There are plenty of epics in Pennsylvania, but there is no one tradition that binds all its people with a sense of common background and achievement. There is one story in Philadelphia, another in Lancaster, and a third in Pittsburgh. Nor is there any tradition common to the Middle Atlantic area, of which Pennsylvania is a part. Quite different is the situation in other regions, where both state and sectional consciousness are more apparent. Citizens of Norfolk and Roanoke share the same memories of Old Virginia. And they are something more than Virginians—they are all Southerners. In like manner, those who hail from such points as New Haven and Portsmouth will identify themselves as New Englanders. From Ohio to Kansas, men declare themselves Middle Westerners. But who ever heard citizens of New York, Philadelphia, and Wilmington in joyous affirmation of their common origin as

* I am indebted in this editorial for helpful, specific suggestions made by several fellow Philadelphians; namely, Carl Bridenbaugh, George Kearney, M. Joseph McCosker, Roy F. Nichols, Merle M. Odgers, and R. Norris Williams, 2nd.
Middle Atlantickers? The phrase is "merely a geographical expression."

This contrast is more than a coincidence. As pointed out in an earlier editorial,¹ three sectional traditions—those of New England, of the South, and of the Middle West—converge upon and even penetrate the Middle Atlantic states;² but the heart of that area shares in none of them. It is the forgotten region. If this statement seems extreme, note that it is literally true. Although two able studies of the "Middle Colonies" have been published,³ no one has ever written a history of the Middle Atlantic area for the national period. Meanwhile histories of New England, of the South, and of the West are numerous enough. Each of the latter has its own historical journal; only the Middle Atlantic area has never possessed such a publication. Bibliographical works, dealing with the entire nation by sections, even omit the Middle States from their table of contents.⁴ In a word, scholars as well as citizens at large seem unconscious of the existence of the region, as such, after 1800. Yet throughout the greater part of our national history, this has been the most populous and the most wealthy portion of the country.

It may be said that all this makes no difference. Have not the Middle Atlantic states moved along very well without a tradition? The answer is yes—and no. If the people of other regions cherish their stories, there must be some reason for it—they must feel that pride in a common past contributes something, intangible but real, to their own morale. And, by the same token, the people of Pennsylvania or New Jersey—without a sectional tradition—are likely to lack certain values. They share in national enthusiasm, but miss the added "lift" of provincial pride.

Lest this seem an abstract assumption, consider a specific example. Some years of residence in North Carolina impressed me, even though this is a relatively progressive Southern state, with the wide-

² Central New York is in many respects an extension of New England; the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania was once a Connecticut colony; western Pennsylvania lies in the Mississippi Valley and may conceivably be viewed as part of the Middle West.
³ The older study by John Fiske, and the recent work of T. J. Wertenbaker.
spread poverty of that region. It had never occurred to me that there were great parts of the land traversed by one-track railroads, where many farmers lived in log cabins, and where school teachers were paid on the average of about six hundred dollars a year. There is, of course, another side to the picture—progress in recent decades has been remarkable. And no Philadelphian may make remarks about the South without being reminded by Jonathan Daniels or other Southern critics that the home town is not without its shortcomings and that criticism—like charity—should begin at home. We may even be told, as by Professor Walter P. Webb of Texas, that such troubles as exist in Dixie ought to be laid on Yankee doorsteps. Be that as it may, we have Mr. Roosevelt's word for it that in normal times the South is still "the nation's economic problem number one." Nor need one labor the point that the section's poverty has necessarily involved serious social and cultural difficulties.

Despite all this, one found North Carolinians proud of their state, proud of the South and its past. This was more than a nostalgia for the colonial associations of Roanoke and Newbern, or for Revolutionary enterprise at Mecklenburg and Guilford Court House. There was pride in the nineteenth century, even in the last stand of Confederate armies at Greensboro and in the final surrender at Durham in '65. Local critics, though conscious of the state's shortcomings, shared in some measure in provincial loyalties. These were all-pervading, having been early absorbed through courses in state history given in the schools. The sentiment so aroused was related to a belief in the present and the future of the Old North State, in the present and the future of the South.

I had rarely observed any corresponding pride in Pennsylvania or in New Jersey. Of course it does exist, and one would not for the world deny such manifestations as may appear. But it certainly is less common and obvious. Never as a schoolboy had I received a course in the history of Pennsylvania or of the Middle Atlantic states. Attending a public school named "Muhlenberg," no one ever explained who Muhlenberg was. There were, to be sure, tales of William Penn, of Ben Franklin, and of Independence Hall. But the last century of the Keystone State was left as a great blank in my mind, and into this mental vacuum rushed detailed accounts of all other regions from the pine-clad coasts of Maine to the sunny shores
of California. In the historical drama so presented, Southern planters, New England Puritans, and Western frontiersmen played down stage, but Pennsylvanians were lost in the background.

Conscious of the contrast in historical attitudes obtaining in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, I returned to the latter in due time and was struck by the strange character of some of the particular traditions that did exist in the home state. One sensed not only a lack of positive sectional pride, but also the existence of certain negative outlooks. If most of the comment which follows is focused upon Philadelphia, it is not merely because of personal associations but also because this city offers the most striking illustration of Middle-Atlantic attitudes as a whole. But there will be opportunities to refer to other parts of the region, so that the total picture can be kept in mind.

A Philadelphian, returning to the city after an absence of some years, becomes aware of the existence of a somewhat curious state of mind. From my one-time Tar Heel perspective, the people had much to be thankful for—all the advantages of an old metropolitan environment. But many intelligent citizens seemed rather indifferent to these values. Some were very conscious of fine eighteenth-century backgrounds; but there was little interest in the great city of the Civil War and of the Centennial, still less enthusiasm for the recent decades. There was, of course, complacency in certain circles. But there was also an uneasy self-criticism which, in some cases, took the form of ironic disdain; in others, expressed itself in a persistent pessimism about the city and all its wicked works. No doubt this was well-intended—was born, perhaps, of bitter experience in trying to arouse local spirit. But it was deep-dyed, for all that. Nothing, it appeared, was right about Philadelphia. Its streets were dirtier, its buildings uglier, its taxes higher, its politics more crooked, its administration more incompetent, its institutions more neglected, than those of any other large city.

