

specific information on the people, places, and events for a previously little-documented regional faith community. This group of readers will find a treasure chest of exacting details on a large collection of family names, land transfers, and other fine points. For those seeking a more interpretive presentation with broader strokes, the level of detail present can be tedious at times.

Building on the Gospel Foundation completes a triumvirate of major works on Pennsylvania Mennonites. The narrative style with ample illustrations and careful and voluminous notes continues the scholarship, style, and presentation of the two previous histories of Lancaster Conference Mennonites and Franconia Conference Mennonites.

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society

BRINTON L. RUTHERFORD

In the Kingdom of Coal: An American Family and the Rock That Changed the World. By DAN ROTTENBERG. (New York: Routledge, 2003. xvii, 327p. Illustrations, chronology, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

No American industry has, at once, been wrought with so much peril for so many, been so destructive to the landscape and environment, and so divergent in the interests of labor and capital yet also so incredibly profitable for a select few and so necessary for human survival and economic growth as coal mining. Dan Rottenberg reminds us of the contrasts that are at the heart of the coal mining story.

Rottenberg traces the history of these contrasts mainly through the stories of two families. The capitalist Leisenring family were among the original investors in coal mining in Pennsylvania's anthracite region in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and their coal empire continued and expanded westward well into the twentieth century. The working-class Givens family of Virginia's bituminous coalfields earned a basic living—and sometimes suffered tragic consequences—supplying the nation's insatiable appetite for coal.

Rottenberg discusses the interplay of factors impacting the lives and livelihoods of the Leisenring and Givens families and others who consumed and benefited from coal. Among these factors were organized labor and public policy. The powerful United Mine Workers of America—complete with its dictatorial leader John L. Lewis, the corruption that followed in his aftermath epitomized by W. A. "Tony" Boyle, and its efforts at democratic reform in the 1970s—gave mine workers their first collective voice. Likewise public policies, such as the 1969 Coal Mine Health and Safety Act and the 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, gave mine workers the first federally mandated mine safety initiatives, recognized black lung as a compensable occupational disease, brought about cleaner air through reduced coal emissions, and resulted in industry down-

sizing.

In the Kingdom of Coal is successful at discussing all of these interacting forces. The writing is clear, easy to follow, and appealing to academic and general audiences. The breadth of the history, 1792 to 1999, is rare in the annals of American business and labor histories. Some important points remain understated, however. Nearly 150,000 mine workers have died in America's coal mines in the last two hundred years. Tens of thousands have been stricken with black lung disease. These are astounding figures by any measure. Yet coal produced record profits—mainly for absentee owners. Moreover, U.S. mine health and safety laws have traditionally been among the weakest and least enforced in the industrialized world. Finally, coal was the first American industry to experience widespread “deindustrialization”—as early as the 1920s—though the term wouldn't be invented by historians and social scientists for another fifty years. These points are hinted at though not always analyzed by Rottenberg, who has a noteworthy biography as a writer and reporter. Perhaps there is more to come from the author?

Historians and students of American industry and labor, public policy makers, those interested in historical biography, and the general public will all benefit from having this important work available. It is highly recommended reading.

*Pennsylvania Historical and
Museum Commission*

KENNETH C. WOLENSKY

The Education of a University President. By MARVIN WACHMAN, with a forward by JAMES W. HILTY. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005. xvi, 206p. Illustrations, index. \$29.95.)

In this autobiographical narrative, Marvin Wachman recounts his endless effort to learn more about life in an ever-changing world. In six chapters the eighty-eight-year-old educator recounts his unshakable, six-decade odyssey through the presidencies of four colleges and universities and the executive leadership of several nonprofit organizations. Dr. Wachman's aim is to convince his readers that America's “educational system has played a major role in fostering the unique dynamism of our society and government” (p. xvi). He does so admirably. His book has been compared to *The Education of Henry Adams*, which, in 1907, also offered wise insight into human experience.

Wachman began his career in education in 1946 with a fifteen-year stint at Colgate University, where he rose from American history instructor to full professor. The author and his wife, Addie, were ever adventurous people, and they demonstrated that in 1961 when they left the security and familiarity of