BOOK REVIEWS


George B. Tatum’s Philadelphia Georgian is the type of comprehensive study every historic house deserves. Few American buildings are as well documented or as carefully researched as the fine brick house completed in 1766 for Charles Stedman and later owned and embellished by the “patriot mayor,” Samuel Powel. Thus, the publication of this volume is a significant event. Mr. Tatum, H. Rodney Sharp Professor of Art History at the University of Delaware, places his description of the Powel House within a context of social and architectural history that underscores the importance of the building itself. While the study concentrates on the Powel House, background information is provided by a survey of Georgian architecture in America as expressed in Philadelphia and its environs. Superb photographs by Cortlandt van Dyke Hubbard illustrate the architectural heritage of the city and enable the reader to compare the Powel House with other remaining eighteenth-century buildings.

Samuel Powel epitomized the colonial gentleman. Rich, well-educated, an outstanding citizen, he married Elizabeth Willing in 1769, and their house at 244 South Third Street formed the setting for the sophisticated life they led until his death in 1793. Mrs. Powel sold the house in 1798 to William Bingham; it passed through successive owners in the nineteenth century, but remained intact until 1917, when a paneled room was sold to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for installation in the American Wing. In 1925 the great room on the second floor was sold to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. To save it from demolition, the house was acquired in 1931 by the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks and restored to its present appearance.

In his analysis, Mr. Tatum has made use of existing records, such as Samuel Powel’s accounts with master builder Robert Smith and other craftsmen pertaining to interior changes made after he purchased the house in 1769 and the insurance surveys which offer contemporary descriptions of the structure and finishing details. This information is coordinated with insurance surveys of comparable buildings such as the Byrd-Penn-Chew house next door to the Powel House and with the detailed records of General John Cadwalader’s house which formed the basis of Nicholas B. Wainwright’s fine monograph, Colonial Grandeur in Philadelphia. Mr.
Tatum also refers to The Rules of Work of the Carpenters’ Company (1786) to document building procedures and the use of such handbooks for architectural details. In addition, the reliance of American builders upon English models through books like Abraham Swan’s The British Architect (1745) and his Designs in Architecture (1757) is revealed in the demonstration of these books as specific design sources for the Powel House.

The carefully footnoted text includes a description of furniture belonging to the Powel family. Appendices reproducing the insurance surveys mentioned above, lists of pertinent dates in the history of the house, even annotated end papers of an early Philadelphia map with buildings mentioned in the text indicated in red add to the scholarly value of the book. It was printed by The Meriden Gravure Company in a characteristically handsome format.

Philadelphia Georgian provides more than a guide book to a restored house. While it is certainly the best souvenir publication produced so far, the price of the hard-cover edition makes it impractical for this purpose. The paperback may be satisfactory for the tourist who visits the house, but the major value of the work will be to the architectural historian. Detailing both the construction and restoration of the Powel House, documenting it with references to contemporary sources, and appraising its architectural and social importance, the book itself is an historic document.

Winterthur Museum

JOHN A. H. SWEENEY


In his preface to this important book, Henry May observes that when he began his research no general treatment of the American Enlightenment existed despite constant references to its importance, and that European writing on the subject, while brilliant, had left us “as so often, very sophisticated and very confused” (p. xiii). Perhaps it is a measure of the Enlightenment’s intellectual range that this first major assessment of its fate in America also leaves us demonstrably wiser, if also sometimes perplexed.

Recognizing the often contradictory nature of much that is called Enlightenment thinking, May divides his subject into four categories—Moderate, Skeptical, Revolutionary and Didactic Enlightenment—and traces their history in America. The Moderate Enlightenment affected American intellectuals most profoundly. This was the Enlightenment of balance and order, of reasonable and reasoned progress, of assured integrity and, sometimes, of complacent acquiescence before the contemporary order. These ideas came to America through the writings of Locke,
Dr. Samuel Clarke, Philip Doddridge and William Wollaston and were consumed by an enormous colonial audience. Thinkers as different as Charles Chauncy, Jonathan Edwards, John Witherspoon, Samuel Johnson and Benjamin Franklin all absorbed crucial forms of this intellectual strain. Not surprisingly, its political tendencies were best manifested in the Federal Constitution of 1787.

The Skeptical Enlightenment of Voltaire and Hume fared poorly in America. It conflicted with too many facets of colonial culture, especially the overwhelming Calvinism of the colonial intellectual elite. However, it does form the basis of one of May's best discussions. His chapter on "The Stoical South" will delight any reader tired of the joint New England-Christian bias in American intellectual history and suggests that what May later calls the "village atheist tradition" may have been a bit more common in early America than we have dared believe.

The Revolutionary Enlightenment won much favor in the 1780s but proved difficult to absorb and finally was thrust out of the emerging American intellectual configuration. May is particularly helpful in tracing the ebbing conjunctions of millennialism, New England Calvinism, and secular radicalism between 1775 and 1800 and his marvelous description of Revolutionary Philadelphia again demonstrates how this most neglected of American cities teemed with vigorous, bitter intellectual debate crucial to the fate of American politics.

Finally, May demonstrates how the intellectuals of the new republic settled on a Didactic Enlightenment as the basis for a new American culture. This was an eclectic school that remade the principles of the Scottish Common Sense philosophers to serve a triumphant Christian evangelicalism and shaped American society, or at least its educational institutions and formal literature, in the image of a Christian Republic between 1790 and 1815.

The success of May's enterprise is measured in good part by the scope of his work. There simply is no other book like this one. The sweep across the colonial landscape is formidable and New England emerges less large here than in other intellectual histories of other periods. Indeed, it is this marvelous scope that makes May's decision to provide only a short discussion of the Federal Constitution so disappointing. The Constitution clearly was the Moderate Enlightenment's crowning political achievement and May here plays the chef who hides the obviously luscious dessert from his feasting readers.

The problems in May's study are largely analytical. In his introduction he announces that he intends to treat the Enlightenment "as religion." While this might be helpful, May never really develops the point. He never defines what he means by religion and in practice usually equates it with Christianity anyway, as when he describes Newton's contemporaries in science as "sincerely, even fervently religious" (p. 5). May's four-fold division of the Enlightenment also tends to dissipate as he describes the
intellectual commitments of prominent American writers. Having argued for Jefferson's complexity, for example, May turns to so many causes to explain it that one loses sight of the relative importance of each, their interrelationships and their connection to the different modes of Enlightenment thinking.

May also generally declines to assess in a critical way the ideas he describes. He is most interested in their evolution, less interested in their philosophical rigor. Linked with this problem is May's tendency to treat the Enlightenment as a function of American politics and of American religious (Christian) development. He ignores science altogether and slights both abstract philosophy and political theory.

If these problems are bothersome it is because May's book is going to be a standard reference for a long, long time. Indeed, May's little intellectual biographies of less well-known figures like William Smith of Philadelphia and St. George Tucker of Virginia will alone keep it in frequent use. Thus, precisely because this is a significant book we ought to know just what about it is well done and what still may need doing.

University of Illinois at Chicago Circle

JON BUTLER

American Slavery--American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia.
By EDMUND S. MORGAN. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1975. x, 454 p. $11.95.)