Fearful lest I had received fragmentary and therefore misleading impressions, I consulted the artists and literary men. For they surely would express the essential views, the real soul of a people. What had Philadelphia artists to say of their city? The architects, apparently, had little to say for anything that had gone up in the
past century. Business buildings, it appeared, were about as bad as they could be. The highest skyscraper was a modernistic nightmare. The works of Furness were fantastic, to put it mildly, and the City Hall was a major catastrophe. Somewhere I ran across Pennell's etching of the great Delaware River Bridge, the title swelling with local pride—something about "The World's Ugliest." Certain of the literary men apparently shared these impressions. When they wrote of early Philadelphia, as had S. Weir Mitchell, there was no lack of enthusiasm. But when Christopher Morley and others came to the recent story, there was irony and ridicule. They seemed to see the vast urban area only from the limited and sophisticated perspective of the Main Line. Kitty Foyle, with its "wise cracks" at the expense of the doddering old town, advertised its seeming decadence to the nation.

All this was puzzling. Was the city so hopeless as these observations indicated? Or was one dealing here with a myth-making process which—like most myths—had some basis, but had been exaggerated and standardized? A mere glance at other cities will indicate the exaggerations. One persistent notion, for example, is that streets in the Philadelphia business section are so narrow that the traffic problem is hopeless. A New York newspaper man stressed this point in one of the popular illustrated weeklies only a year or two ago. Presumably he had never traversed any of the cross-town streets in his home town during rush hours. As a matter of fact, whenever one rides in Chicago street cars or in New York subways, he is conscious of the relative superiority of transportation in Philadelphia. Incidentally, up-to-the-minute Chicago is just getting around to building a passenger subway at the present time. No doubt there was some good reason for this delay, but think what would have been said of poor old "Philly" if it had been a generation behind the times in such a matter! It is not necessary, however, to indulge in odious comparisons. The point is that one could go on down a long list of time-worn criticisms, and demonstrate in similar fashion the distortions and exaggerations still current. Such an analysis would show much the same mixture of good and bad, of the progressive and the conservative, in the Quaker City as can be found in all other large American communities.

What is peculiar in Philadelphia is nothing tangible, but rather a
state of mind. While most cities broadcast their virtues, many Philadelphians seem given to the contemplation of local deficiencies. They focus on their infirmities. Nothing here is bigger and better. The city has long been, for example, one of the two or three largest seaports in the country in the tonnage of its trade, but the average citizen hardly knows that he lives in a port. Nor does the rest of the country; for if Philadelphia doesn't tell the story, who will?

Now the myth of Philadelphia's decline could not have sprung up in a day. As a matter of fact, it goes back more than a century. It will be recalled that the city had led the nation in population down to about 1815, when it was surpassed by New York City. Promptly there appeared, in the former, the prophets of doom. As early as 1821, they informed the city that it had gone to sleep. Unless it was aroused at once, oblivion lay ahead. A local scribe declared in that year:5

The time fast approaches when Philadelphia must wake from the lethargy and slumber into which she has fallen, or she will see herself degraded below her sister cities, of which she formerly took the lead. Mark the difference now—while New York is towering away to greatness, under the auspices of a Clinton, we are yet slumbering in the arms of Morpheus.

Despite such warnings, the value of the port's trade declined during the '20s and '30s, and the notion that the town had lapsed into economic slumber became widespread. Certain specific developments seemed to justify this view. The city failed to make technical adjustments conducive to trade—for example, in relation to the auction system—as effectively or as rapidly as did New York. But on the whole, its trade declined because of obvious limitations in the location of the port. Similar geographical difficulties were encountered in competing with New York for transportation lines to the growing West. In attempting to meet this competition the Quaker City sometimes displayed misplaced energy, but was distinctly energetic for all that.6 The city was largely responsible for constructing the most expensive and most ingenious of all the trans-Appalachian

5 "Civis" in Poulson's Daily Advertiser, Jan. 30, 1821; quoted in Henry T. Reath, "Ebb Tide in Philadelphia, 1815-1830" (typescript, Princeton University, 1942). This able study, remarkable as a senior thesis, was called to my attention by Professor Albion.
6 Ibid., chapters III, IV.
transportation routes—the Pennsylvania system. But geography was on the side of the Erie Canal.

What followed was a remarkable achievement. In the 1830's Philadelphia was indeed threatened with business decline. Like Salem and Charleston, her once lucrative overseas trade was being taken over by rivals. But unlike these ports, the Quaker City made a complete readjustment and recaptured economic prosperity. The very conservatism of her second-generation merchants saved their capital in terms of bank and insurance investments, until it could be diverted into new technological developments. The geographical situation that handicapped overseas trade proved an advantage for the exploitation of coal, iron, and industry. By the Civil War, Philadelphia had become the greatest manufacturing city in America. Even its trade improved after 1840. As a simple measure of this economic readjustment, the population increased between 1800 and 1860, from about 50,000 to nearly 500,000. Amazing phenomenon in a city that slept. What a dream world Philadelphia must have been in those busy years!

Yet the myth of somnolence carried on. It became a fixed idea, and was gradually extended to include cultural as well as economic affairs. No doubt the majority of local people paid little attention to the matter, one way or the other. Most of them were too busy getting ahead to worry about their town's supposed torpidity. But among professional men, and with the more serious-minded members of the wealthy group, the tendency to self-deprecation became almost a vogue.

Henry C. Carey, the political economist, declared about the middle of the nineteenth century that the women of his city were insipid and the men no better:

There is no literary talent among them; they are tradesmen and shopkeepers . . . The Binneys, the Ingersolls, the Duponceaus, the Whartons, the Merediths, the Peterses, the Chapmans have disappeared, and there are none to fill their places. There is no one to take my place at my Sunday evening reunions. We have no historians, no poets, no novelists, no writers, in short, of any great merit in any branch of literature. Philadelphia has gone to the devil.

