they were the majority party and more than their mean share of registered voters when they were the minority party” (p. 193). The crucial difference has been the size of the majority. Republican majorities ranged from 59 to 80 percent while the Democratic majority has rarely exceeded 54 percent. This comparatively small majority has not been able to overcome the majority party’s historic inability to mobilize its base.

Similarly intriguing are Treadway’s conclusions regarding careerism in the General Assembly, the lack of political experience among new members of the assembly, and the disproportionate success of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh candidates in statewide elections. This last assertion might surprise observers of Pennsylvania politics. Anti-Philadelphia and anti-Pittsburgh bias may be a very real phenomenon in rural Pennsylvania. But the influence of the vote in the urbanized areas is indisputable. Fifty-eight percent of the winners of statewide elections have come from one of the commonwealth’s two major metropolitan areas.

*Elections in Pennsylvania* is not without shortcomings. Much of the preliminary historical background is drawn from the venerable *History of Pennsylvania* (1973). This may be testament to the quality of Klein and Hoogenboom’s work, or to the dearth of political history in the more recent *Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth* (2002). Second, statistical analysis rarely makes riveting reading; the casual student of history may find the going rather tedious. Third, Treadway is dealing with legislative and statewide electoral trends that do not necessarily hold at the county and municipal level—the seat of much political power in twentieth-century Pennsylvania and the preserve of the GOP long after the New Deal. Similarly, African Americans in Chester, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg continued to vote Republican in local elections long after the New Deal realignment of the 1930s, and Philadelphia’s 1951 Democratic revolution had little to do with FDR.

These, however, are minor complaints. In the final analysis, *Elections in Pennsylvania* is a well-researched, clearly written, and highly informational monograph that represents a significant contribution to the historiography of politics in Pennsylvania.

**Millersville University**

**JOHN M. McLARNON**


Ian Tyrell, professor of history at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, has traced the manner and mode in which American historians (i.e., professional, university-based academicians holding the PhD) have engaged
the public since the turn of the twentieth century. Beginning with the founding of the American Historical Association, Tyrell found that each succeeding generation of historians expressed to one degree or another a sense of diminishing influence or cachet and, despite history remaining “a critical part of American public discourse,” historians themselves perpetually “claim to be marginalized by this discourse” (p. 2).

After examining historians’ relentless attempts to influence public opinion and engage general readers, shape school curricula and history textbooks, and manipulate public policy and public perceptions of history, both the events and their interpretation, Tyrell concludes that historians “have been exaggerating their irrelevance” for generations (p. 2) and wrongly blaming “professionalization and specialization as the root causes” of their frustrations (p. 8). Granted, the discipline is fractured and fractious, but the fault, he suggests, does not lie entirely within. Rather, he asserts, historians ought to be more mindful of the general intellectual and social currents flowing around and past them, as well as the influence of “powerful interests, lobby groups, and fractious and diverse constituencies far removed from the tenor of academic interpretation” (p. 254).

Tyrell discovered that historians’ contemporary anxieties about overspecialization and the profession’s collective angst over perceived lack of political and cultural clout are nothing new. At the core of the problem, he posits, is the “failure of American historians to examine the history of historical practice” (p. 25). That failure Tyrell proposes to at least partially ameliorate with this history of historical practices focused largely on the American Historical Association and the surprising number of its public initiatives, especially during the period from World War I to the late 1940s. Through memoirs, biographies, private papers of leading historian-intellectual activists, and a careful reading of the secondary literature on public memory and historians’ public roles, Tyrell discerns distinctive trends of public engagement, notably observing the gathering politicization of American history and its closeness and importance to the state.

The author asks, “What’s Wrong with History?” and why are historians not more publicly engaged? His answers will surprise many historians. After tracing the debates over historical specialization, the “trajectory of public engagement” (p. 243) by historians, and their involvement through the years in radio, movies, government service, state and local history, reform of history teaching in the schools, hot and cold war propaganda, and the “building of public memory through the state” (p. 157), Tyrell found “much more variety and variability in historians’ responses to public issues than is usually understood” (p. 254).

Temple University

James W. Hilty