. During the process of their assimilation, Welsh speakers became bilingual, gradually shifting their primary allegiance to English. They maintained the Welsh language and customs within their own social networks, but were gradually subsumed by much greater numbers of migrants from other European countries. In the face of religious diversity their Quaker allegiance also became weaker. Nevertheless, historian Gwyn Williams maintained that between 1682 and 1700 at least 2,000 Welsh emigrants “braved the horrible Atlantic crossings to create their pioneer settlements in a new world.”⁴⁰ Among these were approximately fifty families from Radnorshire. Figure 4 indicates the parishes of origin of these resilient Radnorshire emigrants.

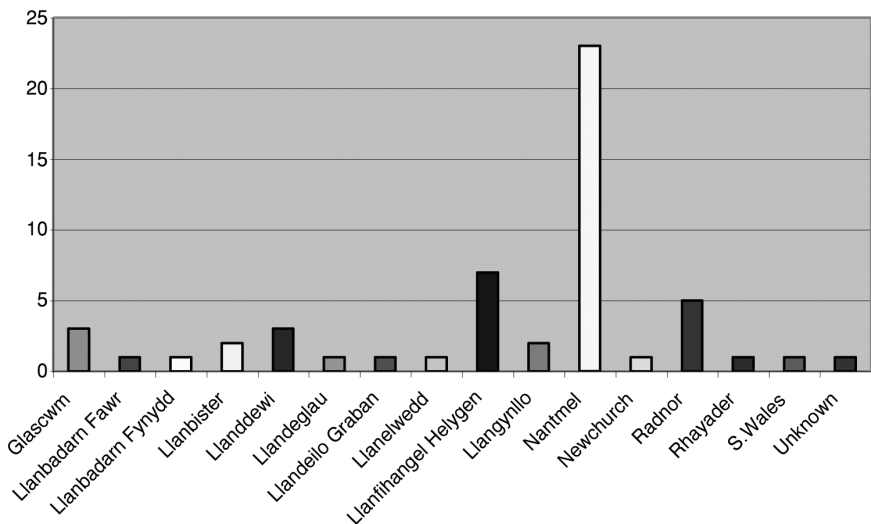


FIGURE 4: Emigrants by parish of origin.

The Welsh of Philadelphia remained mindful of their ethnic origins, despite their declining use of their language. On St. David's Day, March 1, 1729, a group of them met at the King's Head Tavern in King Street (now Water Street) in order to form the Society of Ancient Britons. Reverend Robert Weyman was appointed chairman, an indication of the increasingly important role Anglicans, as opposed to Quakers, were beginning to play in Philadelphia's public affairs.⁴¹ After their inaugural meeting, the group attended divine service in Christ Church, where Reverend Weyman preached the sermon in Welsh. By 1731 the Society was flourishing. Tickets for that year's meeting, held at Owen Owen's "Indian King" in Market Street, were sold at five shillings a head. A report in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* noted that in the evening a ball was held at the home of Captain Hoskins.⁴²

Meredith Families

As historian James Lemon pointed out, many Welsh migrants prospered economically in Pennsylvania. However, it was the significant contribution that the Meredith families made to the development of the colony that drew the particular attention of earlier scholars Wayland Dunaway and Sidney G. Fisher.⁴³ Members of Meredith families from west Radnorshire migrated to Pennsylvania in 1683, 1708, and 1730. It is difficult to specify their blood relationship because no relevant parish registers for the period are extant. Even the normally meticulous Quaker records do not show the birth date of David Meredith, though the birth of Reese Meredith, early in 1708, who was from the same parish of Llandegley, can be deduced from his father's 1707 will. Llandegley lies five miles from Llandrindod, which was then a village before it was developed in the mid-eighteenth century into an internationally renowned spa. Three miles from Llandrindod is Nantmel, the home parish of Simon Meredith.⁴⁴ Demographer D.E.C. Eversley pointed out that during early modern times:

Marriages between persons resident in the same parish, and those involving a partner from an adjoining parish or one within a five mile radius, account for 75–80 per cent of all marriages, and if we extend the radius to fifteen miles, we are likely to include all except an insignificant fraction of places of origin of partners.⁴⁵

Research on early modern Radnorshire marriages corroborates Eversley's findings.⁴⁶ There is therefore a high probability that these three Meredith

families were in some way related. Sadly, no records remain either in Radnorshire or in Pennsylvania that could demonstrate their exact connection. Whether related or not, all three Meredith families not only made a significant contribution to Pennsylvania's colonial history, but also later to the success of the American Revolution.

David Meredith

David Meredith (1637–1727), who migrated to Pennsylvania in 1683 with his wife and children, was among the earliest of Radnorshire's settlers in Pennsylvania.⁴⁷ Described in the 1663 Radnorshire Gaol Files as a "yeoman" from Llandegley, he was twice imprisoned for his Quaker beliefs.⁴⁸ Assured of freedom of worship in William Penn's "Holy Experiment," "weaver" Meredith was determined to participate. But his classification as a weaver is misleading, for it belies his true status as a yeoman farmer. The woolen industry was an essential complement to farming in rural Wales and "weaving looms were expensive at around £2," the equivalent of a seventeenth-century craftsman's wages for twenty-two days' labor.⁴⁹ Substantial farmers like David Meredith carried out weaving during slack winter months, assisted by skilled laborers.

In July 1683 Radnor Men's Quaker Meeting received a request from David James, who had emigrated in 1682, for a certificate of removal to Pennsylvania for himself and his family.⁵⁰ At this meeting, a similar certificate was prepared for David Meredith who had been a neighbor of James, dated 20th of the 5th month 1683. David later presented it to the Friends' Monthly Meeting in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

In Pennsylvania's early years, membership in the Quaker community helped people succeed.⁵¹ A major function of Friends' Monthly Meetings was civil administration, and David Meredith's life in Radnor was an exemplar of successful Quaker community leadership. Evidence of the responsibilities that he exercised can be seen in the Haverford Meeting minutes for August 1693: "the inhabitants of said two townships [Haverford and Radnor] . . . should pay one shilling per hundred [acres] towards the taking of Wolves. . . . David Meredith and Steven Bevan for Radnor to receive the said tax."⁵² Maintaining neighborhood fences was also one of Meredith's duties, as was poor relief. In 1695 he was nominated along with Rees Thomas "to confer with Edward Morgan and to inquire into his condition, and whether he wants relief at present, and to bring an account thereof to the next meeting." In the following meeting both men were:

ordered to inquire further into ye present condition of Edward Morgan and what he intends to do in relation to his present settlement, and to see him relieved out of Friends Collection, what he is in necessity of to his present subsistence.⁵³

Meredith continued to enjoy success as a farmer but his wife, Katherine, passed away in September 1688, only five years after her arrival in Pennsylvania.

By 1689 Meredith's acreage in Radnor Township had increased to 250. In 1690, he married Mary Jones, a widow, of Upper Providence. A copy of their Quaker prenuptial agreement is still held by Gwynedd Meeting.⁵⁴ Despite his disappointment at the loss of the Welsh Tract—he had signed the fruitless 1689 petition—Meredith began to improve his lot, though he received a setback in the spring of 1696 when he was among a group of subscribers from Haverford and Radnor townships who pledged £10 apiece to William Penn to buy land along the Susquehanna River, in order to expand the trade in beaver skins, then the monopoly of the Indians. In June 1696, when Indians from the Ohio Valley raided the Susquehanna region, enthusiasm for the project waned; when Penn failed to return to Pennsylvania by May 1698, David Meredith's pledge, like those of the other subscribers, was voided. Even so, in 1690 he was the highest taxpayer of Radnor.⁵⁵

By 1701 Pennsylvania was "a vigorous, prosperous plantation" and David Meredith was a vigorous, prosperous farmer. In 1703 he purchased 980 acres in Plymouth Township from Francis Rawle and James Fox, English Quakers who had failed to establish a woolen industry there. Meredith acquired part of this estate, that portion of the tract "adjacent to the Schuylkill River." He settled in Norristown, where until a Meeting House was constructed in 1708 Quaker meetings were held in Meredith's substantial three-story house. Historian Lemon noted that "early draft surveys show that, in newly opened areas, the settlers took up land in stream bottoms or near springs." As late as 1900, the limits of the old dam that provided water for David Meredith's mill could still be distinctly traced just below the road. On the slope opposite his house, the race down which the water flowed to operate his sawmill below was clearly outlined.⁵⁶

To the end of his life, Meredith remained an irreproachable overseer of Quaker affairs. In 1714 Gwynedd and Plymouth Meetings established joint monthly gatherings where in 1715, aged seventy-eight, he, along with two other senior Friends, was given a weighty responsibility:

David Meredith, Thomas Evans and George Lewis are appointed to Attend the Service of the next Quarterly Meeting and to report the Love and Unity is Maintained among our Meetings [kept] up and Friends Concerned to put the Discipline into Practice.

At the next Quarterly Meeting he was called upon to investigate the moral uprightness of a prospective bridegroom:

Isaac Williams and Elizabeth Marle Declared their Intention of Marriage with each other the first time—David Meredith and William Coulston are appointed to Inspect into his Clearness and Conversation and make report thereof the Next M:ing.

The September 1715 Meeting recorded that “David Meredith and Ellis Pugh are Appointed to speak with John Roads respecting that he is charged with—and why he did not more frequently attend meeting.”⁵⁷

Ellis Pugh, David Meredith’s co-overseer in Gwynedd, came from Dolgellau in Merioneth. Arriving in Pennsylvania in 1687, four years after David Meredith, Pugh achieved fame with *Annerch ir Cymru* (“Greetings to the Welsh,” or “A Salutation to the Britons,” as the book was called in English). It was written toward the end of Pugh’s life and was the first volume to be published in Welsh in America.⁵⁸ The book’s full title reflects the Quaker author’s concerns with the necessity for the Welsh to continue to live a Christian life:

A Salutation to the Britons to call them from many things, to the one thing needful, for the saving of their souls; especially to the poor, unarmed trailer, ploughmen, shepherds and those that are of low degree like myself. This is in order to direct you to know God and Christ, the only wise God, which is life eternal, and to learn of him, that you may become wiser than their teachers.

In January 1699, Ellis Pugh’s daughter, Ellin, married David Meredith’s son, Meredith David. In Wales the bridegroom would have been known as Meredith *ap* David, that is, Meredith, son of David. The marriage was an important social, as well as religious, meeting, for more than 250 people signed as witnesses to the marriage certificate.⁵⁹ One of them, Rowland Ellis, later translated Ellis Pugh’s *Annerch ir Cymru* into English. Ellis’s name

appeared along with David Meredith's in the list of first purchasers of land in Chester County. In 1700 Rowland Ellis was elected as one of Philadelphia's representatives to the Pennsylvania assembly.

Like many Meredith family members back in Radnorshire, David Meredith lived to a great age. To the end, he remained a respected figure in his Quaker community. Thomas Chalkley, the celebrated Quaker minister and master mariner, called on him in 1726 when returning to Philadelphia from a missionary visit to Okley, now in Susquehanna County:

the next Day I called to see my old Friend David Meredith, who being about 89 years of Age, I thought it probable I might not have another Opportunity of seeing him. He met me with gladness, and told me, It was their meeting-day; so that I stay'd, and was much comforted and tendered by the Power of Christ.⁶⁰

David Meredith's participation in Penn's "Holy Experiment" must surely be considered a success. Though the Welsh Tract did not materialize, Meredith nevertheless spent his life in the company of like-minded Friends in southeast Pennsylvania, where he was neither persecuted for his religion nor vilified for his language. Like many other early settlers whose memory is now lost to history, he surmounted his initial difficulties and achieved material success while remaining steadfast in his Quaker beliefs. Such pioneers could have no more appropriate epitaph than that provided by eighteenth-century historian Robert Proud:

Divers of these early Welsh settlers were persons of excellent and worthy character; and several of good education, family and estate, chiefly Quakers; and many of them either eminent preachers in that society or otherwise well qualified and disposed to do good, in various capacities, both in religious and civil, in public and private life.⁶¹

Simon Meredith

A second family of Radnorshire Merediths came to Pennsylvania in 1708: Simon Meredith (1663–1747) from the parish of Nantmel, together with his wife, Jane, and their four sons, Hugh (11), James (9), John (6), and Thomas (3). In 1697 Simon and Jane had been married by "bond" rather than by the calling of banns. The existence of their marriage bond reveals

that they were of "middling status," for only farmers with some means were in a position to find persons who would act as guarantors that the marriage would take place. Simon and Jane were Baptists, not Anglicans, but at that time only Quakers and Jews were permitted to marry outside the Anglican communion.

Little is known of Simon Meredith's first five years in the colony, which had grown considerably since David Meredith arrived. From 4,000 in the entire colony in 1682, the number of settlers in Philadelphia alone had swelled to 10,000 by 1720. Simon was among the first to purchase land in French Creek, Coventry Township, about thirty miles west of Philadelphia. Three hundred acres sandwiched between the lands of James Pugh and James Logan were surveyed for him on May 13, 1713. His Pughtown home is now a listed building.⁶² Its location enabled him to congregate with like-minded Baptists in the area:

English Sabbath-keepers in Newtown, Providence, Easttown, and Tredyffrin townships of Chester County, . . . migrated to the upper end of the county, where they took up land at the falls of the French Creek in Nantmeal Township, and there founded a settlement and congregation, destined for years to come to be the largest and most influential body of Seventh Day Baptists in the Province. Among the names of these early pioneers, who were mainly Welsh, were . . . Simon Meredith . . . [etc.].⁶³

From then on, Simon Meredith's name appeared regularly in the middle band of taxpayers for East Nantmel Township.⁶⁴

Less than twenty years after his arrival, like David Meredith before him, Simon had become a prosperous farmer and a prominent local citizen. On October, 3, 1727, "a rainy day," according to Benjamin Franklin, Simon was elected one of Chester County's eight representatives to the Pennsylvania assembly. The governance of the colony was still largely in the hands of Quakers, so his election as a Baptist was an achievement. David Lloyd, then Speaker of the House, also represented Chester County. Simon was also a county magistrate, carrying out judicial duties as ordained by the assembly.⁶⁵

While Simon was prospering, his son Hugh was not. Almost thirty years old, and unhappy farming in Chester County, Hugh had found employment at Samuel Keimer's printing house in Philadelphia, where he worked alongside the young Benjamin Franklin. The day of the 1727

assembly elections, Franklin and Keimer had one of their frequent quarrels.⁶⁶ Franklin recalled that it was on that evening that Hugh suggested he and Franklin enter into a partnership on their own.⁶⁷ According to Franklin, Hugh's father had formed a good opinion of him and would be willing to back their venture. Anxious to see Hugh succeed in printing where he had failed in farming, Simon duly advanced the young men 100 pounds to purchase a printing press. It was not long before Benjamin Franklin was using Simon's high-powered connections at the assembly in order to gain access to the arena of political printing. Soon he and Hugh were elected official printers to the government of Pennsylvania. Their first commission, "The Pennsylvania General Loan Office Register of 1729," was discovered in 1999.⁶⁸

In 1730 Meredith and Franklin printed the third book to appear in Welsh in America. Not inappropriately, given that Hugh was from a Welsh-speaking Baptist family, its title was *Y Dull o Fedyddro a Dwfr* (On the Manner of Baptizing with Water), allegedly written by Benjamin Wallin. It was produced by Franklin and Meredith in their new printing works in Philadelphia, *yn yr Agraph-dy Newydd yn ymmil y Farchnad, gan* (in the new printing house on the corner of Market Street, by) "B. Franklin a Hugh Meredydd 1730, pris Is."⁶⁹ (An imperfect copy of the title page of the book is reproduced as figure 5.)

Hugh's success was, however, short-lived. He continued frequenting Philadelphia's many taverns where, as early as 1693, there were between 12 and 20 or one for every 100 to 170 people.⁷⁰ (Franklin's Junto, established in the autumn of 1727, of which Hugh was a member, met initially in a Philadelphia tavern.) Furthermore, by 1730 Simon Meredith no longer enjoyed his influential place in the assembly, nor was he in a position to advance his son a further loan of 100 pounds. Hugh was therefore of limited assistance to Franklin in the furthering of his ambitions. Franklin's new backers "did not like his continuing the partnership with Meredith," whom they accused of drinking to excess. Even though Franklin himself was not averse to a glass of wine, he dissolved his connection with Hugh.⁷¹

Hugh moved temporarily to the Cape Fear district of North Carolina from where, as Franklin recorded,

he sent me two long letters containing the best account that has been given of that country, the climate, soil, husbandry. . . . I printed them in the papers and they gave great satisfaction to the publick.⁷²

Hugh's articles promoting the Cape Fear country appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and were published as a book in 1922.⁷³ They were clearly intended

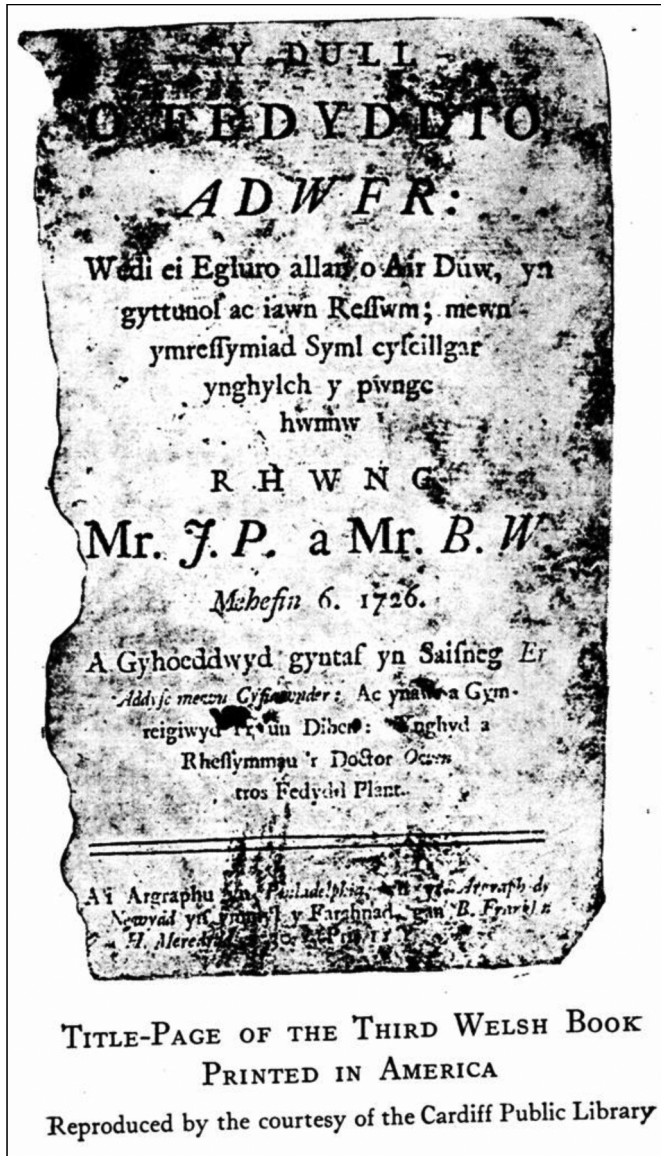


FIGURE 5: Franklin/Meredith Third Welsh Book.

