
Many of the great museums of this country are exhibiting in their bicentennial years materials of great historic importance relating to the American Revolutionary War period. Many of the items are borrowed from various sources—institutional and private. I think it would be fair to say that such exhibitions could not be mounted were it not for the help received from historical societies, particularly those stretching along the Atlantic seaboard. Perhaps this participation will lead to an increasing awareness of the part such societies have played in collecting, preserving, and making available the records of our past.

No other society has been more active in these endeavours than The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. In this slim and most attractive volume Nicholas B. Wainwright, Director Emeritus, reviews the solid collecting achievements of the Society since its founding in 1824. The patient work of Wainwright, Williams, Boyd and a long line of predecessors is revealed here. If they are to be judged by their works, then indeed they were a remarkable assemblage of talents. In their time they amassed outstanding collections of books, manuscripts, maps, portraits, prints and other objects relating to Pennsylvania and its surrounding areas. So important are these holdings that any scholar writing about the Middle Colonies must use the Society’s collections.

And what collections they are! Here you have described a sampling of them: the Penn family papers; the unsurpassed collection of books and newspapers printed by Benjamin Franklin as well as over a thousand letters and documents written or received by him; and superb holdings of George Washington manuscripts, books, and furniture, in addition to the great William S. Baker collection of Washingtoniana: “430 handsomely bound volumes relating to Washington, 1,092 engraved portraits, and 1,146 medals and coins” (p. 30).

It speaks well for the Society that so many collectors placed their acquisitions there; others acquired new materials following a definite pattern with the Society always in mind as the ultimate depository. To name only a few such collections would be like reciting a well-known litany to scholars: the Fahnstock gift of pamphlets, the Brinley books, the Charlemagne Tower collection of colonial laws, and the distinguished autograph collections of such figures as the Rev. William B. Sprague,
Ferdinand J. Dreer, and Simon Gratz. Other important papers of the chief actors in Pennsylvania’s history are regularly being acquired as Mr. Wainwright’s chronological treatment clearly shows: from the colonial period deep into the twentieth century is the Society’s open-ended province.

Simply to collect and preserve is not enough as The Historical Society of Pennsylvania well knows. Through the years the Society has been one of the leaders in making its resources available to readers everywhere, either in its rooms or through the medium of microfilm or letter press. A prime example is the Society’s quarterly, The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography now in its one hundredth year of uninterrupted publication. All students of history are grateful to the Society for its magnificent contributions and wish it well in the years ahead.

Massachusetts Historical Society

Stephen T. Riley


John Wilkes continues to fascinate historians, and studies of his curious career appear at regular, almost predictable, intervals. It is easy to see why, for his was a career that can be read, and written about, at many levels: as wit and *bon vivant*, as rake and rogue; as popular hero against what seemed royal tyranny, champion of Civil Liberty and of Freedom of the Press; as Lord Mayor of London; as a happy father, solicitous over his daughter’s welfare, who yet engaged—and seemed deliberately to have cultivated—the reputation of being the wildest of libertines; and—in the end, ironically—as defender of the Establishment against the mob in the Gordon Riots. In his day, profligacy was no bar to social acceptability, and the profligate man could also be the would-be historian, the friend of Garrick and of Joshua Reynolds, and himself the author of a study of—appropriately enough?—Catullus. It is at least a career of perennial interest, rich in incident, anecdote, and pungent phrase, and any book on him can hardly fail to be readable.

Audrey Williamson’s certainly is so. She tells the story well, and especially so in recounting his sexual exploits and adventures. Three of the thirteen chapters are devoted to the Monks of Medmenham—who are given a role in history to which they seem totally unentitled—the *Essay on Women*, and his Italian amours with the apparently captivating if very simple Gertrude Corradini. None of these episodes, designed primarily to titillate, takes us far toward an understanding of Wilkes’ role in history or of his role as a social and political reformer, if such he ever really was.

Yet was not the size of his popular following due less to his ambitious role as liberal crusader than to his public réclame as man of scandal? His
followers were not the "mob" or "the crowd" but the lower-middle class, the middle rank of merchants and craftsmen and traders. They liked to identify, as Mrs. Williamson recognises, with the independent man, the man above, beyond, or indifferent to party, "the man standing single," to use Pitt's phrase. They identified in particular with the man deemed incorruptible: Pitt, Wilkes, Beckford and, later, Cobbett. They certainly identified with Wilkes, and saw in him the advocate of a widened franchise and a more balanced social order. They could easily get out of hand—in Boston in 1765, in London in 1780. And for Wilkes' part it was not difficult for him to respond, for only two generations earlier his own family was working class, and Cockney into the bargain. There was the makings of an important alliance here. But it did not develop far.

Much of this in her concluding chapter, much the most perceptive in the book, Mrs. Williamson recognises. What one is led, however, to wonder is whether his cause was ever much more than himself? Did he really feel genuinely deeply about freedom of speech, was the crowd's interest in him ever much more than a response to the clown and the cabotin in him? They responded to the showman and the rebel as they always do, to the man who, summoned before Secretary of State Lord Halifax after the publication of No 45 of the North Briton, refused to attend on the grounds that he had not had the honour of an introduction to the noble lord. When a platoon of foot guards appeared to enforce the summons, he insisted that a sedan chair be brought for him, to carry him the four doors' distance between his residence and that of the Secretary of State. For crowds and coffeehouse political gossip this was good stuff. Wilkes lacked Fox's flair, his oratorical brilliance, his wide-ranging erudition. Yet both had in them that streak of the gamester that made them for so long adored, and at intervals reviled, and which in the end spelled that lack of gravitas that denied to each of them real capacity for leadership. It also explains perhaps why they never really got on well with each other. They were much too alike.

This biography concentrates on the familiar, and the familiarly exotic (or erotic) element in the tale. It is given away by its curious and mixed bibliography, in which books on Bernard Shaw, Tom Paine, and Gilbert and Sullivan occur alongside more appropriate studies. At intervals the author is diverted into sequences only marginally relevant to Wilkes—notably where the Satanic Monks are concerned, or later in the references to Burgoyne in the chapter on the American Revolution. This is not a work of research, and is primarily designed for the general, not the specialist, reader. In view, however, of the number of studies of the man, and aware of the temptations to razzamatazz to which any biographer of Wilkes must inevitably be tempted, surely the central fact for any student who tackles Wilkes now is to face up to Burke's indictment of him. The Rockinghams, said Burke, "had not the least intention of taking up that gentleman's cause: he is not ours, and if he were, is little to be trusted:
he is a lively agreeable man but of no prudence and no principle.” He was, as Mrs. Williamson admits, a patriot by accident, prisoner rather than leader of a cause he only dimly perceived.