8 Italics my own.
John Chalmers Da Costa, in quoting this gay effusion, added the significant comment: "There you hear the real, old-time, genuine, true-blood Philadelphian, with several generations of Philadelphia blood in his veins. It is apt to act on us that way. I don't know why, but it does so. I feel that way myself. . . ."

Such statements as that by Carey were not isolated or exceptional. No one has ever made a collection of them, for few historians have followed the development of psychological phenomena like attitudes or states of mind. But many diatribes of this sort could be lifted from newspapers, magazines, and other sources after 1850. Thus a Philadelphian wrote to The Nation in 1885, to inform all and sundry that Pennsylvania—note the inclusion of the whole state—was the only one of the Original Thirteen which had never produced a single great man. The Keystone, it appeared, was without pride and devoid of intellectual ambition.10

Here again, with the cultural as with the economic story, one has a tradition of deprecation; and in this instance, also, it behooves us to check fact against fancy. Conceivably, these critics could have been correct. Such pessimism might have been sound in other declining ports. In the case of Philadelphia, there was just enough truth here to make it misleading.

Relatively speaking, the city was not so important a cultural center after 1815 as it had been before. But it was something else again, to say that for this reason there was no intellectual achievement in "The Red City" during the nineteenth century. Indeed, there were some fields in which, in absolute terms, more could be claimed for the city of 1840 or 1870 than for the eighteenth-century town. Literary and publishing activities afford a fair example. The decline in literary leadership has been exaggerated. A generation after the fatal year of 1815, there were no finer magazines in the country than Graham's and Sartain's. After these had ceased to exist and Harper's and The Atlantic took over, the most widely circulated popular magazines continued to appear in Philadelphia. And while the élite disdained such publications as Godey's, the Post, and the Ladies' Home Journal, these have not been entirely without

10 The Nation, XLI (N. Y., 1885), 484, 485.
cultural significance. Meanwhile, before the Civil War, Poe did much of his best work in the Quaker City; and Walt Whitman was closely associated with it during the generation following that conflict. The literary reputations attained by these two have never been surpassed by any of their countrymen. Their presence alone was an earnest of distinction in the realm of belles lettres.

These are but random observations, but may serve to indicate the danger in sweeping assumptions anent cultural decline. Dr. Da Costa, although admitting that he shared Carey’s pessimism quoted above, was conscious of this danger, and realized that the latter had gone too far. Thus he added significantly, in 1915: “Yet at the very time Carey spoke, Philadelphia boasted Henry C. Lea, the author . . . George H. Boker, the poet and dramatist; Dr. Furness, the eminent Shakespearean scholar; Joseph Leidy, the investigator; Charles J. Stillé, the historian . . . ; S. Weir Mitchell, and Gross himself.”

In a word, Carey—like many a lesser man—simply could not see the leaders of his own period. Perhaps he too had accepted the myth, that no good could come out of the local Nazareth.

Similarly encouraging though frequently forgotten achievements are to be observed in other phases of the Philadelphia story. Consider, for example, the continued significance of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the oldest art school in the land, as well as that of the present Philadelphia Museum. Artists of international reputation, like Eakins, Pennell, and Cassatt have hailed from the city in recent generations. The artistic activity of the present century has been notable—as in the musical renaissance which reached its high points in the Curtis Institute and the Philadelphia Orchestra. One hesitates, as a layman, to pass judgment on latter-day architectural works, but some of these certainly possess distinction. The effective use of classical forms has been appropriate for a city in which so many fine examples of the earlier revival still stand. The Carl Schurz Foundation, in restoring the Old Custom House, has provided us with a modest but rarely beautiful classic interior. In the Girard Trust building, Messrs. McKim, Mead and White seem to have improved upon the Roman original. The great temple of the Philadelphia Museum revives the Greek use of color, and so

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11 Da Costa, op. cit., 311. Samuel Gross was the outstanding American pathologist of his day.
stands in authentic and refreshing contrast to the dead-white mausoleum motive that dominates the national capital. The commanding position of the Museum athwart the Parkway has been made possible by the development of this truly splendid municipal approach to the heart of the city. It is true that the Quaker City has little to boast, for better or for worse, in the way of modernistic experiments. But it is a curious fact that Louis Sullivan was trained here under Furness, before he returned to Chicago and his skyscrapers; and that Frank Lloyd Wright was in turn associated with Sullivan before he embarked upon his own remarkable career. Who knows? We may one day detect a sequence here, and discover that the much-abused works of Furness were the very prototypes of modern forms.

It is passing strange, to mention another non-material phase of the story, how local residents overlook the importance of Philadelphia as a religious center. The presence of the Cardinal indicates its importance to Catholicism. But the outstanding fact is that it has been the historic focus of American Protestantism—of such major denominations as the Presbyterians, the Episcopalian, the Lutherans, and the Friends. It was long the site of the largest Baptist Association. And here Priestley organized what seems to have been the first Unitarian congregation in America. It is true that the city was not always looked upon with favor by the Methodists, whose early leaders approached it from the South and West. Apparently the people did not respond promptly to revivalist appeals, displaying in religion something of the same conservatism that obtained in business. "This is a wicked, horribly wicked city," declared Asbury in his journal, after attempting to hold services in Philadelphia in 1791. Finney, the famous Presbyterian revivalist, shared this impression. He called it "this Anti-Revival city"; and added that it reeked of corruption—holding "all the country, North and South, locked up in a loathsome horrid death." But Asbury later recorded more favorable opinions; and Finney's testimony—while hardly intended as a compliment—indicated the influence of the city among Presbyterians throughout the land.