to promote the area to potential settlers from Pennsylvania, as the following extract shows:

Remainder of the Account of CAPE FEAR, Begun in our last . . . here are Parroquets in the Summer, and greater Plenty of Turkeys than ever I saw in *Pennsylvania*. Here are Foxes, Wolves, Wildcats, Possums, Raccoons, and Panthers always, and Bears sometimes in great Plenty; also Plenty of Deer. . . . Alligators are very numerous here, but not very mischievous; however on their Account Swimming is less practis'd here than in the Northern Provinces.⁷⁴

Motivated perhaps by Hugh's dispatches, in fact many Pennsylvanians moved further south, for Bernard Bailyn noted that between 1730 and 1750, the population of North Carolina doubled, from 35,000 to almost 70,000, many of whom moved down the "Great Wagon Road" from the Pennsylvania backcountry.⁷⁵

While Hugh may have been the "black sheep" of what became a distinguished Pennsylvanian family, historian Barry Levy admitted that he "was wrong to group him rhetorically in regard to wealth with the struggling Quaker families that the new land in North Carolina might appeal to." Levy was equally wrong to ascribe Hugh's wayward character to the failure of his Quaker upbringing. All four of Simon's sons had been brought up in a Baptist household, though John became a Quaker after marrying Grace Williams of Uwchlan Township in November 1727.⁷⁶

By May 1745 Hugh was again in Philadelphia, then a thriving metropolis, where he was establishing himself in a new line of business. He announced in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*:

HUGH MEREDITH opposite John Jones' s at the Sign of the Plow and Harrow in Third Street, Philadelphia, hereby informs his former good Employers, and others, That he is now ready to take in and print or stamp Linen, Linen and Cotton, &c. for Counterpains, Curtains, or any other Uses; and that now having better Conveniency, he can perform it much better than he could do in the Country; those inclined to employ him, may apply to him at his Place of Abode, where Attendance will be given, and Patterns may be chosen.⁷⁷

Six years later Hugh was again in Chester County, from where he advertised the loss of his indentured servant in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of March, 5, 1751:

Run away this morning from Hugh Meredith of Newtown, Chester County, a servant man, named Robert Jones, he is about 5 foot 10 inches high, and of swarthy complexion: Had on when he went away, a good felt hat, a lightish coloured cloth coat, and fustian jacket, old leather breeches, ribbyarn stockings, good shoes; had three shirts with him, and several other things, viz. A buckskin and three yards of white linnen. Who ever takes up and secures said servant, so as his master may have him again shall have Three Pounds reward, paid by HUGH MEREDITH. N. B. All masters of vessels are desired not to carry him off at their peril.⁷⁸

While Hugh Meredith's temperament had led him to experiment with a career other than farming, his brothers continued working on the land. However, with the rapid growth of the colony, perceived as "very flourishing" by a mid-eighteenth-century English visitor, different opportunities presented themselves to settlers.⁷⁹ Hugh's nephews, John and Hugh, sons of his brother James, were first-generation Americans and took advantage of wider opportunities available to them. John became a blacksmith in New Britain, Bucks County. In an age of horse-drawn vehicles, this was an essential and lucrative occupation. His older brother, Hugh (1743–1815), became a doctor in Doylestown. In 1805 Hugh built an imposing mansion in that town for his son, Charles, also a physician. Dr. Hugh later helped found the Union Academy in Doylestown and was the first of a line of seventeen physicians stemming from the Meredith family of Bucks county.⁸⁰

The Revolutionary War caused friction in many families. For example, while Benjamin Franklin embraced independence, his son, William, remained loyal to the English crown; two of the nephews of "printer" Hugh Meredith were similarly driven apart. One, Dr. Hugh Meredith, fought with Captain Christian Binkley's Militia Company, Third Battalion, New Britain Company. However, John, Dr. Hugh's brother, retained his British citizenship. He took refuge behind British lines in New York, moving from there to Annapolis, Nova Scotia, where he died in 1787.⁸¹ Because he was a loyalist, John's estate in New Britain was forfeited under the Pennsylvania Confiscation Act of March 6, 1778. In 1784, he presented a claim for land and property in Pennsylvania which had been left to him in his father's will.⁸² In his own will, John had appointed his "brother Simon Meredith by Letter of Attorney to act in his stead in receiving monies from his father's estate."⁸³ However, on January 21, 1784, seven years after John's death, the Attorney General heard:

the case of James Meredith's will dated 3 February 1774, proved 16 February 1775 in Bucks Co with letters of administration issued to Thomas Meredith, the Sole Executor. The Testator's son John Meredith was attainted by Proclamation 7 July 1780 and his estate in New Britain Twp., Bucks Co. was eventually sold to Adam Melchor.⁸⁴

Along with properties belonging to other British loyalists, his estate of 100 acres containing a house, barn, orchard and meadow, had been advertised for sale in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, May 15, 1781.

Reese Meredith

By 1730, the year of Reese Meredith's removal to Philadelphia, emigration from Wales had long since diminished to a trickle. As scholar Richard Allen pointed out, "from being an influential minority group, in the late seventeenth century, the Welsh became simply one of the many ethnic communities in Pennsylvania."⁸⁵ Nevertheless, in 1730 Reese Meredith, born in the Llandegley parish of Radnorshire, came to Philadelphia alone at the age of twenty-two. The city in which he settled had increased considerably in size and prosperity since the arrival of the earliest settlers almost fifty years previously, and it offered considerable opportunities for advancement to young entrepreneurs like Reese Meredith. Reese was no footnote to history, even though he only appears casually in monographs written about the American mercantile class. He merits no mention at all in any studies of British merchants of the period, though his success in Philadelphia was due in no small measure to the financial and personal encouragement he received from his uncle, a merchant in Bristol. Reese's background in Radnorshire was relatively humble. However, possessed of outstanding business acumen, he became one of the most successful members of the Philadelphian mercantile community that had "more than doubled in size between 1750 and 1791, accommodating the careers of hundreds of successful traders."⁸⁶

When Reese left Radnorshire, he could never have dreamed of success on such a scale, nor that he would transfer his loyalty from the British Crown to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania before he died. His earliest years in mid-Wales were veiled in sadness. His father died in November 1707, two months before Reese was born. Four years later his mother, Elizabeth (nee Southall), and both his grandfathers died. Reese was then cared for by his maternal

grandmother, Mary, who had six underage children of her own. Mary and her family eventually moved from her husband's estate in Llanfihangel Rhydeithon, the parish adjoining Llandegley, to Leominster, then a thriving market town in the Welsh Marches, the border land between Wales and England. There, in 1722, aged fourteen, at a premium of £40, Reese became apprenticed as a mercer to his uncle, Samuel Southall, his mother's younger brother.⁸⁷

Reese completed his eight years of apprenticeship in 1730. The death of his grandmother the previous year may have had some bearing upon his decision to move to Pennsylvania, for by that time there was little overt discrimination in England against Quakers. His Southall family members were very successful merchants in Leominster, but they were divided over problems of inheritance. Reese's uncle, John Southall, had moved from Leominster to Bristol where he traded as a merchant, and it was from there that Reese emigrated to Philadelphia, initially as his uncle's factor, selling British goods for him on a commission basis.

In Leominster Reese had worshiped regularly at the Quaker Meeting House in the town, a building that had been in existence since 1689. Consequently, Leominster Friends provided Reese with a letter of removal to Friends in Philadelphia. As a newcomer to that city, Reese would have found comfort and support within the Philadelphia Quaker community, which met at the Great Meeting House, located on the southwest corner of Market and Second streets. Undoubtedly, the talk in the Men's Meetings, which Reese first attended in 1730, would have been of the major fire that had broken out on Philadelphia's Fishbourne's Wharf in the spring of that year. The conflagration was reported in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of April 30, 1730. This disastrous occurrence led eventually to the creation by Franklin of the Union Fire Company, of which Reese was later to become clerk.⁸⁸

While Reese had connections with his merchant uncle in Bristol, unlike many merchants in Philadelphia he did not initially have any family contacts in that city. His success as a merchant is therefore all the more laudable, achieved initially by his ability as a Quaker to establish relationships with some of the city's most prosperous businessmen.

On March 23, 1738, Reese Meredith made a propitious marriage to Martha Carpenter, the granddaughter of Samuel Carpenter, who had once been the colony's richest merchant and deputy governor under William Penn. Martha was also the niece of William Fishbourne, himself a wealthy merchant and former mayor of Philadelphia. It was from Fishbourne's Wharf that Reese began trading, initially with his first partner, Samuel Neave.

From Fishbourne's, the *Southall*, one of his early vessels named after his family, sailed to Bristol to connect with his uncle, John Southall.⁸⁹ At that time, Bristol was an important port for trading with Philadelphia. Historian Kenneth Morgan pointed out that "John Adams . . . coupled Bristol with Philadelphia as the greatest commercial cities of the British Empire after London."⁹⁰ It may well have been Reese who fostered trading links between his uncle Southall and the great Philadelphia Quaker merchant Israel Pemberton. A 1747 letter from Pemberton to Southall makes clear that the two enjoyed a regular business correspondence.⁹¹

Between 1735 and 1766, John Southall sent regular exports from Bristol to his nephew in Philadelphia. There was a seasonal rhythm to trade with the colonies. John's spring exports consisted mainly of manufactured items. In the autumn he sent Reese woolen goods. From Bristol, Reese imported goods from the growing manufacturing sector of Great Britain, which, seeing Pennsylvania as a vital overseas market, capitalized on Philadelphia's increasing demand for "household commodities, tools, weapons and all kinds of utensils." Together with textiles and glass items, Reese also imported manufactured goods, as his many advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* make clear.⁹²

At the height of his success, Reese traded from his own premises on Meredith Wharf. From there, his ships, like those of other merchants, sailed the North Atlantic. Reese profited from his son-in-law Henry Hill's family links to the wine trade, Madeira, the Canary Islands, and Lisbon, Portugal. Reese also had interests in Barbados, for his Quaker principles did not prevent him from owning and trading in slaves.

As Reese now enjoyed considerable status in Philadelphian society, his children were in a position to make fortunate marriages. Samuel married Margaret, the daughter of Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, an eminent physician, a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, and allegedly "a fallen off Quaker." Reese's daughter, Elizabeth, married George Clymer, a merchant and politician who signed the Declaration of Independence, while Reese's youngest daughter, Ann (Nancy) married Henry Hill, a wealthy wine merchant.⁹³ Reese, Samuel, and George formed a business partnership, *Meredith-Clymer*, which lasted four years after Reese's death until 1782. The weddings of Samuel and his sisters took place in Christ Church, a fashionable Anglican church in Philadelphia. Consequently, they were disowned by the Society of Friends for marrying "out of unity." While Reese remained a Quaker, Samuel was later a vestryman at St. Michael's Episcopal Parish Church, Trenton,

New Jersey. As scholar Nathaniel Burt noted, as the eighteenth century progressed, “the typical Philadelphian family pattern became Quaker turned Anglican.” Increasing numbers of prominent members of the Church of England began exerting an influence on the politics and social life of the city.⁹⁴

Reese also created important links with Philadelphia’s social elite. In 1736 Benjamin Franklin had set up the Union Fire Company to protect the property of its members against fire. It also functioned as a social club, whose members were mainly Quakers of the first rank. By 1744 Reese had become the company’s clerk. In 1756 he was rated at £70 in the Philadelphia tax list, thus joining Philadelphia’s elite group, a position he held until he died in 1778. He was rated at over £100 in the list for 1774.⁹⁵

One of the most lasting friendships Reese made was with George Washington, whom he first met in 1755, as the young gentleman colonel from Virginia was returning from the ill-fated Braddock expedition in the French and Indian War. After drinks in the Coffee House near Walnut Street, Reese, who then lived nearby on the northeast corner of Water and Walnut streets, invited Washington home to supper. In later life, Reese prevailed on his friendship with Washington to help two colleagues seeking to settle in Virginia. Writing in 1773, Reese made the following request to his “esteemed friend”:

Esteemed Friend Philadelphia May 5th 1773

Colonel Washington

From the little acquaintance I had with thee formerly, I take the liberty of recommending the Bearer Capt. John Harper who is in partnership with William Hartshorne—John Harper comes down in order to see the Country, if he likes it, they propose to come down and settle with you; they are Men that have a very pretty Interest—Wm Hartshorne lived with me some Time—They are Industrious, Careful, Sober Men; If Capt. Harper should want to draw on this place for Five hundred Pounds I will engage his Bills shall be paid—Any Civilities shewn him will be return’d by Thy Friend

Reese Meredith

This letter written in Reese’s own hand is preserved in the Library of Congress.⁹⁶ Reese’s son, Samuel, too, benefited from this friendship, for he

became the first U.S. Treasurer appointed by President Washington after the Constitution came into effect in 1789. A notice in *Porcupine's Gazette* of March 3, 1798, also identifies Samuel as the first president of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia, which was inaugurated that year.

In his old age, Reese retained his place among the social elite of the city. In a diary entry for September 21, 1774, John Adams recorded a visit he made to Reese's daughter, Nancy, and her husband, Henry Hill: "rode out of Town six Miles to Mr. Hills where we dined with Mr. Hill and Lady, Mr. Dickinson and his Lady, Mr. Thompson and his Lady, old Mr. Meredith, father of Mrs. Hill."⁹⁷

Reese's life and work in Philadelphia was played out against a backdrop of three major wars involving the American colonies: the War of Jenkins' Ear/King George's War (1739–1748), the French and Indian War (1754–1763), and the Revolutionary War (1775–1783). His Quaker principles were sorely tested by these events. In 1747 Reese faced repeated censure from the Friends for outfitting a warship sent to intercept French and Spanish marauders sighted at the approaches to Philadelphia. He was again criticized in 1757 for contributing toward the sum of 10,000 pounds for Massachusetts soldiers preparing for the French-Indian War, but he was not disowned by the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. A Quaker to the end of his life, he was nevertheless persuaded by his son Samuel and his son-in-law, George Clymer, to give support to the Revolutionary War. Unlike his nephew, Quaker merchant Thomas Wharton, who refused to participate in the war, Reese became "a reluctant revolutionary" two years before his death in 1776.⁹⁸

While his business partner George Clymer was a revolutionary activist, Reese was not.⁹⁹ Influenced by Clymer, Reese was persuaded to accept a share of \$25,000 from the Continental treasurers "to be applied to the purpose of importing gunpowder for the continental armies." He, together with Samuel, Clymer and Samuel Mifflin were to

be allowed out of the same five pr.cent for their trouble and expenses therein, that they keep all their proceedings as much as possible a secret from every other person but the Congress and the general of the continental forces [i.e., Washington].¹⁰⁰

Quaker to the end, in November 1777 Reese affirmed, but did not swear, his allegiance to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

No likeness of Reese Meredith exists, for many Quakers eschewed portraiture. However, a statue was raised in memory of his son, Samuel, near

his last home in Pleasant Mount Village, Wayne County, Pennsylvania. Reese did not live to see his granddaughter, Martha Meredith Read, become one of the first American feminist writers who dedicated *Monima or the Beggar Girl* to Dr. Hugh Meredith, aware perhaps that both their grandfathers migrated from the same small area of Radnorshire.¹⁰¹ Nor could Reese have known of the accolade afforded to his great-grandson, Dr. Meredith Clymer, a brigade surgeon in the Civil War when in 1902 that distinguished physician's obituary notice was posted in the *British Medical Journal*.¹⁰² Reese Meredith, the orphan from the remote parish of Llandegley, in the heart of Wales, not only made a fortune during his life in Philadelphia. He also became the progenitor of one of the most aristocratic and influential "dynasties" in the city.¹⁰³

Conclusion

By the end of Reese's life, toward the close of the eighteenth century, "the Welsh Population of Philadelphia which had constituted one-third of the colony was now less than five per cent (12,000) of a total population of 250,000." By that time also, there was little further immigration from any of the counties of Wales to America. The Welsh were all too few in number to keep a separate identity indefinitely and because their ability to speak English enabled them to interact with a larger number of ethnic groups, the Welsh language and culture became increasingly marginalized. Nevertheless, even if they no longer had the language (Samuel Meredith, for example, was not a Welsh speaker), their ancient culture and ancestry were anchored in Welsh societies, like the Philadelphia Welsh Society, which Samuel helped to set up, and which also offered assistance to poor immigrants from Wales. It was also through societies like these that Welsh exiles "sought to recreate something of the cultural life of their homeland and to promote their nationality's presence."¹⁰⁴ The Philadelphia Welsh Society exists to this day, as do similar societies in other parts of the United States.

Three hundred years ago, it was the attraction of religious freedom and the chance to own large acres and develop a better quality of life that motivated many stalwart Radnorshire farmers to make the perilous Atlantic crossing to Pennsylvania in search of freedom and prosperity. Most eventually lost their religion and their language, but for some there were different compensations. And what was a severe loss to Wales was a huge gain for America, for immigrants like the Merediths, from that small area in the little county lying at the heart of Wales, left an indelible mark on the history, not only of Pennsylvania, but also of the United States.

NOTES

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5. Glanmor Williams, *Renewal and Reformation Wales c. 1415–1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 408.
6. Philip Jenkins, *A History of Modern Wales, 1536–1900* (London: Longman, 1997). For a map of Wales with pre-1974 counties see <http://www.data-wales.co.uk/oldmap.htm> or: Trevor Herbert and G. Elwyn Jones, eds., *Tudor Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988), 139.
7. Geraint H. Jenkins, *Foundations of Modern Wales*, 97.
8. A. A. Gill, "Table Talk," *Sunday Times*, September 28, 1997; and John W. Richards, *Xenophobia's Guide to the Welsh*, 2nd ed. (London: Oval Books, 2008), 7.
9. Mary K. Geiter, "The Ministries of Abel Morgan I and II and the Philadelphia Baptist Association in the Eighteenth Century," *North American Journal of Welsh Studies* 2 (2002), <http://spruce.flint.umich.edu/~ellisjs/journal.htm>.
10. "Pennsylvania's Charter of Privileges," Constitution Society website, <http://www.constitution.org/bcp/penncharpriv.htm>.
11. "Welsh Documents," <http://owain.vaughan.com/1535c26/>.
12. Norman Penny, ed., *John ap John and Early Records of Friends in Wales* (London: Headley Brothers, 1907), 22.
13. Richard Davies, *An Account of the Convincement, Exercises, Services and Travels of Richard Davies* (London, 1710), 34. Eighteenth-Century Collections Online database.
14. Roy Porter, *English Society in the 18th Century*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1991), 36; Glanmor Williams, *The Welsh and Their Religion* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), 46; Penny, ed., *John ap John*, 22.

