

focuses on efforts by Priestly and others, such as Priestly's Northumberland successor, James Kay, to build a viable Unitarian movement. Yet, emphasis on actions and writings of English Unitarian leaders prevents warranted attention from being given to popular Socinianism in the eleven Unitarian churches established from Maine to Kentucky under the auspices of English Unitarians. Bowers's denominational approach also precludes the full exploration of Atlantic themes alluded to throughout his book. He maintains that transatlantic networks of intellectual exchange and immigration transmitted English Unitarianism to the United States and sustained the Socinian faction. However, English Unitarian émigrés such as Thomas Cooper, or the printers and booksellers who distributed Unitarian writings, appear only sporadically throughout the text. Although Bowers's book is unlikely to influence debates over the early republic's place within Atlantic intellectual or cultural history, it is nevertheless an indispensable study of the origins of American Unitarianism and of Pennsylvania religious history.

University of Texas at Dallas

ERIC R. SCHLERETH

Backcountry Crucibles: The Lehigh Valley from Settlement to Steel. Edited by JEAN R. SODERLUND and CATHERINE S. PARZYNSKI. (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2008. 349 pp. Notes, notes on contributors, index. \$46.50.)

Several years ago, a popular bumper sticker proclaimed, "Pennsylvania: America Starts Here." In various ways, this book reinforces that statement. As a result of the Lehigh Valley's racial pluralism, freedom of worship, political democracy, and "boom and bust" economic cycles, this region could be considered a microcosm of the nation, especially the backcountry, as a whole.

The editors divide the book into four chronologically arranged sections comprised of fourteen original articles that cover the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. The introduction presents the editor's rationale for writing the book and tells readers what they will find in it.

Not all articles focus on the Lehigh Valley, however. Marianne S. Wokeck ascribes Pennsylvania's economic growth to its "redemptioner system" (32) that supplied abundant immigrant labor and facilitated the colony's westward expansion. Michael Baylor points out that Pennsylvania's German Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic clergy found the transition from the European "state church" to Pennsylvania's separation of religion from the civil government difficult, while sectarians, such as Mennonites, rejoiced in Pennsylvania's comparatively free environment. The Lehigh Valley is scarcely mentioned in Andrew Shankman's "Perpetual Motion—Perpetual Change—A Boundless Ocean Without a Shore": Democracy in Pennsylvania and the Consequences of the

Triumph of the People, 1800–1820.” Nevertheless, he demonstrates how Pennsylvania’s ordinary men, including residents of the interior, such as the Susquehanna Valley’s Simon Snyder, attempted to make the state’s “dynamic economy an agent of democratic equality and independence” (264). Only one-third of Gregory Evans Dowd’s article on the question of “native sovereignty” (126) discusses the Lehigh Valley’s Delaware and Conestoga Indians. Despite slighting the Lehigh Valley, these articles contribute to an understanding of Pennsylvania’s “backcountry.”

The remaining chapters deal exclusively with the Lehigh Valley. Of course, the Moravians receive significant attention. Beverly Prior Smaby “explores gender concepts underlying women’s leadership in Bethlehem,” which were developed in Europe by the Moravian leader Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf (74). Aaron Spencer Fogleman focuses on “how and why” Moravian evangelists who went forth from Bethlehem became involved in conflicts, especially among the German Lutheran and Reformed church people “in and around Pennsylvania” (185). The missionaries received support from Moravians who remained in Bethlehem. Stephen H. Cutcliffe and Karen Z. Huetter show that the Moravians’ “Perfection in the Mechanical Arts” made Bethlehem an important site in American technological development (161). Although the Moravians were prominent in the Lehigh Valley, people of other backgrounds settled there also. Ned Landsman explains the relevance of the Presbyterian Scottish and Irish settlers’ cultural heritage to their “American identities and experiences” (105). Jeffrey Pasley discusses the Lehigh Valley’s political development by showing how newspaper editors, including Easton’s Thomas J. Rogers, influenced the American political system by pushing it “toward the typical nineteenth-century pattern of popular campaigning” (239).

Many readers will find the last four articles on the Lehigh Valley’s recent socioeconomic development among the most interesting. Augustine Nigro analyzes attempts to transform the Lehigh River into an artery for commerce by constructing first a canal and then a railroad. The need for rails ultimately led to “The Improbable Success of Bethlehem Steel” that John K. Smith attributes to Charles Schwab’s leadership, which transformed a small company into one of the nation’s largest producers of steel products. Because Bethlehem was the company’s headquarters, its executives lived there. Roger D. Simon notes how they “quickly displaced the old guard” (316) of Moravian and railroad elites, even founding their own Saucon Valley Country Club, which was controlled by the “Steel men” (320). The Lehigh Valley’s economic decline is the subject of the book’s final article by Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht, “Gender and Economic Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region, 1920–1970.” They demonstrate the impact of deindustrialization on the Lehigh Valley’s families—men, women, and children.

The editors are to be commended for selecting capable authors who provide penetrating insights. The articles are well written and copiously documented,

citing numerous primary sources. Several authors include informative charts and graphs. Most articles contain illustrations of pertinent people and places. The editors conclude with an identification of contributors and an index.

Pennsylvania State University

JOHN B. FRANTZ

An American Aristocracy: Southern Planters in Antebellum Philadelphia. By DANIEL KILBRIDE. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006. x, 216 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

Upper-class southerners were drawn to Philadelphia as the premier national center of conservative aristocratic society, education, and culture after the American Revolution. Bonds of friendship and kinship developed as a result and helped Philadelphia's elite families maintain their southern connections in the face of rising sectional animosities. In turn, southerners felt more comfortable in this most southern of northern cities than they did farther north. Even on the eve of the Civil War, therefore, there were many southern students in Philadelphia's medical schools and young ladies' "French" boarding academies.

Daniel Kilbride develops this argument through a half-dozen chapters. What emerges, *inter alia*, is that class mattered more than any differences over slavery. Philadelphia drew southerners who sought there the urbanity, cosmopolitanism, and seasoning that were much esteemed by their parents and peers back home. These values and pursuits helped successive generations of aristocratic families at once resist expanding middle-class ideals and, eventually, wear lightly some of the sterner elements of Victorian morality and culture. At the same time, these men and women found themselves and the clubs and organizations to which they belonged progressively less important as arbiters of taste, setters of standards, and shapers of intellectual life for the nation.

The analysis is highlighted by telling quotes—sometimes interpreted with more certainty than is warranted. It also introduces central personalities and brims with suggestive details. Though cleanly written, the volume has a few errors and inconsistencies. John and Pierce Butler had a maternal rather than a "material" grandfather (39). On the one hand, Kilbride quotes an Alabama planter's fear that "girls there [in Philadelphia] are imbibing habits and manners not perfectly congenial with those of the South" (57), while, on the other hand, he insists that southern parents "saw little to fear in intersectional friendships and much to admire" (65). Southern participation in the American Philosophical Society declined for various reasons, including rising sectional tensions, but southerners continued to be the majority or near majority at Philadelphia medical schools—a divergence in trends demanding more concerted explanation than Kilbride provides.