Professor Edmund Morgan, perplexed by the fact that the "men who came together to found the independent United States, dedicated to freedom and equality, either held slaves or were willing to join hands with those who did" (p. 4), began nearly a decade ago to try to explain this paradox. The result is a book which is both a history of Virginia in the seventeenth century and an explanation of how "slavery and freedom" grew at the same time, "the one supporting the other" (p. 6).

In explaining Virginia's problems and development in its first century, Professor Morgan has written the best study of Virginia's past in this century. But his explanation of the simultaneous development of slavery and freedom, as well as the offspring of this combination, racism, though plausible raises some questions.

Englishmen, throughout the seventeenth century, Professor Morgan states, viewed Virginia as a place to make quick money rather than to settle down. A few, primarily the colony's leadership, did make a great deal of money, but it was made at the expense of the majority of the population, especially the laboring class, most of whom were white indentured servants. This exploitation did not create severe internal problems in the first half of the century primarily because of comparatively high tobacco prices and a terrible mortality rate. From roughly 1620 until
the Restoration it was possible for ordinary people to prosper. But after 1660 tobacco prices began to fall and mortality declined. Virginia, which for a time had appeared to be the best poor man's country in the world, became a place where it was difficult for the average man to eke out a living. The entire situation was exacerbated by high taxes and customs duties. Virginia led all of England's colonies in the amount of revenue it produced for the Crown, and at the same time its government was the most expensive of all colonies to maintain. The result was, as Professor Morgan explains, that in the last four decades of the seventeenth century the English government, Virginia public officials, and the more well-to-do prospered while the bulk of the colony's population suffered. This situation produced unrest which exploded in Bacon's Rebellion in the 1670s and the tobacco cutting riots of the 1680s.

Professor Morgan believes that Virginia's problems were not solved until black slaves replaced white indentured servants as the chief source of labor. He explains that as long as the laboring class was made up of short-term indentured servants, the dregs of English society, who when freed could not make a living, the unrest characteristic of the last quarter of the century would continue. But in the period after 1690 slave labor became more readily available and gradually slaves became the chief laborers in the tobacco fields. And as the former white indentured servant became a small planter, the elite consciously aligned themselves with him against the royal governors (Edmund Andros and Francis Nicholson), and built the stable Virginia society of the eighteenth century. They did so deliberately, providing better economic opportunity (lower taxes, etc.) and by encouraging racism which, with improved economic circumstances, would provide the glue to hold white society together. Once white society was united as a result of the exploitation of black slaves, the great political accomplishments of the century were possible. Slavery may not have turned Virginians into republicans Professor Morgan says, but "they may have had a special appreciation of freedom dear to republicans, because they saw every day what life could be without it" (p. 376). He does not contend that "a belief in republican equality had to rest on slavery, but only that in Virginia (and probably in other southern colonies) it did" (p. 381).

The broad outlines of Professor Morgan's interpretation are plausible. But I wonder if racism was consciously fostered by the elite. The poor had always been held in contempt by the English, some even talked of enslaving them, so it was easy, Morgan argues, for Virginia's elite to transfer that contempt to people of color, including Indians. He believes that it was to the leadership's advantage to foster this contempt and they did so through legislation designed to separate the races.

An alternative explanation is that legislation of this type was enacted to provide social control and the hard racism that was common in the nineteenth century developed more gradually as slavery became well
established and as the need to justify the institution developed. In any case, I do not think that Professor Morgan has proved that the Virginia elite consciously encouraged racist hatred and contempt to bind the small planters to them in a union of self-interest. It is, though, an intriguing argument and perhaps I quibble.

This impressive book sets a standard for historical scholarship hard to match. One of its strengths is a clear and vigorous thesis which should lead to much additional research and writing on Virginia's and the nation's past.

University of Maryland

Emory G. Evans

Albemarle: Jefferson's County, 1727-1976. By John Hammond Moore. (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the Albemarle County Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1976. xii, 532 p. Illustrations, index. $15.00.)

Writing local history is always difficult, and never more so than in the case of a county like Albemarle, the seat of Monticello and the home of Jefferson, Monroe, and many other notable Americans (including, as John Hammond Moore reminds us, John-Boy Walton). This handsome book will afford enjoyment to the thousands of people who have lived in Albemarle, including students at the University of Virginia. References to Rugby Road, Keswick, Rockfish Cap kindle many delightful recollections. There are excellent illustrations and useful statistical tables.

The book is divided into four chronological parts: 1727-1820, 1820-1888, 1888-1945, and since 1945. Chapters in each section deal with such topics as race relations, roads and railroads, the University, agriculture. Moore had picked a notable person in each of these eras—Dr. Thomas Walker, Judith Rives, Senator Thomas Martin and banker William Hildreth—and attempted to describe society by focusing on the representative man or woman. This is not highly successful. The device seems forced, and occasional references to Martin and the others appear to obtrude on the narrative and description.

The section on the turn of the twentieth century is one of the best. It includes a chapter entitled "An Educational Revolution," which describes and analyzes changes in education, from primary to post-graduate, which took place between 1890 and 1920. The central figure in the change was Edwin A. Alderman, president of the University of Virginia in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The influence of this innovative and controversial educational statesman is well presented. Indeed, the several sections on the history of the University are good; and this is because there have been good monographs on the subject, which Moore has drawn upon.
This is the key to an appraisal of the book, its strengths and weaknesses. Moore has not done a great deal of research in primary sources, although he has used some newspapers. For the most part he has built his history from secondary sources, some of them published, as well as several unpublished theses and dissertations. Some of the strongest parts of the book are those based on the best monographs. Thus the chapter on Albemarle County in the Second World War is a good one. As Moore acknowledges, practically "all of the material in this chapter comes from Pursuits of War" (p. 301), a history of the people of Charlottesville and Albemarle County in World War Two, edited by W. E. Hemphill and G. D. Parlier.

Regrettably, the style of this book about a distinguished county is undistinguished. Indeed, occasionally it is banal, even ludicrous. For example, in the chapter on improvements in transportation Moore writes, "With the auto came the airplane as well" (p. 295). Even more regrettably, there are a great many errors, and they are so frequent that they cast doubt on the author's reliability. A quotation from Winthrop Jordan's White Over Black (p. 113) is incorrect. There is a twenty-four line quotation from Isaac Weld (pp. 85–86) which contains four misquotations. Most of the errors are piddling and do not change the meaning; but on page 89 there is a glaring grammatical error in a quotation from a secondary work, in which the language was correct.

It is a pity. Thomas Jefferson's county deserves more care and distinction.

University of New Mexico

William M. Dabney


This substantial contribution by Kenneth Coleman is one of Scribner's volumes in the unfinished History of the American Colonies series edited by Milton Klein and Jacob E. Cooke. The work is particularly rich in illustrations—including maps, likenesses of Georgia leaders, town plans, poems, examples of manuscript pages and so on. There is a good "working bibliography" at the end of the book.