Last but not least, Philadelphia never lost its importance in scien-

12 Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, editors, Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld (N. Y., 1934), I, 10, 11. This reference was called to my attention by the Rev. Othniel Pendleton.
tific research and technological progress; though it could hardly claim preëminence in this field. The significance of science was partly obscured during the Victorian era, because the word “culture” still had a largely literary connotation. Now that we broaden the use of the term, the cultural meaning of research in the physical sciences, biology, and medicine becomes apparent. And while the local record in these fields was not unique, it was certainly outstanding. The research carried on during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by such institutions as the American Philosophical Society, the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Franklin Institute, and the major medical schools is well known in their respective fields. The Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania shared with that of Harvard, during the 1870’s and 1880’s, the distinction of first introducing modern educational and research procedures in this country. Meantime the city never lost its preëminence in medical publishing. Not only have such firms as Lea and Febiger and Saunders maintained their position, but many of the major medical and biological periodicals are issued in the city. The Wistar Institute alone publishes eight journals in these fields. Nor should one forget the significance of the pioneer higher school of business, the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, as one of the first American centers of research in the social sciences. In a word, the view that the city experienced a major cultural decline after 1815 is as unsound as the similar perspective on its economic development.

It may be added that other parts of Pennsylvania cherished their own inferiority complexes, or had these thrust upon them. Notable was the case of the German areas in the eastern and southern counties. The descendants of Palatine settlers were frequently ignored or disdained by their English-speaking neighbors, who considered them fit subjects for condescension or ridicule. Most Americans will laugh at such “Dutch” provincialisms as “Papa is all,” without realizing that these people are worthy of the most serious

\[\text{13 It is true that one can see early evidence of the broadening of this concept, in the popular attention which applied science was already receiving in the 1830's and thereafter. But it is fair to say that the literary connotation was still dominant in that period.}\]

consideration. Here again was the same contrast between popular impressions and reality.

Actually, the old German element had made remarkable contributions to the United States in general and to their own state in particular. Always among the best farmers in a nation of farmers, they had also displayed mechanical ingenuity and a bent for science. They had provided, for example, three devices which had become the very symbols of the winning of the West—the log cabin, the covered wagon, and the so-called Kentucky rifle. The most important names in Philadelphia medicine at mid-century, when the city was the chief medical center of the country, were Pennsylvania German—Gross, Gerhardt, Pepper, and Leidy. Nor were these folk mere materialists. In certain folk arts and in music, they were long superior to their English-speaking compatriots. No group of Americans developed a more significant religious life; and they alone of American Protestants had early attempted an ecumenical movement. Yet these were the people viewed as the "dumb Dutch," and so denied a place in the cultural annals of their country.

The traditions of the adjacent states of Delaware and New Jersey, meanwhile, have hardly been happier than those of Pennsylvania. Both have their memories of colonial and Revolutionary achievements, but no great pride in the nineteenth century. Delaware, as the last state to abolish slavery, did not quite fit into Northern patterns, and at the same time it was certainly not a part of the Old South. Balanced uncertainly between the two sections, it did not fully share in either position. Among Americans, impressed by size as such, its diminutive territory was also against it. It was hard to be outstanding on such a small scale.

New Jersey negativism, or whatever one wishes to call it, appeared as early as the colonial era. Even at that time, some of its people felt a lack of dignity or character in their Province. Philip Fithian expressed this clearly when he observed in his journal in 1775:

I am here [in Pennsylvania] often much mortified with Observations upon People who have settled here from our Province—Generally they are upon the lowest Parts of Fortune's Wheel . . . their Character is Mean Dishonest & Irreligious! . . . Sometimes, on these Accounts, I have had thoughts of naming myself from a more Dignified Colony.

From that day to this, New Jersey communities, despite wealth and population, have displayed little consciousness of a great sectional or national role. Overshadowed by New York at one end of the state, and by Philadelphia at the other, they have had to make the best of geographical obscurity. No oracle ever rose in the United States Senate to announce: "New Jersey, there she stands!" Instead, they composed mildly ribald songs about "Over on the Jersey Side."

Enough has been said to suggest, first, that there is no common historical tradition in the Middle Atlantic region; and, second, that such traditions as exist in special areas—in New Jersey, Delaware, Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania-German land—have often been those of inferiority and deprecation. It is also clear that these traditions are so many myths which either exaggerate partial truths or fly in the face of truth altogether. Two questions therefore arise: Why is there no common tradition in the Middle Atlantic states; and why have these particular local myths arisen therein? The two are interrelated. If there were a common sectional tradition, it would obscure or submerge local misgivings; on the other hand, a more buoyant spirit in particular areas might contribute ultimately to an over-all enthusiasm.

There is no one answer to either query. So far as the lack of a Middle-States tradition is concerned, it may be that these states do not constitute a natural geographical region in the sense that New England does. But neither does the South or the Middle West. Indeed these latter areas have less of a claim as cartographical entities than have the valleys of the Hudson, Delaware, and Susquehanna lying parallel between the mountains and the sea.

More than topography and climate are involved in sectional consciousness. It was presumably the recent date of settlement, the memory of pioneering, which provided the lowest common denominator of Western feeling. In the South an attitude toward the race problem, and the memory of Civil War and Reconstruction alignments, plainly activate sectional feeling. The Middle States lack such historical stimuli. Original settlement was remote, and frontier days seem more of a legend than a reality. For a time, the Civil War

gave these commonwealths a sense of kinship with the entire North. Pennsylvanians found that they, as well as those "down East," were all Yankees in '65—somewhat as Southerners found that they too were Yankees in 1918. But by the latter date, the North had largely forgotten the War between the States, and just to that extent there ceased to be any North as such. Once again there was a New England and a Middle West, and a region left over, in between.

There were, in addition, other factors which might have contributed to sectional consciousness. A region in which one people developed a common way of life, adapting a single cultural heritage to a common geographical setting, was likely to evolve a sense of cultural kinship. This was the strength of New England, where for two centuries the great majority of the people were not only English, but English Puritans. So well established was this cultural solidarity by 1850, when non-English elements began pouring in, that even now it survives in considerable degree. Pennsylvania, the original melting pot, presented the reverse picture. Swedish, Dutch, Scots-Irish, Irish, Welsh, and German elements, as well as the English, were all present. And the latter were divided between the Anglicans, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, and the Quakers. Analogous religious divisions obtained among the Germans, who by 1775 made up about one third of the total population. Moreover, their presence meant that the state was actually bilingual to an extent not true of any other of the Original Thirteen.

