

BOOK REVIEWS

New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty. By EVAN HAEFELI. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. 384 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.)

Evan Haefeli's *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* is a thorough account of religion in the Dutch North American colony during its roughly half-century existence. Yet the work is also much broader; Haefeli ranges from the Union of Utrecht in 1579 to the final defeat of the Dutch in North America in 1672, exploring religion in Dutch colonies from Batavia to Brazil along the way.

Haefeli also addresses the meaning of religious tolerance. Drawing on recent scholarship, he defines tolerance in terms of process, not content, social negotiation, not legal standard. "Dutch tolerance in New Netherland was not what the colonial government did or failed to do," he writes, but "was the whole process of negotiating" among "a variety of groups and their conflicts with one another" (15).

Because negotiation varies by time and place, the meaning of religious tolerance varies. The Dutch practiced "connivance," allowing quiet dissent from the Dutch Reformed Church. "The lack of visibility, of public presence, was a key aspect of connivance," Haefeli explains. It required inconspicuousness of dissenters whose presence was never formally acknowledged by Dutch authorities. "Connivance in Amsterdam was frequently mistaken as religious freedom by foreigners," but Lutheran and Jewish worship was relegated to the city's "side streets, attics, and warehouses," and the liberality of Amsterdam "was a great exception in the Dutch world" (54–55, 60).

Connivance was less liberal in most other Dutch cities and provinces, including New Netherland. Colonial Dutch authorities forbade the marginal presence of Quaker, Lutheran, and Jewish worship while permitting nonmembership in the Dutch Church. They did "not arrest someone for being of a different faith, only for holding illicit gatherings" (225). The colony's Amsterdam directors disliked persecution but never compelled the colony's director general Peter Stuyvesant "to permit the practice of any religion besides that of the Dutch Reformed Church" (232). Struggles for dissenting worship did occur in New Netherland, but they took place in English villages on Long Island, at a distance from New Amsterdam's authority (96–97, 282–83).

Haefeli thus corrects overblown versions of New Netherland's contribution to American pluralism (279). The English, not the Dutch, were responsible for "the

religious pluralism that was the hallmark of the middle colonies and, later, the United States" (284). This fact, rightly emphasized (19, 91, 210, 282, 286), makes the book's title misleading; it suggests that the word "Dutch" should have been removed.

The larger issue, though, is Haefeli's insistence that "there is no universal standard of tolerance," only a "multiplicity of its manifestations" (8–9). Religious tolerance certainly manifests in multiple ways, though it is unclear whether for Haefeli this multiplicity precludes merely one universal standard of tolerance or the use of moral standards in examining the subject. Prohibiting corporal punishment for religious nonconformity in favor of modest fines is certainly more tolerant than inflicting it. Allowing inconspicuous dissenting worship without fines is more tolerant still, as is equally allowing the penalty-free public worship of all religious groups. Degrees and discriminatory applications of punishment, inconspicuousness, and equality abound in the past and present, rendering a one-dimensional scoring or grading system for religious tolerance problematic. The difficulty of such a singular standard is at least part of Haefeli's point in maintaining that "tolerance is not a universal norm or category of analysis that can be applied equally to all cases" (281). Yet something more seems intended. What about standards of moral judgment in reasoning about tolerance? If it is true that the English are more responsible than the Dutch for American religious liberty, it is decidedly not "for better or worse [that] the English way ultimately proved the more decisive for American history" (19; emphasis mine).

*Bronx Community College of the
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CHRISTOPHER S. GREENDA

A Harmony of the Spirits: Translation and the Language of Community in Early Pennsylvania. By PATRICK M. ERBEN. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. 352 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$45.)