She fails in particular to analyze in any depth his role, and the reason for it, in the American world of 1776. Of course he was, as victim of parliamentary and royal displeasure, and as hero of the General Warrants affair, ready for more colonial acclaim. But when the chips were down in London in the Gordon Riots, he came out sharply as a Man of Property. Moreover, her chapter on the American Revolution is altogether too cursory; her chronological sequence here is confused; she relies on cautious and old views on blaming Whitehall, and especially Germain, for the failure of the Saratoga campaign. While the relationship between all the principal figures on both sides of the water was confused in 1776-77, it was geography not personality failures that lost this round, and no one can now be dogmatic about where the responsibility lies.

There are more perceptive studies of Wilkes than this, notably Raymond Postgate’s That Devil Wilkes (revised edition 1956). George Rudé has tried to go much more deeply into the difficult world of popular protest and the nature of radical ferment. But if what the reader is after is a piece of escapist reading, a good and well-told yarn that does not ask the difficult questions, Miss Williamson will provide it for him.

Institute of United States Studies, London

ESMOND WRIGHT


Seymour Stanton Block’s book is clearly a labor of love. Having long ago fallen under Franklin’s spell, he wants to communicate his own delight to others, especially his delight in Franklin’s humor, a subject which he claims somewhat dubiously has been short-changed by previous writers. True, none of his predecessors quotes or paraphrases such extensive slices of Franklin’s early journalistic oeuvre or recounts so many anecdotes, but this does not in itself guarantee a greater appreciation or new insights. For one thing, humor is a perishable commodity and most modern readers will not find Franklin’s literary personae infinitely amusing—certainly not amusing enough to justify eight chapters. For another, Block has made no attempt to put Franklin into the journalistic context of his day, to relate his humor to that of his American and English contemporaries.

Indeed this total lack of perspective is the book’s chief weakness. Block has mastered a prodigious amount of Frankliniana, but presents it in an artless and almost indigestible form, and without references. His hero is one-dimensional, without flaws, the fountainhead of wit and wisdom.
There is only the most perfunctory comment on the historical events in which Franklin participated or the circle of friends and family that were such an important part of his life. Even in the matter of science, where one would expect Block as a chemist to have something original to say, he offers a minimum of comment and a maximum of quotation. As to the Boston inoculation (not vaccination) controversy of 1721, he is just plain muddled.

There is a further question raised by a book of this sort. Block cannot resist adding "women" to his wit and wisdom, not simply for reasons of euphony but because Franklin appears to "the 20th century public as a sex symbol," a rather odd way to describe it. He offers due acknowledgment to Claude-Anne Lopez for his extensive use of her book, Mon Cher Papa: Franklin and the Ladies of Paris, but does this authorize him or any writer, for that matter, to derive entire chapters from the work of another author?

Bethany, Conn.

Eugenia W. Herbert

(Rockaway, N. J.: American Faculty Press, 1975. xvii, 332 p. Illustrations, bibliography, index. $16.95.)

Thomas McKeon was a giant in an age of giants. So concludes John M. Coleman who seeks to give McKeon his rightful place in the historical limelight in this study of McKeon's life to 1780. McKeon held more public offices than any of his contemporaries, holding offices (often complementing one another) in Delaware and Pennsylvania and in the federal government. For example, McKeon's political activity was so frenetic in June and July, 1776, that Coleman provides a daily calendar of his activities.

The highlights of McKeon's early political career included his parts in the Stamp Act Congress, where he determinedly and fearlessly opposed British policies, and in the Second Continental Congress, where he did as much as anyone to enhance the cause of independence. His political acumen in the latter instance was astonishing. By strengthening the Revolutionary role of Congress and by taking an active part in Philadelphia Revolutionary committees, he supported independence without violating his anti-independence instructions from Delaware. As president of the Pennsylvania Conference of Committees, he was influential in bringing down the colonial government of Pennsylvania which doggedly resisted independence. He was not, however, a social revolutionary, being committed to the "existing pattern of property-holding." McKeon also opposed Pennsylvania's democratic state constitution. He even thought of joining the conservatives (reluctant Revolutionaries, at best) in order to over-
throw the constitution, but reconsidered when their excesses threatened to destroy the Revolution in Pennsylvania.

To help preserve the Revolution, McKean accepted the chief justiceship of the state. As Chief Justice, he sought to establish the independence of the judiciary; supported the rights of Pennsylvania against the encroachments of the Continental Army and Congress; prevented a bloody reign of terror against Loyalists; and ensured the new government’s success by reopening and keeping open the Supreme Court.

Thomas McKean was a natural leader, a man of boundless energy and ambition with a clear and precise mind, who had a strong love of freedom. Descended from rugged Scotch-Irish Calvinists and imbued with the work ethic, McKean was humorless, stoic, fatalistic, meticulous, and disciplined. An imposing and dignified orator, he dominated mass meetings, often having been chosen to preside over them. However, McKean was vain and arrogant, easily victimized by flattery and possessed of a violent temper. He was sometimes vindictive in politics, and on the bench he was given to spouting sanctimonious platitudes. Later in life, his abundant self-confidence degenerated into egotism.

Despite a dearth of sources for the Middle Colonies, Professor Coleman has researched his subject extensively and imaginatively in both American and British sources. He is especially effective in using genealogical and court records. Nevertheless, the material dealing specifically with McKean is fragmentary. Consequently, in order to reach an understanding of McKean and his career, Coleman very effectively reconstructs McKean’s family background and education and the society and politics of Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. All too often, however, Professor Coleman’s treatment of these subjects is so detailed that one loses sight of McKean. Biographers have often been criticized for not placing their subject in historical context, but Coleman has perhaps gone to the other extreme. To achieve comprehensiveness, sections on family life are woven into the fabric of the political narrative, unnecessarily breaking the flow of that narrative. In particular, the chapter on the medical career of McKean’s brother, Robert, seems out of place. Moreover, Coleman sometimes speculates about the exact nature of McKean’s role in a political event, usually concluding that it must have been important. The work, then, is impressionistic. Also disturbing is the biography’s abrupt ending in 1780; the significance of that date as a watershed in McKean’s life is lost to this reviewer.