The melting pot had its advantages. The provincial culture was the richer for these diverse elements; and the necessary give-and-take between them promoted the toleration established by Quaker founders. But the traditions of Philadelphia Quakers were one thing and those of Presbyterians in the West another. Even more distinct was the cleavage between the English and German populations—one which survives in some measure at the present time. We have today, in Pennsylvania, historical societies devoted chiefly to the German tradition, and others which in practice—if not in principle—largely limit themselves to the history of the English-speaking peoples.

New York had been divided, in a different way, between the early Dutch in the Hudson Valley, New Englanders up-state, and a polyglot metropolis. Here again the melting pot provided a stimulat-
ing environment; but it was hard to fit each part of the state, particularly the great emporium, into any tradition other than its own. And after 1860, the population of the New York City area became so vast and so varied that it was difficult to discern any unity in local feeling. The living traditions in certain parts of town were Irish, or German, or Yiddish, or Italian, but hardly Middle Atlantic or even New Yorkish.

There is yet another possible explanation of the lack of a Middle-States consciousness. As both the New York City and Philadelphia areas were near the center of the original country, and have long included the largest concentrations of population and wealth, their people may have felt that here was the heart of the nation. And there could be nothing provincial about this sort of heart-land—not even a provincial tradition.

To state it in another way, a region which feels itself to be the center of things develops little solidarity, because it is not on the defensive. And lacking solidarity, it lacks strong regional consciousness. (Analogous behavior among groups within any population is obvious—a majority element is apt to be less self-conscious and well organized than are strong minorities.) To put this in historical terms, it will be recalled that each of the sections adjoining the Middle Atlantic states has, at one time or another, found itself on the defensive against the national régime, and in each case that experience led to strong regional feeling. Witness New England in 1814, the South in 1860, and the Middle West after 1873. But the Middle Atlantic area was never "on the outs," never on the defensive, and so evolved no feeling other than an all-inclusive nationalism.

Perhaps this explains why the best-known historians of New York and Pennsylvania wrote, with rare exceptions, primarily of the nation as a whole. On the other hand, most historians of the South and West have limited themselves to just that type of study; that is, to state or sectional histories for the national period. This is not intended as a criticism, but simply as a statement of fact. Only in

18 Notably Wilson, McMaster, Oberholtzer, Thorpe, Beard. See Eric Goldman, "Middle States Regionalism and American Historiography," in Historiography and Urbanization, edited by the same author (Baltimore, 1941), 211ff.

19 Excluding textbooks. Examples have been Turner, Herbert Bancroft, Dodd, Phillips, W. K. Boyd, Ramsdell, etc. This is also true of those historians who are now active. Rhodes was an exception a half century ago, Hockett at present.
New England, as a rule, have scholars prepared both regional and national interpretations.

So much for the factors which inhibited the development of a sectional tradition in the Middle States as a whole. The lack of local feeling in particular parts thereof has its own explanations. Most interesting were the negative influences which affected Philadelphia. It will be recalled that the city was for a half century, after about 1760, the national metropolis. As early as that date, it was the second most important English city and a world center of the Enlightenment.20 Between 1790 and 1800, it became at one and the same time the economic, the political, and the cultural capital of the new nation. No other city in the United States has ever shared this distinction.

Then it was surpassed in population and wealth by New York, replaced as the political capital by Washington, and as the chief literary center by Boston. Influential groups in a city are sensitive to such changes in relative position, whether they admit it or not. To have lost primary status in any one field would have been bad enough; to lose economic, political, and literary preeminence all at one time was devastating.

Finally, as if "to rub it in," the Quaker City was particularly overshadowed by New York because of proximity. Nowhere else in the Western World are two such great cities so close together, and the lesser inevitably suffers by contrast. This is partly because of direct competition, especially in amusements and entertainment facilities. No matter what opportunities are afforded in the smaller city, travelers will pass them by for the greater attractions only ninety miles away. There are thousands of Southerners who visit New York City several times a year to shop and "take in the shows," who have never even seen Philadelphia except from their Pullman windows. True, many citizens of the latter have no desire to compete with New York's night life, as symbolized in the almost pathetic vulgarity of Broadway, and are content with a limited number of stores and theaters—so long as these afford the same wares as those of Manhattan, and are more conveniently reached in the bargain. But there is no question that, from the popular point of view, the

20 Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh, Rebels and Gentlemen (N. Y., 1942), passim.
commonplace that Philadelphia is "slow" is largely due to the limited range of commercialized amusements. All this would have been otherwise had the city been situated, let us say, on the Gulf or on the Pacific coast. It would then automatically have become the great provincial center of entertainment, as well as of all other concerns. As it is, the city often is not even mentioned in representative lists of major communities, since New York is always named and this serves well enough for the Middle Atlantic area. In consequence, cities of only about a quarter of the size of Philadelphia, like New Orleans and San Francisco, stand out more conspicuously on the map of the nation.

Someone should make a study of the psychological consequences within a city when it is passed by its rivals. These may even have national implications. Perhaps the fact that eighteenth-century Boston "lost out" to both New York and Philadelphia in trade and population, had something to do with the revolutionary temper evident in that town by 1765. Was it a mere coincidence, to cite another example, that nineteenth-century Charleston, falling rapidly behind the Northern ports, initiated every radical political move in the entire South from 1830 to 1860?

Philadelphians, suffering a similar experience, did not become revolutionary. Rather they withdrew into their social shells, looking back to their great age, but inclined by this very fact to be overcritical of the present. Hence that strange mixture of complacency and misgiving—complacency about the past and therefore about the real or inner superiority of Philadelphia, misgivings about the transitory present. Perhaps the conservatism that was apparent in both business and professional circles by 1800 explains why this reaction, rather than a radical one, actually occurred. More significant, in all probability, was the economic prosperity which ensued after 1830. One might worry about the material superiority of New York City; but at the same time, rapidly growing industrial wealth encouraged traditional conservatism. Philadelphians might therefore be irritated and critical, but were rarely revolutionary.