Scholars of early Pennsylvania frequently associate the colony's founding with William Penn's attempt to establish a "holy experiment" where religious toleration would foster a utopian society of people living together in peace. In most narratives, however, Penn's ideal proved difficult to create as immigrants from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds sought to establish their place. In *A Harmony of the Spirits: Translation and the Language of Community in Early Pennsylvania*, Patrick Erben seeks to dispel the "cultural and political myth that language diversity poses a fundamental threat to communal coherence" (14). Instead, he invites readers to "retrain their vision and read . . . like the many radical visionaries" who settled the colony, "with an eye for the unseen links tying

together a multiplicity of human languages and expressions" (15). Erben argues that the texts of early Pennsylvanians provide ample evidence of ways in which they sought to build a common spiritual language by creating translingual and multilingual communities, thus reversing the effects of the Tower of Babel. By reading closely English Quaker writings as well as the texts of German-speaking radical Protestants who immigrated to the colony, Erben makes a compelling case for the ways Pennsylvanians used translation as a tool to overcome the factionalism and partisanship of the colony's "mixed multitude."

To understand the dream of a common spiritual language immigrants brought with them, Erben begins in seventeenth-century Europe with the multiple meanings of Babel. He traces how ideas about a universal spiritual language that preceded the linguistic confusion resulting from the Old Testament's Tower of Babel shaped religious writers' notions about translation and a "Philadelphian" ideal. Throughout the remaining chapters, Erben looks at the ways "religious and linguistic reform movements in Europe affected early Pennsylvanian attitudes toward the spiritual and communal life of the province indirectly and directly" (55). He presents detailed analyses of Pennsylvania's promotional literature; the debates generated by the Keithian schism; Francis Daniel Pastorius's translingual community of letters; the music of the mystics of the Wissahickon, the Ephrata community, and the Moravians; the response of the peace churches to wars beginning in the 1740s; and Moravian missionaries' grammars and lexicons of North American Indian languages. In each case, Erben makes compelling arguments about how Euro-Americans and Native Americans implemented translation and multilingual communication to create common spiritual ground across diverse faiths and cultures.

The strengths of *A Harmony of the Spirits* lie in Erben's focus on the German language literature of Pennsylvania and his Atlantic perspective. Much of the literature on early Pennsylvania has been dominated, not surprisingly, by writing about William Penn and the Quakers. Erben's own facility with languages allows him to translate nicely the nuances of early writers. By looking closely at the German language literature—both manuscript and print—and by studying translation and the interconnections between German and English writers and immigrants, Erben decenters the Anglo-American narrative of the colony's early history. Instead, he weaves the story of the German radical Protestants and their vision for a common spiritual community into a larger history that shows how they actively engaged the world around them. In addition, Erben places the use of translation and translingual communication tools in the context of religious conversations taking place across multiple cultural communities in Europe. In doing so, he clearly connects attempts to translate religious and intellectual ideals "across differences in language, denomination, gender, and class" in Pennsylvania to larger movements (156; emphasis in the original). By

providing an excellent opportunity for readers to “retrain their vision,” Erben successfully broadens our view of early Pennsylvanians and their efforts to create a harmony of the spirits.

University of Central Florida

ROSALIND J. BEILER

Knowing Nature: Art and Science in Philadelphia, 1740–1840. Edited by AMY R. W. MEYERS with LISA L. FORD. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012. 432 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$65.)

The fourteen essays in this volume use Philadelphia as a vantage point to address the relationships between art and science during the colonial and early national periods. Essayists describe the international exchange of correspondence; the purchase, trade, and keeping of live (and dried or stuffed) plants and animals on different continents; and the use of flora and fauna in a wide variety of media. Many of the contributors address the intersections of the worlds of naturalists and their publishers, amateur followers, and patrons. Although we have long assumed that science informs art, essayist and editor Amy Meyers contends that “artistic and visual culture informed scientific interpretation of the natural world” (4).

