

cultural ideals to America, creolization works. Still, for readers familiar with Ira Berlin's "Atlantic creoles"—the Africans and their descendents, some of them mixed race, who operated in the multiple cultural worlds of Africa, Europe, and America during the era of the Atlantic slave trade—Smolenski's interpretive use of creole may be less than satisfying. To what extent can the experiences of a privileged group of white Quakers who moved from the British Isles to America and held political hegemony in Pennsylvania really be seen as creolization?

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JUDITH RIDNER

*A Town In-Between: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Early Mid-Atlantic Interior.* By JUDITH RIDNER. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. 320 pp. Maps and illustrations, notes, index. \$49.95.)

The literature on Pennsylvania during the colonial and early national periods has become increasingly abundant in recent years, but it has concentrated on southeastern Pennsylvania, particularly Philadelphia. Because it focuses on a town in the backcountry, Judith Ridner's *A Town In-Between: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Early Mid-Atlantic Interior* is a welcome addition to the historiography of Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century. According to Ridner, Carlisle's geographic location along the frontier—both east/west within Pennsylvania and north/south in the mid-Atlantic—led to it becoming a place where residents faced the typical challenges of life in the backcountry along with the opportunities available to settlers who ventured into the hinterland.

Carlisle was a place that experienced a considerable degree of turmoil and change in the eighteenth century. Early European settlers formed profitable trading relationships with the Shawnee and Delaware of the region before the town's establishment in the 1750s. In fact, Thomas Penn founded the town to advance the proprietors' economic interests at a time when the landscape was changing, both literally and figuratively. During Carlisle's early years, the relationship between the European settlers (mostly Scots-Irish with a few Germans) and the Native Americans shifted dramatically when war came to the Quaker province, as Cumberland County residents flooded to the town to escape the attacks on their property.

The Revolutionary War brought new challenges to the community, as many residents enthusiastically supported independence. Carlisle provided troops (most notably Thompson's Rifle Battalion), and the town served as a prisoner of war camp for British troops and Loyalists. Armaments manufactured at Carlisle contributed immensely to the successful prosecution of the war, and the town served as an important supply depot. However, economic factors discouraged service in the militia, leading to concerns about whether the townspeople fully

supported the patriot cause.

Carlisle did not experience the same kind of economic distress as other communities following the war, as local cloth and grain production made the town a central site of exchange in the region. All was not quiet in the community, however; ethnic and religious tensions divided the town, as did political unrest over the Constitution (which led to riots between Federalists and Antifederalists). The area's response to the whiskey tax further symbolized the hostility toward the establishment that had been manifested against the proprietary government in the 1750s.

Ridner's study of Carlisle is quite masterful in its use of primary and secondary sources to tell the story of the first fifty years of Carlisle's history. She has effectively mined manuscript collections, county, provincial, and state records, and college archives to tell the story of a town undergoing a transformation during the second half of the eighteenth century from a backwoods settlement to a community at the crossroads of the early American frontier. Contemporary illustrations and photographs of period structures enhance the text, a highly readable study of one of the most significant interior towns in early America.

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KAREN GUENTHER

*The Ordeal of Thomas Barton: Anglican Missionary in the Pennsylvania Backcountry, 1755–1780.* By JAMES P. MYERS JR. (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010. 278 pp. Illustrations, appendices, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$52.50.)

James P. Myers Jr. has written an engrossing account integrating biography and exegesis in *The Ordeal of Thomas Barton*. That said, Myers flirts with hagiography as he argues for a reform of Barton's image from that of a possibly unprincipled young man, naive plagiarist, and propagandist to that of a well-respected minister and ultimately victim—a martyr, as Myers puts it, to the Revolution. Another key component of Myers's argument is Barton's significance as an agent of church and empire on the frontier. Barton was essentially "a proprietary placeman" (37), and the crises of the 1750s to 1770s put such middlemen in extremely uncomfortable, even ethically untenable, positions. As such an establishment agent, Barton appears at times to have been simply a tool. Myers concludes, for instance, that Barton, despite his sympathetic portrayals of Native Americans and stated desire for missionary work among them, may have written a pro-Paxton Boys screed because pushed to do so by proprietary and Church of England interests. Barton compromised his principals at that time, but according to Myers he redeemed himself in his own eyes—and those of his chronicler—by refusing to compromise his principles during the Revolution (115).