15. Jenkins, *Foundations of Modern Wales*, 64.
16. George Fox, *Journal*, "Chapter X: Planting the Seed in Wales," accessed from Streetcorner Society website, www.strecorsoc.org/gfox/ch10.html.
17. Geraint H. Jenkins, "Y Sais Brych," *Taliesin* 52 (1985): 58; D. H. Wilson, ed., *The Parliamentary Diary of Robert Bowyer, 1606–1607* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), 204; William Richards, *Dean Swift's Ghost* (London, 1753), Eighteenth Century Collections online.
18. Anti-Welsh prejudice has continued down the centuries. In a London *Sunday Times* article of 1997, A. A. Gill declared that the Welsh are "loquacious, dissemblers, immoral liars, stunted, bigoted, dark, ugly, pugnacious little trolls." BBC News on February 2, 2000, reported that "in a written statement, eighteen Members of the National Assembly for Wales, representing all four political parties, called for an end to what they said was 'persistent anti-Welsh racism'" in the UK media. The AMs called on media regulatory bodies to take firm action "against any remarks or images which demean individuals on the basis of their national, cultural or linguistic heritage."
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**“YOUR PETITIONERS ARE IN NEED”:
PLEASANT HILLS AS A CASE STUDY IN
BOROUGH INCORPORATION**

Richard L. Lindberg

In 1947 residents in the northern wards of Jefferson Township in Allegheny County voted, subject to court approval, to secede from the township in a bid to create a more responsive government. The resulting court approval allowed the Borough of Pleasant Hills to incorporate. Pleasant Hills became another element of local government in a county already fragmented by local governments. Incorporating a new borough raises several questions. Why was it necessary to form another borough in a county with a number of boroughs already? What would the citizens of the new borough gain? Where do boroughs fit in the structures of local government in Pennsylvania? This article will endeavor to answer these questions.

The scholarship on boroughs in Pennsylvania is limited. There are studies on the historical and political aspects of Pennsylvania's boroughs, but little describing the process and reasons leading to their formation.¹ Boroughs have a long history in Pennsylvania, beginning with the incorporation of Germantown in 1691 and continuing until the present day.

In the late twentieth century, criticisms of the complexity of local government, including boroughs, appeared.² In the 2002 Census of Governments, Pennsylvania had 2,630 local governments consisting of 66 counties, 1,018 cities and boroughs, and 1,546 townships. This does not include school districts.³ In 2010 eleven members of the Pennsylvania House introduced a bill to amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to make the county “the basic unit of local government.”⁴ The House referred this bill to the Committee on Local Government but no further action occurred.

Boroughs are a reality in Pennsylvania. The process leading to the incorporation of the Borough of Pleasant Hills provides a window into some of the challenges to borough incorporation as well as the reasons residents petition to form boroughs. At the heart of borough incorporation is a variety of local interests.

Local Government in Pennsylvania

The first plan of government for Pennsylvania allowed residents to participate in their own government by transplanting English local institutions to the colony. On March 4, 1681, William Penn received a charter from King Charles II of England that gave to Penn “his heirs and assignees, free and absolute power to Divide the said Country, and Islands, into Townes, Hundreds and Counties, and to erect and incorporate Townes into Borroughs, and Borroughs into Citties.”⁵ These units of government (aside from the hundred) took root and spread in Pennsylvania.

William Penn established three counties in Pennsylvania: Bucks, Philadelphia, and Chester. He established in each a county court, which had authority to raise revenue through taxation to provide for public works, the poor, and prisoners.⁶ He also created townships in these counties for the purpose of controlling settlement. Each township was to have about 5,000 acres distributed among ten families. These townships followed English practice where justices of the peace held court and carried out daily administrative tasks. Townships became the basic county subdivision with powers to levy taxes for poor relief and maintenance of roads.⁷ Over time, townships received additional powers from the General Assembly and eventually were divided into first- and second-class townships based on population density. The 1933 first-class township code granted forty-five powers ranging from the power to regulate conduct, maintain a police force, provide for fire

protection and sanitary facilities, and maintain water troughs and rest areas on township roads.⁸

As early as the seventeenth century, towns developed within townships. As the towns grew in population and size, the need for order and government at this level became apparent to the residents. This led them to petition either Penn, the General Assembly, or the County Court of Quarter Sessions (depending on when the borough was incorporated) to erect a borough.

Along with counties and townships, boroughs are clear evidence of the English roots of Pennsylvania local government. Pennsylvania boroughs originally had the same government and functions of British boroughs. Most of the current cities in Pennsylvania began as boroughs. To understand the nature of boroughs in Pennsylvania, it will be helpful to survey borough development in England.

The English Background

In England boroughs were important centers of trade and local administration. The term *borough* comes from "burgh," which in England referred to a military structure or fortress used as a base for both territorial conquest and refuge.⁹ Boroughs had the ability to elect burgesses to Parliament.¹⁰ Some burghs were "a special form of government," receiving "special privileges from the king, which in effect meant they were excluded from the supervision of the county authorities."¹¹

Other boroughs received their charters when citizens petitioned the crown. The petition was the first step in the process and usually contained specific language that the citizens desired to have included in the charter. They requested powers that made for better government, good order, or means of regulating business.¹²

Under British law, boroughs were municipal corporations, defined as "many persons united together into one society, and are kept up by a perpetual succession of members, so as to continue forever; of which kind are the mayor and commonalty of a city."¹³ They were incorporated under a name, such as "Mayor, Alderman, and Commonalty," or "The Mayor, Bailiffs, and Burgesses." Many were closed corporation boroughs in which the present borough corporation selected its successors, that is, "ensuring to the Borough, in uninterrupted succession, the necessary group of governing personages,

and placing their authority beyond dispute.”¹⁴ Borough officials included, variously, mayors, aldermen, bailiffs, and burgesses. Burgesses originally were the privileged members of the borough, men of trade; the term later meant a magistrate. Aldermen were originally leaders of the guilds; later, the term meant “associates to the civil magistrate of a city or town corporate.” Bailiffs administered justice and served writs, though in some cases the chief magistrate was a bailiff. The mayor was the chief magistrate of a city or town and also served as a justice of the peace.¹⁵ The commonalty usually referred to members of a community who were not part of the nobility. This included knights, esquires, gentlemen, yeomen as well as tradesmen, artificers and laborers.¹⁶

This brief summary of the English borough provides a context in which to understand Pennsylvania’s boroughs.

Pennsylvania Boroughs

At present, Pennsylvania has 962 boroughs.¹⁷ This high number may suggest that borough formation is easy. While this may have been true for the early boroughs formed by William Penn and his successors and those incorporated by the General Assembly, following the Borough Code of 1834 and its revisions, the process of incorporating boroughs became harder and more open to challenge.¹⁸

Boroughs begin with a request from the inhabitants. Citizens petitioned either the proprietor (William Penn and his descendants), state legislature (the earliest borough so incorporated was Carlisle in 1782), or the court of quarter sessions in a given county (following the passage of the Borough Code in 1834). The first borough was incorporated in 1691, the most recent in the 1990s.

There are similarities between Pennsylvania and English boroughs. Both share the status of municipal corporations, their corporate names, the titles of their officers, and their identity as a body politic. Like English boroughs, they were created in order to manage their own affairs. Boroughs allowed the residents to have “the power of regulating their markets, fairs, wharves, street, and other public concerns.”¹⁹ This set boroughs apart from townships where the residents did not have these powers, at least in colonial and early post-Revolutionary Pennsylvania. Townships would later receive these powers, so that by the twentieth century both townships and boroughs were roughly equal in corporate powers.²⁰

Germantown was the first borough in Pennsylvania. The Dutch and German residents of what was called German Township “Did Request the Proprietor to grant Certain priveledges to our Dutch Nation who according to his honourable Mildness Did grant our Request and promised to gratifies us profitable priveledges.”²¹ William Penn incorporated Germantown in 1689, although the charter was not issued until 1691.²²

In 1701 Penn granted a charter incorporating the Borough of Chester at the request of the inhabitants. The charter set the geographic boundaries of the borough. Penn named three men to serve as burgesses and one as constable until elections were held to elect citizens to those offices. The burgesses had power to keep the peace, much like justices of the peace in the county. The charter also records Penn’s permission for the borough to hold a weekly market and two fairs, one in the spring, the other in the fall. This charter is very similar to the one establishing Germantown.²³

Boroughs reflected the interests of the residents calling for incorporation. This is apparent in the charters for Germantown and Chester discussed above. The law forming the Borough of Harrisburg in 1791 is another example of local interests driving incorporation.²⁴ They believed that becoming a borough would “contribute to the advantage of the inhabitants” by preventing “nuisances, encroachments of all sorts, contentions, annoyances and inconveniences.”

Harold Alderfer has identified three kinds of local interests behind borough incorporation: “a greater degree of local control over their local government, a desire to escape greater amounts of township taxes . . . and a desire to provide locally for better or more numerous government services.”²⁵ In other cases, local business interests were the driving force for borough incorporation. In the cases of the Borough of Seven Fields in Butler County, formed in 1983, and Bear Creek Village in Luzerne County (1993), developers laid out streets and a sewer system and then petitioned for incorporation as a borough, based on his evaluation that the township would not be able to provide adequate services to the planned community.²⁶ The Borough of New Morgan in Berks County was proposed in 1988 by a developer with plans for a landfill, a trash-to-steam facility, and a village center that were rejected by the local townships.²⁷ Not all petitions for incorporation were successful. Attempts to incorporate boroughs in Linfield in Montgomery County, the Pocono Speedway in Monroe County, and Chilton in York County all failed.²⁸

With this survey in mind, we can now consider the process by which one borough was formed.

Pleasant Hills

In mid-1946, the residents of the two northern wards in Jefferson Township petitioned the court of quarter sessions in Allegheny County for permission to incorporate as a borough. Following a legal process, the Borough of Pleasant Hills was incorporated in April 1947.²⁹ The first government of the new borough was elected in August of that year.

Pleasant Hills lies in what was originally a portion of Mifflin Township, one of the county's original townships, which then became Jefferson Township. At the time of the initial steps to separate Pleasant Hills from Jefferson, Jefferson was considered a first-class township with all the corporate powers enumerated in a 1933 law.

The oldest existing building in Pleasant Hills was built around 1774.³⁰ Land warrants were issued on June 1, 1785, to John Kinkead for 102 acres, to Martha Lapsley on May 1, 1786, for 288 acres east of John Kinkead's, and to John Reed for 378 acres for a tract named Reedsburgh.³¹ Reed, like many others in southwestern Pennsylvania, operated several stills but apparently did not oppose the excise tax on whiskey that led to the Whiskey Rebellion. He was warned in a paper signed by Tom the Tinker about his failure to come "not forth to assist in the suppression of the execution of said law [placing an excise tax on whiskey production]."³²

The 1850 U.S. census for Jefferson Township, Allegheny County, Hope Church post office lists the families of Jeremiah Sickman (farmer), David Torrance (farmer), John Beam (blacksmith), and William R. Livingston (farmer) living in what would become Pleasant Hills.³³ An 1876 map of Jefferson Township identifies the landowners in this area: David Walker, D. Torrence, W. R. Livingston, the estate of J. Sickman, J. Carlisle, John Beam, and John Mowry. In addition to farming, the 1876 map also indicates that Walker, Torrance, Livingston, Sickman, Carlisle, Beam, and Mowry had coal on their property.³⁴

An 1898 map of this part of Jefferson Township shows property owned by J. W. Snee, Joseph Wilson, J. Carlisle, the Torrence and Sickman estates, William Work, and J. L. and J. Livingston. These maps also show the early development of the area that would become Pleasant Hills. A school (variously identified as either the Sickman or Torrance school) appears on contemporaneous maps along what is now known as Old Clairton Road. The roads to Bruceton and Gill Hall were in place, as was Lebanon Church Road.³⁵

“YOUR PETITIONERS ARE IN NEED”

Census records indicate that farming continued to be the major occupation of the residents in this part of Jefferson Township until the early twentieth century. Other residents worked for the railroad or in the local coal mines.

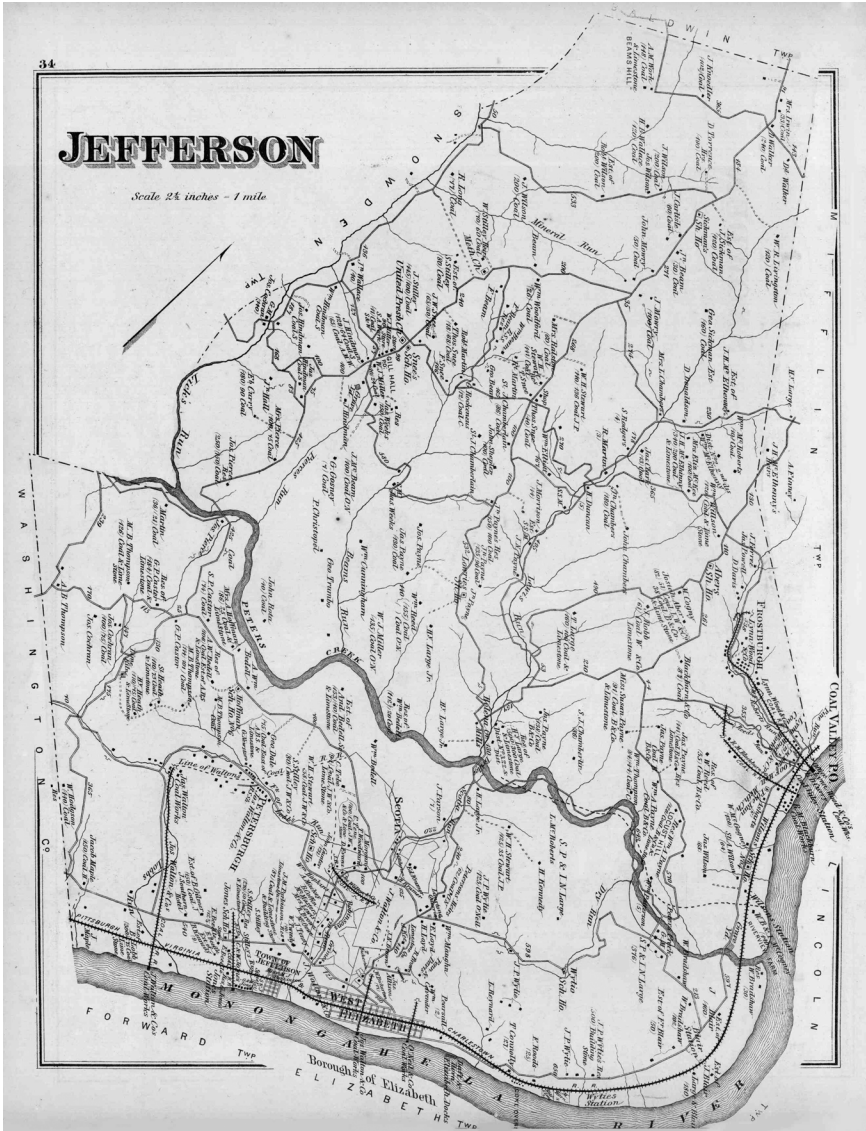


FIGURE 1: G. M. Hopkins Company Maps, 1872–1940, 1916 volume 6 plate 33, University of Pittsburgh.

Census records also reveal that the residents were white and mostly native-born Pennsylvanians with a small number of foreign-born residents. Properties in the area were both owned and rented.

Change came to this predominantly farming community beginning in 1929. Two developers, N. H. Hankoff and James H. Rose, operating as Pleasant Hills Realty Company, began to purchase land in Jefferson Township for proposed housing developments to be known as Pleasant Hills Plans 1–4.³⁶ Another sign of development was the opening of Bill Green's Casino and Terraced Garden in 1934 at the Cloverleaf, the junction of the newly constructed PA Route 51 and Lebanon Church Road. Started as a barbecue stand, it soon became known for dancing and dining in the South Hills of Pittsburgh.³⁷ The opening of Route 51 was a third part of the development that affected the northern part of Jefferson Township. Connecting it with Pittsburgh to the north, and Uniontown to the south, it opened the southern suburbs of Pittsburgh to development and growth in population.³⁸

The impact of the new housing developments is evident in the 72 percent increase in population in the northern part of the township from 1930, when development began, to 1940.³⁹ News articles in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* record the new housing construction in Pleasant Hills. In May 1935 the paper reported the construction of new homes under the auspices of the Pleasant Hills Realty Company. In August 1935 the paper reported the transfer of two lots in Pleasant Hills Plan no. 1 to Sarah V. Cooper for the price of \$1,195.⁴⁰ By 1939 at least 300 new homes had been constructed in Pleasant Hills. The construction included new roads and a new "modern sewage disposal plant."⁴¹ Various newspaper articles in the early 1940s identified by name the people who had purchased these new houses and were moving into Pleasant Hills.⁴²

As the community grew, community organizations formed including churches, a school, and a volunteer fire company. First came Bethany Lutheran Church in 1937 by the Pittsburgh Lutheran Extension Society. It met originally in a private home, moving in 1940 to an old school building, and then to its own newly constructed building in 1942. The Presbyterians followed with their own congregation in 1939 when services were held in a local family's home. By Palm Sunday 1940 they had erected their own building.⁴³ The fire company was formed in 1937 and the Pleasant Hills Elementary School opened in 1941.

With new houses and a growing population came a distinct community awareness made evident in the formation of the Pleasant Hills Civic Association in 1939. One of its early projects was a supper dance to raise money for the

Pleasant Hills Volunteer Fire Department.⁴⁴ The Civic Association served as a community club, organizing social events for the community and recognizing new residents. It also seemed to function as a quasi-governmental body with committees including the Fire and Police Protection Committee and the Streets and Sewers Committee. In January 1942 the Fire and Police Committee reported the action of Jefferson Township to set aside funds for a police car. The Streets Committee, on the other hand, noted on "the deplorable condition" of Pleasant Hills' streets.