The project, intended as an exhibition and catalog, resulted instead in two conferences, this volume, and a forthcoming book. The essays refined after a 2004 conference in Philadelphia range from the broad, deep sweeps (Therese O'Malley on gardens) to thick descriptions (Amy Meyers on turtles and Alexander Nemerov on snakes). O'Malley discusses the relationships among Philadelphia's intellectual communities and the concentration of significant gardens in the city. In addition to enumerating specific gardens and their visitors, she has the reader consider the importance of a movement through a garden while in conversation with intellectual peers. Mark Laird looks at the use of American and Asian flora and fauna in English gardens, particularly those at Goodwood, Selborne, and Kew. He places as much emphasis on animals as he does on plants, and his study of birds is particularly enlightening.

Several essays are models for the careful reading of objects. Margaret Pritchard summarizes North American cartography and provides profitable, close readings of maps in the context of their creation. Methods for coloring prints—manually and mechanically—are explored by James N. Green. He describes the techniques and variations among editions of books in ways that will encourage readers to look more closely at these images. The high-quality, abundant illustrations in the volume are put to particularly effective use in these two essays.

Several essayists tie naturalists' work to the decorative arts. Meyers notes William Bartram's use of decorative arts terminology to describe the turtle. Janice L. Neri employs Chinese and Chinese-inspired objects to examine relationships among the decorative arts, natural history, and consumption. These authors' significant conclusions would have been strengthened by choosing more artifacts for which the owner is known. Alicia Weisberg-Roberts examines the production and consumption of textiles, allying business and natural history with the decorative arts. Her work is enhanced by employing predominantly objects with known provenances.

The quibbles are minor ones. Text tying the essays together, short captions amplifying key illustrations, and more variety in techniques of analysis of individual objects would have strengthened the volume. An essay addressing shells more explicitly would have been a useful addition. But, like all important texts, the book implies questions other scholars might explore, such as how the city's scientific communities contributed to the perception of the importance of the region's Quakers well after the colonial period. This fine volume would be a welcome addition to the library of anyone interested in the intersections of art and science or the history of Philadelphia.

Penn State University, Harrisburg

ANNE VERPLANCK

The Pennsylvania Associators, 1747–1777. By JOSEPH SEYMOUR. (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2012. 304 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

The Pennsylvania Association was one of the most unique and interesting military organizations in colonial America. Because Pennsylvania lacked a militia, concerned citizens took it upon themselves to organize a voluntary, extralegal corps to defend the province. Often cited but rarely explored in detail, the Associators are the topic of Joseph Seymour's book.

Seymour begins with the founding of Pennsylvania, explaining how William Penn and his pacifist Quaker coreligionists avoided establishing a colonial militia by making treaties with Native Americans. By the 1740s, however, many colonists questioned this approach, especially once French attacks on the frontier and on the Delaware River seemed imminent. In 1747 Benjamin Franklin appealed to Pennsylvanians to associate for defense, and thousands heeded the call. Seymour traces associations from around Pennsylvania but focuses largely on the Philadelphia Artillery, a group for whom considerable evidence survives. The Philadelphia Artillery—and the Associators generally—provided training to colonists during the Seven Years' War and defended the capital during the Paxton

Boys' revolt. When taxation without representation drove Pennsylvanians to declare independence, the Associators led the charge. The creation of a state militia in 1777 made the group superfluous, but not before its artillery and infantry provided the expertise for the American victories at Trenton and Princeton.

"Who were the Associators?" Seymour asks, offering answers through the stories of the men who filled their ranks (xxii). Particularly illuminating is the tale of Benjamin Loxley, who commanded the Philadelphia Artillery for thirty years and trained thousands of Associators. Seymour argues that men like Loxley joined the Associators to defend their families, homes, and liberty, a somewhat obvious conclusion. Readers looking for a more nuanced account of what inspired men to fight should seek out Steven Rosswurm's *Arms, Country, and Class*.