Such reservations, notwithstanding, Professor Coleman has made a valuable contribution to the study of the American Revolution. He has focused on an individual, too long ignored and too little understood, who had a definite and profound impact on men and events. One might quarrel with Coleman on the extent of McKean’s prominence, but an extension of the biography beyond 1780 would probably re-enforce Coleman’s conclusions about him. A strong point in this biography is Professor Coleman’s
intrepid effort to explain McKean's often contradictory positions and actions. McKean's politics, to say the least, were chameleonlike and he had a Franklinesque quality for picking the winning side. McKean could "hold with the hare and run with the hounds" (p. 97).

_Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution_  
Gaspare J. Saladino

_Thomas Nelson of Yorktown: Revolutionary Virginian._ By Emory G. Evans. Williamsburg in America Series, X. (Charlottesville: Published for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation by the University Press of Virginia, 1975. x, 204 p. Illustrations, bibliography, index. $8.95.)

Thomas Nelson, Jr. of Yorktown, one of Virginia's signatories to the Declaration of Independence, has not received the recognition from historians that his contemporaries readily afforded him. "Where is Mason, Wythe, Jefferson, Pendleton, Nelson and another I could name...?" lamented Washington in 1778 over the absence from Congress of Virginia's "best men" (p. 79). To be sure, Nelson has enjoyed a certain popular reputation based on the mistaken belief that he sacrificed his fortune to the cause of freedom—something of an exaggeration since his family was still among the ten wealthiest in the state when the war was over. In this, the first full-length biographical study of Thomas Nelson, published in the popular series, Williamsburg in America, Professor Emory G. Evans seeks to establish his subject as a key figure in the Revolutionary movement in Virginia and the war for independence. Long a student of the Nelson family and of eighteenth-century Virginia, Evans argues that Nelson's popular fame has distorted and obscured his true contributions to the Revolutionary cause and denied him his place in the annals of Virginia history alongside Jefferson, Henry, Mason, Wythe, Lee, Harrison and Pendleton (p. 3). Tall company indeed.

Nelson's early career in the House of Burgesses was frankly undistinguished. The son of a member of the Virginia Council and the nephew of another, enjoying the advantages of family, wealth and power, he felt no need to prove himself (p. 1). By the mid-sixties, Evans identifies Nelson with that group of Burgesses coalescing around Patrick Henry which, though sometimes described as radical, was distinguished rather by its youth and its impatience with the traditional leadership of the House (p. 31). In the years that followed, Thomas Nelson was clearly in the forefront of events, though the precise nature of his role is often difficult to discern: in the Assembly, in the Associations, in the Conventions and in Congress. Consistent with his earlier proclivities, he urged an early and rapid separation from Great Britain. Resigning from Congress in 1777...
because of ill-health, Nelson spent the next four and a half years vigorously promoting Virginia's war efforts despite recurring bouts of sickness. Though possessing little military experience—few Virginians did—he commanded the Virginia militia in 1777, 1779, and 1780-1781. During the crucial months of 1781 when he succeeded Thomas Jefferson as Governor, he kept the American and French armies supplied and joined them in the field. Evans believes that Nelson's willingness to utilize his extensive emergency powers to the fullest to promote the interests of the campaign contributed, in no small measure, to the ultimate success at Yorktown (p. 123).

There is little in this study that is essentially new. Written in a clear, purposeful style, making liberal use of quotations and directed at the general reader, this is neither an analytical nor an interpretive work. Materials for a life of Thomas Nelson are, in any event, scattered and fragmentary. Many of Nelson's attitudes to major issues have not been recovered. Nothing is known of his views on the Virginia constitution, on the drafting of the Confederacy or of what lay behind his opposition to the Federal Constitution. On those subjects where his opinion is known, Evans is often content to let Nelson speak for himself, refraining from any analysis of his political ideas. Evans does characterize Nelson as "a moderate whig" (p. 31), but he does not elaborate on this statement for the benefit of the general reader. Evans fails to give Nelson an intellectual dimension but this is consistent with his view of him as "a man of direct action" (p. 104).

Evans' approach to the Revolution is distinctly traditional. Baldly stated, the Revolution was an old-fashioned Whig struggle which owed nothing to tensions generated from below, still less to instability at the top. Evans stresses the fact that for a period of twenty-five years Thomas Nelson was constantly returned as representative for York County, first, to the House of Burgesses, and second, to the House of Delegates, but he never explores the nature of Nelson's relationship to his local community nor of it to him. Conversely, Evans does set out the deteriorating economic circumstances in which members of the Virginia elite, Nelson among them, found themselves in the years before the actual outbreak of the war, but he is reluctant to attach any significance to these trends.

The Thomas Nelson who emerges from these pages, ambitious and frustrated, is too complex for the framework in which Evans has placed him. The "easy good natured indolent man" (p. 50), transformed into the Revolutionary "man of direct action" (p. 105), driven by a compulsion to lead his forces into battle, requires a far more penetrating treatment than he receives here. Yet to be fair, Professor Evans did not set out to explain Thomas Nelson to us, but rather to establish his place among Virginia's Revolutionary generation. In this, he succeeds.

College of Charleston

Gwenda Morgan

The advent of the nation's bicentennial has elicited a spate of books on this intriguing era, and certainly one of the most handsome and interesting volumes is The Fate of a Nation. This particular work is the result of a fortuitous collaboration between Hugh F. Rankin, Professor of History at Tulane and a specialist on this period, and William P. Cumming, one of the leading experts on cartography in the United States.

Drawing upon a wide range of contemporary sources including diaries, letters, journals, battle reports, broadsheets and other pertinent documents, the Revolutionary War is delineated by those who actually participated in its exciting events. While the majority of the selections are from the writings of Americans, both Patriots and Tories, there are also vivid accounts of the internecine conflict by British, French, and German commentators. Professor Rankin has chosen his materials judiciously, and his lucid commentary provides just enough introductory and explanatory data to link the disparate original items into a meaningful collage. Rankin's excellent text is distinctly enhanced by profuse illustrations, all produced during the period, including maps, diagrams, paintings and cartoons. Professor Cumming has selected these with exacting care and discernment, and they are particularly well integrated with the written materials.

The volume covers the period from 1765 to 1783 but stresses the war years. Although there is some discussion of political and economic issues, military history is emphasized. While the majority of the first-hand accounts of the battles and maneuvers were produced by the more literate officers, there are also some very colorful, if less eloquent and grammatical, commentaries by the foot soldiers who, as in any war, bore the brunt of the actual fighting. These dramatically convey the mingled excitement, fear, hope and despair engendered by the changing circumstances and shifting fortunes of the war.