Police protection and road maintenance became flashpoints in the relationship between the people of Pleasant Hills and Jefferson Township government. In the summer of 1942 Jefferson Township took over the Pleasant Hills sewer system due to arguments between the township and the people of Pleasant Hills. Controversy between the two parties led the township to postpone improvements to Audrey Drive. A meeting between Pleasant Hills' residents and the township commissioners in August 1942 was the occasion for a heated discussion over sewage assessments and damage to roads following a major storm.⁴⁵

These matters were but prelude to the postwar actions that led the residents to petition the court to incorporate Pleasant Hills into a borough in the summer of 1946. Leaders of the Civic Association began to speak at community meetings to announce plans for a new borough.⁴⁶ Engineers also began to work surveying the part of Jefferson Township that would become Pleasant Hills.⁴⁷

The major step toward forming the new borough was the drafting of a petition to be presented to the residents of Pleasant Hills for their signatures. Fifty-one percent of the residents would need to sign the petition for it to be presented to the court, though those behind the petition believed they could get the signatures of 80 to 90 percent of the residents. This petition began to be circulated on August 10, 1946.⁴⁸

Court hearings on the petition were begun on November 19, 1946. However, a technical problem arose when it was pointed out that part of a street to be included in Pleasant Hills actually belonged to Baldwin Township. As a result, the Pleasant Hills petition was withdrawn.⁴⁹

A new petition was ready for circulation on November 22, 1946. It contained a new plat map excluding the street that caused the first petition to be withdrawn.⁵⁰ The petition charged Jefferson Township with failure to provide adequately for the residents of the seventh and eighth wards (the area to become Pleasant Hills) as the language of the petition makes clear:

EIGHT: That your petitioners are in need of more adequate police protection to better secure the safety and property of all those living within the area proposed for borough incorporation, because at the present time and for a long time in the past, police protection has been almost entirely lacking on account of failure or inability of the present township government to provide necessary and adequate protection.

NINE: That your petitioners are in [d]eed [*sic*] of a stronger government to secure measures needed for protection against fire hazards, because at the present time and for a long time in the past, the volunteer fire department, protecting said area proposed for borough incorporation has not been properly supported by the township government and in inequitable burden has been placed upon a great number of the petitioners residing in said area.

TEN: That your petitioners are particularly in need of a more forceful, effective and efficient health supervision, because at the present time your petitioners and the other residents in said area have practically no health supervision whatsoever, and the lives and welfare of the people in the area proposed for borough incorporation are in constant jeopardy.

ELEVEN: That your petitioners are greatly in need of proper laws and ordinances of a local government designed to promote the present and future welfare of the people in a fast growing community, because at the present time no laws or ordinances have been in existence or been enforced in regards to construction of buildings, zoning and planning, and as a result thereof a chaotic condition may result in the near future, by reason of the lack of local government control in said area proposed for borough incorporation.⁵¹

These examples of complaints by the residents of Pleasant Hills all involved matters that Jefferson Township, as a township of the first class, had the power to deal with according to the 1933 act governing first-class townships. The petitioners claimed and believed that Jefferson Township was not fulfilling its responsibilities toward the northern part of the township. The Jefferson Township Commission had nine members. Only two represented Pleasant Hills.⁵²

This petition asserted that approximately 3,000 people lived in the area being considered for incorporation, and that the number of dwellings was 800, more or less. The petition included a land plat for the proposed borough, a description of the boundaries, and the signatures of roughly 900 freeholders.

The new petition was presented to the court on December 27, 1946. The hearings began on March 3, 1947, and ended on March 12. Jefferson Township opposed the new borough, arguing that the borrowing power of both municipalities would be threatened. Other opposition came from residents who held that land used for farming should not be included in the borough limits.⁵³

The court's opinion came on March 31, 1947. It affirmed the petition in support of Pleasant Hills and ordered the incorporation of the borough. The judge wrote: "As a matter of expedience and in the interest of good government, we are of the opinion that the prayer of the petitioners should be granted and that the proposed borough should be incorporated."⁵⁴

Borough elections were set for April 12, 1947. A meeting was called for April 9 by the Pleasant Hills Civic Association to discuss a slate of officers for the election. The officers to be elected were burgess, tax collector, councilmen, high constable, and auditors, as enumerated in the General Borough Code of 1927. However, on April 7, the Jefferson Township commissioners voted to appeal the judge's ruling. Nevertheless, Pleasant Hills went ahead with the election plans, forming two slates of candidates. On April 11 the election was postponed because the court accepted Jefferson Township's appeal.⁵⁵

Jefferson Township's appeal was scheduled for April 28 before a panel of judges of the Pennsylvania Superior Court.⁵⁶ It was based on two contentions: the manner in which new boroughs' boundaries were determined and surveyed, and the "adverse financial effect of the incorporation on the remaining township."⁵⁷ On July 17, 1947, the court's opinion was published, rejecting the arguments of the township and affirming the decision of the court of quarter sessions.⁵⁸

The Supreme Court recognized that Pleasant Hills had few options in regard to its relationship to Jefferson Township short of incorporating as a borough. It wrote:

Problems of sanitation, health, building restrictions, public safety measures, regulations with respect to small businesses, the control of public highways, and all the various questions necessarily arising through a concentration of homes in a substantial group are matters which may much more efficiently be solved through a borough council than through a township commission.⁵⁹

The court went on to note that the problems between Pleasant Hills and the rest of Jefferson Township were related to the rural nature of most of the township, compared to the development taking place in Pleasant Hills.

With the Supreme Court's decision, candidates for the new borough's officers filed their petitions for office in anticipation of a special election. Authority for the election was given on August 1, 1947, with the date of the election set for August 9. Two lists of candidates were again put forward, one sponsored by the Borough Committee and the Pleasant Hills Civic Association, the other by the Citizens Committee. The election took place as scheduled. Candidates from both groups were elected with the majority of the new officers sponsored by the Borough Committee. They were sworn in on August 14.⁶⁰

The leaders of the new borough included people prominent in the movement to incorporate. C. C. Larson, leader of the Civic Association, was elected burgess. Walter Brand, one of the two Pleasant Hills representatives on the Jefferson Township commissioners, was elected a member of the council. All those elected to office had signed the petition to incorporate the borough. Louis Rosenberg, attorney for the pro-borough group, became the solicitor.⁶¹

Conclusion

The incorporation of the Borough of Pleasant Hills offers some insights into the process of borough creation in the mid-twentieth century, the forces leading to incorporation, and the role boroughs play in Pennsylvania government. First, boroughs are populist and democratic institutions, created by the people, not the Commonwealth (other than as Commonwealth law provides for their incorporation), which reflect the interests of a community. In many cases, the driving force for incorporation was a growing community, such as an urban area in a predominantly rural township, desiring the ability to manage their affairs. A core group of residents rallied other members to address common problems and participate in finding solutions. Even before the borough was incorporated, residents of Pleasant Hills were involved in a quasi-government of committees focused on their own needs.

Rather than wanting more government, the residents of Pleasant Hills wanted a responsive government. Incorporating a borough did not create another layer of government; it only exchanged township government for borough government. The provisions of the Borough Code of 1927 provided clear guidance how to create the borough and the enumeration of powers in the code set forth the powers the petitioners would acquire.⁶²

Second, local interests were the key to borough formation. In the court cases that followed the incorporation of Pleasant Hills, one court observed: "The very persuasive fact appears that the residents of the area designated within the borough boundaries have little in common with the rest of the township." The appellate court wrote: "There is a community of interest calling for the establishment and maintenance of a local government adapted to their common necessities."⁶³

Third, borough residents gained power to enact ordinances that met the needs of their situation. Soon after it first met, the borough council enacted speed limits, an ordinance to tax pinball and slot machines, an ordinance for road construction and maintenance, and an ordinance regulating the sewer system.⁶⁴ By the end of August 1947, the borough had its first police car to patrol the borough and to enforce the newly enacted traffic laws. To take a later example, in the case of the Borough of New Morgan in Berks County, the incorporators were able to build the landfill that Caernarvon and Robeson townships had turned down.⁶⁵

The days are gone when the incorporation of boroughs allowed them to hold markets and fairs. They are well-established bodies with the legal status of municipal corporations. While the unique privileges and powers they once had are now shared by townships, the continued attempts to incorporate boroughs (whether successful or unsuccessful) suggest that they still offer those Pennsylvania residents, who consider themselves a distinct community with different interests from the larger entity that governs them, a means of protecting and furthering their local interests.

NOTES

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19. Pennsylvania General Assembly, *An Act to Re-Establish the Ancient Corporation of the Borough of Bristol in the County of Bucks, The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (1785), chapter MCLXXXIV. Similar language is found in Pennsylvania, *An Act to Erect the Town of Harrisburg, in the County of Dauphin, into a Borough, The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (1805), chapter MMDCCCXCIX.
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“YOUR PETITIONERS ARE IN NEED”

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SAVING THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Karen Ramsburg

*With Introductory Remarks by Patrick Spero
and Nathan Kozuskanich*

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Karen Ramsburg has been at the forefront of the drive to save the William Smith House in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Patrick Spero and Nathan Kozuskanich introduce the importance of Smith and the Black Boys for understanding the American Revolution, followed by a brief excerpt from chapter 2 of Ramsburg's book *Smith Rebellion 1765 Gives Rise to Modern Politics*, published by iUniverse. Readers interested in participating in saving the Smith House, or seeking more information, should go online to smithrebellion1765.com.*

THE WILLIAM SMITH HOUSE: ORGANIZING THE FRONTIER IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

Patrick Spero, Williams College
Associate Editor, Pennsylvania History

On March 6, 1765, a pack train of at least eighty horses carrying £30,000 of goods approached Sideling Hill, a small Appalachian ridge in southwestern Pennsylvania.¹ The train was on its way to Fort Pitt, where George Croghan, a leading diplomatic figure in this corner of the British empire, planned to use some of

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these goods to negotiate a peace treaty with the Shawnee Indians and thus formally end Pontiac's War. Croghan may have had other intentions for the trade goods, too. Since the beginning of hostilities in 1763, imperial regulations banned trade between Great Britain and warring Indians. Strong if not explicit evidence suggests that Croghan hoped to use a portion of these goods to flood the reopened market as soon the treaty closed, making a huge profit for himself and his investors.

The entourage did not travel comfortably. Heading west on Forbes Road and other, smaller country roads, the horses and men certainly felt the winter's wear under their feet. But bad roads were not the real problem. As soon as the convoy crossed the Susquehanna River, they began to encounter hostility from colonists. Word traveled ahead of the slow-moving caravan, and opposition to it grew the further the traders proceeded. Near Fort Littleton, William Duffield, a prominent preacher, pleaded with the merchants to halt, warning that they faced a grave threat if they pursued their westward path. Duffield's prediction came true at Sideling Hill, as a band of men led by James Smith attacked and burned the cargo.

British officials viewed this audacious act as an attack upon the king himself and demanded that the parties involved be brought to justice. Local settlers, on the other hand, considered the act just. They believed that the cargo contained weapons that the Indians planned to use to begin "a third Indian war." They also opposed reopening trade because the Shawnees had not yet returned their friends and family taken as prisoners of war. Far from undermining the king's authority, they asserted that their actions protected the empire and its members. In time, roving bands composed of like-minded settlers patrolled the roads, inspected all goods traveling west for "warlike stores," and issued passports to traders whose merchandise cleared their searches. Self-appointed inspectors included the local justice of the peace, William Smith. Smith also used his official capacity to defend the ad hoc inspection regime as a legal way to enforce imperial regulations and to protect the empire. When British officials like General Thomas Gage heard of these acts, they grew even more enraged at what they considered a usurpation of imperial authority.²

Events began to spin out of control as imperial officials and local residents continued to clash. Lieutenant Charles Grant, the commander of Fort Loudon, sent a group of soldiers into nearby settlements to find and arrest the destroyers of the goods, who now called themselves the Brave Fellows or the Black Boys. The local community rejected the army's attempt to enforce law, arguing that any arrests had to come from civil rather than military

authority—in other words, had to come from Justice of the Peace William Smith. Grant continued to pursue the guilty. Soon both sides exchanged fire. At one point, James Smith and others captured Grant, tied him to a tree, and threatened his life. The Black Boys besieged Fort Loudon twice and demanded that the army stop harassing their efforts and return guns seized from local residents during the hunt for the Black Boys. Throughout the conflict, the Black Boys used the house of William Smith as their headquarters, calling it “Fort Smith.”³

The fighting eventually ended in November 1765. The inspection regime had lost steam over the summer after the crown officially reopened trade with Indians. The British army still retained the guns seized in the spring and that fact riled the local community. In early November the Black Boys laid siege to Fort Loudon in an effort to recapture their property. After two days of incessant firing, Grant acceded to the Black Boys’ demands and gave the guns to a local magistrate, who presumably returned them to their owners. Throughout the 1760s and probably into the 1770s, groups opposed to various government policies and actions continued to form in the region, wreaking havoc for both colonial and imperial officials trying to maintain order. In his memoirs published in 1799, James Smith related the story of one of these later groups raiding a British fort. “This, I believe, was the first British fort in America, that was taken by what they called American rebels,” he declared.⁴

Over a decade ago, I began researching the politics of the Pennsylvania frontier. When I began, the Blacks Boys’ story—so fantastic that the limited space here cannot convey its drama or do justice to its significance—was unknown to me. I knew of the Paxton Boys, the group who massacred the Conestoga Indians in 1763 and then mobilized a massive march on Philadelphia. Everyone seemed to know of them. The Paxton Boys receive our attention because of the gruesome deed they committed and because they aimed their political ire at the legislature and marshaled their arguments in print. Their actions had a palpable effect on history. The unpunished violence of the Paxton Boys led the Quaker Party to petition the crown to seize control of the colony’s government. Their ill-timed actions reconfigured politics in the colony in the years before the American Revolution. Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Galloway, the Speaker of the Assembly, both lost their elections in 1764, and the mobilization of the frontier helped lay the foundation for a Presbyterian Party that seized control of the revolutionary government in 1776. The ouster of Franklin from the assembly reverberated throughout

the imperial crisis, as Franklin left for London and represented the colonies' cause to Parliament. How different would American history be had Franklin not been in London? How different would Franklin have been had he stayed in Philadelphia? What would have happened if the crown took control of Pennsylvania and, most probably, made Franklin the royal governor?

The Black Boys, on the other hand, seem to have had little effect on the course of history. Their rebellion appears short-lived and of a purely local nature. It petered out, and their legacy, likewise, seems insignificant. Part of the problem is that the Black Boys took issue with imperial institutions far removed from Philadelphia and left their records in manuscripts that are now scattered in various archives. The bulk of the records relating to the Black Boys rest in the assorted volumes of *Pennsylvania History*, with fragments strewn in manuscript collections at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania State Archives in Harrisburg, and the Thomas Gage Papers at the Clements Library at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I wanted to piece together all of these fragments, believing that this story once compiled would reveal a crisis of empire as significant as the better-known rebellions happening further east. I also hoped to find hidden collections in underutilized archives, so I emailed all of the county archives in western Pennsylvania to see if they had any documents on the Black Boys. That outreach began my association with the William Smith House.

Most county archives responded to my request in the negative. But Glenn Cordell of the Fulton County Historical Society, while letting me know that they did not have any documents from the era, did something more: he asked me to visit McConnellsburg (the town that sprung up from the settlements near which the Black Boys were active) to see if I could help locate the site of the initial attack on the pack train on Sideling Hill. It turns out that this question had long fascinated both Glenn and Perry Nelling, a resident of neighboring Mercersburg. Perry had amassed a huge collection of Black Boys material and had his own theories about where the rebellion occurred. They hoped that my research would help add some missing pieces. Glenn promised a place to stay, a tour, and a hike on Sideling Hill. I could not say no.

I no longer recall when exactly I visited Glenn. I do remember it being chilly. Maybe it was in March, right around the time of the Black Boys' first attack, but my wife, Laura, who joined me on this adventure, insists it was the fall. On my own (much easier) trek west, I remember wondering what type of reception awaited me. As Laura and I drove into Glenn's driveway, our concerns were put to rest. Glenn lives in a well-manicured

nineteenth-century stone farmhouse that exudes warmth and hospitality. It was a perfect place to commune with the past. As I think back on it now, I have some recollection of frost-covered windowpanes, but that picturesque image could just be a trick of my memory, a small detail added to reflect how wonderful the stay was.

After we arrived in the evening, Glenn outlined our ambitious plans for the next day and we turned in. We woke early and set off. Our day began with a tour of the surrounding area. Glenn showed me Bloody Run, a river whose name comes from fighting during the Seven Years' War. We drove south, near the Maryland border, and he told me about Confederate troops raiding McConnellsburg during the Civil War. Next, we traveled east, across a ridge, toward Mercersburg, where Fort Loudon sat and William Smith lived. At the base of the mountain, Glenn took a left into a state park and showed me a huge grey stone monument in the shape of a pyramid. It was the birthplace of James Buchanan. The depth of history packed into this small corner of the state took me aback. But then, border regions often produce rich and complex histories—and unusual individuals.

Our tour then shifted to the Black Boys. We picked up Perry Nelling and headed to Fort Loudon, where the Black Boys had besieged the British in 1765. The fort sits a few miles out of town, surrounded by open space, farms, and houses with acreage. Several years ago—maybe even two decades ago—local residents discovered the old postholes from the fort and began to reconstruct its walls. On the day we visited, a local group of Boy Scouts had camped out in the fort.

After introducing me to the Scouts, the group leader—I assume a father of one of the boys—recounted the story of the Black Boys to his pack. Impromptu and unscripted, he displayed a detailed knowledge of the incident. The memory of the Black Boys was very much alive in this man, and he had seized the opportunity to pass it onto the next generation. He also offered an interpretation of why the rebellion occurred. The conflict, he argued, was over gun rights. Easterners, he told the boys, were trying to take guns away from the Black Boys. They laid siege to Fort Loudon to take back their rightful property. On some level, he was right. His criticisms of easterners and their attempted impositions would have resonated with the Black Boys. Although certainly anachronistic and lacking a larger contextualization—the reason the guns were seized was because the owners had used them to defy British authority—his analysis was nonetheless as revealing about political tensions within Pennsylvania today as the Black Boys were in the 1760s.

Just outside the fort, a white, wood-framed home held a small museum that included a wax replica of James Smith. The Black Boys' legacy, if overlooked by academic historians, thrived locally, and it mattered. Nathan Kozuskanich's essay (below) addresses the Scout leader's argument. I suspect the Scout leader would agree with much of what Kozuskanich has to say.

Next, Glenn and Perry took to me to Perry's childhood home. It was, he claimed, the house of William Smith, the brother-in-law of James Smith and the justice of the peace who helped organize the Black Boys. The house had numerous additions and, frankly, I had no idea if it even had a colonial core. We could only walk around the outside because it was occupied and the residents were not in. But Perry assured me that it was Smith's home and that he had discovered a stone in its foundation with "WS" carved into it. For a historian trained to question received wisdom and familiar with countless homes that claim to have had George Washington as a guest, I politely took Perry at his word though I was privately very skeptical.