Overall, Seymour offers an intriguing and, at times, engrossing account of late colonial military practices. Readers will certainly enjoy the scenes of the Philadelphia Artillery shaking the city with cannon fire during official celebrations and the details of several battles. At the same time, Seymour misses several opportunities to explore the inner workings of the institution. For example, the Articles of Association declared the group "a temporary expedient in the absence of a proper defense," but when the French threat abated, the ranks of the Associators continued to grow (45). Seymour avoids asking why this might have been, concluding instead that it was "for no apparent reason" (64). Similarly, Seymour indicates that the Paxton Boys' revolt marked a moment of division between Philadelphia Associators and those in the west; the former were prepared to fire on the latter. It is unclear how this breach was repaired. Did an esprit de corps among Associators unite Pennsylvanians—or did the incident provide an opportunity for Philadelphia to demonstrate its hegemony over the province?

The Pennsylvania Associators will appeal to military historians and general readers alike. It is a good read, full of colorful stories, that provides a useful narrative for a fascinating chapter of Pennsylvania's history.

Eastern Michigan University

JOHN G. MCCURDY

Dear Friend: Letters and Essays of Elias Hicks. Edited by PAUL BUCKLEY. (San Francisco: Inner Light Books, 2011. 316 pp. Illustrations, appendices, index. Cloth, \$45; paper, \$25.)

Elias Hicks is one of the best-known names in American Quaker history, largely because of his influence within the eponymous "Hicksite" faction in the schism of 1827–28. Most historians of nineteenth-century America are familiar with the Hicksites' influence on abolitionist and women's rights activism in the antebellum period. Non-Quakers typically associate Quakerism as a whole with

the “unprogrammed” meetings of Friends General Conference, the branch of Quakerism most closely related to the Hicksite heritage. Yet Elias Hicks himself has scarcely been studied by historians. The only scholarly biography on Hicks was published by Bliss Forbush in 1956, and the present volume is only the second critical edition of Hicks’s writings. It follows *The Journal of Elias Hicks* (2009), also edited by Paul Buckley and published by Inner Light Books, a small Quaker press.

Several factors may account for the scholarly neglect of Hicks. His death in 1830 effectively prevented him from leading the movement he had inspired, and he surely would not have endorsed everything that “Hicksite” came to mean. Moreover, his own theology, as Buckley observes, was hard to “pigeonhole.” Hicks saw himself as preserving the original Quaker emphasis on the Inner Light at a time when other Quakers were falling under the influence of evangelical Protestantism, with its tendency (according to Hicks) to idolize both the Bible and the clergy. His “Orthodox” opponents saw him as captive to the countervailing influences of Unitarianism and Deism.

This volume is a collection of seventy-three letters and four brief, unpublished “essays.” Fourteen of the letters are addressed to Hicks’s wife, Jemima Hicks, and twenty-two to his close friend and collaborator William Poole. Buckley stresses that this collection is a representative sample of a much larger body of correspondence. The annotations are light but effective; they include explanations of biblical references, identifications of persons mentioned, and clarifications of nineteenth-century Quaker jargon.

Buckley strives both to refute Forbush’s simplistic characterization of Hicks as a “Quaker liberal” and to persuade readers that Elias Hicks was a creative religious thinker—one worthy of more extensive study. He is largely successful on both counts. These letters are full of seemingly liberal attacks on predestination, original sin, Trinitarianism, and traditional understandings of biblical authority, but all of these are embedded within a complex theological system in which Jesus was simultaneously the “outward” Messiah promised to the Jews and an exemplar of the capacity of every person to submit inwardly to the “Divine Spirit.” Hicks had little in common with those liberals who saw theological disputation as a threat to Christian unity; he had an absolute confidence in the truths he received from the Inner Light, and he defended them with zeal. Nor did he sympathize with the liberal desire to engage with society as a whole; he vigorously policed the sectarian boundaries of Quakerism, portrayed even William Penn as a misguided compromiser, and blasted public schools as “unjust and unrighteous” (85).

Though Buckley persuaded me that Hicks *had* a complex and interesting theology, he did not persuade me that Hicks ever fully *expressed* that theology in writing. Hicks’s letters provide us with intriguing snippets of theology and repetitive responses to his opponents; they do not offer a holistic vision of Christianity. But, mixed in with the theology, the letters illuminate the work that occupied

much of Hicks's life: crisscrossing the nation on behalf of his faith and standing up boldly for his interpretation of that faith when it came under attack. We find Hicks engaging in spontaneous debates with the heterogeneous folks who take shelter together during a snowstorm, we find him bemoaning the incivility of the Orthodox during the time of schism, and, throughout, we find him longing for the companionship of his wife and children. Elias Hicks emerges from this volume as a full person, not merely a label for a movement.