Coleman's Colonial Georgia is divided into fourteen chapters, among the best being the colony's government under the Trustees and then as a royal province. The section on agriculture and the chapters dealing with business and labor and the background of the American Revolution also possess real merit. On this last topic Coleman has long been the dominant Georgia authority. The overall interpretation of the effect of the Revolution is that the person who benefitted most was that illusive "common man." In education, politics, availability of land and allied fields, the Revolution
is seen as having a generally democratic effect. It is particularly demonstrated how the events of 1776 and thereafter put backcountry Georgia into the political and economic driver's seat—a position it has held ever since. The writer's sympathy for the administrative and governmental problems faced by Sir James Wright comes through clearly, but the pros and cons of both the radicals and the conservatives are nicely balanced.

Colonial Georgia, though, is not without factual errors. Most of them relate to the Trustee period and, more specifically, to events that concern James Edward Oglethorpe, Georgia's founder. In addition, it should be noted that Spain's ambassador to the Court of St. James was Tomas Geraldino, not Geraldion, and that the Spanish engineer-diplomat on the southern frontier was not Arrendondo but Antonio de Arredondo. About the "feeling of independence" noted by Coleman as being part of the Georgians' intellectual baggage even as early as 1733, there might be strong disagreement, but there can be no quibbling with the author's handling of economics, the life of the people, and the storm that culminated in the Revolution. Here the volume is assured, confident, and informative; the book, in fact, grows stronger as it proceeds, building momentum all along. The recounting of the background to the Revolution and of that movement itself are the appropriate highlights.

In conclusion, it should be noted that Professor Coleman's Colonial Georgia is a piece of scholarship characterized by careful work and judicious conclusions. The book easily takes precedence over any other survey of the province's colonial past and, along with Harold Davis' even more recent work on social and cultural history, The Fledgling Province, it brings the study of British Georgia's early years a long way. Coleman's prose is straightforward and businesslike; the format is attractive; the general balance admirable. The author, who took an early retirement from academic teaching in June 1976, has capped a distinguished and productive career with the publication of this volume.

University of Georgia

Phinizy Spalding


Edward S. Gifford, Jr. presents a Bicentennial treat. The American Revolution in the Delaware Valley is an informative and entertaining treatment of eight specific locations of military significance in the Philadelphia area. By using eyewitness accounts of patriot civilians and soldiers, British officers and Loyalists, Quakers and other neutrals, Dr. Gifford offers a variety of themes: war has its lighter moments, war is hell, war is frustrating, war cannot control the weather or prevent human failings. The reader
is forced to reflect also on the role that luck plays in combat, though the author does suggest at one point that "a special providence was watching over the American cause." He reminds us of the gore, the disease, and the unglorious deaths: there is nothing honorable about dogs digging up or heavy rains washing up amputated limbs. But war is to be commemorated, too, and so he concludes each chapter with directions to the sites he has discussed.

Six battles are examined in addition to a brief view of military life at Valley Forge and the wounded and dying at Yellow Springs. Gifford describes Washington’s crossing of the Delaware and the subsequent battle of Trenton, the battle of Brandywine, the bayonet and sword massacre at Paoli, the battle of Germantown, the destruction of Fort Mifflin, and Lafayette’s near blunder at Barren Hill. We meet key and lesser participants in and observers of the engagements: a Hessian Colonel Rall, who missed a chance at glory; Elizabeth Loring, whose interests included William Howe, and who certainly was not a girl, but then the author frequently refers to women in these pages as girls; Joseph Townsend, a curious Quaker youth; the “transparent knave” Charles Lee and others.

His battle commentary is good, but the human drama is better. There is Washington finding and returning William Howe’s lost dog, the “barefoot and naked” men at Valley Forge, “one of the most gallant actions of the war,” namely the defense of Fort Mifflin, and the celebrating and rioting in the city against Quakers and Loyalists with the news of the surrender at Yorktown. The first-hand accounts add color to these and other tidbits which make up a healthy portion of the book.

War has many sides and Gifford covers each, though some more eagerly than others. The politics of the war are left out of focus; his labeling without definition is disconcerting, whether it be his choice of the word Tory, mob, or radical Patriot. He can be accusatory without substantiation: for example, he describes Charles Townshend as “recklessly irresponsible” in introducing the 1767 duties. Maybe so, but without clarification the statement cannot stand.

The social slant, the human interest aspect, and the military tactics and outcomes are well handled, even though the sources used are not extensive and newspapers and official records are rarely introduced. A great reliance is given to a dozen older secondary works and select journals, letters, and diaries. A bibliographic note is needed to identify other sources used and to indicate which ones were most useful. Without footnotes or end notes something is required to guide the serious reader to further study. The book does include well-chosen engravings and battle schematics; a brief bibliography ends each chapter.

Given the purpose of the work, its limitations can be overlooked, including a somewhat simplified view of Revolutionary causation in his introduction. Gifford is writing for all of us. Pennsylvanians especially

Cities, historians repeatedly tell us, have been the creative centers of Western Civilization. And no city has played that role with more success and romance than Paris. In a curious way, the experience of Paris unites such different individuals as Villon, Abelard, Hemingway and Henry Miller. There is a sharp irony in the fact that at the moment when American cities are dying from neglect, a talented historian publishes a book which documents with detail after detail the role the city of Paris played in the development of one of America's most creative individuals, Thomas Jefferson, whose longest stretch of urban living was the five years he spent in Paris. Time and again Rice, by suggestion or implication, makes connections between what Jefferson saw and did in Paris and what he thought, planned, or created later on. Paris was not, of course, the only influence on Jefferson, but it was a significant one. When Jefferson later returned to Monticello he consciously carried with him the "treasure of art, science and sentiment" amassed during his years in Paris.

Jefferson arrived in Paris at a time of great fermentation in that city and stayed to see the beginnings of the French Revolution. The years before the outbreak of the Revolution were a time of enormous growth of towns and cities in France, and Paris, Rice demonstrates, was no exception. The rich bourgeoisie and nobles invested their revenue in building private houses. And the building industry (along with textiles) was one of the leading industries of the period. During much of his stay in Paris, Jefferson lived in or often visited those "new quarters" that were being developed and there he saw what bold architects, new technology, and skilled artisans could create. The new Halle aux Bleds provoked his interest and praise, especially the construction of its dome. And he was "violently smitten" by the elegance of the Hôtel de Salm designed by Pierre Rousseau.

But Paris was only one-half of the equation. The other half was Jefferson himself, a man of enormous energy, with an open-minded sensitivity and keen powers of observation. A man without Jefferson’s personal qualities would not have "seen" Paris the way Jefferson did. The point is beautifully illustrated by the example of Gouverneur Morris. Jefferson and Morris were riding together in the Bois de Boulogne when Jefferson pointed out to Morris the extraordinary beauty of the bridge at Neuilly. It was the new bridge by the famous designer Perronet. Both Franklin and Jefferson
admired it. Morris allowed that the bridge was handsome, but that he had "crossed over it four times without remarking it." One wonders what the results would have been if Morris, and not Jefferson, had planned the University of Virginia.

Still, there was a Paris that Jefferson did not see or know. That was the Paris of the laboring poor in the Faubourgs, such as Saint Antoine and Saint Marcel. In this "Paris" a culture of poverty and misery offered little chance for science, the arts, or any kind of creativity. Perhaps Jefferson had indirect contacts with these Parisians when his own house was robbed three times during the "turbulence" of the summer of 1789. Otherwise, his "Paris" for the most part was the wealthier western half of the city. "His business, his friendships, his avocations," Rice notes, "took him seldom to the working-class districts . . ."