We ended the day with a hike on Sideling Hill, searching for the elusive site of the initial Black Boys attack. It was a small hill, but part of a big woods, and we had little idea where to go. My documents provided little specific information about where the attack happened, and we were not even sure about where roads and paths ran back in the 1760s. I do not even recall how we ended up hiking where we did. We walked through the woods, and turned over some stones and logs, but we did not find any remnants of the Black Boys. We did find good company, though, and, for me at least, a much better understanding of the past and its peoples.

The trip stayed alive in my memory as I developed my dissertation, though I never found a way to mention it in my work. Unfortunately, you cannot cite the subtle type of influence such experiences have on one's thinking. Nonetheless, it is there. But as I completed my work and moved on with my career, it did begin to recede.

That is, until I received a phone call from a number I did not recognize sometime in the spring of 2009. I almost never answer such calls, but I did take this one. On the other end was the excited voice of a man from Mercersburg who told me that the local fire department had purchased William Smith's house with the sole intention of bulldozing it in order to expand the department's capabilities. He had heard that I studied the Black Boys' Rebellion and hoped that my research could help them protect the house. I thought of what the house looked like when I saw it and told him

that he would have to prove that the house I saw—which to me looked more like an old nineteenth-century home with twentieth-century additions—was in fact William Smith's house. Over the course of the next year, my skepticism faded, as archaeologists, architectural historians, and some good legal research convinced me that the home was on property owned by William Smith and that the core structure—hidden behind years of improvement—likely dated to the late-colonial era.

Living and working in Philadelphia, I never got to participate in the events that unfolded in Mercersburg, events that Karen Ramsburg relates in her essay and in her book *Smith Rebellion 1765 Gives Rise to Modern Politics*. To quickly summarize, a local community organization formed to halt the fire department's plan to turn the house into a driveway. The community members not only wanted to preserve the house's legacy, but they also wanted to build the community by turning the house into a museum dedicated to the Black Boys' Rebellion. They hoped it would be part of a larger initiative to rebuild Mercersburg's downtown.

For over a year, they fought to save the house from demolition. I watched it all unfold from afar, reading coverage in regional media outlets, receiving email updates, and following the Smith House's website. It seemed strangely similar to how I studied the Black Boys—from the distance of time, I learned about their doings through newspaper accounts, correspondence, and other materials. And what I saw happening in the twenty-first century community seemed eerily reminiscent of how the Black Boys had used the house in the eighteenth century. I saw twenty-first-century Pennsylvanians organizing around the William Smith House to challenge a government organization that seemed to ignore community values.

There was more to it than that. The movement to save the Smith House may have been decidedly local, but its vision was expansive and ambitious. Those trying to preserve the Smith House did not want to just protect some old pieces of stone. Instead, they wanted to elevate public consciousness about the Black Boys, to transform knowledge of it from a piece of local lore to a story that is interwoven into how we conceive the founding of the nation. James Smith and his comrades would have agreed with their interpretation.

I have to admit, I am a bit skeptical about their new undertaking, too. The traditional narrative of the American Revolution—one beginning with the Stamp Act and one largely involving events in urban seaports like Boston and Philadelphia—seems a hard one to break. I was proven wrong about the Smith House once before, though. I hope I am again.

NOTES

1. The following was adapted from a talk given at the Pennsylvania Historical Association's Annual Meeting at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, October 14, 2011.
2. Petition from Cumberland County, [March 1765], *Papers of Henry Bouquet* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951–1994), 6:777–79; “Copies of Passes Given by William and James Smith,” *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4:219–20.
3. William Smith to Charles Grant, November 14, 1765, Fort Smith, Thomas Gage Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
4. James Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Col. James Smith* (Lexington, KY, 1799), 68.

WILLIAM SMITH AND THE IMPACT OF THE WEST ON AMERICAN HISTORY

Nathan Kozuskanich, Nipissing University

When James Madison convinced the first Congress to turn its attention to drafting the bill of rights that had been promised to anti-Federalist factions in Virginia and New York, he admitted that such amendments were not “essential to the federal constitution.” In fact, he believed once bills of rights were established in all the states and the federal government, Americans would soon discover that “some of them are rather unimportant.” If only Madison could see the millions of pages modern Americans have dedicated in law and history journals to discussing and debating the meaning of amendments he thought at best would have “a salutary tendency” on government!¹

Of course, for many more Americans who were not James Madison and his Federalist friends, the Bill of Rights was an essential barrier against the potential abuses of the federal government established under the Constitution in 1787. In Pennsylvania the radical Whigs who overthrew the colonial Quaker government and drafted the first state constitution in 1776 largely became the anti-Federalists who unsuccessfully tried to thwart ratification and then threw their weight behind the Bill of Rights compromise. These men, largely but not exclusively from the western parts of the state, have enjoyed notoriety once again for those seeking to divine the original meaning of the Second Amendment. Although dismissed in their day as potential rebels such as those who followed Daniel Shays in Massachusetts, in conservative circles they have become the gatekeepers of the true meaning of the right to bear arms. In the majority opinion for *District of Columbia v. Heller*, the landmark 2008 case that explicitly recognized for the first time a federal, individual

right to have guns outside of militia service, Justice Antonin Scalia gave the words in Robert Whitehill's "Dissent of the Minority" equal importance with Madison's and James Wilson's when determining the meaning of the Second Amendment.² This, of course, would have blown all three of their minds.

While we (or perhaps just I) may disagree with the ways Pennsylvania's history has been employed in legal scholarship, such attention to men like Whitehill proves what many historians have known for some time: that Pennsylvania's western history is a key element to understanding American history. Indeed, it is essential that we integrate William Smith and his Black Boys into the largely eastern and urban narratives we have told about the Revolution. As Patrick Griffin argues, fully understanding the Revolution means recovering the world of William and James Smith and those like them.³ While Pennsylvania's earliest historians found the birth of democracy on the unruly western frontier, more recently scholars have found that democracy was tamed on these same lands following the Revolution.⁴ To be sure it is more comfortable to consider eastern urban class conflict, or rhetoric and ideology, as causes of the Revolution rather than the racial violence that marred the West during and after the French and Indian War. But as unsavory as the James Smiths of the past are to our modern sensibilities, they played a crucial role as the voice of dissent during America's founding.

Although westerners were largely the losers of the Revolution, damned as white savages before and whiskey rebels after, in Pennsylvania they took control of the government in 1776 and issued the most radical constitution of the day. Their version of democracy was informed by their experience and thus they demanded that all who enjoyed the benefits of civil society contribute equally to its defense. They opened the vote to most white men while through oaths and test acts shut out the pacifist Quakers and Tories they considered inimical to ends of government. John Adams abhorred the new constitution as "wretched," but we should not be so eager to dismiss it as he was.⁵ Perhaps because James Wilson rewrote the constitution in 1790 to be more in line with Federalist principles, the 1776 constitution has been largely relegated to the ideological trash heap of the Revolution as unworkable and idealistic—much the same fate as the Articles of Confederation. But James Smith (a delegate to the state constitutional convention) is part of the complicated and messy history of the Revolution and its aftermath, something we are only just starting to appreciate. Indeed, the successes and failures of the William and James Smiths of the past give us a better understanding of the successes and failures of the Revolution itself.

NOTES

1. *Annals of Congress*, 1st Cong., 1st Sess., 1:453, 454.
2. The Dissent itself was printed in the *Pennsylvania Packet* on December 18, 1787. For one of several online copies, see "Minority of the Convention of Pennsylvania," www.Constitution.org/afp/penn_min.htm. Scalia's use of Whitehill's *Dissent*, see Majority Opinion, *District of Columbia v. Dick Anthony Heller*, No. 07-290 (June 26, 2008), 31, available at <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/07pdf/07-290.pdf>.
3. Griffin's specific example is Tom Quick, a ruthless "Indian killer," but the point remains the same. See Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).
4. For the historiography, see William Pencak, "Pennsylvania's Historiographical Heritage, 1933–2008: From the First Pennsylvanians to the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Pennsylvania History* 75 (2008): 346–67. For the best integration of the West into the overall story, see Terry Bouton, *Taming Democracy: The People, the Founders, and the Troubled Ending of the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
5. John Adams to Abigail Adams, October 4, 1776 (electronic edition), *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>.

SAVING THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Karen Ramsburg

The following letter from William Pencak, professor of history and Jewish studies at Penn State University, appeared in the Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, *Public Opinion*.

January 5, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

I recently learned that some citizens of Mercersburg are trying to save the house of Justice William Smith. It is not only the most important historical site in Mercersburg, but probably the most important historical site related to the American Revolution in Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna River.

Why do I say this? Here, the Black Boys met in 1765 to prevent the British from supplying the Indians with trading goods, which included weapons that could be used to attack the frontier. They eventually drove the British out of Fort Loudon and later Fort Bedford in the first military resistance against the Mother Country prior to the American Revolution.

We don't remember the Black Boys because unlike Lexington and Concord, their actions did not lead to widespread support from all the colonies. But we should. In 1775, the Pennsylvania riflemen who comprised the Black Boys would be among the first men recruited by Congress to aid the New Englanders as they camped outside Boston following the Battle of Bunker Hill. General William Thompson, commander of the Pennsylvania Rifles in the Revolution, was a leader of the Black Boys as well. Not only were the frontiersmen who met at Mercersburg the first to rise up against the British, they were among the first, and the best, who participated in and won the Revolution. Their experiences at the Smith House explain why they were so prominent in the cause of America.

What surprises me the most is that the Mercersburg Fire Company is the group that wants to demolish the building. If anyone in modern America can be compared to the Minute Men of 1776, it is the volunteer firemen who come to aid their communities in times of distress. They are the successors of the Black Boys, and ought to be at the front of the effort to preserve, not to obliterate, their memory.

I first learned about the Smith House in August, 2009, over coffee with a friend—that the house was located next door to the fire department, which had purchased the property to raze for a parking lot. A week later, a group of concerned citizens met, and we were introduced to historian Patrick Spero's University of Pennsylvania dissertation, "Creating Pennsylvania: The Politics of the Frontier and the State, 1682–1800" (2009), from which we learned about the important role the house and Smith's Rebellion played in our nation's history.

What attracted me to Justice William Smith and the Black Boys was the fact that these ordinary citizens exercised their right of self-defense during a brutal war with the Indians, when government was so incompetent that people were left to fend for themselves. These hardy Scots-Irish immigrants came to America in search of opportunity. To knock down the house that symbolized their American Dream, where the ideas of true American patriots gave rise to the very fabric of our nation, seemed wrong.

The battle to save the Smith House took eighteen months and consisted of many twists and turns. In September 2009, about ten or so Mercersburg residents formed the Committee to Save the Justice William Smith House, Inc., and began trying to get the house on the Historic Register. Representative Bill Shuster stated that he would help us get funding if we could secure



FIGURE 1: Smith house before demolition. Courtesy of Chris Witmer.

its placement on the National Register. But when the folks from the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission (PHMC) came to look at the house, we were told that because of renovations, such as an 1820 stone kitchen and a second story added in the early 1900s, Justice William Smith would not recognize his house.

The compromised architectural integrity cost us the nomination; however, we believed that the history behind the house was so important that it warranted doing whatever was necessary to save it. Because the fire department wanted the space for expansion, things became contentious between the fire board and the preservation committee for the next year and a half. In November 2009 I attended a fire board meeting during which a member said that he had a friend who worked for Frederick County Landmarks Association in Maryland. The friend's name was Doug Claytor, and he said he could move the house to the Conococheague Institute located near Welsh Run in rural Franklin County, Pennsylvania. "It would get lost there. Why not move the house across the street, where it could remain on Smith's property?" I suggested. Suddenly all of the tension left the small, crowded room, and fire board members unanimously agreed that this was the best idea. However, some of the committee members in our preservation group

were not completely in favor of moving it; some thought the fire department could use the house for additional space if it was renovated.

Doug appeared at our committee meeting the following week, and I wondered if he had already agreed to work with the fire company to move the house. After getting to know him, I soon realized that he was an expert in colonial architecture with many years of experience in historical restoration and preservation. Doug offered to dismantle the renovations one layer at a time and talked about how much information we could learn about the house and its history by peeling it back to its original form.

The fire department granted us permission to conduct an initial archaeological survey in a small area of the basement, representing a total of 255 square feet, on January 16, 18, and 19, 2010. The survey was conducted by the Cumberland Valley Chapter 27 of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology, Inc. In 2010 Doug Stine, president of the chapter, prepared an unpublished report entitled, "Justice William Smith House Basement Excavation," including a field notes summary by Ron Powell, the chapter's field supervisor, as well as an analysis of ceramic assemblage provided by archaeologist and ceramicist Scott Parker, Director of Research, Little Antietam Creek, Inc.

They discovered hundreds of artifacts that confirmed that the house dated to the 1750s. Scott Parker, in his "Analysis of Ceramic Assemblage from Smith House Excavations," which is contained in Doug Stine's report, writes that the ceramics produced during the Justice William Smith period and excavated from the basement include:

Chinese export porcelain, prevalent throughout the eighteenth century, and the most expensive and prestigious ceramic type of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;
 English white salt-glazed stoneware (1715–1790s);
 tin-glazed earthenware (1700–1770s);
 creamware (1760s–1820s);
 English soft-paste porcelain (1740s–1800);
 English slip-glazed coarse earthenware (1700–1770s); and
 the ubiquitous, generic coarse earthenwares produced throughout most of American history and not attributed to any time period.

After analysis of the artifacts, Doug Stine concluded that the dates during which William Smith could have resided on the property were 1759–1775. He writes that "all of these diagnostic type artifacts point to the basement part of the building being there at least from the early 1750s." He points out that

the slip-glazed earthenware and yellow ware found were traditionally made exclusively for use in serving food in taverns, and that the number of pipe stems and used or lost copper clothing buttons point to the basement being used as an area where people definitely congregated for some reason. He notes that the utilitarian type of ceramics also point to the fact that the basement was used for more than just storage. "A case could be stated for a tavern, residence, trading post or store, or a combination of all of the above"—in colonial America, leading citizens would run a combination tavern and store from their residence. After thorough analysis of the ceramics, Scott Parker writes, "the house and surrounding property are extremely significant, not just to local, but to national history, and all efforts should be made to preserve them."

The Save Smith House Committee unanimously agreed that we needed further archaeological study, and yet we had no real money to pay for it. I discovered AXIS Research, Inc., on line and sent them information about the history and artifacts from the basement. I asked if they would be interested in helping us. Soil scientist Dr. John Wah responded, and in late February 2010 a team of archaeologists—Steve Warfel, Dr. John Wah, Dr. Jonathan Burns, and Dr. Paul Raber—toured the Smith House and examined some of the early ceramics from the Doug Stine excavation. We discussed what we hoped to accomplish, and the plan was to return in August for a more thorough excavation. Sometime before then, we would figure out how to obtain a grant and gain permission from the fire department to conduct the survey.

Steve Warfel's opinion was that we would have no trouble getting the house on the Historic Register because of the artifacts we were pulling out of the ground. Finding three Native American artifacts would have secured placement on the National Register, but to that point, no Indian artifacts had turned up. The artifacts AXIS found included the same types of Chinese export, English, and American ceramics from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that had been unearthed in the basement. An English flint, numerous clay pipe stems measuring about an inch long, a number of tombac buttons, which are made of brass alloy, and a George II half-penny, all dating to the mid-1700s, were excavated from the yard. The archaeologists were able to identify and date various artifacts to determine that the house was built in the mid-1750s.

At this point, we had failed three times to get the house placed on the Historical Register, due to the architectural integrity issue. John Wah listed the Smith House property with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an archaeology site. This, of course, would not prevent the fire department from razing the house, but could increase its value and maybe persuade them to

change their minds about tearing it down. At this time I met Jackie Nelling. She had owned and lived in the Smith House with her husband, Perry, prior to his illness, which had forced her to sell the house. Five generations of Nellings had lived in the house, and Perry understood, loved, and appreciated its history, which he described in a pamphlet he designed. Jackie shared cases of well-preserved artifacts that her husband had dug up from the yard. She said that she had buckets of hand-forged nails that he had pulled from the beams in the basement. I told Jackie that if we saved the house, I would work on a dedication museum in her husband's name.

With the fire board's permission, in April 2010 Richard Pencek, professor of art and architecture at Penn State, came to Mercersburg. Doug Claytor was present when Dick pulled up in front of the Smith House. Dick climbed out of his car, coffee in hand, wearing a big smile, and said, "You're in trouble." He was referring to the second-story addition. Dick was impressed with the large, square, original stone exterior and commented that some of the stones probably weighed as much as 800 pounds each. After looking around, he said we could take the house back to its 1765 original, like the houses in Williamsburg, but such an endeavor would be costly, not only to reconstruct the house but also to maintain it as a museum. He went on to explain that in doing so, we would be looking at a reconstruction process rather than a restoration. As to the inside the house, Dick stated, "The events that happened here were as important as the Boston Tea Party." He said that the large Irish fireplace used for cooking was the most incredible one he had ever seen. Also, on the exterior was the cornerstone with William Smith's initials, which had been carved with a period stonecutting tool.

In any case, the fire company determined to sell the building and construct a parking lot on the property. As bids were being taken, one Saturday morning I received a phone call from a soft-spoken man who wanted to buy the house.

"Is this some sort of prank call?" I asked.

"No, not at all. My name is Orange, Paul Orange, and this isn't a prank call. I read about your efforts to try to save the house, and I hope it's not too late but I feel compelled to help. I'd like to purchase the house from the fire company so we can save it."

Somewhat skeptical, I asked, "What do you do for a living?"

He said that he was a doctor from Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, had a practice in Chambersburg, and he loved history, especially Civil War history. Dr. Orange wanted to see inside the house, and I suggested that it would be best for him to deal directly with the fire department.

Within the next week, I learned that Dr. Orange had offered to purchase the house from them for \$100 and pay to move the house with his own money. He would pay to have the lot landscaped and restored to their liking. “Amazing,” I thought. “Just what the fire company wanted all along—for us to move the house. My persistence has paid off.” I thought about Richard and knew he would be happy for us. I hoped he wouldn’t feel too disappointed. The whole thing had been an emotional rollercoaster right from the start.

But for some reason the fire department would not accept the bid, and we spent the next three months, until February 2011, asking why the fire department refused to accept the doctor’s offer. We got nowhere. Things just got messier. We heard that the bid had gone to a demolition company, but they decided to pull out of the deal since it was too controversial. The weekend before the house was to be razed, we staged a peaceful demonstration on February 4–6, 2011. Some people showed up expressing anger toward the fire department for spending \$20,000 to demolish the house when the doctor wanted to move it for nothing. People waved and blew their horns in passing cars and pickup trucks to show their support. Even the town mayor joined in our protest.