Other explanations of the Philadelphia outlook have been suggested. Some years ago, for example, Mrs. Pennell ascribed it to Quaker modesty. Certainly Quakers have exhibited a dignified
reserve rather than a booster spirit, and their influence was potent
during the formative periods. But if the Friends have not been given
to self-advertising, neither have they been inclined to be too critical
of their city. They seem to have avoided alike the extremes of
municipal promotion and of municipal pessimism.

It has been held, again, that a city drawing its sustenance from
foreign commerce is more likely to cultivate the arts than is one sup-
ported by industry. The wide horizons of overseas trade are stimu-
lating and romantic; while industry is said to involve only money-
making, a limited outlook, and grime. The validity of the theory,
however, must be checked by comparative observations. One can
think of instances that seem to support it, but other cases are less
convincing. Chicago reared a cultural center on the basis of the
stockyards, manufacturing, and a predominantly domestic trade.
Conversely, New Orleans—with its long, successful history as a sea-
port—produced men of distinction, but can hardly be said to have
achieved first rank as a literary or artistic capital. In any case, the
application of this hypothesis to Philadelphia assumes that there was
an absolute literary decline therein, and it has already been remarked
that this is open to question.

While one is on this theme of literary history, however, it may be
observed that the lack of an enthusiastic tradition in Philadelphia is
related, both as cause and effect, to the character of local letters.
Once a sense of local decline had been established, this in itself may
have discouraged actual accomplishments within certain limits.
Those who were convinced that the city was incapable of greatness,
were not likely to recognize local talent. Indeed, the most striking
contrast in the literary atmosphere of Boston and that of Phila-
delphia during the mid-century decades was in the public apprecia-
tion extended to men of letters in the former, and the apparent lack
of such appreciation in the latter. Bird, for example, received little
recognition in Philadelphia, despite the great success of his plays
throughout the country. The Gladiator was played one thousand
times during the author's life, which seems to have been a unique
record up to that period. Boker, likewise, was not embarrassed by
local plaudits. When finally appointed to a diplomatic post, he was
tendered a dinner; whereupon Thomas Bailey Aldrich wrote that he
was glad to see Philadelphia at last treating one of her own literary leaders as though he came from some other locality!  

Had there been a strong sense of local pride, moreover, novelists and playwrights would have employed the city more frequently as background, and this in turn would have contributed to the development of a strong provincial—or metropolitan—consciousness. As it is, even local authors went elsewhere for their settings, much as did local historians. Alexander Woollcott, Eric Knight, and Clifford Odets are recent examples. Others, it has been observed, adopted a condescending attitude, or described the town in terms so general that they could have been applied to almost any large community. "The Philadelphia Story" might just as well have been located in Long Island.

So much for the complex influences which have entered into the state of mind of this one large city. No doubt the analysis has been over-simplified, but it must serve for the present. The explanation of the traditions, or lack of traditions, peculiar to other areas in the Middle States—New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania-German land—has already been implied. New Jersey was overshadowed by the adjacent states. Delaware was inhibited by its very size. And the German counties were disdained because of the partial survival there of a non-English culture. The dominant English-speaking population could never quite understand folk who, in addition to not speaking God's language when they landed, persisted in that enormity through the centuries. Strange ways were by definition outlandish ways. Hence the "Dutch" were viewed at best as a quaint and at worst as a stubborn and inferior people.

Keeping in mind all the factors noted, one can begin to understand why there has been no common historical feeling in the Middle Atlantic states, and why the traditions which did develop have in certain cases been of a negative character. It is the present thesis that a vigorous common tradition is needed. New York City might conceivably do without it, might transcend everything provincial as do London and Paris. But the whole Middle area is too large to bask in this metropolitan exclusiveness. It must, as already implied,

21 A. H. Quinn, *A History of the American Drama From the Beginning to the Civil War* (New York, 1923), 363.
either remain the forgotten region or encourage a regionalism of its own.

Practical men who scoff at such intangibles may again be reminded that these have the most tangible consequences. Our national tradition is also of the stuff that dreams are made of, but is a real force in the present world for all that. And so, on a more modest scale, are the traditions of the South and of New England potent within their own borders. It will be more difficult for political leaders in the Middle States to plan the post-war economy of their region than it will be for a corresponding group to do the same thing "down East." For the latter are more conscious of common interests. The governors of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware do not meet in conference as do those of New England.

There are sentimental reasons, as well as practical, for encouraging a Middle Atlantic tradition. The spectacle of states or sections competing with one another for historical distinction is a bit absurd; but Middle States folk might as well face the fact that as long as this goes on, those who do not assert themselves will see their just claims go by default. Kentucky claimed the Lancaster County rifle, the Conestoga wagon is now ascribed to the Great Plains, and both Virginia and Massachusetts appropriated the Pennsylvania log cabin. As soon as this became a cherished symbol of democracy, it seems to have been assumed in each of those states that it could not conceivably have originated elsewhere. An able scholar in New England recently announced that the great role in the Revolution had been played by Massachusetts, along with Virginia. When I wrote to remark that a few things had also occurred in Pennsylvania, he replied quite frankly that this was "the line" one had to give a Bay State audience. More serious than cases of this sort is the merely negative fact that if Middle States people do not hear their own story, their ears will automatically be filled with the epics of other regions—with consequences which are obvious. It is well to know the story of the Mayflower, but why not also recall the ships that first sailed the Delaware?

Granting that it would be desirable to promote a pride in the Middle Atlantic states and that historical facts justify this, the same means can be employed as have always been used in other areas.

