

BOOK REVIEWS

Sensory Worlds in Early America. By PETER CHARLES HOFFER. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. x, 334p. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95.)

Peter Hoffer's *Sensory Worlds in Early America* is an ambitious work of cultural hi that raises important methodological issues and opens up promising new avenues of historical inquiry. *Sensory Worlds* consists of four extended essays that explore "the impact of sensuous experience on the larger course of history" (p. 1). As such, it is less a history of the senses in early America than a history of perception: a history of Americans making sense of what they saw, heard, and felt. Hoffer argues, quite persuasively, that unless historians pay closer attention to the "lost sensory world" (p. 18) of early America their efforts to reconstruct the experiential dimensions of colonial American life for their readers will be inevitably limited. The four essays in *Sensory Worlds* analyze the English-Indian encounter in the seventeenth century through the lens of "sensory novelty" and, ultimately, "sensory imperialism" (pp. 46, 49); witchcraft in New England as a "crime against the senses" (p. 125); the role of sensory cues in shaping cultural "otherness" during the slave uprisings and religious revivals of the mid-eighteenth century; and the American Revolution as both a "revolution in politics" and "a revolution of the senses" (p. 191).

Hoffer's use of sensate experience as an analytical tool is most effective when applied to the lived experience of cross-cultural encounters. His attention to the visual, auditory, and even olfactory cues in the textual record allows him to bring these interactions to life in vivid detail. He shows in the first chapter—the strongest in the book—an especially keen eye for ethnographic detail that leads to intriguing conclusions. By reconstructing English reactions to the Chesapeake and its inhabitants, for example, Hoffer shows that colonizers' efforts to alter the American landscape represented, in many respects, an effort to transform a novel—and frightening—place into a more perceptibly recognizable space. Thus, this sensory imperialism (as Hoffer calls it) was an integral part of a larger colonial project. The book also shines when describing the "sensuous etiquette" of the revolutionary period, offering a comprehensive account of the contemporary politics of speech, manners, and dress—the ways in which Revolutionaries literally embodied their politics.

Hoffer's desire to interpret early American interactions as sensory worlds causes him to overstate his case at times. To assert as he does that all conflict on slave plantations "was first and foremost a sensory event" (p. 149) is to expand

the category of sensory history beyond its utility. Ultimately, *Sensory Worlds* works best when Hoffer uses his evidence to carefully reconstruct the sensate experience in early America in order to bring new depth to familiar stories. His ability to retell these chapters of American history as a "lively and contested sensate process" (p. 253) challenges other historians to look at their own source materials with a new eye—and ear—for how to recreate the sensuous details of early American life in their own narratives.

University of California, Davis

JOHN SMOLENSKI

Draw the Lightning Down: Benjamin Franklin and Electrical Technology in the Age of Enlightenment. By MICHAEL BRIAN SCHIFFER. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003. xiv, 383p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

Michael Brian Schiffer is fascinated by the study of electricity in the eighteenth century. And as an archaeologist, he is particularly interested in "how technologies, as artifacts, related to the lives of the people who made and used them" (p. 3). In this book, he attempts to combine those interests and bring them to life, both through a careful examination of the creation and diffusion of electrical technologies and through brief biographies of some of the major actors. (It should be noted that the title is somewhat misleading. While Schiffer uses Franklin to introduce the reader to the world of eighteenth-century electricity, the book itself is far more wide-ranging, covering electrical technology in Europe and America.)

In three introductory chapters, Schiffer establishes a broad history of electrical technology. The following eight chapters, the core of the book, focus on what he calls "communities" and the ways in which they employed electrical artifacts. He creates these communities by grouping individuals who possessed an interest in a particular use of electricity (such as exploring its medical benefits or using it to protect property), recognizing that this means that those who had several different interests might have taken part in more than one community. He discusses communities of lecturers, collectors, inventors, and those who used electricity both to study nature, health, weather, and chemistry and to protect property. The last chapter generalizes from these experiences to create a large-scale theory of the process of technological differentiation.