At the last minute, the house was saved. Tim McCown handed the demolition foreman a piece of paper listing Dr. Orange’s offer to purchase the historic core of the house, including the basement and summer kitchen, for \$49,000. During the demolition process, a local stonemason was on site to number the stones. Likewise, a carpenter numbered and labeled all of the boards so the house could be rebuilt. In June 2011 Dr. Orange purchased the property across the street from the original site to serve as the future site for the Smith House. There the stones and boards remain in a heap, testimony to both William Smith and the Black Boys, the contemporaries who had it demolished, and the people who are struggling to reconstruct it.



FIGURE 2: Smith house after demolition. Courtesy of Chris Witmer.

REVIEW ESSAY

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY, PHILADELPHIA

Deborah Waxman

The new National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH), located on the east side of Philadelphia's Independence Mall in close proximity to the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, and the National Constitutional Center, has a twofold focus. In the broadest manner, the institution celebrates the promise that American-style freedoms offers to all minority communities. This focus is refracted through the experience of how Jews who emigrated to or were born in America have taken advantage of those freedoms, thus creating the second and more explicit focal point. As with most celebrations, the museum's orientation is overwhelmingly positive, though the core exhibition consistently strives to present multiple perspectives rather than advance simple boosterism of American Jews.

The NMAJH tells the story of Jews living in the United States through the prism of America and American values. It takes on the complex task of explaining Jews (a people sharing, sometimes contentiously, a religious, cultural, and ethnic heritage); Judaism (an evolving set of religious beliefs and practices,

shaped by diverse and conflicting modes of interpretation and authority); and Jewishness (a cultural and ethnic experience of living as a Jew, in relation to other Jews and to non-Jews) to both Jewish and non-Jewish audiences. The museum also aspires to explain America to all visitors, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, by explicating the ways that the Jewish community has flourished in and contributed to the broader American environment. The museum succeeds in the latter attempt, with more mixed success in the former one. In the overarching interpretive framework, “American” is ultimately privileged over “Jewish” in a manner that complicates any narration or interpretation of Jewishness.

The museum’s placement on Independence Mall mandates engagement with the founding themes of the American republic—freedom, democratic participation, and good citizenship. Visitors to the Mall are, presumably, the non-Jews whom the curators and exhibit designers imagined might be inclined to visit such a community-specific museum. The building’s design intends to invite such exploration. According to concept papers generated by architect James Polshek, the design reflects the balance between open



FIGURE 1: The museum is located on Independence Mall and in both architecture and exhibition seeks to reflect American and Jewish themes and the intersection between them. National Museum of American Jewish History (dusk), © Jeff Goldberg/Esto, courtesy of National Museum of American Jewish History.

American society and fragile democracy (reflected in the exterior glass sheathing) and, through the terracotta construction that mirrors nearby historic buildings, the durability of the Jewish people and America's role as sheltering haven for Jews. The museum does not disappoint in regard to the exploration of American themes: the core exhibition's chronology is illuminated by investigations into freedom. Traveling from the fourth floor downward, the exhibition explores "Foundations of Freedom: 1654–1880" (fourth floor); "Dreams of Freedom: 1880–1945" (third floor); and "Choices and Challenges of Freedom: 1945–Today" (second floor).

Through this focus, the exhibition's creators are making suggestions about what America is and should be, that is, a place that welcomes ethnic and religious minorities and enables them to offer their gifts to the larger public, yet permits them to retain the distinctiveness that cultivated these gifts. This is not a straightforward narrative, and the challenges to the tolerance, let alone embrace, of America's Jews are acknowledged in all of the periods leading up to World War II. The exhibit addresses explicit anti-Semitism in all periods of Jewish residency in America, from efforts to prevent their emigration in the colonial era to the infamous 1915 lynching of Leo Frank, from the nativist-driven closing of U.S. borders in 1924 that eliminated a haven for European Jews to restrictions on employment, education, and housing that stood until after World War II. However, the overwhelming orientation of the core exhibition is positive. America, it is asserted, is an embracing haven. The very presence of the museum on one of the national malls suggests vindication, and possibly even creates proof, for this perspective. Like the new exhibit bringing to life the experience of slaves in George Washington's Philadelphia presidential home down the block from the museum ("President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation"), this institution's depiction of the diversity of Jews in America insists that to understand the full richness of the American experience, one must look beyond the white, Protestant, landed men who penned the U.S. Constitution in nearby Independence Hall. The extensive Jewish contributions to the national American experience—in the arts, sports, politics, science, and industry, and more—are carefully and even exhaustively represented, implicitly communicating that Jews are good and valuable citizens of America, and that America would be impoverished by their exclusion.

As the museum aims to explain Jews, Judaism, Jewishness, and even America to non-Jewish visitors, it also is iterating these concepts to Jewish visitors. Many of these visitors are deeply attached to the Jewish component

of their American Jewish identities but may feel confused by tensions they experience between it and the American component. They may also feel confounded by the multiple and competing claims of authenticity put forward by the Jewish community, which range from Orthodox to liberal expressions of religious Judaism to fully secular Jewish identities expressed through involvement in Jewish communal organizations, pursuit of universally oriented social justice work, immersions in Jewish culture, or some combination of all of these commitments. The core exhibition promotes to American Jews a particular narrative of empowerment and cultural generativity within the free American environment. Through interactive installations and invitations to contribute to the core exhibition, including an opportunity to "Tell Your Own Story" via videorecording at the exhibition's conclusion, visitors are treated not as passive observers of static history but as active shapers of an ongoing and ever-changing narrative. The story of America's Jews as told through the core exhibition should be at once familiar to most Jewish visitors, even if individual details are new. At the same time, in its insistence on and invitation to engagement and lay-driven change, the exhibition may even be subtly transformative of visitors' own beliefs and behaviors.

In this fashion, the NMAJH endeavors to move beyond a nostalgic emphasis of such immigrant bastions as New York's Lower East Side, frequently valorized in popular discourse as a site of Jewish authenticity in contrast to expressions of contemporary Jewishness that are perceived to be thinner. In the NMAJH's explorations of contemporary Jewish life, necessarily partial and not fully coherent, present-day expressions of Jewishness are repeatedly invited into the exhibition and in this way deemed worthy of note. The immigrant experience, massive in scope and influential in American Jewish history, is honored but not granted too much authority. Through extensive artifacts, films, and interactive exhibits, the breadth of the American Jewish experience, up to this very day, is richly communicated.

The NMAJH's focus on freedom and the successful integration of Jews within the free American context is a distinct counternarrative to the other national Jewish institution, located not on Philadelphia's Independence Mall but in close proximity to Washington's National Mall, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. That institution focuses not on an indigenous or even immigrant experience but is dedicated to chronicling the decimation of the European Jewish community at mid-twentieth century. It is not entirely divorced from the American Jewish experience, since the confluence of actions that has come to be known as "the Holocaust" catapulted the

American Jewish community to prominence as the premier and, at the time, largest Jewish community in the world. Indeed, the NMAJH's treatment of the Holocaust focuses on the efforts of American Jews to aid and intervene on behalf of European Jewry before, during, and after the Holocaust; it makes no effort to chronicle the scope of devastation. The major emphasis of the NMAJH tells a story not of persecution, otherness, and ultimate destruction, but one of empowerment, opportunity, mutual embrace, and success; its message is one not of vigilance but rather of celebration.

The framework of freedom, extremely apt for explicating America, works reasonably well for explicating Jewishness, but is a problematic lens for explaining Judaism. As a religion, Judaism has existed on multiple continents for more than 2,500 years, and throughout much of that period its transmission was through authoritative, tightly controlled structures, though expressions of folk religion always flourished and influenced elite interpretations. Explorations of religious authority in a liberal context—noncoercive and shared with nonelites—are only as old as the Enlightenment era, that is, roughly the same as the experiment of American democracy. They too are experimental in nature, sometimes controversial, best understood as works in progress, in constant tension with Jewish traditions and with new opportunities. The NMAJH's core exhibition catalogs the diversity of Jewish religious responses to modernity: the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist movements in Judaism appear at various points, with the greatest representation on the third floor (1880–1945). Yet Judaism as a religion is interspersed in an episodic fashion that fails to communicate in any systematic manner a clear perspective on, for example, a Jew's relationship to God or how Jews may act to express their identity as a religious people. Though this diffuse treatment quite likely reflects the experience and understanding of many non-Orthodox Jewish visitors, little of the richness and complexity of Jewish religious thought and practice and their evolution is communicated. An interactive theater highlights synagogue architecture in greater detail than the range of activities that take place within these buildings. Modern Orthodoxy, including its separatist elements that shun contact with mainstream American society, are almost absent from the postwar floor, though this group represents the fastest-growing segment of the contemporary Jewish community.

Resolute in its focus on the power of individual Jews to create expressions of Jewishness and to participate in and help shape the larger American environment, the core exhibition also treats lightly most of the institutions that comprise the complex network of the “organized Jewish community” for the last

100 years. One great advantage of this orientation away from institutionalized structures, be they religious or communal, is the balanced gender representation. Women's artifacts and experiences are exhibited and explored throughout the core exhibition. Since rabbinic leadership was restricted to men until the early 1970s and senior leadership of most communal institutions did not begin to include women until roughly the same period, the people-oriented emphasis of the exhibition neatly avoids the pitfalls of a "great man in history" approach that a more institutional approach might be unable to avoid.

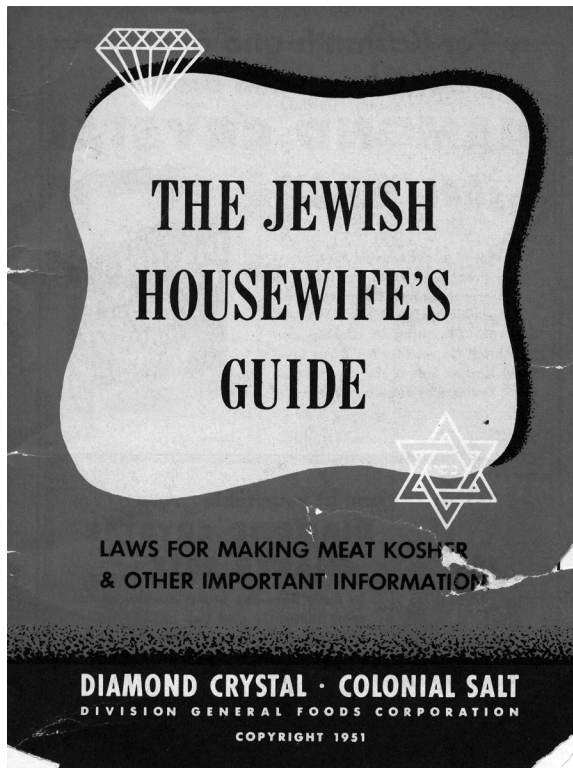


FIGURE 2: In its focus on the power of individual Jews to contribute both to the Jewish and American environments, the NMAJH achieves balanced gender representation throughout the exhibition. One artifact illustrating the experience of American Jewish women is "The Jewish Housewife's Guide." Joseph Jacobs Jewish Market Organization, New York: Diamond Crystal-Colonial Salt, 1951, National Museum of American Jewish History, 2006.1.6267, Peter H. Schweitzer Collection of Jewish Americana. Diamond Crystal and Colonial are trademarks of Cargill, Incorporated.

The tension between religious Judaism and the ethno-cultural Jewishness most represented in the core exhibition is also reflected in the museum's admission policies on Saturday, the day of rest in Judaism. A religious approach to the Sabbath includes restrictions on various everyday practices, including the handling of money. The NMAJH is primarily a museum of ethnicity that presents most fully either nonreligious or liberal expressions of Judaism, yet is understood by the wider world—and desires to be so understood—to stand in for the entirety of Judaism in America. The museum's administration adopted a compromise policy of honoring religious proscriptions by keeping the museum open but closing the box office. Tickets for Saturday admission can either be purchased online in advance or at box offices of other nearby institutions. Yet the ethnocultural emphasis of the museum's core exhibition misses the animating influence of religion and never presents a coherent picture of the source of Jewish values, or what may be the commitments that unite Jews *beyond* an embrace of American-style freedom. Admittedly, these commitments are challenging to identify, especially in the face of the ever-increasing diversity that the museum so amply portrays, and even harder to illustrate, and any efforts would likely invite criticism from partisans who disagree with a proffered interpretation.

There is also little discussion of the possibility that ethnic identification alone is not sustainable across generations in a context of porous boundaries. Thus intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews—at once a measure of the acceptance of Jews by majority society and a source of deep anxiety in various pockets of Jewish life regarding the prospect of Jewish survival—is not significantly addressed after the colonial period. This silence is a definitive response to those who are pessimistic about Jewish survival in an open society or the impact of modernity on the Jewish religion and the Jewish people. The core exhibition of the NMAJH insists that the experience of Jews in America is a positive story projecting an equally positive future. The museum's ultimate message, especially to Jewish visitors, is a message about empowerment in what one prominent Jewish American thinker called the “Jewish civilization”: Judaism in America, the museum suggests, is what *you* will make of it. This message is cemented with the invitation for visitors to “tell their own story” as the final act upon leaving the core exhibition, with each recorded video emailed home to the creator and entered into the museum's catalog, for private screening on monitors equipped with earphones or for inclusion in a curated display projected into the sitting area at the end of the core exhibit.

Each of the three floors of the core exhibition begins with a “preview gallery” featuring video and photos that provide limited contextualization. A pathway through each floor is suggested but not rigidly enforced; visitors have freedom to move around the galleries on their own. Maps and other signage tracking Jewish residency in America are placed at the beginning of each period, and each one ends with a three-part timeline tracing developments in world history, American history, American Jewish history. The maps are excellent visual communicators of information throughout the core exhibition, providing concrete markers in the midst of an increasingly dense collection of artifacts. These artifacts are usually in consonance with the chronological period and the larger themes discussed above.

Periodization, though helpful and probably necessary in any historical museum, always comes at a cost. The first period, “Foundations of Freedom: 1654–1880,” aims not only to cover this period but to set the context for the rest of the exhibition, including an explanation of the longevity and breadth of the worldwide Jewish community and the particular appeal of America for many Jews. To do so, the preview gallery opens with a quote from the Yiddish newspaper editor Abraham Cahan, an émigré who arrived in the early twentieth century. Cahan’s quote is emblematic and in this way useful, yet the inclusion of this and other figures from later eras immediately confuses the premise of periodization. The second period, “Dreams of Freedom: 1880–1945,” is extremely rich with artifacts and interactive exhibits, to the point of crowding and cacophony. This may be a deliberate design decision to reflect the density and intensity of the period of massive immigration, from the steerage in which most immigrants crossed the Atlantic Ocean to their living and working quarters in urban settings. However evocative, the impact can also be overwhelming to visitors. The decision to devote a whole gallery to the relatively short period following World War II (“Choices and Challenges of Freedom: 1945–Today”) necessarily privileges the current era and is in keeping with the museum’s self-presentation as a site of engagement and relevance designed to empower contemporary visitors and ensure that they feel part of shaping the narrative of the Jewish experience in America. Certain developments in Jewish history or Jewish concepts are presented unequally from period to period, leading at times to distortion or inadequate treatment.

The NMAJH made a major investment in technology. There are films throughout the museum: playwright Alfred Uhry narrates the impact of Leo Frank’s lynching on his family; visitors can sit in a mock theater to watch

one of three films about the Jewish presence in Hollywood narrated by Carl Reiner (Jewish comedians), Juliana Margulies (Jewish actors and actresses), and Mandy Patinkin (Jews in the film industry); men and women who served in the armed forces during World War II reflect on their experience in oral histories; multiple congregations are profiled in images and interviews in a small theater featuring synagogue architecture; and short films narrated by influential Americans are the basis of the “Only in America” exhibit that runs continuously in the museum lobby. Various interactive exhibits are deeply engaging, foremost among them a large installation in the first gallery charting the industrialization and westward expansion of America and overlaying Jewish participation in these developments. Visitors can experience themselves as an immigrant facing a possibly hostile immigration officer at a port of entry by choosing a persona and making a set of choices, including taking tests to measure competency. They can drive their own explorations of the contributions of prominent Jewish American artists, musicians, athletes, and other cultural figures. In an exhibit on the importance of Jewish camping, visitors can search for photos of the camps they attended, and plans are underway to allow visitors to submit their own photos for inclusion. In the



FIGURE 3: An interactive map table in the “Dreams of Freedom: 1880–1945” floor charts industrial and population shifts in America and Jewish participation in them and is an excellent example of the impressive technology deployed throughout the museum. Interactive Map Table, Jay Rosenblatt, courtesy of the National Museum of American Jewish History.



FIGURE 4: The Contemporary Issues Forum, located near the end of the core exhibition, enables visitors to post their own comments on themes present throughout the core exhibition and on issues currently under discussion in the American Jewish community. Contemporary Issues Forum, Jay Rosenblatt, courtesy of the National Museum of American Jewish History.

“Contemporary Issues Forum,” they can post their own comments on themes present throughout the core exhibition and on issues under discussion in the American Jewish community today. Visitors can opt to preserve their thoughts for later viewers by scanning their sticky notes for projection.

The core exhibition attains a balance between a multipronged grand narrative and individual stories that illuminate it. Throughout it, there are story boxes, small installations, and oral histories that bring to life the larger ideas and themes. The children’s installations, however, are surprisingly weak. Apart from a room given over to enacting nineteenth-century Western migration in a covered wagon and a camp bunkhouse, many seem to be an afterthought (a beaver pelt that can be touched is placed in the colonial period and a simple matching game illustrates the clothing that workers in the garment industry assembled in the early twentieth century). A child able to use technology may be engaged, not least by the technology itself, but other younger children may well be bored. High school and college students, however, could easily mine the richness of the artifacts and interactive

components of the core exhibition to learn about overarching themes of American Jewish history or individual experiences of Jewish men and women in different periods and locations.

The National Museum of American Jewish History sets out to directly and repeatedly engage adult visitors, and it succeeds. Through the framing questions of the core exhibition and the opportunities for self-direction and interaction, visitors may imagine themselves as the historical Jews depicted and may insert their own experiences—as Jews or non-Jews—into the story. Such an enterprise, especially one that seeks to define “Americanness” as much as “Jewishness,” unavoidably introduces inconsistencies and flattens elements of the Jewish experience. However, the overarching impression is one of richness and the positive presentation of a vibrant community.

