

Washington (1994), as compiled by Joseph E. Fields, to reveal Lady Washington's story. Loane did substantial research in secondary sources, but she commendably built her history chiefly upon primary sources.

Of particular interest are Loane's reviews and rebuttals of certain fanciful anecdotes (see pages 14, 57, and, in particular, the appendix) that became part of the public's memory through nineteenth-century interpretations. The author educates her readers about how and why some of the stories came to be and how available evidence does not substantiate them. She also, over the course of the book, but especially when adding the rest of the story to the accounts of officers' wives, provides a counterpoint to upbeat, glorified tales by noting how many of these women faced hardships not only at Valley Forge but throughout the war and afterwards. These are valuable lessons in what is a nice, easy-to-read introduction to women with the Continental army.

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Architecture and Artifacts of the Pennsylvania Germans: Constructing Identity in Early America. By CYNTHIA G. FALK. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008. 256 pp. Illustrations, appendices, notes, index. \$45.)

This book begins by clarifying its particular take on how to think about the materiality of eighteenth-century Pennsylvania Germans. Like "us today," Falk argues, earlier Americans "invested material goods with meaning," and once invested, "objects served as symbols of otherwise intangible ideas" (1). The intangibles we meet in this study have much to do with ethnicity and the innovative ways that people can play with discretionary membership by gliding across and through material forms and, in so doing, manage to pursue interests while neglecting such infelicities as "acculturation." Falk tells us, "I consider material culture as a physical manifestation of personal identity, that is, as a means of designing self" (5). To be sure, she is not the first scholar to use the "defining self" argument, but Falk's analysis pushes the reader to see new social relations and new buildings as her late eighteenth-century Pennsylvania Germans came to define themselves in new ways.

Specialists who approach this work will not be disappointed. Falk's unique contribution is to remind us that so-called Georgian-German houses—structures that have a symmetrical arrangement of windows and doors and a center (or slightly off-center) passage—are as typical of German citizens as they are of their British counterparts. While vernacular-architecture enthusiasts usually choose a three-room, center-chimney *flürkuchenhaus* to represent a quintessential Pennsylvania Germanness in their slide lectures, Falk argues that what qualifies

as “German” requires further investigation. She of course discusses this early plan and illustrates such monuments as the Herr House and Fort Zeller. But the *flürkuchenhaus*, if it indicated a German identity, was a sign of being “poor farmers” (180). Thus, it was by no means a representative social space.

Falk arrives at a closer approximation of economically representative housing by focusing on the 1798 federal direct tax returns for two Pennsylvania townships, and the results are telling. In the first township, Coventry, the house sizes of British (700 square feet is average) and German (about 830 square feet) citizens make apparent the relative wealth and material investment of Germanic peoples; in 1798, about one-third of all Coventry householders had no barn at all, while only 16 of 179 householders owned a barn larger than thirty-by-sixty feet (48–49). The second township, Conestoga, by contrast reveals distinctions between two nominally German groups, Lutherans and Mennonites. We might think that Lutherans, as people unabashedly of *this* world, might prosper more than their sectarian neighbors. Not so. Mennonites were among Conestoga’s earliest settlers, grabbed the best land, and then built the largest houses (though of what plan, we cannot tell). She notes that “of the 135 householders who occupied houses worth more than \$100 . . . 34 could be identified as Mennonite and 14 as Lutheran” (142–43). These two townships demonstrate two kinds of tensions felt by Germans at the very end of the eighteenth century: as a group aware of its differences from its British (English, Scots, Scots-Irish) neighbors, and as a group split up into its own ethnic fragments, whether Palatine, Mennonite, Lutheran, or Moravian.

Falk then takes us to the “artifacts” inside the house, or such domestic furnishings and spaces as blanket chests, tea equipage, bedsteads, and the kitchen and its various uses. She sees accumulation as both familiar and foreign. Here, for example, is her view of the force of new goods arriving in the countryside: “new types of goods and new types of behaviors began to distinguish those who had the knowledge and money to participate in the culture of refinement” (167). A basic question nags for a response, however. What may have been the early German words for “refinement” or “improvement”? According to my *Cassell’s*, *die Verfeinerung* stands as the best estimate of “refinement,” although it may contain more ambivalence in its wider range of significance. The root word, *Fein*, suggests delicate, thin, polite, cultivated, elegant, and fashionable but also subtle, sly, and artful. Improvement, however, is more straightforward: *die Verbesserung*, meaning the process of bettering oneself, as well as amendment, and even a kind of personal reformation. Had it teased out these semantic traces, *Architecture and Artifacts of the Pennsylvania Germans* would have been a more nuanced cultural history.

Still, Cynthia G. Falk has provided a challenging, well-researched study that emphasizes the commercial strength of Pennsylvania Germans and the “creole” (her word, p. 184) houses they built, structures that signaled at once their resi-

dents' dual status as "Georgian Germans" and as *verfeinerung* citizens of the early republic.

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A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania: Creating Economic Networks in Early America, 1790–1807. By DIANE E. WENGER. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008. 280 pp. Illustrations, figures, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.)

Founded in the mid-eighteenth century, Shaefferstown was a largely German crossroads village approximately seventy-five miles northwest of Philadelphia and surrounded by the most productive iron furnaces and forges in early America. In the years before the Revolution, Shaefferstown supported two or three country stores and associated taverns. Trading collapsed during the Revolution, but in the late 1780s it picked up again, which may have been why Lewis Kreider traveled to Philadelphia to hire a new clerk, Samuel Rex, to help him manage his store. Within a year, Kreider had moved on, and Rex had opened a store of his own (using money from his father, a Philadelphia-area storekeeper). A year later, in 1791, Rex, now twenty-five years old, married the thirty-four-year-old daughter of a local innkeeper, cementing relations in the community. He would run a thriving store in Shaefferstown for almost two decades.

Diane E. Wenger systematically analyzes Rex's day books and store ledgers to address several questions that have informed scholarly debate about early American economy and society. Did this Middle Atlantic region undergo a disruptive "transition to capitalism"? How caught up in a "consumer revolution" were the region's German inhabitants? Were the villages that provided the fuel and housed the workers for iron furnaces integrated into the regional economy? While answering these questions she also provides a richly nuanced portrait of the village that will appeal to those interested in local history.

Wenger argues that Rex's storekeeping operations provide strong evidence of the embeddedness of market relationships in the village and surrounding area. Rex charged (and his customers accepted) market prices for goods, collected interest, held produce back from sale until he could get a better price, provided his customers fashionable textiles for their homespun cloth, and routinely stocked European and West Indian goods. But Wenger complicates this depiction of the market with several crucial qualifiers. Market relationships did not force Shaefferstown's inhabitants to abandon their German cultural heritage. Nor did the market impose impersonal, long-distance imperatives on the village. Rather (and this is Wenger's central point) market transactions occurred through personal networks and face-to-face transactions that differentiated the economy