In his decision to explore artifacts, Schiffer's work has some significant things to say about the importance of material culture in the history of science. Not only does he add to the growing literature on the role of instruments in the study of nature, he draws our attention to the myriad, and often unexpected, ways in which apparatus was constructed. Schiffer demonstrates the wonderful variety of

everyday things that people employed, from glass jars to pottery, from various animals to (of course) Benjamin Franklin's homemade kite.

Schiffer's focus on groups defined by their interests and activities offers some real benefits. By choosing to examine how electrical technology was differentiated within and among communities, he ably illustrates the diverse methods and purposes for which electricity was studied, devices created, and apparatus used. People interested in the weather built huge electrical machines designed to simulate thunderstorms, while those using machines as an agent of medical care designed apparatus to deliver shocks and devices to measure how much electricity the patient was receiving.

However, there are difficulties with his interpretation. In placing so much attention on what went on within his communities, Schiffer frequently overlooks the importance of connections across the groups. Franklin and Joseph Priestley are given a nod as agents of information transfer, but no sustained study is made of how their actions affected the development of technology between communities. Nor is attention paid to the ways in which an individual's interest in one category (such as disseminating knowledge) affected his interest in another (such as the study of weather).

In addition, throughout the book Schiffer draws connections between the development of apparatus in the eighteenth century and the present day. While this has the laudable goal of making a study of early modern electricity interesting to a popular readership (the use of Franklin and brief biographies are also part of this strategy), if not done carefully such efforts obscure more than they illuminate. Several of Schiffer's inquiries, such as comparisons between Franklin and Edison and the lack of interest in using static electricity to create a lighting system in the eighteenth century, are sketchy and fail to recognize the vast differences in experimental knowledge, institutions, and disciplines in the eighteenth century and in modern times.

Such flaws aside, Schiffer has written a book that is at times captivating and serves as a good introduction to those interested in the world of eighteenth-century electricity.

New Jersey Institute of Technology

KEVIN GUMIENNY

The Most Learned Woman in America: A Life of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson.

By ANNE M. OUSTERHOUT. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004. xx, 391p. Illustrations, notes, index. \$35.)

In *The Most Learned Woman in America*, Anne Ousterhout offers what many scholars interested in colonial American gentility, gender norms, and intellectual life have long awaited: a full-length study of the life of Elizabeth Graeme

Fergusson. Historians of eighteenth-century Philadelphia have long recognized Fergusson as a leading light in the city's colonial intellectual community, due both to her impressive opus of manuscript prose and poetry and her role in founding the first American salon. Beyond her intellectual accomplishments, Fergusson is also known for her entanglements with revolutionary politics, thanks largely to her Scottish loyalist husband whose political allegiance cast a shadow over her own loyalties and put at risk her ownership of her family's country estate.

In this, the first comprehensive biography of Fergusson, Ousterhout provides readers with an eminently readable account of this woman's fascinating life, leading us skillfully from Fergusson's early years as a privileged member of the colonial American elite to her later years of personal loss, political intrigue, and, ultimately, self-imposed exile from the city she loved. Ousterhout's account engages the reader in Fergusson's successes and travails as a woman struggling with the limitations of societal gender norms, the fractious social politics of fellow elites, the upheavals of revolution, and the thorny early American legal system. Ousterhout makes it clear that at times Fergusson brought troubles upon herself; many of her problems stemmed from an inability to reconcile herself to a failed marriage. Yet, at the same time, this study carefully contextualizes Fergusson within eighteenth-century Philadelphia, thus illuminating how her experiences were connected to—and at times contingent upon—larger political, economic, and social developments.

One of the most notable aspects of this biography is Ousterhout's impressive and careful research. A portion of Fergusson's poetry, prose, and personal letters has been readily available to scholars for some time. In this study, however, Ousterhout has looked well beyond such familiar materials to locate and analyze meticulously a wide collection of letters, commonplace books, and poetry scattered across many archives and historical societies. As a result, the author's painstaking work offers readers a full account of Fergusson's life.