The first move is to rescue the sub-regions from their doldrums. New Jersey need not concentrate on its numerical inferiority to New York. If size is so important, emphasize rather the fact that the Newark retail trade zone, entirely outside of New York, has a larger population than the corresponding zones of Detroit, of St. Louis, or of Los Angeles—indeed, of any zone in the West except Chicago. Recall also the story of cultural achievements, as in the development of Princeton as a great intellectual center. In Pennsylvania, we should discourage all ridicule or condescension concerning the "Dutch." Actual shortcomings should be faced, but this need not conceal the superior achievements of those of German descent in this Commonwealth. And Philadelphia must rise above its strange combination of complacency and self-criticism. Its actual record, admitting serious blemishes, has been a remarkable one—since 1815 as well as before. This can be stated in dignified and authentic terms, without recourse to booster methods.

Insofar as Philadelphia suffers from propinquity to New York City, the remedy is the same as that prescribed for New Jersey. View the record of the Quaker City in absolute terms, and not merely in relation to the one place in this part of the country which surpasses it. Admitting the decline of overseas trade after 1815, recall also its recovery later in the century. Note the economic triumph of a town which, when threatened with commercial decadence, adjusted itself so successfully that it became the "workshop of the nation." Remember that it remains, despite the recent rise of Detroit, of Los Angeles, and of such boom towns as Washington, the third largest city in the United States.

The same readjustment is indicated in relation to cultural and religious matters. The fact that Philadelphia was surpassed by Boston in literary activity after 1850, and by New York City after the Civil War, is no reason for forgetting the continued importance of the former as a literary and publication center. Granting that the city has maintained no artistic colonies comparable to those in New York, and that both public authority and private wealth have frequently failed to support local leaders and local institutions, observe,

23 Figures for retail trade zones are frequently more significant than those given for cities in the census, since the latter are determined by arbitrary political lines. See A.B.C. [Audit Bureau of Circulations, Chicago], Blue Book: Period Ending Sept. 30, 1940.
as noted above, that the record is still creditable in many ways. In the arts, the sciences, and in all other cultural concerns, the city was not only the first major center, but remains today a vital part in the nexus of the nation's intellectual activities.

Lest such observations seem naive or unduly provincial, note that I am not stressing the mere "firsts" that are so plentiful hereabouts unless they possessed real significance. Nor is there any desire to overlook the town's shortcomings, which are real and at times inexcusable. I am only urging, in the name of a more balanced outlook, that Philadelphians recall their healthy achievements as well as their infirmities. A hypochondriac may suffer from real ills, but should at least be shocked out of those which are imaginary.

There are other fronts on which the battle for better local and for a better regional tradition may be waged. Every article, or play or novel that presents a Middle States city seriously and fairly—even though unfavorably—represents a gain on the literary front. Every one which treats these cities flippantly, or with exaggerated condemnation, is a loss. The Atwater Kent Museum recently exhibited some twenty novels relating largely to Philadelphia which had appeared since about 1900. A few of these fit into the first category mentioned, though others display only the suburban perspective. We need an outstanding novel whose setting is the city proper, somewhere in the vast reaches between Germantown and League Island, or between Delaware Avenue and Tinicum Road. The metropolis is ready to sit before a great artist.

The same observations hold for the states. Any effective and authentic tale of Pennsylvania or New Jersey should be welcomed. The writings of Elsie Singmaster and of Cornelius Weygandt on the German areas, arouse an appreciation of the land and the people. The WPA publications may serve a similar purpose in less literary form. Travel also has its place in normal times. We do not advertise the Keystone State extensively as a summer resort; yet few parts of the country reveal greater scenic beauty. It is not a matter of grandeur, but of fine farms and lovely valleys. And if one must have the spectacular, he may find it in the historic associations of some of these natural settings. Stand on Seminary Ridge at Gettysburg, and look westward over the rich lands to the long line of the Blue Ridge.
Across this hazy barrier once flowed the stream of colonial settlement—down into the great Valley at Chambersburg and from there southward to Hagerstown and the Shenandoah. Back up the same Valley, many years later, came the armies of the Confederacy. There were several invasions, during which Chambersburg was burned and Southern cavalry reached as far as Harrisburg. Finally, with Lee at their head, the grey forces recrossed the Ridge and descended on Gettysburg. Here, by the old Lutheran Seminary, surged the high tide of the Confederacy—and the tide was turned. Here in Pennsylvania!

Well, this tale would take a Benét for the telling, but the point is clear enough. There is so much that is interesting, and of which one may be justly proud, in the heritage of this Middle region. I am not sure but what even seemingly trivial things might make for some recognition of this. Why, for example, have most American popular songs celebrated chiefly the Southland and occasionally the West? Perhaps we owe it to the minstrel tradition and to a certain Pennsylvanian named Foster; but the results are pretty terrible at times. Despite a genuine affection for that state, I am surfeited with “Carolina moons” and “Carolina in the morning.” Yet it is almost impossible to escape this lyric word in the high-pressure productions of Tin Pan Alley. A recent effusion assures us that with:

"Dinner in the dinah,  
Nothing could be finah  
Than to have your ham and eggs  
In Carolina!"

Now, as a matter of fact, those particular eggs probably came on board in New York, and in any case would have tasted just as well in passing through Newark or New Brunswick. Even allowing for poetic license, why leave the impression that there is something peculiarly romantic in all things south of the Mason and Dixon line? Or that the banks of the Wabash are any more enchanting than those of the Susquehanna above Harrisburg? Surely someone wants to be “carried back to old New Jersey.” Let us impound the “Are-you-from-Dixie?” motive for the duration; and if there must be swing bands, restrict them to the “Pennsylvania Polka” and “The Jersey Bounce!”
The proper care of historic shrines is a standard procedure; and so too—though it has less popular appeal—is the preservation of historical records and the preparation of authentic histories based thereon. Much, of course, has been or is about to be done in this direction in the Middle States. The recently organized Independence Hall Association, for example, has been able to insure preliminary steps necessary to the proper treatment of the site of this greatest of national shrines. No comprehensive history of Pennsylvania has been prepared; but one has been published in New York, and a group of Princeton historians has recently issued several excellent volumes in a cooperative study of New Jersey. Specialized investigations have also been made of New York City; as in Albion's notable writings on the evolution of the great port.