The book skillfully chronicles the major phases of the war from the initial clashes in Massachusetts in the spring of 1775 when "the spirit of rebellion became an epidemic, racing through the countryside, and like an octopus gathered many new converts within its folds" (p. 37) until the final triumph at Yorktown eight years later. Originally disdainful of their largely unprofessional adversaries, the British forces came to have a grudging respect for the American troops. Thus, Colonel William Harcourt wrote after the battle of Princeton: "They (the Americans) possess extreme cunning, great industry, and a spirit of enterprise upon any advantage. Though it was once the fashion of this army to treat them in the most contemptuous light, they are now become a formidable enemy" (p. 129).

In contemplating the events of our first martial struggle as a nation,
one notes interesting parallels with later and less glorious conflicts. Thus, the perplexity and frustration wrought by the war in Vietnam is brought to mind by contemplation of “the complex question of what constituted the winning of a war in this huge and formless land, where resistance was diffused rather than concentrated, and where defeated bands of rebels could melt away into forests, regroup, and attack again” (p. 171). If there had been a regimental band on the scene at the denouement in Saigon, perhaps it would have been appropriate to stack arms as the British did at Yorktown in 1783 to the ironic strains of “The World Turned Upside Down.”

McLean, Va.

E. Berkeley Tompkins


Nine years ago David Brion Davis’ The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture was welcomed as a valuable contribution to our understanding of the cultural heritage that opponents of slavery drew upon as moral perceptions changed in the eighteenth century and the antislavery offensive began to take shape. The sequel to this volume, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, carries the analysis of antislavery ideology into the early nineteenth century. The period of time under consideration is greatly shortened but the analysis thereby gains in depth, complexity, and subtlety. Davis has given us an extraordinarily rich work which should become a landmark in intellectual history.

Davis’ goal is to explain how social reformers in England, America, and France underwent a profound transformation of values and perceptions regarding human relationships, and how emerging antislavery ideologies flowed from particular historical circumstances in these countries. It is the interaction of ideals and social action that interests Davis, and to understand this convergence he has probed very deeply into the social, economic, demographic, and political realities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In all of this, writing with great lucidity, he has succeeded brilliantly.

Students of European and American history will no doubt find frequent occasions for referring to this book in order to inform themselves about the leading antislavery figures of the period, and also to learn about the particular ideas employed in support of abolitionism. But far more important in my estimation—at the very heart of Davis’ contribution to the history of antislavery ideology and to intellectual history in general—is his ability to demonstrate the connection between ideological development and social change. Davis, for example, shows how the new moral sensitivity
to the evils of slavery grew out of religious, intellectual, and literary trends. But he is equally at pains to explain how these ideas could find a wide audience only because of "the rise of new classes and new economic interests" in England and America (p. 82). The new antislavery ideology was not isolated and self-contained but intimately connected with much broader changes in thinking about "labor, property, and individual responsibility."

Readers of this magazine may be particularly interested in Davis' explanation of the connection between ideological and social change insofar as it related to the Society of Friends. The Quakers, as is well known, were of crucial importance in the antislavery movement on both sides of the Atlantic. Davis differentiates between the quietistic efforts of reformers, such as John Woolman before the American Revolution, and the more evangelical opponents of slavery, such as Rebecca Jones and William Savery a generation later. Each type, he argues, represented Quakerism at a different stage in its history. More important is the distinction between the self-denying, anticapitalist views held by reformers in Woolman's era (who wanted not only to cleanse the Society of slave-holding but also challenged the moral basis of capital accumulation) and the intensely capitalistic quest of the post-Revolutionary antislavery reformers. After the Revolution, Quakers welcomed the advent of industrial capitalism; indeed, they were disproportionately represented among its leaders. Helping to usher in the new economic order, of which a competitive labor market was an essential part, they enthusiastically enlisted in the antislavery cause, Davis suggests, because "it provided an outlet for demonstrating a Christian concern for human suffering and injustice, and yet thereby gave a certain moral insulation to economic activities [in the rising mining and manufacturing enterprises] less visibly dependent on human suffering and injustice" (p. 251). Quaker abolitionism, then, ran concurrently with the rise of the free labor market and all the human exploitation that accompanied it. Providing much of the energy, talent, and capital that fueled the growth of industrial capitalism in England, Quakers confined their protests against labor exploitation there to the case of slavery, while diverting their eyes from other kinds of exploitation upon which the great nineteenth-century fortunes were built. Not by coincidence, many of the names on the roll-call of antislavery reformers were also leading figures in the movement to create a highly disciplined, routinized, industrial working force. It was not that direct economic interest was served by abolitionism, especially in the British case, but that great indirect benefits were to be derived if reform sentiment could be channeled into a crusade against slavery—loudly and frequently proclaimed as the quintessential evil in English society—and thus away from conditions created by the new economic order.

University of California, Los Angeles

Gary B. Nash

The title of this book is somewhat misleading; it is too casual. One might think that it is a collection of miscellaneous essays by an elderly scholar in a meditative mood. Actually, the essays are all biographical and they all deal with American authors of the same period—from about 1783 to about 1835. Some of them—like Franklin, Cooper, and Irving—are well known, some—like Freneau, Dennie, and Dunlap—are not entirely unknown, but some—like Thomas Branagan, Samuel Low, John Brown Ladd, and John Blair Linn—have been deservedly forgotten.

Mr. Leary's introduction does little to dispel the impression of inconsequence: "I have enjoyed making the acquaintance of all of them," he confesses, "and am happy now to introduce them or explain them to my friends."

Agreed, then, that this is not an important book, but it is seldom that a reviewer has the chance to point out to an author that he has written a much more significant book than he thinks he has. Soundings hangs together because it has an unspoken central theme which underlies all its essays. It is a study of how a national literature evolves in a newly created political and ideological culture.

This theme is not original. I have written much on it myself, as have Cooper, Freneau, and many others in this book. It is based on the proposition that the new nation, having achieved a glorious political independence, should immediately produce a national literature to embody its experience and ideals in immortal words. But with only a raw experience, totally lacking in tradition or sophistication, and with literary forms and modes borrowed from the mother country, no such literature was possible. The first American literature was either crude or derivative. Mr. Leary shows how each author faced up to this problem and how he failed. In the case of well-known authors, he concentrates on the problem; in that of unknown authors, he supplies fuller biographical detail.

But now for what is novel about Mr. Leary's book. He not only studies these failures, which has been done before in many of his examples, but he posits failure as inevitable at this stage of the national literary development and proceeds to analyze its degrees and kinds. No genius, however great, we must conclude, could have succeeded any sooner than about 1835.