Nevertheless, Jefferson can hardly be blamed for not seeing the political or social potentialities of these menu peuple, for very few Frenchmen saw them as anything but canaille. And the working classes themselves, with their psychology of acceptance, were no more enlightened about themselves than Jefferson. For it had not even occurred to them that they could be in any way the arbiters of their own destinies, or that (in Marivaux's words) they were "much more people and much less rabble" than most people believed.

Along with a text rich in detail and generalization Rice has included a treasure of illustrations: maps, architects' plans, sketches, portraits, etc. Sometimes these illustrations are best studied with a reading glass, but they are well worth study.

A gem of a book.

State University of New York at Buffalo

Orville T. Murphy


This biography is an abridgement of Professor Mitchell's two-volume life of Hamilton published some twenty years ago and reissued in 1976. Inexplicably, this fact is nowhere acknowledged save on the inside dust jacket of the book.

Widely hailed as this century's definitive study of Hamilton, Mitchell's two-volume biography was the high water mark of the Hamilton revival that occurred over the quarter of a century or so following World War II. Not only was the work a model of thorough research but it was tailor-made for its time. Rejecting the stereotyped view of Hamilton as the enemy of American democracy and exponent of additional privileges to the privileged classes (notably capitalists), Mitchell pictured the first Secretary of the
Treasury as the far-sighted proponent of national planning, the solicitous guardian of the public welfare, the ardent defender of a viable union against the assaults of states righters, the persuasive advocate of a balanced economy at home and of merited respect abroad. Hamilton was thus seen as the prescient statesman who prefigured America's national solidarity, industrial pre-eminence and world power, the far-sighted leader who also foresaw and contributed to the transformation of a government of sharply divided powers into one of executive supremacy.

Despite the widespread praise of Mitchell's work, by no means all American historians regarded it as an acceptable historical likeness. As early as 1958, Professor Adrienne Koch spoke for them when in a critique of the works both of Mitchell and other contemporary pro-Hamilton scholars she wrote: "It is possible that we have moved from the failure, a century ago, of not taking Hamilton seriously enough, to a present effort to take him forcibly beyond his human scope. Hamilton's history has become the much lengthened shadow of the man." Professor Koch's viewpoint rather than Mitchell's appreciative appraisal is (if I perceive correctly the current drift of scholarship) far more widely accepted today than it was some twenty years ago. The reasons are, I think, apparent. The "imperial presidency," the events subsumed in the word "Watergate," the diplomacy of Realpolitik (along with other recent developments) seem to have dimmed the Hamiltonian star that was ascendant in the 1950s and early 1960s and by unavoidable association rendered suspect the claims of admirers like Professor Mitchell.

In so doing, historians are, I think, making a mistake of magnitude. Even if one concedes (as it is proper to do) that some of the features sketched by Mitchell were too flattering, one need not for that reason reject the essential accuracy and value of his portrait. It is, after all, far more than a period piece. For example, it should have dispelled (though, unfortunately, it has not) the Hamiltonian demonology that has exercised such a seemingly irresistible appeal for historians who, maintaining a Manichaen view of American history, appear intent on personifying in Hamilton the ideas and forces that impeded political democracy, economic equality, and more generally, the fulfillment of the progressive view of the American promise.

For an understanding of the historic as distinguished from the symbolic Hamilton Professor Mitchell's full-scale biography (to which the volume under review should lead the interested student) remains an indispensable source.

Lafayette College  
JACOB E. COOKE

The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution. Edited by MERRILL JENSEN. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin,
The publication of the first two of a projected fifteen-volume documentary marks the beginning of an important scholarly contribution to the history of the Constitution. In progress since 1951, this massive reference work is cosponsored by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the University of Wisconsin and is under the general editorship of Merrill Jensen. According to the dust jacket blurb, it "will comprise a veritable library of manuscript and printed documents compiled from hundreds of sources, systematically annotated, and woven into a chronological whole which will ultimately embrace all significant documents, and all significant public and private commentaries, for the thirteen original states." In addition, the volumes will include extended introductory essays, lists of delegates and roll-call votes, biographical gazetteers and microfiche supplements. The series will be divided into four interrelated and cross-referenced parts: introduction, ratification by the states, commentaries (public and private), and constitutional amendments.

Volume I, *Constitutional Documents and Records, 1776–1787*, is an introduction to all the volumes to follow. Beginning with the Declaration of Independence, it contains state-by-state summaries of action taken on the ratification of the Articles of Confederation, the Amendments to those Articles, the calling and appointment of delegates to the Constitutional Convention, and the various resolutions and drafts of the Federal Convention. Within this framework one sees both the continuity of issues, including the balance of power between large and small states, the balance of power between northern and southern states, the balance of power between the central government and the states, and the continuity of the men who debated them. Despite the development of these larger themes, one is struck by the accent on the actions taken by individual states at the local level.

It is fitting that Volume II documents the ratification of the Constitution by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for it was the first state to call a convention and its convention met before that of any other state. Although Delaware ratified the Federal Constitution five days before Pennsylvania ratified on December 12, 1787, Pennsylvania took the lead in the national debate over the Constitution and the central issues raised there were debated in most of the other states. After reading this volume, which includes among others the oft-told story of how force was used to affect the outcome of the ratification struggle, one is impressed with the overall significance of Pennsylvania's early decision to the nationalists' cause. Perhaps Benjamin Rush best summed up the state's role to John Adams in 1789 when he wrote that the new government was not only framed in
Philadelphia but also had “received from our citizens that impetus or offing that finally carried it into every port in the United States.” The promise of Amendments, which became the price in several key states, also received its impetus in Pennsylvania as did the future debate of whether the Founding Fathers had created a “federal” or a “national” government.

This superb account on Pennsylvania replaces John Bach McMaster’s and Frederick D. Stone’s Pennsylvania and the Federal Constitution written nearly a century ago. Because the printed volume and the microfiche supplement (more than 2,700 document pages) is based on exhaustive research and scrupulous editing, it will not be soon surpassed. Naturally, not everyone will approve of the microfiche since it is more difficult to handle than the printed text. To my surprise, however, I found that the supplement, which includes letters, pamphlets, and a considerable number of newspaper items, can be used with relative ease. The documents consist of consecutively numbered items arranged chronologically, and they are for the most part literal transcripts. Some appropriate subjects have been grouped together and there are a few photographic reproductions. In addition, the end of the supplement contains an appendix of the items to be printed in a future volume in the series entitled Commentaries on the Constitution: Public and Private. Inasmuch as these documents embellish the basic arguments of both supporters and opponents of the Constitution, one certainly ought to be thankful to have these sources (1,000 printed pages) on this medium than to have had them omitted in a more selective edition.

In bringing together conceivably everything that is known on the subject, students and scholars now and to come must be grateful to the editors and to the sponsors. If the succeeding volumes are crafted with the same editorial skill as the first two and if the series is published in a reasonable time span, the money will have been wisely spent. The excellent introductions and the comprehensive indexes at the end of each volume make the materials eminently usable. Finally, accessibility to these indispensable and reasonably priced volumes should enable constitutional and legal scholars to achieve a new level of understanding of this important chapter in American history.