Ousterhout's study is an example of biography at its strongest: it provides a window into the detailed life of one woman and illuminates how she fit into the broader social, intellectual, and political communities around her. In doing so, this work suggests important directions for further scholarship on eighteenth-century women and their relationships to intellectual life and activities that extended beyond the household. In particular, this study reminds readers that an elite woman's gender did not alone determine her opportunities in early America. In her focus on Fergusson, Ousterhout shows how critical class standing also could be in shaping a woman's connections to intellectual life. In fact, the author could have explored this issue more explicitly at times. On this point, literary scholar Susan Stabile's introductory essay could be of greater help. Largely interested in Fergusson as part of an early republican literary culture, Stabile situates Fergusson's life and work within a rhetorical framework of "domesticity." She thus creates a juxtaposition between her essay and Ousterhout's work on the issue

of gender categories and ideologies.

Overall, both scholars long awaiting a Fergusson biography and those encountering the history of this remarkable woman for the first time will find *The Most Learned Woman in America* quite satisfying.

Otterbein College

SARAH E. FATHERLY

The Soldiers' Revolution: Pennsylvanians in Arms and the Forging of Early American Identity. By GREGORY T. KNOUFF. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004. xxiv, 311p. Notes, essay on sources and methodology, index. \$45.)

The title, *The Soldiers' Revolution*, is telling, for Gregory Knouff focuses on the enlisted men's engagement in change rather than battle. The War for Independence is the context, but the emphasis is on how military service provided ordinary men with a conduit for political and cultural activism and empowerment. Their revolution was their fight for their definitions of self and interest. They were white people determining racial supremacy, men demanding suffrage, and localists defending their geographic, social, and cultural communities. In ensuring their place and power in the new republic, these soldiers shaped essential characteristics of the nation's identity.

Knouff acknowledges his argument's ties to Edmund Morgan's thesis in *American Freedom, American Slavery* (1975) when he offers "a view of the Revolution that asserts a model of American freedom/American exclusion" (p. 284). He expands upon Morgan's thesis by incorporating material from the "whiteness" studies of the last fifteen years and altering the perspective from elites pushing the racial divide to control poorer white men to those poorer white men widening the divide to promote their own power. The soldiers' revolution was about who would rule at home. That is a common dictum, but Knouff makes one reconsider "who" and "rule." These men did not only want self-governance, they also wanted to rule "Others." They balanced their push for universal white manhood suffrage by denying the privileges of citizenship to Indians, African Americans, and women. Essentially, Knouff contends, they determined that citizenship was not to be the reward of wealth and the performance of masculine roles, but of being white and male.

Knouff's argument is strongest when he discusses how the soldiers perceived and fought the natives on the frontier. He posits that the more the frontiersmen resembled the Indians, especially militarily, the more they had to differentiate themselves. They did so by emphasizing whiteness. Indians were nonwhite; they were Others. Furthermore, Pennsylvania soldiers tended to lump all Indians together as a savage enemy. Savagery meant they could be denied equality.

Free and enslaved Africans constituted threats to social order through their resistance to slavery and as they became Americans—in effect, less different—though cultural convergence. Soldiers accepted Pennsylvania's gradual emancipation of slaves, but only with the continued subordination of these Others. The soldiers' concepts of manhood and male privilege also meant that they never questioned female subordination, though Knouff does not delve deeply into that aspect of othering.

Knouff digs deeper into how these Americans defined themselves against British soldiers and "Tories." He emphasizes that because European soldiers belonged to the same racial community, held the same military status, and did not generally threaten Pennsylvania communities (except in 1777–78), they did not serve as significant Others. However, Tories did, for they threatened local security and disputed local interpretations of revolutionary ideology.

The centrality of localism in forging an American identity and nation appears paradoxical, for localism can be a centrifugal force. Knouff argues, though, that potential instability was mitigated by the development of an imagined unified community based on white male supremacy. He also presents localism as a centripetal idea in that it allowed different groups to oppose British policies for different reasons while coming together to protect separately interpreted communal interests. Localism particularly unified men from the lower social ranks as they enlisted to defend their communities and promote their own power within them. They fought together to establish a nation that protected local interests.