Sharpened and reorganized in its outline and thrust, this work could then have been a revealing study of our national cultural adolescence and its causes. The chapters on Franklin, Cooper, and Irving are lively but unoriginal, but those on Ladd, Linn, Branagan, Low, and Tucker are careful studies of minor writers who best reflect the temper of the times and the materials and methods then available to any hopeful author. Ladd will serve as an archetype. "A few who search reverently," says Leary, "through the past for clues to the secret of American cultural tradition will find him
significant for the trends he represents.” The justification therefore for such a thorough study of a nonentity lies in the fact that he was a typical product of his time and of the then moment on the cycle of an evolving new national literature. One might wish that Mr. Leary had been more aware of the book he had in him, but only hinted at in the writing.

For Pennsylvanians, the chapters on Franklin, Dennie, Crawford, Freneau, Dunlap, and Branagan are most relevant, but what was happening there was also happening in Charleston and New York. The chapter on Dennie is excellent.

University of Pennsylvania

ROBERT E. SPILLER

The Return of Lafayette, 1824-1825. By MARIAN KLAMKIN. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975. x, 212 p. Illustrations, bibliography, index. $12.50.)

Lafayette’s return to the United States in 1824–1825 as the Nation’s Guest, said President John Quincy Adams, “will form hereafter a pleasing incident in the annals of our Union, giving to real history the intense interest of romance.” The incident has indeed continued to fascinate historians and general readers alike. This latest addition to the literature is intended primarily for collectors of the souvenirs and related ephemera engendered in such enormous quantities by the Marquis’ amazing tour through the twenty-four states of the Union: banners and buttons, ribbons and handkerchiefs, bottles and flasks, dishes and snuffboxes, music, menus, programs, poems, and addresses of welcome. The seventy-five or so illustrations in Mrs. Klamkin’s book, drawn from museums and private collections, provide a representative sampling, enough to whet the aspiring collector’s appetite, but will disappoint those expecting a systematic catalogue or authoritative reference handbook. The descriptive captions are sketchy and in some instances the author is content with such imprecise tags as “from an old print.”

The accompanying account of Lafayette’s tour is intended to place the souvenirs in context and “to give the historian collector some idea of where to look for Lafayette-related material.” The sources for such an account are endless: the official version published by Levasseur, Lafayette’s secretary and traveling companion; contemporary newspaper accounts (conveniently collected in Edgar E. Brandon’s compilations); pamphlets, broadsides; diaries and letters; as well as the lore and legend accumulated by generations of local antiquarians. Lafayette’s own bag of fan mail (a source apparently not tapped for the present book) is preserved with other Lafayette papers in the Cornell University Library. To condense this mass of detail into a readable narrative is at best a difficult task. Perhaps because she has attempted to include too much, Mrs. Klamkin’s retelling of
the story becomes tedious. The color, excitement, drama, and humor are somehow lost. A bare chronology would have better served the purpose. The same story has been told in much smaller compass and with far greater skill by J. H. Powell in his lecture-essay “The National Guest,” included in his book General Washington and the Jack Ass, and Other American Characters, in Portrait (South Brunswick, New York, London, 1969).

Such considerations as the significance of Lafayette’s tour for his own biography, its connections with French politics of the period, and its importance as an international episode are all beyond the scope of Mrs. Klamkin’s book. It may nevertheless be worth mentioning here that the subject has recently been treated, with an entirely different approach, in Anne C. Loveland’s Emblem of Liberty: The Image of Lafayette in the American Mind (Louisiana State University Press, 1971), which, surprisingly, neglects the very “imagery” that is the raison d’être and chief interest of the book under review. Neither Klamkin nor Loveland pays much attention to the American pilgrimages to La Grange (which also contributed to the imagery), when the roles were reversed and the Nation’s Guest in turn became Host to a Nation. This aspect of the subject has been set forth, with a wealth of corroborative detail, by Russell M. Jones in his article “The Flowering of a Legend: Lafayette and the Americans, 1825–1834” (French Historical Studies, IV, No. 4, Fall, 1966).

Brattleboro, Vt.

HOWARD C. RICE, JR.


Michael Paul Rogin has written a psychobiographical study of Andrew Jackson that seeks to reveal the innermost character of his subject and through him to lay bare the pathology of an age. The transformation of the new nation from the familial republican order of the revolutionary years into the sprawling market society of the first half of the nineteenth century is played out against the psychic turmoil of Jackson’s tortured life. From his early years of abandonment and adolescent irresponsibility, to his efforts to redeem his loss through the accumulation of property and the killing of Indians, to his seeming triumph as President in removing the Indians and destroying the Bank, Jackson adumbrates the major tendencies of the period. A liberal market society cuts the familial attachments that persisted into the eighteenth century, sets separate individuals free to possess themselves of the continent, and proceeds to the systematic destruction of the native tribes which form the major obstacle to its self-realization.
Rogin's contribution is his analysis of Jackson's psyche and his contention that the pathology he discovers there reveals the hidden energies of American society. The evidence is slim. Jackson's father died before he was born, his mother abandoned him at critical moments, he drooled and had difficulty articulating, and he developed a violent temper. The symptoms are classic and reveal a child whose "rage" and insecurity over weaning had never been assuaged. The rest of Jackson's life is an effort to achieve command of himself which he does at the expense of the Indians and traditional society.

One must have a taste for this sort of thing. It may indeed be true. Jackson could surely be an unpleasant character, and he did exhibit a striking penchant for familial images in his rhetoric. Yet one can doubt the justification for using clinical theory so rigidly in what is not a clinical situation. Rogin derives a full explanation of Jackson's life from a few fugitive facts. Any patient deserves better from his therapist. Psychological analysis can be suggestive in biography, but it makes a shaky foundation for the kind of monument Rogin constructs. As for the attribution of Jackson's pathology to an entire society, the argument becomes even more tenuous. Perhaps in some analogous way societies have psyches, but the analogy will certainly not yield the kind of certainty that the psychological theory was designed to convey in a clinical context. And this is precisely what Rogin demands of it.

In Rogin's account the opposition between white and Indian is one to one, the white man as violent aggressor and the Indian as passive victim. He manifests little sense of the process by which European culture infiltrated the native world and transformed it. In the calculus of native disintegration, violence can scarcely compare with disease, alcohol, or the various indirect consequences of contact between the two societies. To be sure Rogin notes the gradual decline of the Indian, but it plays no real part in his interpretation. Throughout the period from the Revolution to removal, native society seems as pristine as it had been before the white man arrived. Whiskey does not affect village life until after removal. Intruders move into native territory only after the extension of state authority and encouragement by politicians and speculators. Rogin notes the changes in tribal government that stiffen resistance to removal but does not see the significance of this phenomenon in the transformation of native life. Tribal factions serve the white man's purposes in obtaining land and encouraging removal, but Rogin does not perceive them as symptoms of the collapse of native order. Nothing that might diffuse the impact of the white man's guilt intrudes upon his indictment.