REVIEW ESSAY

BEYOND THE FURNACE: CONCRETE, CONSERVATION, AND COMMUNITY IN POSTINDUSTRIAL PITTSBURGH

Allen Dieterich-Ward

*F*ranklin Toker, *Pittsburgh: A New Portrait* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009. xv, 512 pp.: illus. [some color], color maps. Hardcover, \$34.95)

Edward K. Muller, ed. *An Uncommon Passage: Traveling through History on the Great Allegheny Passage Trail*. Photographs by Paul G. Wiegman. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009. xii, 290 pp.: illus. [some color]. Hardcover, \$34.95)

The year 2009 was especially significant for Pittsburgh. The city had just celebrated its 250th anniversary with a year-long series of concerts, parades, and other public spectacles. Among these were renovations to the iconic Point State Park, the completion of the Great Allegheny Passage bicycle trail to Cumberland, Maryland, and a “Parade of Champions” at the Senator John Heinz History Center featuring the legends of Pittsburgh sports. City leaders saw in these festivities an opportunity for fostering

“improved regional perceptions of Pittsburgh” and “defining a vision for our region’s future.” The marketing blitz paid quick and unexpected dividends when in May the Obama administration announced the community would host an upcoming G20 Summit. The president’s emphasis on “the green economy” meshed perfectly with the booster narrative of Pittsburgh as “a great poster child [for] economic transformation.” Combined with the Steelers’ Super Bowl victory and the Penguins winning the National Hockey League’s Stanley Cup, by the end of the year residents of the ‘Burgh had plenty to justify claims that they were back from the ruins of deindustrialization.¹

Though marked by less fanfare, 2009 also witnessed the publication of two fascinating books by the University of Pittsburgh Press that drew heavily on these same themes of economic and environmental transformation. Designed explicitly for an audience beyond the confines of the academy, Franklin Toker’s *Pittsburgh: A New Portrait* and Edward K. Muller’s edited volume, *An Uncommon Passage: Travelling through History on the Great Allegheny Passage Trail*, are also of importance to scholars for their insight into the process of community and regional regeneration in the postindustrial era. Each text spans nearly 300 years of history, and they suggest both the opportunities and the difficulties in weaving together multiple themes and sites of urban, suburban, and rural development into a coherent narrative. The books thus resonate with recent environmental and urban history scholarship, such as David Stradling’s *Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills* (2007), Matthew Klinge’s *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (2007), and Anthony Penna’s *Remaking Boston: An Environmental History of the City and Its Surroundings* (2009).

Taken together, Toker and the contributors to *An Uncommon Passage* provide readers a nuanced portrait of a region extending from the central city to the farthest reaches of its countryside. The books are linked by an explicit analytical focus on the adaptive reuse of physical infrastructure, whether natural or artificial, for contemporary needs. The transformation of derelict train tracks into well-used bicycle paths is a key example of this process. “Abandoned railroad tracks,” Muller argues, offer “the ideal venue [for] biking . . . and in the process redefine the role of the Great Allegheny Passage in the postindustrial economy” (8). Toker similarly concludes, “the speed with which Pittsburgh can reinvent itself may be best exemplified by bicycling. Bikers in other cities know of Pittsburgh’s excellent cycling, and at least a few have moved here just for that reason” (29). Using the contemporary landscape as their starting point, both volumes dig beneath the

surface to find what Kevin Patrick describes in his chapter, “The Spirit of the Passage: Where Past and Future Meet,” in *An Uncommon Passage* as the “ghosts of the past and remnant bits of historic landscape [with which we] share the stage” (201).

Of the two books, *An Uncommon Passage* is much shorter and written in a narrative style free of jargon that will appeal to casual readers. The Great Allegheny Passage trail extends for 150 miles across the spine of the Appalachian Mountains, bringing together the cultures and ecologies of the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest. Following an uncommonly good introductory overview by Muller, conservationist and photographer Paul Wiegman takes the reader on a whirlwind tour through more than 400 million years of geologic history written in the rock like “pages of a book [with] text that has been pushed, pulled and otherwise shaped by continental forces” (22). Wiegman’s skilled prose does a wonderful job of rendering accessible complex scientific ideas, while at the same time connecting natural processes to specific landmarks along the trail, such as the recently refurbished Hot Metal Bridge across the Monongahela River (51).

The next three chapters map out the region’s history from the imperial wars of the late colonial era through Anglo-American conquest and the rise of industrialization in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Martin West, director of the Fort Ligonier historical site, frames his analysis in terms of the need to find the “Best Passage through the Mountains” during the struggle for control of the Ohio’s headwaters. Jennifer Ford’s chapter on settlement picks up on this theme of competing transportation routes, while also devoting considerable space to the architecture of log homes and barns, which could be of use to travelers looking for surviving structures along the trail route. Rounding out this middle portion of the book, Robert Gangewere systematically and elegantly details the development of railroads and the rise of coal, the formation of the Frick and Carnegie empires, and worker culture, ending with a nice transitional conclusion foreshadowing the decline of the steel industry.

The third portion of the book encompasses a pair of essays on the evolution of the region in the twentieth century. Kevin Patrick, a professor of geography and regional planning at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, creates a visceral sensation of past and present together by explaining the layers of human-nature interaction experienced by the contemporary leisure traveler. Patrick focuses on Ohiopyle, a town near the trail’s midpoint that

has long been a popular tourist destination due its namesake waterfall on the Youghiogheny River (known as the “Yough”). In Patrick’s telling, Pittsburgh retailer Edgar Kaufmann Sr. served as the link “between the [rail-oriented] tourism of the Yough’s past . . . and the tourism of the Yough’s automobile-oriented future, which has come to rely on environmental conservation and preservation” (211–12). He also pays particular attention to the rise of whitewater rafting, which grew from 5,000 participants in 1968 to 95,000 ten years later. Today, four outfitters guide 150,000 tourists down the lower Yough annually, making Ohiopyle the most popular whitewater destination in the nation.

Paul Wiegman returns for the book’s final chapter on the creation of the Great Allegheny Passage trail itself. This is particularly fitting because he served as an officer of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in 1972 when the Western Maryland Railway announced plans to discontinue operations, opening the possibility for a trail that would connect Pittsburgh with the C&O Canal trail and thus to Washington, D.C. From his vantage as both participant and observer, Wiegman is ideally placed to sort the complex issues that delayed the completion of the trail for more than a quarter of a century. With only small parts of the route acquired initially, it was a long, slow process of recreating the right-of-way during a period that also saw the collapse of the region’s industrial base. The book ends by looking forward to the Pittsburgh 250 celebration and the completion of the few remaining gaps in the route.

Pittsburgh: A New Portrait also uses the massive deindustrialization of the 1980s as a point of departure for what Toker describes as “a conversation among Pittsburghers . . . about the workings of a great but often overlooked city” (x). The current volume is an expanded update of the well-known *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait*, first published in 1986. An architectural historian by training, Toker has tried to limit the more technical aspects of his study in favor of an “evocation of Pittsburgh as an urban experience” (ix). Nevertheless, those like me who cannot readily distinguish between a cornice and corned beef (the former is a decorative element above a door or window, the latter is on the menu at Primanti Bros. for \$6.29) must make a decision early on either to keep a dictionary handy or else let the often-obscure terminology flow by in a pleasant, half-understood stream. The book’s introduction, “Pittsburgh from the Ground Up,” provides an excellent overview of Pittsburgh history with reference to buildings that survive from each

period. It also offers a very good academic introduction to the concept of “space,” while connecting theoretical ideas about the sociological process of community construction to examples from specific neighborhoods.

Toker’s discussion of the downtown “Golden Triangle” begins appropriately with an overview of the postwar Pittsburgh Renaissance and its successor in the early 1980s. As with *An Uncommon Passage*, the multiple connections between the urban core and the rural periphery become immediately apparent, with Edgar Kaufmann Sr. once again a key player.² In surveying the work of modernist designer Benno Janssen, Toker highlights the retail magnate’s “importance as a patron of architecture for many years before he built Fallingwater” (64). While looking at “three different ideologies of renewal” in the gritty North Side neighborhood of Manchester, Toker also demonstrates brilliance in coaxing compelling stories from the fabric of the built environment on even the most mundane-seeming blocks (131). This interweaving of architectural description, engaged storytelling, and passionate advocacy for adaptive reuse continues in coverage of the South Side, which the author dubs “Real Pittsburgh.” He finds much to admire, for example, in one mixed-use redevelopment of a defunct steel mill—“SouthSide Works’ density, its integration with the preexisting street grid, its assimilation of the dominant old architectural forms, and its stress on urban versus suburban features has made it an authentic Pittsburgh neighborhood, despite its artificially accelerated pace of development” (171).

The two chapters in the book’s middle take transportation corridors as their departure points. “Penn Avenue: First Foundries and First Suburbs” walks the reader through Pittsburgh’s history by following the Monongahela Plain—the level remains of the river’s previous route—from its base on the waterfront to the bluffs on the city’s eastern end. “Fifth Avenue: Uphill and Upscale” examines the city’s other traditional thoroughfare, first by climbing “The Hill,” the city’s historically black neighborhood, and then driving through the leafy streetcar suburbs of Shadyside, Squirrel Hill, and Greenfield. Toker rounds out his portrait of Pittsburgh proper with an examination of Oakland, the city’s cultural Acropolis and home to three universities. Beginning with the desire of the city’s elite to transform the “Smoky City” imagery depicted in the 1909 Pittsburgh Survey, he carries us through architect Franklin Felix Nicola’s “transformation of Mary Schenley’s cowfields into Pittsburgh’s ‘City Beautiful’” (321). Among many beautifully detailed portraits of well-known landmarks such as the Carnegie museums,

the Cathedral of Learning, and the Phipps Conservatory, the author shows his intimate knowledge of the area with a discussion of Flagstaff Hill in Schenley Park, “an artificially banked-up amphitheatre [and] the city’s premier spot for kiting on windy days” (350).

Having thus provided industrial and postindustrial bookends to the story of the city proper, Toker turns his attention to the rest of the region. It is here, I believe, that the book makes some of its most important contributions to the existing canon of Pittsburgh scholarship. “The River Towns: Valleys of Industry” covers those areas hardest hit by the collapse of steel, while the book’s final chapter tackles the dramatic growth of the hilltop commuter suburbs. The focus in both chapters is firmly on the successes, failures, and possibilities of community revitalization through architectural design. The author sees in the creation of a National Historic Park of the Steel Industry around the “mesmerizing remains” of the Carrie Furnaces an attraction “destined to become the single most riveting site for visitors to Pittsburgh” (395). On the other hand, Toker is clearly disappointed with the Waterfront, a mixed-use development on the site of another iconic steel mill, which unlike the SouthSide Works was not well integrated into its surrounding neighborhoods leaving them to “languish in unemployment and decay” (392). Significantly, he applies these same insights to the less-known communities of Braddock and McKees Rocks, where it is their “architectural and industrial heritage that makes [them] memorable, so [their] old buildings necessarily play a major role in any economic revival” (399).


An Uncommon Passage and *Pittsburgh: A New Portrait* thus present visions of the contemporary metropolitan region that are both accessible and innovative. From the urban core to the rural periphery, these carefully constructed volumes lead readers both casual and scholarly on a detailed tour through time and space. In each, beautiful photography is seamlessly meshed with engaging prose presented by narrators with detailed knowledge of their subject matter. Just as Muller and his collaborators give the reader an intimate look at the making and remaking of the Great Allegheny Passage trail, Toker’s in-depth knowledge of neighborhoods from Manchester to Monroeville provides tremendous insight into the evolving form and function of urban space. As with Wiegman’s analysis of the early years of trail development, Toker also occasionally inserts himself into the narrative, such as in 1990 when “ignoring [Toker’s] own personal plea” a property owner demolished a building in the historic Allegheny Arsenal designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe in 1813 (207–8).

Each book does have its limitations, though, which are due in part to the difficulties in telling a coherent regional narrative in an area as diverse as metropolitan Pittsburgh. It has been fifteen years since the last attempt to craft such a synthesis for the post-steel era and thus the present volumes do help to fill a gap in the existing scholarly literature.³ Taking into account the patchiness of a multiple-author format, Muller actually does a better editorial job of crafting and maintaining an overarching analytical framework than Toker, whose chapters function more as stand-alone essays. Indeed, despite its tremendous advantages, *Pittsburgh: A New Portrait* does not fully realize the author's stated ambition to "write a book that could be read cover to cover rather than picked at like a reference book" (xiii), with often perfunctory transitions both within and between chapters and little in the way of a conclusion. That said, these are both wonderful books that will have readers packing them along with their bicycles and binoculars as they make their way to the 'Burgh.

NOTES

1. Allegheny Conference on Community Development, "Pittsburgh 250 Blows Out Birthday Candles on Year-Long Celebration," news release, Dec. 18, 2008; "G-20 Summit Coming to Pittsburgh in September," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, May 28, 2009.
2. Toker is also the author of a critically acclaimed and controversial study of the relationship between Kaufmann and Frank Lloyd Wright, *Fallingwater Rising: Frank Lloyd Wright, E. J. Kaufmann, and America's Most Extraordinary House*, published by Knopf in 2003.
3. Roy Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, vol. 2, *The Post Steel Era* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996). Lubove's two-volume history of Pittsburgh adopts a quasi-regional approach, though even it remains theoretically underdeveloped when compared to more recent scholarship such as Robert Self's *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003) or Richard Walker's *The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

BOOK REVIEWS

ark Abbot Stern. *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010. Pp. xvii, 263. Appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$60.00)

The second half of the eighteenth century in North America was dynamic and filled with opportunity, tragedy, and change. From the Seven Years' War period to the Colonial Crisis and culminating with the Revolutionary War, the era presented individuals with both tremendous opportunity and significant risks. Perhaps no colony experienced such a drastic shift during this period than Pennsylvania. Still a Quaker-dominated government at the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, the colony-turned-state had become the seat of a revolutionary government, significant battlefield, and home to radical revolutionaries during the War for Independence. This period of transition, however, presented outstanding financial opportunities for men willing to seize them—including David Franks. Mark Abbot Stern, a retired engineer,

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adeptly tracks the life and business career of one of Philadelphia's leading merchants between the Seven Years' War and the conclusion of the American Revolution in *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*.

David Franks was born to a New York-based Jewish mercantile family in 1720. In early adulthood, the ambitious and entrepreneurial Franks moved to Philadelphia, presumably to extend his family's commercial connections. There he thrived through a series of partnerships with both relatives and other business associates. He married into a Christian family, raised a Christian family, and became a participant in Philadelphia's Christ Church while simultaneously remaining active in New York's Jewish community. Throughout his career, Franks dabbled widely in the variety of mercantile pursuits available to him. The Indian trade, land speculation, the import/export business, and even shipbuilding attracted his attention, with varying degrees of success. Military contracting for the British, however, proved both the most lucrative and dangerous of Franks' endeavors. While supplying British armies and garrisons in Pennsylvania during the Seven Years' War and the interwar period provided a steady profit, his contract to supply British prisoners of war during the War for Independence ended disastrously. Despite Franks having congressional approval and General Washington's support, radical patriots in Philadelphia targeted him as a Tory sympathizer. The consequent arrests and ultimate departure from his adopted city resulted in tremendous damage to his family and finances.

While Stern attempts to develop a comprehensive biography, his work heavily favors David Franks' mercantile activities. The author, however, openly acknowledges this result, noting that the available resources necessitated such a treatment. As it stands, Stern's work should prove extremely useful to scholars of the late colonial and Revolutionary periods in a variety of ways due to the scope of detail provided by the author. The transitory nature of Franks' business partnerships, as well as the extensive networks he developed, illuminates the business practices of the era. The initial success he enjoyed, moreover, demonstrates the tremendous opportunities for profit war and a military presence provided Pennsylvanians. *David Franks* will thus be found useful for economic and urban historians.

Franks' extensive involvement in land speculation, the Indian trade, and military contracting in western Pennsylvania is likewise valuable in examining connections between Philadelphia and the colony's hinterlands. For scholars more interested in the British military, the detailed listings of goods provided by Franks will prove immensely useful in perfecting present

understandings of the regular soldier's life. Correspondence between Franks and Henry Bouquet, as well as other British officers, appears quite valuable for those wishing to study the relationship between Pennsylvanians and newly arrived Britons and Europeans.

Finally, Stern's work might best make a contribution to our understanding of the Revolution. Neither an outright patriot nor a loyalist, the author portrays Franks as an individual who simply attempted to survive the conflict while doing what he had always done—providing goods to those who needed them. While treatments of the Revolution naturally gravitate toward those who clearly took a side, be they patriot or loyalist, Stern's discussion of Franks might assist scholars who seek to describe the experience of the ambivalent or undecided, which certainly represents a larger proportion of American society than historians generally suggest. The disdain with which radical revolutionaries in Philadelphia treated Franks, moreover, suggests the difficulties facing those who tried to pursue a middle course. While the primary evidence available to Stern does seem to suggest Franks' "middle path," it should be noted that the family's coziness with British officers during the occupation of Philadelphia does suggest either private loyalist sentiment or simply the opportunistic mentality of the merchant. Without direct primary evidence, however, the author's treatment of the contentious subject of treason appears judicious.

While the detail contained in Stern's work should prove useful to scholars, this work is not recommended for use in the classroom. While the book will be promoted as a work of Jewish history, its value in that sense appears limited. The author does a commendable job of combating the image of Franks as a man who abandoned his inherited faith, but his continued observance of Judaism does not appear to have played a pivotal role in his business life. His business partnerships included Christians as well as Jews. In his personal life, Franks does appear to have straddled the divided between Judaism and Christianity, maintaining his membership in New York's synagogue while at the same time allowing his Christian wife to raise their children in Philadelphia's Christ Church. Yet the mercantile slant to all the materials available to Stern suggests very little about what this actually meant to Franks. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the rancor directed at Franks during the Revolution appears to have had no connection to his faith but instead to his apparent close connection to British officers.

The clarity produced by Stern's exhaustive research and attention to detail has clearly resulted in a strong history of a colonial merchant with extensive

involvement in a wide variety of economic activities. Stern's ability to make sense of a complicated set of materials will be valuable to colonial and revolutionary historians of Pennsylvania interested in such practices. The nature of the primary materials produced by Franks, however, significantly limits the ability of the author to make definitive cultural or theological statements about this dynamic period in Pennsylvania's history.

BENJAMIN G. SCHARFF
West Virginia University

Judith Ridner. *A Town In-Between: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Early Mid-Atlantic Interior*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. Pp. viii, 287, maps, illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$49.95)

Judith Ridner provides important new insights to multiple audiences in her excellent new study of Carlisle, Pennsylvania's first half-century of settlement. Students of early Pennsylvania will no doubt benefit from this comprehensive narrative of the development of proprietor Thomas Penn's new administrative seat for his sprawling interior Cumberland County. Generalists in early American studies will also be enriched by Ridner's deft analysis of how the residents of Carlisle contributed in material ways to such well-known intercolonial and national events as the French and Indian War, American Revolution, Constitutional ratification, and Whiskey Rebellion. Ultimately, *A Town In-Between* successfully balances the need for intimate detail of local and specialized interest with the forging of broader thematic connections that speak to much wider audiences.