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
ROLAND M. BAUMANN

Cleopatra’s Barge: The Crowninshield Story. By DAVID L. FERGUSON.  
(Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1976. 293 p. Illustrations, index. $10.95.)

A New England family that instead of producing Unitarian college
presidents, mill-owning abolitionists, and stuffed literary reputations has spawned privateers, parvenues, murderers and bastards—how refreshing! The Crowninshields of Salem are such a family, tough, rich, queer; and David Ferguson revels in their eccentricities. The high point of family peculiarity and the high point of the book is the episode that gives the work its title. This is the saga of a George Crowninshield in the second generation of seafaring wealth who built what may well be the Western World’s first seagoing pleasure yacht in 1816. He actually named her *Cleopatra’s Barge* and took her to the Mediterranean with hopes of bringing back a real live European princess to Salem. What happened is Mr. Ferguson’s story, and a better one it would be hard to imagine. It is beautifully told here, and gives the book its best excuse for being.

The other stories—the book is not so much a narrative as a collection of vignettes—are not up to the water level of the *Barge*. They are however sufficiently picturesque: the sad, wispy tale of Clara, bastard daughter of George of the *Barge*, who may have had an affair with Longfellow on the Rhine; the violent tale of murderer Dick, a melodrama villain if ever there was one. Less appealing somehow, though still curious and instructive, are the Ferguson portraits of twentieth-century Frank Crowninshield, “Crownie,” editor of *Vanity Fair*, and his cousin Francis, yachtsman, who married a du Pont. It is here, and also in the beginning where he describes the founding of the family fortunes, that Mr. Ferguson’s own eccentricities as an historian interfere with history. He is anything but cautious, which is part of the fun. But those who still revere the memory of Crownie, that personification of the *New Yorker’s* Eustace Tilley, will not relish the wart-filled sketch presented here. In his effort to avoid George Apley, he bends over backward to caricature all Crowninshields unmercifully. As a result he’s unfair to many members of the tribe, particularly Congressman Jacob, such a worthy antagonist of John Randolph of Roanoke, and to Frederic, father of Crownie, artist and director of the American Academy in Rome. Both these men deserve better. It is only grudgingly that he gives credit to son Crownie for his pioneer efforts as a supporter of modern art in America. In fact, he’s never willing to admit that Crowninshields ever had worthy motives. It’s lucky that no male members are left or Ferguson would have to walk about armed. As for female members, he seems to have taken care of that by marrying one. As for other families: his brief comments on the du Ponts are derived from tainted sources like Zilg and then pickled in Ferguson. He can hardly be judged by objective historical standards; but the Mediterranean cruise of *Cleopatra’s Barge* is worth the trip. And if some of the same salty attitudes might be applied to the present overinflated reputations of another New England family, the Adamses—how salutary!

*Princeton, N. J.*

Nathaniel Burt

An exhibition to define the work of this artist and open his life to further study has been long overdue. It has been held, appropriately, in the former town hall of Wilmington where he had rented studio space in 1838, and where a number of his portraits have a permanent home. This excellent catalogue, more than two years in the making, brings us a complete record, annotated from Otis’ commonplace book at the American Antiquarian Society and other sources. There are ninety-six illustrations, including six in full color and all eighty pieces in the exhibition—painted portraits, landscapes, and the prints, notably the first American lithograph of 1819.

We see, particularly in the five self-portraits, a wide-ranging itinerant painter, son of a Massachusetts manufacturer, in whom the strain of Yankee ingenuity appears on the one hand in admirable craftsmanship, and on the other in surprising variations of style, from sensitive and perceptive characterizations to hard primitive or easy slapdash. One can only assume that Otis readily adjusted to both patrons’ taste and price range, roaming the countryside and charging from two dollars up to one hundred. Unusually fine are his portraits of James Abercrombie, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Marie du Pont, Alexander Lawson and John Neagle. In his family portrait and his Interior of a Smithy we see him enjoying the challenge of unusual lighting effects.

This book is a challenge too to the historian to bring us more. It shows us an artist well worth knowing better. This was the obstinate, competent, self-assertive mind which impressed Charles Willson Peale when he found Otis a fellow passenger on the Delaware steamboat in 1823—“That man possesses very extraordinary talents. He entertained me by his inventions of various sorts. He told me that while he was in Trentown he wanted to make a sketch of a View, that he went to a House painter & got some burnt terre de siene, prusian Blue & white lead and made his sketch very much to his satisfaction.”

Dickinson College

Charles Coleman Sellers


Amateur historians have probably heard of many of the men whose names are associated with giant industrial companies such as Carnegie or Ford, but even professionals could probably name few outstanding commercial bankers of the nineteenth century. These financial men went
about their business quietly, even secretly, diversifying risks and avoiding overcommitment to any single enterprise. Next to Nicholas Biddle, known chiefly because as president of the second Bank of the United States he quarreled with Andrew Jackson, Moses Taylor, president of the National City Bank of New York from 1856 to his death in 1882, may lay a good claim to being the most important commercial banker.

His life illustrates the common transition from mercantile success to close association with a bank, and then widespread private investment in developing areas, often facilitated by the bank’s resources. The son of a locally prominent father, Taylor, with the aid of a parental loan, was able in 1832 at the age of twenty-six to set up on South Street, New York, as an independent importer of sugar and other tropical goods, and as an exporter of the machinery, other manufactures, and American securities that the plantation owners wanted in return. A naturally cautious man, he foresaw the Panic of 1837, and partly as recognition of such acumen he was made a director of the City Bank. From the start his career was always successful, every year in prosperity or depression he became richer and richer, and between his private resources and those of the bank he constituted a major agent and advisor for investing the profits of trade in internal development.

Dr. Hodas’ well-written book is replete with new and useful knowledge about important details of business history, far too many to more than sample them here. While Taylor was president of the bank, for example, he still ran his mercantile house in partnership with Percy R. Pyne, and he expanded his interest in primary commodities to include iron and coal. In the 1850s they still operated six ships, not because ship operation paid, but because it advertised their mercantile house. In Taylor’s actions one also sees the confusions in traditional business ethics brought about by the rapid rise of large corporations. In the 1850s Taylor was on the boards of railroads that bought coal and iron as well as of the companies that supplied them, and this “conflict of interest” was true of a number of his close associates. With knowledge only available to an insider he made millions buying and selling the stock of companies, some of which ultimately went bankrupt. Yet to most of his fellow businessmen he was the typification of sound integrity. The same confusions in ethics governed the thinking of others in the top-level financial groups regarding public policies. Government interference was thought to be uneconomic, but private pools or monopolies were seen as essential to stabilize prices. Labor unions contradicted the laws of the market, but protective tariff fostered American economic growth.

Taylor’s largest continuing financial interest from 1850 until his death was in the development of the coal and iron deposits of New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. In this connection one should remember that these were the important natural resources nearest to New York City. In fact, Scranton and the eastern Wyoming Valley is nearer to New York than to
Philadelphia, and because of more available capital at the former city, it was soon better connected to the mines by railroads. (In the next few years better understanding of such geographic relationships that cut across state lines will come from the regional research projects of the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation.)