Gregory Knouff offers a fine answer to the question of how people in Pennsylvania's diverse communities came to unify and create a common identity. Based on discerning reading in such sources as the Revolutionary War pension applications, he makes a strong argument for the soldiers constructing and defending a "localist white male nation." Yet there is ambiguity, as Knouff himself admits, in this story. Were Pennsylvanians as consciously exclusionary as Knouff argues? He writes that laws that specifically referred to white inhabitants, such as those requiring oaths of allegiance and militia service, made African Americans and Indians outsiders and made whiteness central to revolutionary identity. That was an effect, yes; yet Revolutionaries made such legislation to affect inclusiveness, or alliances, among those of European heritage. They were still racist acts, but questions remain over intent and definition—matters of importance when considering contemporary intolerance of certain "white" groups and later nativism. Knouff presents the inclusive side of "whiteness" by noting how it created imagined shared interests, but its weaknesses need more acknowledgement. That aside, Knouff provides valuable insight on the formation of national identity. This is a thought-provoking contribution to the complex debate about racial and ethnic lumping and splitting in American history.

Duquesne University

HOLLY A. MAYER

Washington's Crossing. By DAVID HACKETT FISCHER. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. x, 564p. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. \$35.)

Reminiscent of his widely acclaimed *Paul Revere's Ride* (1994), David Hackett Fischer's *Washington's Crossing* is a well-researched account of the story behind a familiar event from the Revolutionary War. The book deals with far more than just George Washington's famous attack on the Hessian garrison at Trenton, New Jersey, in December 1776, however. Fischer asserts that Washington's crossing and the ensuing winter campaign in New Jersey changed the momentum of the war. They ended a long string of American defeats, ruined Sir William Howe's plans to suppress the rebellion with a show of military force and reconciliation, and convinced many British and German officers that the war was unwinnable. Overall, Fischer argues that Washington's crossing marked a key turning point in Western, not just American, history. American independence became a real possibility, and Europeans started to question the old order, as exemplified by the "*Soldatenhandel*," the soldier trade (p. 261). Equally important, Washington developed a way of war that provided for the humane treatment of wounded and captured soldiers, something that European troops frequently had not attempted.

One of Fischer's key themes is the clash between a society based on "liberty and freedom" and one based on "order and discipline" (p. 5). He repeatedly notes how Washington learned to develop consensus within an army composed of Virginia planters, rugged backwoodsmen, New Englanders steeped in the militia tradition, and Pennsylvania Associators. Fischer contrasts Washington's methods with the authoritarian British model in which generals directed operations with little regard for divergent opinions. He also stresses the importance of contingency, "the sense of people making choices, and choices making a difference in the world" (p. 364). In this context, readers are introduced to or learn more about Philemon Dickinson, John Cadwalader, Charles Cornwallis, and even perhaps, Betsy Ross, among others.

In addition to these broader themes, Fischer is very good on the details of war, and he enhances these with numerous maps. Drawing on both standard and previously overlooked sources, he paints a vivid picture of the war in the middle states between March 1776 and March 1777. He describes German troops looting their way across New Jersey and the subsequent civilian response. He also provides a gripping narrative of exhausted American soldiers marching through a howling nor'easter on their way to Trenton. Once there, they found an able Hessian garrison, not drunk after Christmas revelry, but worn out by repeated alarms. Many readers will find Fischer's descriptions of the second battle of Trenton and the "Forage War" illuminating.

This is a highly readable and entertaining book that deserves a wide audience.

The footnotes contain a wealth of interesting information, as do the twenty-four appendices that cover topics ranging from troop strength to ice conditions on the Delaware River. Fischer also includes a historiographic essay on how portrayals of Washington's crossing have changed over time and why. While some scholars might be put off by the book's popular tone and positive message, most readers will welcome it and gain a greater appreciation for the men and women who created the United States.

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania

MICHAEL P. GABRIEL

Crucible of American Democracy: The Struggle to Fuse Egalitarianism and Capitalism in Jeffersonian Pennsylvania. By ANDREW SHANKMAN. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004. xii, 298p. Notes, index. \$34.95.)

Andrew Shankman's first book is a superb contribution to the political and intellectual history of the early republic. Framed as an intervention into the ongoing debate over the origins of democracy and capitalism in America, *Crucible of American Democracy* treats early nineteenth-century Pennsylvania as a laboratory to understand how the state's Republicans attempted to hold on to their conceptions of independence and equality as they observed accelerating socioeconomic differentiation and diminishing opportunities. Unified by their opposition to Federalist policies in the 1790s, after 1800 the "Pennsylvania Jeffersonians" quickly split into factions that competed for control of the state party and, more importantly, provided different answers to the problem of safeguarding democracy in the face of economic change.