Harvard Divinity School

DAN MCKANAN

A Democracy of Facts: Natural History in the Early Republic. By ANDREW J. LEWIS. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. 208 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95.)

American naturalists, Andrew J. Lewis argues, occupied a position in the decades following the Revolution that was both uniquely promising and extremely uncomfortable. Under British rule, they had participated in a cosmopolitan scientific world, supplying European theorizers with specimens and information, which in turn bought them entry into the world of polite learning. As these networks decayed, new possibilities emerged. Many naturalists had resented cosmopolitan hierarchies that cast them as permanent clients in a system of patronage. They now saw the possibilities of a new model: democratic rather than aristocratic and nationalist rather than cosmopolitan, organized not around personal networks but around an open market. Knowledge in this new model was to be established in new ways. Stung by elaborate continental theories of American inferiority, American naturalists swore off theorizing and "system building" and devoted themselves instead to the Baconian gathering of facts (15).

Even as they dismantled the old system, Lewis shows us, naturalists now had a new challenge: how were they to establish their own legitimacy and authority in a society where systems of legitimacy and authority were being questioned? In particular, how were they to do so when a curious American public demanded speculations about causes that naturalists now saw as illegitimate—especially when observations from members of that same public were the crucial material of natural history? Not all their answers to these questions were successful. The popularity of the idea that swallows hibernated in the bottoms of ponds, for example, shows how difficult it was to discipline democratically acquired observations, particularly once they had been rendered respectable by wide publication in an expanding and uncontrolled print culture. A chapter on botanical and geological forays into the market demonstrates how difficult it was to maintain a stance of authority once the status of valuable herbs or ores was in question. A chapter on Mound Builders shows us how antiquarianism ultimately spun off

from natural science, creating an alternative sphere of authority in which theories of Vikings or lost Jewish tribes could proliferate. Ultimately, Lewis argues, naturalists found more reliable sources of authority in the rhetorical strategies of natural theology—a field in which the search for God’s underlying design rendered theorizing more respectable—and, institutionally, in the state surveys of the 1830s and 1840s. With this new status, however, came loss. As geologists and botanists professionalized in the service of the state, the old generalist “natural history” came to be seen as a hobby. The practices of knowledge making that achieved legitimacy in the 1840s were not the same as those that had sought it in the 1790s.

With this book, Andrew Lewis gives historians curious about the wealth of natural historical texts produced during the early republic a clear lens through which to understand them. At the same time, he contributes valuably to broader conversations in the history of popular knowledge making and the construction of credibility that specialists will find stimulating and newcomers welcoming.

Dickinson College

EMILY PAWLEY

Mrs. Goodfellow: The Story of America’s First Cooking School. By BECKY DIAMOND. (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2012. 288 pp. Illustrations, recipes, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.)

Eliza Goodfellow is a specter haunting students of early American culinary history. She leaves traces of her professional endeavors in arid advertisements for her Philadelphia cooking school and pastry shop; otherwise, we know of her only through the admiring writings of others, especially her students. No higher praise could be lavished on a young housekeeper in the mid-nineteenth century than to be told that her pastries were worthy of that great lady, yet we have not a single recipe directly penned by this near-mythic figure. All that remains of Goodfellow’s craft are competing, contradictory versions of “Goodfellow” recipes that have been gleaned from various manuscripts and collected in Becky Diamond’s deeply researched biography (see “Spanish Buns,” 214–16).