Taylor's chief continuing interest in this western projection of the New York market was in the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad and various suppliers such as Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company. Since rolling mills usually had to sell rails in return for stocks and bonds in the purchasing roads, investment in iron manufacture drew Taylor further afield. For a while Taylor was deeply interested in the Michigan Central and its possible connections, but not enough so to try and make it part of a new competing trunkline. Taylor was simply not prepared to run the risks of empire building. A true "sedentary merchant," he preferred nearby enterprises that he could control from his office in New York through able managers such as the Scrantons in Pennsylvania. He did not even try aggressively to expand the National City Bank, preferring to keep it an ultra sound facility for easing the problems of trade and investment that inevitably arose from deferred payments of commercial obligations.

In spite of his quiet conservatism in business dealings, Taylor apparently enjoyed being a public figure in the local New York scene. He led business groups both to prevent the Civil War, and, when war came, to support the Union in men and money. He also took the lead in trying to win banker support for the early war loans. Later he became a somewhat confused leader in the cause of municipal reform. In these and other instances, perhaps because he was president of a commercial bank, he seems to have been more active than other members of the top New York financial group such as J. Pierpont Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, or John Jacob Astor.

Limited by occasionally sparse sources, but aided by his own long experience in practical affairs, Dr. Hodas has been able to put together an excellent business biography of one of the richest and most influential Americans of the mid-nineteenth century. Taylor's estate of a little under $50,000,000, when he died in 1882, may have been second only to that of Cornelius Vanderbilt in the New York City probate records, and his influence with other businessmen must have greatly exceeded that of the taciturn Commodore.

University of Pennsylvania

THOMAS C. COCHRAN

American sheet music illustration, as the meeting of two popular art forms, the song and the lithograph, has been the topic lately of considerable scholarly effort in studies such as David Tatham's *The Lure Of The Striped Pig* and Nancy R. Davison's essay in the 1970 *Winterthur Conference Report*. Given the potential value of further exploration of the interrelation of subject among the popular arts, one awaits the appearance of fresh work in this vein.

Mr. Levy is a veteran author with three previous books on American popular songs—*Flashes of Merriment*, *Grace Notes in American History*, and *Give Me Yesterday*. In *Picture the Songs* Levy again draws upon his own collection of music sheets in a survey of pictorial title pages. One hundred specimens of the art, dating from 1826 to 1895, are illustrated, each accompanied by a catalogue-style essay. Fourteen well-chosen examples are reproduced in splendid color. The selection, although favoring portraits a bit heavily, is representative of a wide range of subject and city of publication.

While the author retains the penchant for the anecdotal apparent in his previous books, precision and scrupulousness for fact remain his weak suit. Information regarding publication, attribution, and technique is thin, and unfortunately subordinated to frequently diffuse commentary on composers and their musical subjects. The vital data on artists, printers, and publishers which finds its way into the text is often unclear or inaccurate. A case in point is the incorrect dating of the Kennedy & Lucas partnership as 1829 to 1835 (p. 8), which actually spanned the years 1828 to 1833. The statement that after Winslow Homer ended his apprenticeship with the Buffords of Boston in 1857 he was “never again to do any work for a lithographer” is contradicted by the existence of his “Campaign Sketches” executed in 1863 for Louis Prang. The absence of footnotes is a frustration. The bibliography, though impressive in length, is devoid of most of the major literature on American popular prints.

Although Mr. Levy’s book is the product of considerable research, a less nostalgic study would be more timely and welcome.

The Library Company of Philadelphia  

BERNARD F. REILLY, JR.

*Edgmont, The Story of a Township*. By JANE LEVIS CARTER. (Kennett Square, Pa.: KNA Press, Inc., 1976. viii, 604 p. Illustrations, index. $15.00.)

Although it lies but fifteen miles from Philadelphia and is surrounded by encroaching suburbia, Edgmont Township, a community of some ten square miles in Delaware County, retains a surprisingly open and rural character. Edgmont is missed by major highways and railway lines and is fortunate to have half its land area given over to Ridley Creek State Park,
the outdoor museum at Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation, a golf club, a farm school and six large gentlemen's farms. On these and on other properties there is an abundance of indigenous domestic architecture in fieldstone which provides a visual statement of survival.

The character of the township also owes something to the continuing, if diminished, presence of some of the same farming and milling families who came to Penn's colony at the first settlement to take up land in what was then Chester County, at Gilead, promptly renamed for the manor of Edgmond in Shropshire.

Edgmont is a statement of this environmental stability seen in the context of three centuries of change and growth. Its narrative history follows a classic pattern, progressing from English origins, early settlement, occupations, churches and schools through the Revolutionary War to the age of the railroad and, finally, the agricultural-become-suburban scene. An outline of the history of the township was first provided by nineteenth-century writers Smith, Ashmead, Futhey and Cope, but that earlier skeleton is fleshed out here with new information from local deeds, wills and inventories, diaries and letters and by the collection of pictorial and architectural evidence. (It is unfortunate that the documentation, which must often be inferred, is not tied down to footnotes as a work of this scope deserves.)

Two sections of Edgmont are particularly attractive, "The Down River People," an account of the local Lenni Lenape Indians, and "In a Far Springtime," the synthesis chapter which embodies the memories of the author, herself a lifelong Edgmontian. She is at her best as a chronicler of the ways of the community: the growth and preparation of food, the dress, habits of worship, school life and occupational patterns in house, barn, shop and mill.

Jane Levis Carter writes with charm and fluency. In her account of a day in the life of a nineteenth-century schoolmaster, Mrs. Carter delightfully succeeds in answering her own invitation to "imagine a sparkling October day in 1853, by which time Samuel Smedley had been teaching at Edgmont Central Seminary for over a year. . . ."

A major source of information is personal reminiscences, many of which were recorded by the author. Wide acquaintance with her neighbors has also made it possible for Mrs. Carter to collect more than 350 photographs ranging from vintage domestic scenes of the Civil War era to fine recent architectural views. Among them are some effective juxtapositions like the pictures of the Bishop farm house both in its simplicity before the Brognard Okie architectural facelift and as it is today, set in terraced box gardens in the never-never land of pre-World War II country life which lingers yet in such corners as this.

A few editorial judgments are in order. Tantalizing statements should have documentation (did Samuel L. Smedley conceive Philadelphia's Fairmount Park?), a few are in error (William Penn was not of noble
birth and never had a title); minor misspellings occur; a number of words are incorrectly capitalized, but the volume is well bound, clearly printed and full of good halftone illustrations.

The story of Edgmont Township shows what can be done with local materials to record both the enduring elements and the changing character of a rural community. In the Edgmont mirror we see the evidence of stability and of loss, the contrast of before and after, the role of rich and poor. Walter Jeffords, M.F.H., whose vast domain became the state park that keeps Edgmont green, gets no more attention than William Wilmer, a black farmer whose photograph is the finest portrait in the book, or "Aunt Lyddy," the local centenarian. Never mind demographic or economic or sociological interpretation; from the personal and pictorial evidence of Edgmont comes a believable picture of three centuries of neighborhood totality.