Rogin misinterprets and then dismisses the effort to civilize the Indians. In his view, because whites tended to conceive of Indians as children they did not believe them capable of improvement. Infantilization may have yielded some paradoxical consequences, but it is clear that a major body of opinion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries held a
high opinion of native abilities. It is not enough to identify philanthropic attitudes toward the Indians as a minor theme in the ideology of the early national period. Nor is it accurate to contend that reformers had in mind the protection of the tribes. Missionaries and secular reformers were as much committed to the obliteration of native society as were speculators and frontiersmen who coveted the Indians' land and met them in war. Liberalism contained more than the market economy. Whether it sanctioned the murder of Indians may be doubted, but it surely stimulated the expectation that Indians would soon be indistinguishable from white men. To miss this point is to ignore a major theme in the documentation of the period.

A good deal of the writing is muddy. With good reason, Rogin pauses often to explain his psychological theory. The reader might welcome the explanations, although they do not always contribute to clarity. Rogin writes as an advocate. As a result his book is tendentious and excessively righteous. Is it too much to ask, even of committed historians, that they attend to the irony and tragedy of human existence? It is difficult to believe that Jackson was as vicious as Rogin has made him out to be; it is even more difficult to hold him to account for behavior that arises from a deep-seated psychic pathology.

Indiana University  

BERNARD W. SHEEHAN

By MATTHEW A. CRENSON. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975. xii, 186 p. Charts, bibliography, index. $10.00.)

During Andrew Jackson’s presidency, argues Matthew Crenson, American national government became bureaucratized. Before Jackson, it had been a government of men, not institutionalized laws or impersonal bureaucratic procedures. But the press of events, a qualitative as well as quantitative enlargement of governmental activities, and ideas of politics and society nurtured by the Jacksonians, combined to redirect and rechannel federal governmental energies. “Personal organization,” or proprietary officeholding, had to give way to system, near-anonymity, and oversight by other public officials. Officeholders could no longer be trusted. American society, its seams weakening by the 1830s, had an air and a reality of looseness about it that required bureaucratization.

The author seeks to establish that significant changes took place. To do so, events of the 'thirties must be meaningfully compared with what took place in Federalist and Jeffersonian Republican times. Such is not the case. The presidency of John Quincy Adams, immediately preceding Jackson’s, would seem to offer an inviting and ample basis for comparisons, since although both of these republican presidents, Adams and Jack-
son, differed markedly in political style and convictions, their "reigns" are chronologically linked. But Crenson shies away from intensive research on the Adams years, and concludes by emphasizing "puritanical" aspects of Jacksonian control of bureaucracy, leaving the impression that the Adams people, if not "sybaritic," were at least lax.

Crenson also limits his labors in other, damaging ways. First, he deals only with the federal establishment, an unacceptable curb for an era in which most governmental activity still took place in the states. Second, he writes mainly of the upper echelons of the bureaucracy, utilizing the work of Aronson. Third, he deals in detail only with the Post Office and the Land Office. The former, then as now, desperately needed the reorganization Amos Kendall attempted; the latter, suffocating under the paperwork following the land booms of the 1820s and 1830s, needed help too. Crenson retells these stories yet fails to make of them convincing substantiation for his thesis, or to advance our knowledge on the points beyond the findings of White or Rohrbaugh. (There is little discussion of the work of collectors of customs, though Crenson makes much of Samuel Swartout's defalcation in New York City as partial proof of the vice and wickedness which supposedly corroded the moral fiber of Jacksonian America.) The most effective section of this short monograph deals with the spoils system and its role in the Jacksonian effort to regenerate pristine republicanism. But, if we are to believe that significant bureaucratization occurred in the 1830s, more evidence than Crenson adduces is necessary.

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Frank Otto Gateell

_Inventors of the Promised Land._ By Lawrence J. Friedman. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975. xviii, 344, xiii p. Bibliography, index. $15.00.)

Although this ambitious and carefully plotted book may set some kind of record for grammatical errors and stylistic howlers (about 100), its object is a serious and fascinating one: to explain the spread-eagle patriotism of the first half century of the republic as a response to a general cultural crisis. Early patriots, it is contended, were both personally and civically caught in an anxiety-creating bind between the pull of rooted stability and a commitment to achieve national perfection, to realize "The Rising Glory of America." The pressure of these inconsistent ideals led to the invention of powerful nationalistic myths such as the image of Washington as Flawless Founder; the patriotic idealization of American womanhood; the vision of a white man's America; and the notion of the public school as moral anchor for society. Wrapped in a cloud of extravagant rhetoric and utopian dreams, these constructs speciously harmonized contradictory categories of permanence and change with a bad effect on national life.
They "were distractions which drew patriots away from confrontation with specific daily realities—the rich . . . possibilities of the real world" (p. xviii).

This large claim is not made good. The author's valuable study of Washington funeral orations shows plainly that Americans identified with the Founder individually and collectively, and that the attributes of stability and perfection were both attributed to him. Such dialectical ingenuity, we are assured, "pointed . . . to . . . deep-seated ideological and psychological problems . . ." (p. 48). When Washington the Man of Action was merged with the "calm statesman, certain patriots may have sensed" the contradiction, and when they were exhorted to change their ways and follow the great man's example "some may even have feared that they were being required to do the impossible" (p. 75). Nevertheless, while the language of the eulogies "must have put many people at ease . . . it probably tormented others" (p. 77). This cautious tone is no more than the evidence requires, but quickly the language of speculation gives way to positive assertion. Being an abstraction, the Washington ideal was "distant from the complex realities of daily existence . . . [and] made patriots less tolerant of human frailties and diversities. . . . Consequently, the Washington myth tended to draw patriots away from the tolerance, empathy, and flexibility upon which rich and diversified interpersonal relations are based" (p. 78). Who were the patriots who were thus drawn away from empathy? We are given a couple of questionable examples, but the rest is silence.