Shankman identifies three groups among the Republicans: the Philadelphia "radicals" around William Duane and Michael Leib; the increasingly powerful rural and western men who supported Simon Snyder's bid for the governorship; and a coalition of conservative Republicans (the "Quids") who defined themselves not the least against the radicals' campaign for a constitutional convention and their attack on the independent judiciary and the common law. What divided these men more fundamentally, however, were their irreconcilable differences over the specific shape democracy and economic development should take in Pennsylvania. Unlike the Federalists, all Republicans accepted popular sovereignty and "identified material independence and a rough equality of condition as essential for productive democratic citizenship"—but each group "disagreed about how best to ensure those conditions" (pp. 108–9). Whereas the radicals concluded that the Revolution had established the right of common men to determine their own lives, the Quids continued to believe that "the best and wisest men in the community" would have to guide the people to ensure justice and prosperity (p. 146). More dramatically, the radicals came to argue that nothing—

not a governor, not a state senate, not a supreme court—should stand in the way of majoritarian rule: for them the separation of powers was an “antidemocratic idea” (p. 158). Where the radicals saw judicial and political elites obstructing opportunity—for them inequality had primarily political causes—the Quids saw only the unavoidable effects of “the democratic freedom to pursue one’s talents” (p. 105). Inequality could be fought by supporting economic development (banks, manufacturing, and internal improvements). “Opportunity, prosperity, and mobility, not [the radicals’] dangerous and anarchic innovation,” as well as a due regard for private property and individual rights, “would ensure the future for Pennsylvania’s producers and citizens” (p. 100). (For Shankman the Quids’ specific take on fusing democracy and capitalism prefigures the “classical liberalism” of the later nineteenth century [p. 148].) The Snyderites’ ideological trajectory led them from close association with the Philadelphia radicals to a rapprochement with the Quids. Factional battles with the Philadelphians led the Snyderites to argue that Leib and Duane had become a threat to democracy, that their machinations threatened the expression of the popular will. The Snyderites also embraced the Quids’ vision of economic development: “the market [could] produce social and economic equality” (p. 191). In the late 1810s, whenever stronger evidence accumulated that the opposite development was taking place, political realities in the state had made critiquing this situation without also questioning the legitimacy of democracy impossible.

Students of Pennsylvania politics will be familiar with Shankman’s cast of characters and the partisan and policy issues explored in this book. Some readers may be put off by his neglect of important recent work in the field (Jeffrey Pasley’s *Tyranny of Printers* [2001] in particular) or a certain degree of repetitiveness—but these are minor concerns. What distinguishes *Crucible of American Democracy*—and this is impossible to convey in a short review—is its detailed and convincing account of the emergence of a new political economy out of the quest for political power in Pennsylvania. Shankman is especially good at describing how new arguments emerged in the conflict among the Republicans—in a specific historical situation, fueled by the ideas and actions of specific individuals—rather than giving us yet another account of “disembodied” political language and abstract ideological change (p. 239). He shows persuasively how the emergence of liberal individualism and the embrace of capitalism in postrevolutionary America were the results of an extended struggle, not an easy, inevitable transition. Hopefully the publisher will issue a paperback edition before long.

Florida State University

ALBRECHT KOSCHNIK

Damn Dutch: Pennsylvania Germans at Gettysburg. By DAVID L. VALUSKA and CHRISTIAN B. KELLER. (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2004. xix, 236p. Illustrations, notes, appendices, index. \$26.95.)

This work is more than a retelling of the role of Pennsylvania Germans at Gettysburg; rather it is a most welcome and timely examination of the identity of "Pennsylvania Germans" and their role in the Civil War. As the authors make clear, there were distinct communities: "the Pennsylvania Dutch of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth-century migrations and the later emigrants from German-speaking Central Europe who arrived in the nineteenth century, the so-called German Americans" (p. ix).