Diamond tries valiantly to bring Goodfellow to life, although with scant hard evidence uncovered despite her unflagging research, she has little choice but to spend much of the book pursuing tangents, such as the Philadelphia tavern, boardinghouse, and restaurant scene or abbreviated culinary histories of exotic curries, catsups, and gumbos—recipes for which appeared in American cookery books of the 1820s–50s. When dealing with her purported subject, Diamond approaches Goodfellow and her cooking school from four perspectives, awkwardly weaving together (1) a fictionalized “day-in-the-life” account of the pastry shop and cooking classes; (2) a historian’s ponderously cautious speculations

of how Goodfellow founded and ran her successful business; (3) a biography and analysis of the work of her famous student, the best-selling cookery and domestic advice writer Eliza Leslie; and (4) a summary of American cooking schools post-Goodfellow. I came away wishing that Diamond had simply written a historical novel, which would have freed her from the historian's strictures and relieved the prose of its cumbersome "perhapses," "possibilities," and "we'll never knows." With the evocative tidbits Diamond uncovered with an archaeologist's zeal, such as the description of the pastry shop's "marble mosaic-patterned floor set in stone and a Venetian door" (174), she could have narrated a colorfully textured story of an independent nineteenth-century woman, widowed three times, in the intelligent manner of Hilary Mantel.

Instead, Diamond attempts history, which ill fits her material; hence, the book is laden with unsatisfying guesses and provides no indication of what Diamond, as a historian, thinks actually happened. About the crucial matter of how Goodfellow learned her pastry craft, we are told: "From circumstantial evidence it appears that her first husband had been a pastry chef. It is also possible that her father, a brother, or an uncle was a pastry chef or baker. . . . [or p]erhaps Goodfellow learned to cook through one or more of the Quaker women in her life when she was a girl in Maryland" (28–29). The only avenue Diamond eliminates is learning through an apprenticeship due to gender, an unremarkable statement.

Diamond's strongest chapter is "Directions for Cookery," a biography of Leslie that supremely fills a gap. Brief biographies of this important writer have appeared in various collections, but Diamond admirably plumbs archives and other unpublished sources to present the most thorough and intimate portrait thus far of Leslie's life and influence. It would be fairer to the reader to have titled this book *Eliza Leslie, the Foremost Student of Mrs. Goodfellow*. The volume would also have benefited from an active editor, who could have eliminated much of the superfluous information and superficial observations. Sadly, *Mrs. Goodfellow* reads like a student struggling to reach a minimum word count for a book report.

Institute of Culinary Education, New York

CATHY K. KAUFMAN

America's First Great Depression: Economic Crisis and Political Disorder after the Panic of 1837. By ALASDAIR ROBERTS. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012. 264 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$26.)

In 1837 Orestes Brownson offered a sermon, entitled *Babylon is Falling*, in which he tried to make sense of the economic meltdown that had ripped through the United States that fateful year. Brownson denounced the "Spirit of Gain" for

“the direction it has given the men’s minds and hearts, the evil propensities it has fostered, the wicked passions it has strengthened, and the worldiness and sensuality in which it has buried kings, governments and people.” Subsequent generations of observers attributed the Panic of 1837 and the years of economic depression that followed in its wake to a number of more definable political and economic variables, including President Andrew Jackson’s war on the Bank of the United States, international capital flows, an influx of silver from Mexico, and land speculation. Rather than join the debate over which of these factors is most responsible for triggering the crisis, Alasdair Roberts instead seeks to remake this historical event into an instructive lesson for modern-day policymakers. By recasting the Panic of 1837 as the start of the “First Great Depression,” this book offers a clear attempt at creating a “usable past” that can help modern citizens understand how our current unsettling economic landscape is not the first one Americans have been forced to navigate.