Such as it is, the Washington section is the strongest part of the book, largely because the same illogic thereafter has less impressive materials to mismanage. Thus, when Colonization Society leaders in 1840 adjured Americans to "feel for the underprivileged with 'bowels of compassion'" (p. 213) we are told: "This phrase may have pointed to the innermost racial feelings of . . . colonizationists" (p. 213–214). And why? Because of the following exegesis: for "bowels" read blacks to be expelled, for "compassion" read (as Mr. Dooley might have put it) But not so fast! Here we may have, according to the author, a clue not only to the Society's well-known foot-dragging on repatriation, but to the ambiguous attitudes of Henry Clay and others. The trouble with this is that while the phrase in question "may have pointed to" anything at all there is little doubt that it is religious cant, pointing to nothing but I John 3:17 ("But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"). Furthermore, a few pages later we hear William Lloyd Garrison declaim on the subject of cleansing the polluted land, "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my heart" (p. 235), and this almost literal cry from Jer. 4:19 shows plainly the intended heart-bowels congruence. Curiously, in a study that is if anything overdocumented, these verses are not identified.

Cornell University

Fred Somkin

These two volumes of the diary of Charles Francis Adams are not simply two additions to the steadily growing shelf of Adams Papers publications. They mark the end of an era in the story of this great historiographical venture, for they are the last two volumes to be prepared by Lyman H. Butterfield, until recently Editor in Chief of the project, and Marc Friedlaender, Editor. With twenty volumes already published, with the problems of financing the project largely overcome, with the extraordinarily high standards of editorial excellence that they have set for themselves firmly established, these two gentlemen are moving on to a well-deserved retirement. Fortunately, their connection with the Adams Papers will not cease, for each will be available for consultation as the project advances. As Lyman Butterfield's successor, those in charge of the project have chosen Robert J. Taylor, until recently Chairman of the Department of History at Tufts University, visiting editor of publications at the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg in 1964–1965, and the author of Western Massachusetts in the Revolution (1954) and the editor of Massachusetts, Colony to Commonwealth: Documents on the Formation of Its Constitution, 1775–1780 (1961). All who have an interest in the Adams Papers wish Mr. Taylor well and are confident that he will continue the splendid tradition of scholarly excellence established by his predecessors.

The two preceding volumes of the diary of Charles Francis Adams, covering the period 1829–1832, saw the young man establishing himself and his family in Boston society and gradually gaining confidence in himself in his new role as husband and father. Though there was occasional mention of political events, those volumes were primarily private and personal. In these two latest volumes the young Adams begins to enter more actively into the field of politics, albeit with a good deal of reluctance. The restrictions that loyalty to his still-vigorous father and, to a lesser extent, to his father-in-law, Peter Chardon Brooks, imposed on his independence of action made his position a difficult one. Indeed the role that he played in the politics of this period was almost entirely determined by the career of John Quincy Adams. This meant, among other things, that he felt unwilling to sign his name to the substantial number of articles on political subjects that he wrote for the Boston newspapers, but instead resorted to pseudonyms. Though he often disagreed with his father in private conversation, he was unwilling to oppose him publicly, and thus in his early ventures into politics he could never be completely his own man. No wonder that he could write, "My domestic happiness is such, why should I strive to shade it by dabbling in the dirty water of our political
affairs” (VI, 148). Yet despite these misgivings, he continued to write political articles in the hope that he would “be able to do something of value to my generation” (VI, 206).

The two most important political events in Massachusetts in which Charles Francis Adams became engaged both involved his father. In 1833 the gubernatorial election was complicated by the appearance in the state of a strong Anti-Masonic party. John Quincy Adams had opposed the Masons and received the new party’s nomination. Adams’ supporters hoped that he might secure the nomination of the National Republicans as well, but old Federalist resentment at Adams’ role during the Jeffersonian years proved too strong, and the place went to Congressman John Davis. In the resulting election no one of the four candidates had a majority; according to state law, the House was to pick two candidates from whom the Senate would select the winner. In the political maneuvering that followed John Quincy Adams pursued a characteristically independent course. Refusing to align himself with Marcus Morton, the Democratic candidate, he withdrew his name in favor of Davis, who was promptly elected. Two years later the legislature was faced with the problem of choosing a Senator to fill a vacancy. Adams was a leading contender and might have been chosen had he not, again with characteristic independence, supported President Jackson in his stand against France. Throughout these two episodes Charles Francis Adams did all he could to support his father’s interests, acting as his spokesman on several occasions. But his introduction to the “dirty water” of politics did little to increase his respect for the art.

Space does not permit detailed discussion of the many other interesting subjects covered in these volumes. We see Charles Francis Adams outraged at the burning of the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown—“What a comment upon our free institutions! What an indelible disgrace to the famed liberality of New England” (V, 359)! We see him attending a performance of Much Ado About Nothing, with Fanny Kemble as Beatrice, and being less than enthusiastic about her performance: “Her conception of the part was tolerable and yet not exactly mine. ... I thought her an ugly, bright looking girl” (V, 74). We see him distressed at the treatment of William Lloyd Garrison by the Boston mob: “Among other things we have had a mob to put down Abolitionists, as if the Country was not going to pot fast enough without extraordinary help” (VI, 248). We see him becoming exasperated with his brother-in-law Edward Everett: “He is a double hearted man if there is one on the face of the earth” (VI, 79). And there are countless other passages to catch and hold the attention of the reader. By now it has become an act of supererogation for a reviewer to say that the editing of the Adams Papers is superb. Some of the footnotes—for example, one on Fanny Kemble and John Quincy Adams (V, 84-87) and one on Josiah Quincy’s problems as President of Harvard (V, 366-372)—are really miniature essays on their respective subjects and provide a whole new dimension to the text. Certainly, in these, their last
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two volumes, Lyman Butterfield and Marc Friedlaender have gone out in style.

Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. Frederick S. Allis, Jr.


The History of once separate regional railroads forming trunklines from the Atlantic seaports westward was a case of the survival of the fittest. Fitness depended on a reasonably good route from the standpoint of grades and distance, potential local as well as through traffic, and most of all adequate financing, without which none of the rest mattered.

The Sunbury and Erie had the possibility of being a link in the shortest route from New York City through central Pennsylvania to Lake Erie, but it lacked the other requirements. The route, starting from Sunbury at the forks of the Susquehanna, to Erie was almost unpopulated west of Lock Haven, and Erie itself failed to keep up in growth with Buffalo or Pittsburgh. Consequently, the promise of local business was much less than for the central New York lines of the Pennsylvania Railroad. If financing could have been largely completed before the Panic of 1837, some of the later disadvantages might have been avoided, but Nicholas Biddle was the leading promoter and with his downfall the project became quiescent.