Although often viewed by Anglo-Americans as the same, the Pennsylvania Dutch and German Americans were very different and often found themselves in conflict over political and cultural issues. Whereas the German Americans were firmly in the Republican and Unionist camp, the Pennsylvania Dutch were a divided community, heavily Democrat, and often suspected of Copperhead sympathies. The two "communities" also served differently: the Pennsylvania Dutch tended to serve in ethnically mixed regiments, such as the 67th, 87th, 107th, 149th, 150th, and 151st Pennsylvania; whereas German Americans were represented by more purely ethnic regiments, including the 27th, 73rd, 74th, and 75th Pennsylvania.

The authors offer a candid assessment of the dearth of literature on Pennsylvania's German American participation in the Civil War. There are only a handful of published first-hand accounts, including Hermann Nachtigall's *Geschichte des 75sten Regiments, Pa. Vols.* (1886) and the Gettysburg Battlefield Commission's *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg* (1914); and a number of unpublished collections, including the Numa Barned Papers at the William L. Clement Library of the University of Michigan (73rd Pennsylvania). Works that look at German Americans within a broader perspective include Joseph G. Rosengarten's *The German Soldier in the Wars of the United States* (1886), Wilhelm Kaufmann's venerable *Die Deutschen im Amerikanischen Bürgerkriege* (1911), Frank H. Taylor's *Philadelphia in the Civil War* (1913), Ella Lonn's *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (1951), James S. Pula's *The History of a German-Polish Civil War Brigade* (1976), and William L. Burton's *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Regiments* (1988).

The authors argue that the Civil War affected both the Pennsylvania Dutch and the German Americans, and ultimately enhanced their ethnic identity. While that is certainly true, I would also argue that it ultimately hastened their Americanization. When in October 1862 Major Adolf von Hartung of the 74th Pennsylvania ordered that all orders and reports be written in English, he was simply acknowledging the fact that the German immigrants and refugees he commanded considered themselves Americans and were willing to shed their

blood in defense of their new homeland.

There are two problems with *Damn Dutch: Pennsylvania Germans at Gettysburg*: the maps are of uneven quality, and the title really doesn't do the book justice. Indeed, despite the authors' protestations to the contrary, this book is at its most interesting in its broader examination of the Pennsylvania Dutch and German Americans of Pennsylvania. And while the narratives on the battle are interesting, they don't really offer many new insights into Pennsylvania Dutch and German American participation at Gettysburg. But these small criticisms aside, this is a fine work that truly helps fill a void in the vast field of Civil War scholarship.

Washington, DC

E. BRET COULSON

Party Games: Getting, Keeping, and Using Power in Gilded Age Politics. By MARK WAHLGREN SUMMERS. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. xiv, 352p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$59.95; paper, \$22.50.)

In this fine book Mark Wahlgren Summers devotes but brief attention to the ideologies, policy orientations, and social sources of Gilded Age partisanship. To be sure, these are interesting dimensions of Gilded Age politics, but they illuminate dimly the no-holds-barred mentality that by definition sets the political activist apart from the average voter. Accordingly, Summers focuses on the broad organizational base of the major parties and the methods of late nineteenth-century Republican and Democratic organizers to cultivate, manipulate, intimidate, and many times defraud the public in the pursuit of office.

Of course the major parties engaged in plenty of harmless campaign hoopla in order to excite the faithful; torchlight processions, picnics, and flatulent oratory filled the days leading up to an election. But these amusements were only a part of the major parties' repertoire for getting and keeping political power. Always in control of state legislatures, the major parties employed the gerrymander to enlarge their majorities. Sycophantic partisan editors whipped up fear of the opposition with outrageous claims often repeated. Vote buying and ballot fraud were routine facets of Gilded Age elections, and not just in the notorious cities. Then too, voter intimidation and election day violence might provide the margin of victory. This was especially so in the South, where racially motivated political terrorism secured Democratic hegemony. Democrats' commitment to white supremacy explains much of the deplorable politics in the Gilded Age South. What about the rest of the country? Skeptical of traditional arguments that blame the scramble for office on the corrupting influence of big business, Summers provides a sensible alternative explanation. The structural rules and

procedures of American politics, such as our winner-take-all system, joined with the period's intense partisanship to encourage nefarious practices. In an era of highly competitive elections, blind party devotion demanded victory at all costs, and too often simply winning office became the end game. The huge number of appointive government positions in the late nineteenth century also encouraged dirty tricks. So too did the parties' control of the ballot. Small wonder that the era's third party movements emphasized antipolitician and antiparty themes, for there was much in party politics to decry.