America’s First Great Depression begins with a present-minded discussion of the relative fall of the American economy since the 2000s, then offers a broad recounting of American history during the late 1830s and 1840s—a narrative in which the economic malaise following the financial collapse of 1837 pervades every aspect of American society. The inclusion of episodes such as Thomas Dorr’s failed rebellion in Rhode Island and the antirent movement in New York—usually presented as examples of the ascendancy of white male suffrage and the egalitarian rhetoric of the time—are recast with an eye toward how the loss of faith in the American economy reconfigured social relations. This connection is more implied than demonstrated, as Roberts consciously avoids historiographical debates on the subject. As a result, he is able to cram fairly complicated historical events into a single, free-flowing narrative synthesis of the period following the Panic of 1837, with a focus on how the downturn affected the course of political economy at both the state and federal levels. At times, the linkages can be a bit breezy. He integrates the war with Mexico, for example, as such: “Panic caused the depression, which caused default, which caused a war of words across the Atlantic, which caused a dissipation of good feeling, which now affected American policy on Texas” (175–76).

Specialists in the early American republic will find little new here in terms of research or analysis, but these are not the main goals of *America’s First Great Depression*. The author asks instead whether “it is possible to anticipate something about the nature of American politics in the years ahead by learning more about American politics in the long years before the country became an economic hegemon” (6). In providing an affirmative answer to that question with a compact, somewhat narrow, narrative account of the years between the Panic of 1837 and the Mexican War, Alasdair Roberts demonstrates both the potential and limitations of the “usable past” approach, sacrificing much of the broader historical context of the events of this time in order to extract lessons from them. The

book is a kind of secular sermon, not unlike *Babylon is Falling* in spirit, offering warnings drawn from the past that can help policymakers avoid problems in the future.

University of Florida

SEAN PATRICK ADAMS

James Buchanan and the Coming of the Civil War. Edited by JOHN W. QUIST and MICHAEL J. BIRKNER. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. 300 pp. Illustrations, index. \$69.95.)

A symposium at James Buchanan's Lancaster home, Wheatland, held in September 2008, has provided the impetus for the second installment of essays about the nation's fifteenth president in as many decades (see Birkner, ed., *James Buchanan and the Political Crisis of the 1850s* [Susquehanna University Press, 1996]). This book's two editors and ten contributing authors collectively reconsider one of America's "least respected chief executives" (x). The title of the volume argues for genuine political agency in a figure who has often been viewed as ineffectual as much as it positions the ensuing chapters in the historiography of the causes of the Civil War.

Indeed, the accumulated wisdom of a past generation still informs studies of Buchanan and the Civil War era. An earlier conversation among historians Kenneth Stampp, Don Fehrenbacher, Robert Johannsen, and Elbert Smith is continued in a compelling dialogue between William Freehling and Michael Holt. Both Holt and Freehling want to keep asking the "big questions" of the generation now gone from the scene: David Potter, Richard Current, and Roy Nichols—the last of whom, the editors note, still stands as the finest interpreter of the Buchanan administration.

The present edited volume brings this scholarly tradition into the 2010s. In one essay, Paul Finkelman plumbs the depths of Buchanan's "disingenuous" involvement in the Supreme Court's 1857 *Dred Scott* decision (40). In another, Michael Morrison believes Buchanan severely miscalculated when he expected an "ebullient nationalism" to effect continual Union (136). Likewise, two chapters address Buchanan's performance during the secession crisis of 1860 to 1861. Jean Baker, whose recent biography of the president is repeatedly cited as sharply critical, thinks Buchanan "failed to interpret" the divided nation (181), while William Shade compares Buchanan favorably to Lincoln, whose mighty shadow nevertheless casts a perpetual pale upon his predecessor.

Since the publication of *James Buchanan and the Political Crisis of the 1850s*, historians have attended to events typically neglected as part of the buildup to the Civil War. William MacKinnon connects the 1857 Utah War to decisions made during the later secession crisis to illuminate Buchanan's "too

clever by half” style of leadership (78). In a refreshing change of pace, John Belohlavek defends Buchanan’s largely successful “doughface diplomacy,” an arena in which the president’s decisions accorded with the future direction of the country’s imperial ambitions (111).