By the time it was revived in the boom of the 1850s, the Pennsylvania had reached Pittsburgh, the New York Central was a trunkline system, and even the Erie had reached the Lake. There was little beyond purely local needs for another railroad to a medium sized lake port, and the road was only completed by the cities of Erie and Philadelphia, as well as the few large towns along the route, making substantial subscriptions to bonds. Without adequate private financing, construction was done cheaply with the result of a poor route and bad grades. In 1861 the partly completed road was renamed the Philadelphia and Erie. Ultimately it was taken over as a feeder by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Dr. Rosenberger presents a chronologically arranged collection of all the pertinent information he was able to secure in many years of searching. Little beyond annual reports could be provided by the railroad itself. Much of the material from newspapers and political debates will be of interest to historians of Pennsylvania. Its value for such scholars is enhanced by profuse illustrations. From the larger standpoint of eastern railroad history, however, the material needs more synthesis and interpretation.

University of Pennsylvania

Thomas C. Cochran

Yes, Jews did fight in the American Revolution. No, Haym Salomon did not finance it. Professor Rezneck has gathered from reliable sources what information is available on the contribution of Jews to the making of our country. He continues his history into the early years of the Republic, treating of political and military services through the second decade of the nineteenth century.

The work is in essence a compilation of already published material which will be known to most scholars but may be new to the general reader. His original research in government records and the archives of a few hereditary societies adds a few facts, but is somewhat disjointed. Good editing would have eliminated some of the repetition and added to the cohesiveness.

There were not many Jews in the United States 200 years ago. In proportion to their numbers they did their share in winning independence. A few—Francis Salvador who was killed by Tory-incited Indians in South Carolina, Major David S. Franks, Arnold's aide and later a minor diplomat, Major Solomon Bush who was wounded in the retreat from Brandywine, Benjamin Nones, soldier under Pulaski and fighter for civil rights, and a handful of others—attained some distinction. Most served in the ranks. As Professor Rezneck states in his summation: "Their combat activities and accomplishments were limited and obscure; these roles were determined not by their choice but by the circumstances and character of this particular and unusual war." The same could be said of the vast majority of soldiers in the Continental Army and the state militias.

The author has not puffed the Jewish patriots, or the few Tories, larger than life-size. With circumspection he has dealt only with facts and calmly dismissed myths. Some zealots will not like his measured account of the contribution of Haym Salomon as an exceptionally capable and honest broker for the Office of Finance, but it is the only one sustained by evidence. After all, the Salomon myth in its widely accepted form is made of the same cloth as Betsy Ross's flag.

It is unfortunate that the author has been careless in his quotations. Madison's letter to Randolph of September 30, 1782, does not read: "The kindness of my little friend in Front Street will preserve me from extremities but I never resort to it without mortifications," should read: "The kindness of our little friend in Front Street near the Coffee House is a fund which will preserve me from extremities, but I never resort to it without great mortification." Mordecai Levy in his recantation did not speak of "legal and institutional" assemblies, but of "legal and constitutional" ones. De Pinto's book is called "Letters Concerning the Troubles in America" in the text, but cited correctly in the notes as Letters on the American Troubles. The British did not "hold Philadelphia briefly during 1777." Similar slight errors occur throughout.
The illustrations are poor. In view of the author's recital of the feeling between Polish Jews and German Jews which resulted in the apotheosis of Hyam Salomon, one wonders why the statue of Salomon between Washington and Morris erected in Chicago was chosen for the frontispiece and dust jacket.

Library Company of Philadelphia


In 1850 the Democratic Party was the master of Pennsylvania politics. Ten years later, shattered and factionalized, it lay prostrate before its Republican opposition. The object of this slim volume is to explore the reasons for the collapse of the traditionally ruling party and the rise of the "Black Republicans" who would dominate Keystone politics into the twentieth century.

Through strong leadership provided by James Buchanan, George M. Dallas, and Francis Shunk the Democracy had parlayed the Jacksonian image of the common man with careful distribution of the patronage to control Harrisburg in the Age of "Old Hickory." Not incidentally, their struggle was made easier by the division within the Whig Party by the 1840s over the issue of "free soil"—or the extension of slavery into territories newly won in the Mexican War. While the Democrats would suffer defections from their ranks, such as stalwart David Wilmot, most of the party clung faithfully to the banner of Jackson. The Whigs in contrast were ravaged by internal strife, symbolized by their unusual victories in 1848. William F. Johnston, a free soil Whig, was elected Governor and Zachary Taylor, a Louisiana slaveholder, swept Pennsylvania on his way to the White House. Coleman emphasizes that the issue in the Keystone state was not slave extension, but economic problems and the tariff issue. The Whigs triumphed because they championed the higher rates favored by most Pennsylvanians. The party also endorsed a national bank and federally funded internal improvements. Since most residents tended to support these as well, it is a paradox that the voters should continually return Democrats to office who avoided or equivocated on these major economic issues.

By 1852 the Compromise of 1850 and its popular sovereignty provisions dealt a death blow to remaining Whig unity. The Democrats' optimism about controlling state politics was quickly destroyed, however, by the emergence of the nativist Know Nothing movement. Developing as a reaction to increased Irish and German immigration, the American Party posed a successful threat to the Democracy and gained control of the
legislature in 1854. Unable to govern once elected and themselves vulnerable to the slavery issue, the Know Nothings would evaporate as a significant factor in Pennsylvania politics by 1857. A greater and more enduring threat had formed by that time—the Republican or "People's Party." A fusion of abolitionists, free soilers, Know Nothings, Whigs, disgruntled Democrats and temperance men, the party unsuccessfully challenged favorite son James Buchanan for the presidency in 1856. Within two years the Republicans by emphasizing the tariff and the economic chaos resulting from the Panic of 1857, rather than slavery and "Bleeding Kansas," won both Houses in Harrisburg. As the "People's Party" was presenting a strong, united front, the Democracy was crumbling over the Kansas issue. Its fate was sealed in 1860 when pro-slave southern Democrats walked out of the national Charleston Convention to prevent the selection of popular sovereignty champion Stephen A. Douglas as their presidential standard bearer. Abraham Lincoln's triumph by 60,000 votes over his combined opposition "marked the disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy and the dawn of a new era in the political history of the Keystone State" (p. 140).

Professor Coleman has given us a well-researched comprehensive survey, election by election, candidate by candidate, for the period 1848-1860. Although this is in itself a service to the historian, the author has failed to bring this exciting and controversial period to life. The reader searches fruitlessly for an inside glimpse of Buchanan, Dallas, or the wily and opportunistic Simon Cameron. The scholar will welcome this valuable addition as solid, traditional political history. Both professional and layman may put it down, however, with a sigh of disappointment over what it might have been.

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*John M. Belohlavek*
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