The rules of the game made third parties all but futile in the Gilded Age. And as Summers makes clear in case after case, major party activists opened their bag of dirty tricks to ensure third party defeat. But the major parties also—and this is Summers's crucial point—demonstrated flexibility when faced with potentially serious third party challenges. Third party movements encompassed followers who had long histories of fealty to one of the two major parties, and Democrats and Republicans modified their campaign messages and enacted policies that answered at least some of the criticisms of their disgruntled constituents. In the final analysis, Democratic and Republican politicians controlled the Gilded Age political system and principally ran it in their own interest, but they were compelled to respond, however grudgingly and incompletely, to the people's will. Lively, engaging, and consistently insightful, *Party Games* is a work of mature scholarship on the relationships of power in our political system. Sure to enrich specialists and nonspecialists alike, it is essential reading for anyone interested in the Gilded Age.

Eastern Illinois University

MARK VOSS-HUBBARD

The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840–1917. By JON A. PETERSON. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. xxi, 431p. Illustrations, notes, index. \$59.95.)

In *The Birth of City Planning*, a book that is both a tour de force of intellectual history and a deft appraisal of professional practice, Jon Peterson argues that the emergence of the ideal of comprehensive planning—of plans that embraced the city as an organic unity, that encompassed its social as well as material fabric—was not a straightforward triumph. Innovators like Frederick Law Olmsted may have given cities greenswards, grandiose water systems, and engineered sewerage, but these were “special interest” plans that reflected narrow expertise. At Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893, the prodigious work of architect Daniel H. Burnham inspired a movement for the City Beautiful, but like its plaster facades, Burnham's “White City” was more surface than substance. What brought the breakthrough, Peterson says, was the McMillan Commission's Plan

for Washington, DC, in 1902, a call for sweeping transformation of the Mall, Pennsylvania Avenue, and the district's parks, which touched off a national mania for city plans. Riding the energies of municipal reform, local groups charted some eighty plans, including one by the Harrisburg League for Municipal Improvement and the Philadelphia proposal for a processional boulevard, a park on the western shore of the Schuylkill River, and the reclamation of piers at Penn's Landing. "Social progressives" added their own elements to the national effort, notably the vehement attack on capitalist congestion by the impetuous New Yorker Benjamin C. Marsh. In the years before the Great War, national conferences on city planning brought together a host of professionals who accepted the social as well as the physical rudiments of the comprehensive ideal.

The nascent movement, however, could never fully amalgamate these interests, as Peterson shows in the career of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., who led the struggle to set down the profession's parameters. Olmsted accepted the comprehensive outlook as he saw it; his 1910 plan for the Pittsburgh Civil Commission encompassed civic structures, railroads, street systems, land-use controls, even smoke abatement. But he remained the realist, ever conscious of the practical demands of municipal clients. He exhorted his colleagues to collect technical data, battled against Marsh's crusade for radical housing reform, and kept an aversion toward great plans of the Burnham kind, which enthralled audiences until they reached for their wallets. Olmsted's solid, middle course, Peterson contends, opened the way for comprehensive planning that became an administrative process, run by a government bureau ready "to serve those with the power to act" (p. 315). Realtors and community builders (with zoning), municipal engineers (traffic circulatory patterns), and park enthusiasts (recreation and social hygiene) could all lay claim to city planning that evolved into what Peterson calls "a fragmented art" (p. 331). While he harbors a lingering regret for planning that turned its back on Burnham's bravura style for the buttoned-down expertise of the younger Olmsted, Peterson is inclined to appreciate half a loaf. City planning may no longer be the heroic enthusiasm that held so much hope at the turn of the twentieth century, but its ubiquitous achievements—the civic plazas, grand boulevards, building codes, and reclaimed waterfronts, were no mean gains—even if most metropolitan residents have come to take them for granted and have no knowledge of their provenance.

Montclair State University

JOEL SCHWARTZ

Documenting Pennsylvania's Past: The First Century of the Pennsylvania State Archives. Edited by WILLIS L. SHIRK JR. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 2003. 242p. Illustrations, bibliography. \$32.95.)