There have been encouraging signs, meanwhile, of quickening historical activity in the Keystone State. First, there have been able studies of particular sub-regions, such as that on Western Pennsylvania by Solon and Elizabeth Buck, and those of a number of scholars on the German area. Special phases of the Philadelphia story are beginning to receive the skilled attention they deserve, as in Marion Brewington's work on the port, and in Arthur H. Quinn's studies of the stage. Until many such works are available, it may not be feasible for any one person to attempt a general history of the city. But once the war is over, it might be possible to plan a cooperative history of Philadelphia—or of New York City, for that matter—which would be most enlightening. This might not reach the public directly, but could be popularized in one way or another. Novelists could use such a work right now, if it were only available.

Also encouraging has been the activity of local historical societies and of the State Historical Commission in Pennsylvania. The latter has received substantial support, of recent years, from the authorities at Harrisburg, and has taken the lead in planning a state history of the present war. It provided study materials to some eight hundred groups of the Pennsylvania Federation of Women's Clubs, when that organization decided to center its 1942-1943 program on the study of state history. The Historical Commission is also supporting the organization of history clubs in the high schools in order to promote an interest in the story of local areas or of the state as a whole. A number of the local historical societies, such as that of
Berks County, are now better housed and more energetic than ever before. Several of the local historical museums, such as that opened last year at Lansing Valley, and the Atwater Kent Museum in Philadelphia, have built up remarkable collections that preserve the very life of the past, rather than mere curiosities or episodes.

A current example of renewed interest in the proper preservation and use of historical materials is to be observed in the recent activities of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The interior of its building has been refinished, modern lighting and shelving systems installed, and more effective arrangements made for the display of materials in the museum and art gallery. At the same time, plans are under way for improving the catalogues of books, manuscripts, and museum objects. These procedures have been followed with a view to making the rich collections of the Society both more attractive and more accessible to the public.

Meanwhile an extended publication program is under way. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania is preparing a cumulative index to *The Pennsylvania Magazine*, which is probably the oldest general historical journal in the country. The Pennsylvania Historical Association and the older societies, such as those devoted to the German tradition, are active in publication. The Association will soon bring out the first comprehensive bibliography of Pennsylvania history, with the aid of the State Historical Commission, and continues to issue the journal entitled *Pennsylvania History*.

A distinctly cooperative spirit has been manifested in many of these ventures. Various societies in Philadelphia have backed the successful activities of the Independence Hall Association. A collection of popular essays on state history, *Pennsylvania Cavalcade*, was prepared as a Federal Writers Project, was co-sponsored by the state Federation of Historical Societies, and was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. The latter has also been active in bringing out its promising series of *Pennsylvania Lives*.

All these things help, and give one a cumulative impression of a veritable renaissance of interest in Pennsylvania history. While this has been stimulated in some measure by federal projects common to the entire country, it has been primarily a state movement. One might even claim a regional renaissance, in view of similar developments in New York and in New Jersey. Notable in this connection
has been the activity of the history departments of the universities in these states and in Pennsylvania, in encouraging special studies in the development of the region. Such scholarly productions, as noted before, may not reach the public directly; but their contents percolate gradually into textbooks, fiction, and other forms that eventually make a popular appeal.

The fact remains that, in the long run, the most effective way to implant a tradition in a people is to give it directly to their children. Remember that one means here a true tradition. Let the pupils of both public and parochial schools be given a course in the history of the state in which they dwell. Let it be as good as the cooperation of scholars, administrators, and teachers can make it! It need not distort and it need not be effusive; indeed, these qualities should be consciously guarded against. But it should appeal to reason and, yes, to the emotions, as well as to the memory.

One must face here the danger that a new course in state history, introduced suddenly, would fall into the hands of teachers who were either indifferent to or unfamiliar with the story. And a course badly taught would be worse than no course at all, since it might arouse distaste for the theme. State history is somewhat more difficult to organize than is national, since less work—as in the preparation of good texts—has been done in the former field. At first glance, moreover, the relatively provincial story may appear less interesting than the national. Properly presented, however, there would seem to be no inherent reason why the history of states cannot be made as attractive as other courses. It is encouraging, in this connection, to learn that the State Department of Education at Harrisburg is considering a requirement in state history of those applying for a teacher's certificate.

It will hardly be feasible to request a course in the history of the Middle Atlantic region. There is at present scarcely any literature on which to base it, unless the whole story were worked up for this purpose. But there may be opportunities for calling attention to the significance of the section in teaching the history and geography of any one of the Middle States, or in considering the history and geography of the country as a whole.

Nor should we forget that music, art, and literature appeal to
children as well as to grown-ups. I recall a popular song that stirred elementary school assemblies many years ago—it began with the line: "I saw Washington cross the Delaware." If grade schools hereabouts still have their children read from the New England poets, so much the better. Longfellow and Whittier—I still recall some of their lines with affection, though why their exploitation for grammatical instruction did not ruin them for a small boy is something of a mystery. Gentle Evangeline and the forest primeval! But these writings may well be supplemented by others relating to the home-towns or the home-states of the children. Moore wrote about the Schuylkill, Poe about the Wissahickon, and Whitman about Brooklyn. There are good novels and at least one fine epic that "bring in" Gettysburg. The bibliography mentioned above will include a section on fiction that ought to be helpful in this connection. Teachers of English, as well as those devoted to geography and history, may be of real service.

It may be held sincerely, and no doubt vehemently, that this is no time for encouraging provincial feeling, that in the present crisis we should all think only of being Americans. This is no doubt true in large measure, but it is partly for that reason that I would urge this renaissance in local and sectional pride. National traditions are sometimes most effectively based on provincial traditions, paradoxical as that may sound. Virginians have been noted for pride in their state; they have been just as famous for their services to the country. The boy or girl who is a good Pennsylvanian will be a better American for that very reason.

Richard H. Shryock