

the great achievements of their work is that it communicates to the modern reader what was obvious to Catto's contemporaries: the man's brilliance and charisma. This is a book that will reward both general and scholarly readers.

Towson University

ANDREW DIEMER

Remembering Chester County: Stories from Valley Forge to Coatesville. By SUSANNAH BRODY. (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2010. 128 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. \$19.99.)

In *Remembering Chester County*, amateur historian and self-described "storyteller" Susannah Brody provides a unique blend of family anecdotes, folklore, legend, and both oral and recorded history. Spanning more than two hundred years, this slender volume contains nearly three dozen tales detailing the heroism, patriotism, and sacrifice of Chester County's residents; their involvement in our nation's long struggles with inequality, racism, and war; and their brushes with well-known historical figures. But Brody does not confine herself to narratives that showcase wisdom, bravery, and altruism; she also includes several that illustrate ignorance, cruelty, and selfishness. The result is a quaint and curious collection of yarns—with just a soupçon of boosterism—presented in breezy, vivid prose.

Brody groups her vignettes of Chester County's past into three sections, roughly covering the American Revolutionary period, the nineteenth century, and the twentieth century. Each era offers tales that run the gamut from the truly noteworthy to the utterly obscure. Brody tells us, for example, of Squire Cheyney's warning to George Washington; the Paoli Massacre; the activities of abolitionists and fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad; the kidnapping of Rachel and Mary Elizabeth Parker, sisters who were suspected of being runaway slaves; and the lynching of Zachariah Walker. Readers also learn about the filming of the science fiction classic *The Blob* at Yellow Springs; Bayard Rustin's role in the civil rights movement; and the deaths of Irish immigrant laborers at Duffy's Cut—a topic explored through written history, ghost stories, and archeological evidence.

While the anecdotes that Brody offers are entertaining and in many cases enlightening, the author mixes some good history with some poor. She presents fictional conversations as direct quotations despite that fact that we don't know what words Squire Cheyney used when alerting George Washington or who said what when an angry mob of neighbors interrogated suspected witch Molly Otley. Brody asserts that some civil rights leaders had "concerns" about Bayard Rustin's "private life" (108), which is true, but today it should simply be stated that the man was gay. Brody also leaves some of her references unidentified, referring to

“miscellaneous data” from historical societies rather than to specific sources. And she claims that British soldiers in the county foraged, looted, and pillaged despite orders to the contrary and furthermore tells us that Revolutionary War artillery units were “elite,” but never explains why. This collection also contains significant historical gaps. Why are there no stories of Chester County residents in wars other than the Revolution and World War II, for example, and no accounts of events during the Great Depression?

From a historical perspective, the book would be richer and more useful had the author been a bit more rigorous in her scholarship and comprehensive in her selection of stories. The work could have also been improved had the author offered a general conclusion. What, on the whole, do these tales tell us about Chester County and its people through the ages? That said, Brody’s entertaining collection of forgotten tidbits of local lore reminds us that history is made up of the stories of real people and should inspire inquisitive readers to do their own research and additional reading.

West Chester University

STEVEN G. GIMBER

A Brief History of Scranton, Pennsylvania. By CHERYL A. KASHUBA. (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2009. 144 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.99.)

Industrial Pioneers: Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the Transformation of America, 1840–1902. By PATRICK BROWN. (Archbald, PA: Tribute Books, 2010. 142 pp. Bibliography, index. \$19.95.)

A Brief History of Scranton, Pennsylvania, by freelance writer Cheryl A. Kashuba, is published by History Press, purveyor of local histories for popular consumption. This attractively designed book tells the story of the city from approximately 1700 to 2009—an ambitious task for such a short volume, as its author acknowledges. The work is not a narrative so much as a collection of vignettes. Seven chapters are subdivided into between four and ten short sections on various topics. The longest of those segments is four pages; most are less than a page. A chapter entitled “A City at Leisure,” for example, has a single leaf devoted to electric trolleys, followed by one on theaters, and then another on Luna Park. Between forty and fifty photographs supplement the text. Based on limited research and lacking an argument or thematic development, the book might not appeal to serious students of the area, but that is not its intention. Instead, Kashuba’s work offers a survey of Scranton’s industries, ethnic populations, buildings, educational institutions, and more. Readers may well find something within the volume’s covers that sparks a desire to learn more about the area.