Willis L. Shirk Jr. served as the project editor for this two-part centennial volume. Three general editors, a design and layout specialist, and a final editor assisted him. While the chapters themselves do not bear any authorship, six individuals apparently collaborated in writing part 1 (a mere twenty pages). This history of the Pennsylvania State Archives (PSA) drew on the 1983 *Historical Records in Pennsylvania* assessment report. Sixteen staff members wrote and researched the individual chapters for the unnamed part 2.

In the foreword, Frank M. Suran concludes that "the true measure of success for any archival program is found in its holdings" (p. 33). This belief led the committee of writers to adopt a documents-driven strategy to produce the celebratory two-hundred-page part 2. In giving emphasis to the "most precious and fragile relics of the Commonwealth's historical memory" (inside flap) and in engaging in storytelling, the writers have largely produced a coffee table volume with a narrow, nonanalytical story line.

Part 1 discusses the origins of the commonwealth's continuing effort to preserve and make available Pennsylvania's documentary record (pp. 11–28) and the early and ongoing commitment to report on records through digital publication (pp. 29–30). Actually, the 138-volume publication of the *Pennsylvania Archives*, begun in 1838, dominated the commonwealth's archival landscape for a century. Yet the writers miss pointing out how the "Great Historical Enterprise" of the nineteenth century and the priorities of the Division of Research and Publications in the twentieth century shaped the development of a state archives program. It was not until after 1975 that care for the records of state government and its political subdivisions was well understood at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC).

The volume's summary overview of the history of the PSA is selective, superficial, and unrewarding. The writers frequently omit significant details, resulting in misleading or incomplete reporting on the role of self-conscious patriotic interests in promoting the commonwealth's rich history. The role of internal and external politics and the divisional rivalry within and between the administrative bureaus in the PHMC are also lost. Readers are led to believe that the PSA operated in a vacuum (with no leadership), even though its several divisions operated within a Bureau of Archives and History. (A chronological chart of the program history and the changing organizational structure of the PHMC would have been useful.) Too little comment is made about the state archivists, beginning with Curtis Garrison, either in changing or in staying the course of the PSA. In

contrast, the story line advanced here suggests that they all responded willingly and approvingly to all new legislative mandates without any struggle or even foot-dragging. Too much credit is given to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission for enabling the PSA to fulfill its documentary heritage mission at all levels. This top-down emphasis leads one to wonder why the committee of writers did not seek to recognize internal structure(s), political and patriotic forces, and the meeting of strategic plans. Finally, some reporting imbalance exists in part 1, where the Local Government Records program receives more attention than other facets of state archives' programming.

Part 2 contains more than 175 digital-based photographs, which were either done in-house or by Commonwealth Media Services, arranged in nine chapters over two hundred pages. The editor's impressive use of color and the wide range of illustrations accompanying the narrative account enhance part 2. But at times the breath and number of items becomes a liability resulting in gaps and unevenness in the full story of the Keystone State. (Readers will want to rely on *Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth* (2002), edited by Randall M. Miller and William Pencak.)

The volume contains endnotes for part 1 only. The source and record group location for the illustrations, however, are identified. There is a bibliography but no index or list of illustrations.

This reviewer would have welcomed a more detailed statement on how the PSA responded to the 1983 state assessment report. So, too, the critical challenges that the PSA will face in the twenty-first century require more attention. This program history is not the last word. A more accurate, lively, and serious assessment of the PSA remains to be written.

Oberlin College Archives

ROLAND M. BAUMANN

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Franklin Issue of *PMHB*

In honor of the upcoming Franklin Tercentenary in 2006, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* is soliciting articles for a special issue on Benjamin Franklin and his legacy, to be published in October 2006. We seek manuscripts that shed light on all aspects of Franklin's life, as well as papers that examine Franklin's influence on Philadelphia and Pennsylvania during his lifetime and beyond.

Manuscripts should be no longer than 35 double-spaced pages, including notes (which should also be double spaced). For more information on our submission guidelines, see <http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=276>. Manuscripts may be sent to:

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Historical Society of Pennsylvania
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Philadelphia, PA 19107

Or e-mailed to pmhb@hsp.org

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