

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Invasion and Insurrection: Security, Defense, and War in the Delaware Valley, 1621–1815.* By JEFFERY M. DORWART. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008. 250 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$46.50.)

We have heard repeatedly that 9/11 “changed everything.” In response to this assertion, *Invasion and Insurrection* suggests that the American concern over safety and defense, today what we call homeland security, in fact has deep historical roots. Instead of starting with the National Security Act of 1947, Jeffery Dorwart takes his readers to the Delaware Valley in the seventeenth century, where Dutch, Swedish, and eventually English immigrants sought to protect their settlements and trade from imperial and Indian enemies. Although the book considers the entire mid-Atlantic region, it largely focuses on Pennsylvania. This makes sense, of course, since the militia debate between pacifist Quakers in Philadelphia and the settlers on the frontier meant that security and defense were perennial concerns. Dorwart is not trying to prove any particular thesis, but rather he seeks to “examine the original meaning, development, and organization of home security, defense, and war in American history” (13). The chapters that follow are largely narrative, tracing the attempts to ensure security and defense, from the establishment of English power and military institutions in the Delaware Valley through to the end of the War of 1812.

Dorwart is concerned with how Americans dealt with both internal and external threats and how the “fear of invasion often led to attempts to suppress dissent and insurrection” (13). Since the Delaware Valley was subjected to many invasions during the colonial period and home to several riots and insurrections both before and after the Revolution (the Paxton Riots and the Whiskey Rebellion being the most prominent), Dorwart’s particular geographical focus is logical. By the end of the War of 1812, however, he argues that “region no longer held a prominent position in the search for an American way of security, defense, and war organization” (205). Washington, DC, was now the capital, and the region would not face another major insurrection or invasion until the Civil War.

Dorwart’s study is the “first full study of the original meaning, initial organization, and earliest development of ideas and institutions for security, defense, and war in U.S. history” (16). The book covers a lot of ground in its two hundred pages and suggests links and connections that warrant further exploration in future studies. Dorwart ignores how ideas of security and defense shaped state constitution making in the wake of the Declaration of Independence. This certainly deserves further study since the 1776 Pennsylvania constitution was instituted for the “security and protection of the community,” and the 1777 New York

constitution sought to secure the people “against the hostile invasions and cruel depredations of our enemies.” Also, in light of the recent *Heller* case, more could be said about rights and responsibilities in the new republic, particularly as they pertained to bearing arms and providing defense. Dorwart contends that those who came to the Delaware Valley believed in the natural right of self-defense, but this idea is never traced through to the federal constitution or the relationship between article 1, section 8 and the Second Amendment.

Lastly, Dorwart wrote *Invasion and Insurrection* in response to questions his own students had about the concept of homeland security. I hope that the fairly steep price of \$46.50 will not keep them and others from finding out the answers.

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*Immigrant and Entrepreneur: The Atlantic World of Caspar Wistar, 1650–1750.* By ROSALIND BEILER. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008. 224 pp. Illustrations, maps, figures, tables, appendix, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$55.)

Rosalind Beiler’s new work is one of the latest editions to the Max Kade Institute German-American Research Series, published by the Pennsylvania State University Press. It traces the background and story of Caspar Wistar, who came from the German Pfalz and arrived in Philadelphia in 1717. Like many other biographical works on eighteenth-century German settlers, this one focuses on an individual who ended up doing very well for himself financially. Beiler’s chronicle stands out from others, however, for two main reasons: it is a more secular story of German American life in the colonies; and, secondly, it is about one of the earliest German immigrants in Pennsylvania.

The author does a remarkable job of covering both the origin and the destination sides of the story. Beiler uses a wide variety of sources, including personal letters, church documents, and court records spread across various archives and libraries in Germany and in the United States. On the German side, we not only learn about the personal and professional challenges Wistar faced while trying to make a career as a forester but also about the past struggles of his parents and grandparents. These family experiences may have influenced Wistar’s decision to emigrate and his later business and family plans in Pennsylvania. As Beiler notes, “Like his father and grandfather before him, the young man set out to build professional and social connections through religious affiliation, political patronage, and family networks” (89).

Once in Philadelphia, Wistar first worked as a wage laborer and then as an apprentice to a button maker, after which he set himself up as an independent artisan and “entered the career path of prominent Philadelphia merchants” (108).