Several authors compare Buchanan to other political figures of the day. Nichole Etcheson invokes the specter of Andrew Jackson in her examination of the vexed relationship of Buchanan to Stephen Douglas over the Kansas territory’s organization. Daniel Crofts deploys the Kentucky Unionist Joseph Holt—a politico accorded much respect in the Lincoln administration and beyond—to read Buchanan’s policy toward secession. Birkner concludes by shedding a favorable light on Buchanan’s wartime reticence, judging him less outspoken (and less critical of the war) than his predecessor Franklin Pierce.

Quist and Birkner have faithfully assembled the disparate strands of Buchanan scholarship into a useful compendium. The breadth of topics and the variability of analytical approaches, moreover, broaden an understanding of the many channels by which the Civil War came about. This is a fine complement to earlier work and a timely contribution during the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

Cornell University

THOMAS J. BALCERSKI

The Fishing Creek Confederacy: A Story of Civil War Draft Resistance. By RICHARD A. SAUERS and PETER TOMASAK. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012. 240 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$35.)

On July 31, 1864, a fugitive deserter in Columbia County shot and mortally wounded a Union army officer during a late-night pursuit in the backwoods of Pennsylvania. Rumors began to swirl throughout the state that hundreds of deserters were hiding out in a fort in the woods, armed with a cannon, ready to defend themselves against anyone who might come after them. Federal officials sent a force of Union soldiers into the area to quell the resistance, but they were unable to locate the deserters or the fort. Instead, the soldiers arrested about one hundred local men (mostly, if not all, Democrats) who were suspected of conspiring to oppose the draft. After a brief interrogation at a local church, the military sent more than forty of these men to Philadelphia’s Fort Mifflin for indefinite detention. One man died from the poor conditions at the fort; another went insane. About a dozen were sent to Harrisburg, where they were tried before a military tribunal for acts of disloyalty against the United States government. Several were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment and fines. But as the war wound down in 1865, they all were eventually released.

A thorough account of this alleged organized draft resistance in Columbia County—the so-called Fishing Creek Confederacy—is long overdue. Coauthors

Richard A. Sauers and Peter Tomasak have done an impressive amount of digging at the National Archives in Washington, DC, as well as in a number of other repositories in Pennsylvania. They seek to provide a balanced narrative of the events that transpired, criticizing Republicans for spreading “wild stories” while challenging the standard Democratic narrative that this was a “military occupation” intended to suppress Democratic voters (180, 183).

While *The Fishing Creek Confederacy* is rich in primary source materials, it is lacking in secondary research. For example, the authors rely in part on an undergraduate student paper for their description of Judge George W. Woodward, the Democratic nominee for governor of Pennsylvania in 1863. (Incidentally, they confuse Judge Woodward with his son, George A. Woodward, in the text.) And the chapter entitled “Historiography” discusses many local newspaper articles but does not cite Mark E. Neely Jr.’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties* (1991), which argues that the Fishing Creek Confederacy was a “wartime myth” propagated by “nervous and gullible Union authorities” (174).

The omission of Neely’s important book points to a larger issue: The authors have done a nice job of detailing this fascinating moment in Pennsylvania history, but they could have better contextualized their story, both historically and historiographically. For example, they seek to refute the Democratic claim that the military presence in Columbia County was an attempt to silence Democratic voters, yet they never acknowledge the Republicans’ well-documented use of the military to suppress Democratic voters in other states during the war. Nor do they discuss military incursions like this one into other rural regions of the North, such as the Battle of Fort Fizzle in Ohio or the Charleston Riot in Illinois. The events in Pennsylvania were, in fact, part of a much larger story of how the military interacted with civilians on the home front during the Civil War.

These reservations aside, *The Fishing Creek Confederacy* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the Pennsylvania home front during the Civil War, joining other books and articles by Robert M. Sandow, J. Matthew Gallman, William Blair, Timothy J. Orr, Margaret Creighton, Judith Giesberg, and others. College professors in Pennsylvania may find this a useful text for courses on the Civil War and Reconstruction or on Pennsylvania history, as it will give students a unique and little-known perspective on their state’s Civil War experience.

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