Central to Ridner's argument for Carlisle's broader importance was its status as a place "in-between." Her book does not elaborately theorize this framework, but rather allows its multiple meanings to unfold in the course of her chronological narrative. As Native Americans long knew, Carlisle's geographic location provided a convergence of north-south trade routes along the Susquehanna River Valley and east-west paths (later roads) connecting Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley with the expanding western frontier. Thomas Penn hoped these geographic advantages would allow him to extend

law, order, and proprietary power in a newly made county seat as well as establish a successful way station for merchants in an increasingly important fur and skin trade with Native Americans. Although contested in his vision (see below), Penn's town of Carlisle was quickly successful in both accounts. As the French and Indian War broke out with violence at the forks of the Ohio River in western Pennsylvania, Carlisle's location "in-between" allowed it to serve as a staging ground for General Forbes' military efforts to dislodge the French from Fort Duquesne. When violence again erupted during the American Revolution, Carlisle's crossroads location made it an attractive site to locate a critical depot and manufacturing center for Patriot arms as well as a detention center for captive British and Loyalist soldiers. Following the Revolution, Carlisle remained a significant economic hub as part of the expanding grain trade between the Ohio River Valley and the coastal cities of the eastern seaboard.

Apart from this grain trade, however, the analysis of Carlisle as a place "in-between" during the early Republic becomes strained in the final two chapters of the book. These closing chapters are otherwise strong, describing key aspects of Carlisle's maturation over time, including its industrializing economy, more refined material culture, development of local print trades and newspapers, and the establishment of Dickinson College—Pennsylvania's second institution of higher learning. Even Ridner concedes in the final chapter that this maturation showed that Carlisle had developed into a "town of the cosmopolitan east . . . it sat more on the edge of the east than in the middle of the mid-Atlantic" (179). This admission would have been less jarring had the penultimate chapter not been titled "Still In-Between," as its contents seemed to better describe its transition away from that status.

Another major strength of this book is its excellent analysis of the contentiousness of Carlisle's residents as conflicting visions of the community's meaning and destiny clashed over time. This process began with the earliest settlers, predominantly Scots-Irish Presbyterians, who largely ignored the Proprietor's original town plans, including his preference for a large Anglican church on its central square (Thomas Penn had abandoned the Quakerism of his father). Readers familiar with Gary Nash's accounts of early Pennsylvania will find this type of proprietary versus Anti-proprietary conflict in early Carlisle very familiar. Even more striking examples of contention within the town itself were seen in the friction between merchants who were enriching themselves through western trade and the farmers and townsfolk who feared that same trade was built upon the transfer

of weapons and alcohol that encouraged and facilitated Native American frontier violence. Local residents would often stop merchants' wagons to ensure they were free of these items and many traders resorted to sending their shipments (including weapons and alcohol) alongside army detachments passing through to frontier forts. Carlisle was predominantly united behind the Patriot cause during the American Revolution, but the politics of the early Republic proved to be extremely divisive for local residents. Dueling public demonstrations planned by Federalists and Anti-Federalists during the constitutional ratification debates developed into riots that commanded national attention in 1787. Street violence returned to Carlisle in 1794 in the midst of bitter disputes over federal tax policy during the Whiskey Rebellion. The town square became a hotly contested public space when anti-excise demonstrators erected a liberty pole that was dismantled by local Federalists before being raised yet again by even more angry protesters. Pacification was forced on Carlisle as it hosted President Washington at the head of an army designed to crush further resistance to the federal taxing power. Ridner's narrative and analysis of each of these conflicts advance a stronger understanding of Carlisle's own development, but also highlight the important role this relatively small Pennsylvania community played in early American history.

Judith Ridner's *A Town In-Between* is everything a good community study should be. It is rich in details combed from exhaustive research in local and state archives. The writing is crisp and accessible, augmented well with maps and images that provide a sense of place and material culture in early Carlisle. Finally, the narrative is framed in a broad context that makes a strong case for Carlisle's importance to the mid-Atlantic region and beyond.

LARRY A. SKILLIN
St. Ambrose University

Joe W. Trotter and Jared N. Day. *Race and Renaissance: African Americans in Pittsburgh since World War II*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010. Pp. xxi, 352. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$29.95)

In recent years, historians have enriched our view of the civil rights movement to encompass a broader national view of racial segregation, social activism in black communities, and white resistance to racial change during the twentieth century. No longer is the history of the African American freedom struggle a conversation that is regionally confined to the South. Exciting studies by Martha Biondi, Matthew Countryman, Patrick D. Jones, and Robert O. Self, among others, have highlighted how civil rights protests and white opposition rocked the neighborhoods, schools, buses, and streets of cities outside of the South during the second half of the twentieth century. Joe W. Trotter and Jared N. Day's new book is a noteworthy addition to this scholarship, contributing to our understanding not only of Pittsburgh's civil rights history but also of the importance of industrial growth and deindustrialization, suburbanization, urban housing, and urban "renewal" efforts in the civil rights struggles of northern African Americans, as well as the opportunities and limitations blacks faced as they pressed for both social and economic change. Built on an extensive foundation of archival sources, oral interviews, newspaper articles, and relevant secondary sources, *Race and Renaissance* is essential reading for historians of race, civil rights, and cities in post-World War II America.

Trotter and Day employ a long view of Pittsburgh's African American history, beginning in the nineteenth century when blacks (as well as native-born whites and European immigrants) sought to carve out spaces for themselves in the iron (and later steel) industry and the crowded neighborhoods nearby. Pittsburgh had always been an interracial space, though African Americans consistently experienced economic marginalization and segregation. The city's growth during the second industrial revolution yielded very uneven dividends. While black men made inroads into the iron and steel workforce (even as skilled "puddlers"), they never equaled more than 3 percent of these workers in Pittsburgh during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Despite extensive racial exclusion in the manufacturing economy, the black population of the Steel City continued to grow dramatically during the early to mid-twentieth century, from 27,000 in 1914 to 82,000 in 1945. Many African American newcomers regarded Pittsburgh as the "Mississippi of the North" (48): white landlords and realtors refused to lease and sell properties to blacks, consigning African Americans to specific areas of the city such as the Hill District and Homewood neighborhoods; police harassment was frequent; and local schools often excluded black children.

However, as Trotter and Day illustrate, black men's and women's experiences with urban/industrial segregation fostered a dynamic African American culture. As evidenced by the proliferation of black faith communities (including followers of Islam), the popularity and profitability of Negro League baseball clubs (such as the Homestead Grays and the Pittsburgh Crawfords), and the growth and activism of African American political organizations (such as the Urban League of Pittsburgh [ULP], the Universal Negro Improvement Association [UNIA], and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP]), black Pittsburghers transformed the "mean experience" of segregation into "congregation," creating what Trotter and Day aptly characterize as a "black metropolis" within the city (15).

The book's main chapters explore why the proliferation of black protest politics after World War II ultimately could not dislodge the city's established patterns of segregation and racial exclusion. As Trotter and Day illustrate, the black freedom movement in Pittsburgh was very active and complex, driven forward by numerous political actors whose voices and views spanned the entire spectrum of black protest during the era of the civil rights movement. From a particularly active Urban League of Pittsburgh, to the National Negro Labor Council (NNLC) and the Negro American Labor Council (NALC), to the Black Panther Party and the Black United Movement for Progress, men and women of the African American communities of Pittsburgh struggled to break down color barriers in the city's workplaces, schools, and housing. However, several factors played determining roles in shaping the outcomes of civil rights campaigns in Pittsburgh. While the courts and the federal government overturned the legal bases of segregation, ongoing white resistance in employment offices, realtors' offices, public housing boards, local schools, and local neighborhoods limited the expansion of black employment, home ownership, access to better rental properties, and access to superior schools. In addition, postwar "urban renewal" efforts (especially Renaissance I and Renaissance II) fragmented black communities, as major sections of entire neighborhoods were leveled in order to make room for sports arenas and office buildings. Deindustrialization, as well as rampant discrimination and white resistance in the local construction trades, undercut blacks' access to the higher-paying jobs of the blue-collar elite.

Also, the culture of public schooling in Pittsburgh emphasized close ties between local schools and nearby residents—a parochial view that justified white opposition to busing schemes and redistricting meant to enhance

African Americans' access to newer schools. A combination of enduring white resistance to desegregation efforts from above and below, and the structural reality of a declining industrial base, reinforced the "slow pace of change" in postwar Pittsburgh and explained why blacks continued to occupy "the cellar" of Pittsburgh's labor and housing markets (103, 48). The final chapter of the book points to a legacy of persistence, as African Americans continued to maintain communities and push for new opportunities during the 1990s—done amid the challenges posed by the postindustrial, low-wage service economy that replaced manufacturing as the city's economic base.

Trotter and Day's interpretations of twentieth-century Pittsburgh history rightly center on the analytical frames of class and race since they view employment as a central battleground of the black freedom struggle in Northern industrial cities. However, the theme of African American masculinity is a recurrent (though unexamined) refrain in their sources. Black men's concerns about securing a patriarchal breadwinner role within their families and communities animated much of the race and class struggles for blue-collar employment opportunities in Pittsburgh's post-World War II labor market. For example, during a 1959 demonstration to demand urban-renewal construction jobs, organized by the Negro American Labor Council, men carried "Remember Forgotten Man" signs, while black marchers in 1969 challenged employment discrimination at US Steel by chanting "more jobs now for black men" (56, 112). The issue of securing the foundations of respectable working-class manhood (stable blue-collar employment, decent homes, and good schools for children) proved to be an important cultural ideal that informed black men's decision to embrace social movements for racial change and validated their demands for an end to Jim Crow racism in the cities of the North. Trotter and Day could have made an already engaging book even stronger by pursuing more fully the importance of gender politics in the histories of African American men.

Nonetheless, Trotter and Day have written an excellent study that is a significant contribution to the historiography of the civil rights movement in the North. It is a must-read for scholars and students who are interested in the histories of African Americans, cities, race and industry, whiteness, education, and social movements.

GREGORY WOOD
Frostburg State University

Scott Gabriel Knowles, ed. *Imagining Philadelphia: Edmund Bacon and the Future of the City*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. Pp. 178. Notes, index. Paper, \$50.00)

Time capsules are artifacts that at face value appear antithetical to the enterprise of history. Capturing frozen moments in time, time capsules flatten the dynamic and contingent nature of the past. Yet, as the contributors to *Imagining Philadelphia: Edmund Bacon and the Future of the City* argue, the artifact is simply an entry point opening up larger questions of the complex relationships between past, present, and future. In this case, the “time capsule” is a single text, famed city planner Edmund Bacon’s 1959 essay, “Philadelphia in the Year 2009.” When read with the benefit of twenty-first-century hindsight, Bacon’s essay, chapter 1 of the volume, seems romantically utopian at best and naively simplistic at worst. Bacon appears at once eerily prescient and hopelessly out of touch. Fortunately, the contributors to *Imagining Philadelphia* conceived of this project as more than simply a catalogue of Bacon’s forecasting successes and failures. *Imagining Philadelphia* encourages readers, in the words of editor and contributor Scott Gabriel Knowles, to interpret Bacon’s essay as “less a prophecy than a gamble, a hope that big ideas could win the day, while achieving some serious and useful results along the way” (110).

The volume’s contributors, hailing from the fields of history, urban studies, and city planning, seek to historicize Bacon the planner and “idea man” alongside the circumstances determining Philadelphia’s fifty-year course—a course that at times bore little resemblance to the city Bacon envisaged in 1959. Bacon, the contributors repeat, was not simply a “floating ‘great man’” (5). He was *not* Philadelphia’s version of Robert Moses. Bacon was a formative player in Philadelphia city planning who was, by virtue of his relative *lack* of political clout, forced to contend with and negotiate between varied interests throughout the city. In chapter 2, Gregory Heller cites architect Louis Kahn’s take on Bacon, whom he called “a planner who thinks he is a politician” (20). Based upon Heller’s biographical work in chapter 2, this assessment appears spot on as Bacon was forced to “sell” his ideas that attempted to fuse his own commitment to affordable housing with his interest in citywide commercial revitalization.

What led Bacon to a vision of a Philadelphia restored to its former place of prominence within the American urban landscape—a city where “no part . . . is ugly or depressed”? (17). The answer, writes historian Guian McKee in chapter 3, lies in the disjuncture between Bacon’s faith in design and in ideas. Attributing Bacon’s failings to a lack of political power, McKee maintains, is insufficient. Simply, Bacon “believed far too deeply in its [design’s] power” (61). By privileging the power of design, Bacon subscribed to an overly deterministic understanding of the relationship between economics, culture, and the built environment, says McKee. This philosophical flaw left Bacon out of step with the changing contours of Philadelphia’s deindustrializing landscape. When Bacon penned “Philadelphia in the Year 2009” in 1959, the seeds of the city’s decline had already been sown. Philadelphia’s industry was leaving the city, along with much of its population. Crime was on the rise and racial tensions were simmering. Bacon placed too much emphasis on the reinvigorating power of design and particularly the 1976 World’s Fair/Exposition. As Knowles points out in chapter 4, the economic impact of world’s fairs was anything but predictable.

However, Bacon didn’t have it all wrong. In fact, he had a great deal right. As Harris Steinberg, director of PennPraxis argues in chapter 5, Bacon’s 1959 essay presaged, among many developments, Philadelphia’s shift to the tourism sector during the Rendell mayoral administration in the 1990s. Bacon predicted the resurgence of Philadelphia’s downtown residential neighborhoods. Bacon saw in Philadelphia the city where American democracy found its footing. Although Steinberg is careful to take note of that which figured in a rather cursory way in Bacon’s vision—specifically poverty and racial tensions—Steinberg ends with hope. Should we imagine a Philadelphia revitalized fifty years from now? Absolutely. Will such revitalization come to fruition? Time will tell.

Imagining Philadelphia raises a number of important questions regarding what went right and perhaps, more significantly, what went awry in the post–World War II period that marked Philadelphia’s decline. The volume is admirable in its aims and has seized a document rife with possibility as its locus of inquiry. However, the volume also at times seems to fall victim to precisely the critique it situates itself against—“the great man” narrative of history. “Philadelphia in the Year 2009” undoubtedly requires a closer look at Bacon and the circumstances underpinning his vision. In pointing to the planner’s own intellectual boundaries and considering the counterfactual—what *could* have been—the contributors generate the unanticipated effect of

recentering Bacon himself. With Bacon occupying the center of the volume, all that was changing within Philadelphia—its demographics, economy, politics—seems to fall out of the story, receiving brief attention at opportune moments. Much was changing in Philadelphia between 1959 and 2009 on an institutional and neighborhood level, which warrants greater discussion. The contributors make overtures to some of the racial tensions characterizing the city, for instance, but ultimately *Imagining Philadelphia* is a look from the top down. For a reader with knowledge of the changing contours of Philadelphia in the postwar period, this may be less an issue. Otherwise, it would be easy to lose sight of the dynamic state of the city and the people living within it.

NICOLE MAURANTONIO

University of Richmond

CONTRIBUTORS

ALAN DIETERICH-WARD, assistant professor of history at Shippensburg University, received his PhD from the University of Michigan in 2006. He has published several articles on American urban history and is completing a book, *From Mills to Malls: Politics, Economics, and Environment in Modern Pittsburgh* for the University of Pennsylvania Press.

RICHARD L. LINDBERG is a retired public librarian who was born in Pittsburgh and grew up in Pleasant Hills. He has a BA in history from Alderson-Broaddus College in Philippi, WV, a ThM from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and a MS in library science and a graduate certificate in history from Villanova University. He has a previous article about Pleasant Hills in *Western Pennsylvania History*. He lives near Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where he operates his own genealogy research service.

KAREN RAMSBURG, a nurse, activist, and mother, became interested in history while trying to save the Justice William Smith house in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. She is running as an Independent candidate for Congress in Pennsylvania's Ninth Congressional District in the 2012 election. Ramsburg was born in Frederick, Maryland, and resides in Mercersburg.

RABBI DEBORAH WAXMAN, PhD, is vice president for governance at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. She has published several articles, including "'A Lady Sometimes Blows the Shofar': Women's Religious Equality in the Postwar Reconstructionist Movement" in *A Jewish Feminine Mystique? Jewish Women in Postwar America* (Rutgers University Press, 2010), "The Challenge of Implementing Reconstructionism: Art, Ideology and the Society for the Advancement of Judaism's Sanctuary Mural," coauthored with Joyce Norden (*American Jewish History*, September 2009), and a review of the National Museum of American Jewish History for *Pennsylvania History* (forthcoming, Winter 2012). Deborah is a graduate of Columbia College, Columbia University, where she was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa Society. She received rabbinical ordination and a MA in Hebrew letters from RRC in 1999. She received a PhD in American Jewish history from Temple University in May 2010; her dissertation was titled "Faith and Ethnicity in American Judaism: Reconstructionism as Ideology and Institution,

1935–1959.” Deborah serves on the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society.

HILARY LLOYD YEWLETT, after a career spanning almost thirty years, teaching English and education studies in the universities of Cardiff and Swansea, took early retirement in order to pursue other academic interests. Among the most addictive of these has been the study of early modern Wales, particularly her home county of Radnorshire. In 2004 she gained an advanced diploma, with distinction, in local history from the University of Oxford. In 2008 she obtained a master’s degree from the University of Cambridge. Sadly, her planned return to Oxford University to pursue further doctoral research into emigration from early modern Wales to America was thwarted by illness. Hilary Lloyd Yewlett died on March 4, 2012.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*A*nnual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association will take place at the Harrisburg Hilton Hotel from November 1–3, 2012. For more information, see the PHA Web site. David Witwer (dxw44@psu.edu) chairs the program committee; Simon J. Bronner (sjb12@psu.edu) chairs the local arrangements committee.

Call for Papers—Joint Issue with *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*

Special Issue: Teaching Pennsylvania History (Fall 2014)

The *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* and *Pennsylvania History* are planning a joint publication, scheduled for 2014, on teaching Pennsylvania History. We invite teachers who have a special interest in a topic, such as women's history, African American history, political bosses, religious sects, a particular event (Coal Strike of 1902/3, Centennial Exhibition of 1876), etc., to prepare an article that describes their method, perhaps with illustrations, documents, and connection to Web sites, that would help others teach that subject in the context of Pennsylvania and US history at the college level (though articles that suggest how to adapt the presented materials for high school

use are welcome). Articles should be about 15–20 pages and double-spaced. Please indicate any documents or other resources you would like to include, either in print or online.

Submission details: Please send inquiries to either Tamara Gaskell (tgaskell@hsp.org) or Bill Pencak (wap1@psu.edu).

Deadline for submissions: January 1, 2013.

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