University of Pennsylvania Archives

FRANCIS JAMES DALLETT

This Was Harrisburg: A Photographic History. By RICHARD H. STEINMETZ, SR. and ROBERT D. HOFFSOMMER. (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1976. 224 p. Illustrations, index. Paper, $8.95; cloth, $12.95.)

Many interesting and worthwhile pictorial works on local and regional history have appeared in recent years, probably stimulated in part by the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution, and facilitated by modern processes for offset reproduction of illustrations. This Was Harrisburg may be regarded as one of the more important of these works, since Harrisburg was not only the capital of Pennsylvania but a major center for transportation and commerce. Intelligent and generous selection of illustrations also make it one of the more attractive—fascinating to the general public and useful to the historian.

Almost three hundred pictures, mostly photographs but supplemented for the earlier period by reproductions of old prints, drawings, and the like, give vivid impressions of Harrisburg and its people from its beginnings to about 1940. The photographs, which provide firsthand evidence of the capital city as it was from the 1860s to recent times, come mainly from the Warren E. Harder collection, the William W. Stoey collection, and the Department of Highways photograph file preserved by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in the State Archives, and from the private collection of Richard H. Steinmetz, Sr. With their aid we can visualize the growth of the city; see the development of its roads and bridges, canal and railroads; and witness the occupations and recreations of its people, even their holidays and parades. Detailed captions identify and explain the illustrations, and greatly enhance their value.

This Was Harrisburg is more than a picture book but less than a full history, which the authors take pains to disclaim. The first seven chapters,
which have about as much text as pictures, cover the history of the community to 1860. In the remaining three chapters, more than half of the book, a few pages of text are followed by many pages of illustrations. The historical account is based generally on the earlier histories of Harrisburg. It has the story of Etienne Brulé’s exploration of the Susquehanna valley, a story discovered too late for most local histories of Harrisburg to include, and for which there is no convincing evidence. A more noticeable error has the “Last Raft” of 1938 breaking up near Fort Hunter and one crew member drowning; actually the raft struck a railroad bridge near Muncy, where seven crew members were drowned. The badly damaged raft was able to continue its voyage to Fort Hunter, where the logs were sold as intended to a Harrisburg lumber dealer.

The arrangement of the pictures is roughly chronological, but there are some curious juxtapositions—for example on pages 136–137, where the public library of 1895, a West Shore camp of Civil War days, and the Harrisburg Hospital in 1884 are in anachronistic company. This reflects, of course, the difficulty in arranging pictures in available space.

Sometimes, in looking through this fascinating collection of oldtime views, it seems that a topical arrangement might have been desirable. Perhaps this was considered and rejected as impracticable. Still, it would have been interesting to turn immediately from Market Square of the 1870s, with the sheds which gave it its name (p. 43), to the Market Square with a horsecar in 1880 (p. 104), with a circus parade in 1892 (p. 114), with trolley cars in 1890 (p. 126), with an Old Home Week parade in 1905 (p. 148), and in 1914 with a single automobile in sight (p. 189). The same might be said of the views from above of various parts of the city: the old-fashioned bird’s eye view from the Capitol to the railroad and canal (pp. 60–61), credited to the Harder collection, although he must have photographed the interesting lithograph, perhaps at the Historical Society of Dauphin County or the Dauphin Deposit Trust Company; a photograph looking east from the steeple of Market Street Presbyterian Church in 1885 (p. 127); a view of the Seventh and Eighth wards about 1900 (pp. 178–179); a view southwest from the Capitol in 1919 (p. 191); and, most interesting of all, a view in 1917 of the old Eighth Ward, back of the Capitol, before it gave way to the present complex of state buildings (p. 192).

These pictures have been mentioned primarily to show what vivid representations of the past days of Harrisburg are to be found in this work, but it would have been possible to list a number of others, such as railroad and canal scenes, views of domestic life, the succession of bridges, or even horse and buggy scenes. Anyone familiar with the present-day city will find it of great interest, while it will arouse nostalgia in present and former residents who remember Harrisburg as it was before urban redevelopment and the flight to the suburbs began to change it so greatly.

Camp Hill, Pa.

Donald H. Kent

By Richard J. Webster. Introduction by Charles E. Peterson.
(Philadelphia: Published with the Philadelphia Historical Commission by Temple University Press, 1976. xlvi, 411 p. Illustrations, index. $20.00.)

A measure of Philadelphia's architectural heritage was lost during the massive redevelopment of the 1950s and 1960s. However, in one sense many of these buildings have been preserved as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Excellent photographs were taken, measured drawings were made, and historical data was gathered by the HABS staff of the National Park Service and the Philadelphia Historical Commission. These records joined earlier HABS records gathered over the years (a total of 600 entries) and are available to the public through the Division of Prints and Photographs of the Library of Congress.

The publication of this catalogue of the Philadelphia Survey (it follows the lead of similar HABS catalogues printed in other cities) was initiated and promoted by the Philadelphia Historical Commission—the guardian of the city's architectural assets. Richard Tyler, the present Historian of the Commission, tells in the Foreword of the collaboration of HABS and the City Commission. He also recognizes the vision and constant support of this production by his predecessor, Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom.

The catalogue will prove of value and interest in various ways. Anyone investigating the history of a particular building (if it was included in the survey) will easily find reference to it in the index so carefully compiled by Dr. Tinkcom. And in the HABS entry itself will be found a brief description of the building, a statement of its architectural and historical significance, date of erection, architect and/or builder if known, alterations and additions, and a listing of the material available from the Library of Congress.

In addition to editing the Survey entries, Richard Webster has written fact-filled histories of the development of nine geographical districts of Philadelphia. The catalogue entries have been skillfully placed in this context along with other significant buildings not included in the survey. These texts and the fine HABS photographs contribute a lively portrait of Philadelphia's rich history of building.

Almost as rich as Philadelphia's architectural history is its pictorial history. Charles E. Peterson's Introduction presents the long Philadelphia tradition of graphically portraying buildings of note. His description of the birth and growth of the Historic American Buildings Survey itself is a first-hand report by the founder.

Congratulations to all the surveyors for gathering the material, and our thanks to those who have brought us this research tool and tribute to Philadelphia building.

National Park Service

Penelope Hartshorne Batchelor
It is surprisingly refreshing to find someone saying good things about the City of Philadelphia. We have heard so much in a negative vein that it seems only fair in this Bicentennial year to read a reaffirmation of the greatness of this city. In Mr. Fairbairn’s new work, *Philadelphia, The Fabulous City of Firsts*, we find that in the tradition of George Morgan in his *Philadelphia, The City of Firsts*, and Joseph Nathan Kane’s *Famous First Facts*, all the reasons why Philadelphia is the “Fabulous” city.

Mr. Fairbairn explains that his book “is not really a history book, nor a guide, nor even one that tells you where to eat. Rather, it’s a book of *handsels*. The dictionary says ‘handsel’ means something used or done for the first time. Our incredible city has more handsels to its credit than any place in the New World.” While he says that this is not a guide, I am sure that it could very well prove to be one. The listings, as well as the illustrations and photographs, most certainly should prove to be an exciting glimpse into many of the aspects of a truly rich and fabulous city of firsts.

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*  

**John H. Platt, Jr.**


In 1972 P. William Filby and Richard Randall organized one of the more unusual Bicentennial exhibitions with their colleagues from the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Maryland Academy of Science and the Peale Museum. With support from the NEH the Maryland Historical Society, the Walters Art Gallery and their sister institutions mounted a joint exhibition, *Maryland Heritage*, that was installed in each of the five institutions. While each institution emphasized its “collections and proclivities” the whole was tied together by a joint catalogue and a circuit of buses. The exhibitions and buses are now gone; the fact that they existed at all is a tribute to the boards and staffs of the five institutions. Logistics must have been a nightmare. What remains is an attractive catalogue of that joint effort.

*Maryland Heritage* does not purport to be a scholarly catalogue such as that offered by the Philadelphia Museum of Art last year. It does, however, record remarkable riches. The editor, John Boles, has brought together five disparate smaller catalogues, each with its own introduction and entries. In “European Art at the Time of the Revolution,” William Johnston of the Walters describes, somewhat summarily, English, French,
German and Italian rococo and neoclassicism in painting, furniture, and the decorative arts without reference to America. The ninety entries that follow describe each piece individually; comparison and interpretation is left to the viewer.

The Baltimore Museum of Art's section really contains two catalogues: "American Painting of the Revolutionary Period" by Sona K. Johnston, and William Elder's treatment of the decorative arts of the same period. Both Johnston and Elder note that the models and conceptual vocabulary of eighteenth-century American artists and craftsmen were derivative from European originals. Particularly refreshing amidst the uncritical praise lavished on things American during the past year is Johnston's statement that English artists who migrated to the colonies "possessed neither unique abilities nor superior creative powers, but instead were painters of average talent working in a staid, conservative manner that had already run its course in England" (p. 55). Sixty-nine paintings, from Blackburn and Wollaston through Stuart and Sully make Johnston's point. Even the powerful Copley portrait of Nathaniel Hurd (item 68) derived from English engravings. Copley had no other model.

The dependence upon English models is abundantly clear in Elder's discussion of the decorative arts. The burden of his argument can be summarized in four names: Chippendale, Adam, Hepplewhite and Sheraton. Regional styles, however, made the adaptations particularly American. Thus the graceful Newport shell carvings and the more formalized Philadelphia carvings were as different from each other as they were from English originals. But Elder casts his net rather too widely. Many pieces have neither Maryland provenance nor makers. And, with the exception of the Dauphin County dower chest, he limits selection to high-style pieces that are probably the heritage of only a very few.

The Maryland Historical Society's contribution, prepared and described by Richard Cox and Romaine Somerville, is the best in the catalogue. Cox's essay, "From Feudalism to Freedom," tells the history of Maryland from the first settlements simply and well. While scholars might take issue with such statements as Coode's Rebellion (1689) presaged the American Revolution (pp. 130-31), the essay generally reflects modern scholarship. The illustrations accompanying the text come from the Society's exhibition and their captions help integrate the object with the essay most effectively. A check list follows the essay.

The Peale Museum's contribution, prepared by Wilbur Hunter and Marion Sinwell might better be titled "Baltimore after the Revolution" because it is from that period that most of their objects are drawn. Hunter's history of Revolutionary Baltimore is straightforward and interesting. But the real joy of the Peale's exhibition was to see so many of the Museum's fine collection of early nineteenth-century paintings.

Mary Olenick's very brief treatment of Maryland scientists, 1776-1976, is a puzzling addendum to the catalogue. Quite properly Olenick begins her
essay by paying some attention to Benjamin Bannekar and Andrew Ellicott, but then moves very quickly to nineteenth- and twentieth-century scientists. Undoubtedly the collections at the Maryland Academy of Sciences are better able to support an exhibition in the later period, but one wonders why the Academy joined in the effort at all if its contribution was to be so insignificant.

With the single exception of the Maryland Academy of Science's rather disappointing contribution, *Maryland Heritage* is a fine record of an unusual experiment in institutional cooperation, an experiment that might well be emulated in such museum-rich cities as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*  
*PETER J. PARKER*

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Hugh Mercer is commemorated by Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, where he once lived; by Mercer County, New Jersey, where he died; by Mercer County, Pennsylvania (home of the Hugh Mercer Chapter, D.A.R.); and, at one remove, by Mercer County, Illinois. His apothecary shop and his medal for the Kittanning expedition may be seen in Fredericksburg, Virginia, his last place of residence.

Two earlier biographies, John T. Goolrick's *The Life of General Hugh Mercer* (1906) and Joseph M. Waterman's *With Sword and Lancet* (1941), are out of print; and the present author rightly observes that the Bicentennial is a very proper occasion for a new book on the distinguished soldier whose career was cut short at the Battle of Princeton.

The present work does not defer to the professional historian. There are no footnotes, the bibliography is limited to published works, and there is no index. Rather, it provides a brief, informative account for the wider circle of general readers. Consistent with this purpose, it uses fictional devices ("This must not be another Culloden," Mercer told himself.), and it alters a few facts: General Forbes named Pittsburgh but not Fort Pitt, which was begun several months after his death. The illustrations are sketchy and include no maps or portraits. The book is attractively printed and bound, and the text has been carefully proofread.

*Mechanicsburg, Pa.*  
*WILLIAM A. HUNTER*

This Bicentennial publication deals with one of Montgomery County's smallest townships, which, at the same time, is one of Pennsylvania's oldest. Originally, the Township was divided into seventeen long, narrow strips, the property of owners who had acquired land in Philadelphia. This arrangement may well date from 1682, as the author states, but the Thomas Holme map which she illustrates and dates 1682 was probably not printed before 1687.

The pages unfold the history of this little area and should be of interest to everyone living there. After the Civil War, during which it was the site of Camp William Penn, the township exercised a strong appeal for men of wealth. There Jay Cooke lived in his mansion "Ogontz," later a school. John Wanamaker was another resident. In the 1890s came P. A. B. Widener and William L. Elkins, who developed Elkins Park and built huge houses. Widener's "Lynnewood Hall" was said to have cost eight million dollars. Other notable township residents included the publishers Cyrus W. Curtis and George Horace Lorimer, who also erected lavish homes, while the most novel of these creations was "Grey Towers," William Welsh Harrison's castle, completed in 1892 and now part of Beaver College.

A pleasant collection of photographs enriches this presentation of the rather glamorous history of Cheltenham Township.


More than 10,000 post offices have existed in Pennsylvania at one time or another from July 26, 1775, when the Continental Congress started the American postal system with Benjamin Franklin as Postmaster General, to the establishment of the B. Free Franklin station of Philadelphia on July 26, 1975. Of these post offices, 2,306 remain in operation today.

This work is organized alphabetically by county. Under each county are listed alphabetically all its post offices, named stations, branches, rural stations and community post offices, together with their dates of establishment (and discontinuation) and the names of their first postmasters. A section is devoted to a list of all of Pennsylvania's first postmasters, and a final section is devoted to an alphabetical list of post offices, their dates and counties. This latter list serves as an index to the book, which should be of interest to devotees of postal history, genealogy, and stamp collecting.