STUDENTS and writers of western Pennsylvania history find, even upon a hurried examination of the literature of the subject, that there are many possible approaches to the early history of the region. Sharply distinguished and set apart, such approaches may seem highly artificial. From the point of view of historical criticism and methodology, the very recognition of them may be a mistake; the background of the story, as of all others, is really a unity, and any satisfactory treatment must incorporate all possible approaches in one composite whole. But there are distinct advantages in noting and comprehending the many possible different approaches: a fuller perspective is certain to be obtained; clarity of evolution is more likely to be established; and, particularly, masses of historical material will be considered that might otherwise be ignored or overlooked. Consideration of the different possible approaches, therefore, seems essential to a full understanding or a definitive treatment of the subject.

Probably the most natural approach to the history of western Pennsylvania in the middle of the eighteenth century is through the earlier history of eastern and central Pennsylvania. This involves studies of the early settlement of the Delaware region by the Dutch and the Swedes, the founding of the colony by William Penn, the terms of the charter, the limits of the province, the nature of its government and laws, the character of its settlers and settlements, the land policies of the proprietors, their relations with the Indians, and many other features. Above all it calls for a tracing of the growth of population and the westward expansion of trade and settlement into the interior.

For this approach general, special, and source material should be

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used. First to be consulted are general histories, such as Wayland F. Dunaway's *History of Pennsylvania* (New York, 1935); Sidney G. Fisher's *The Making of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1896) and *Pennsylvania, Colony and Commonwealth* (Philadelphia, 1897); and Isaac Sharpless' *History of Quaker Government in Pennsylvania* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1898–99). To this list should be added James M. Swank's *Progressive Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1908), a work that emphasizes the economic and industrial aspects of history. Through the bibliographies in these publications, and through Henry P. Beers's list of "Pennsylvania Bibliographies" published serially in *Pennsylvania History* in the issues for April, July, and October, 1935, and January, 1936, it is possible to go on to other general works and to special works on the economic and social life of Pennsylvania in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

A brief list of source materials relating to early Pennsylvania would include *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West Jersey and Delaware*, edited by Albert C. Myers (New York, 1912); the *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, 1683–1790 (16 vols., Philadelphia and Harrisburg, 1851–53), particularly the first ten volumes comprising the *Minutes of the Provincial Council*; the first six series of the *Pennsylvania Archives* (96 vols., Philadelphia and Harrisburg, 1852–1907); *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania* (6 vols., Philadelphia, 1752–76); the *Duke of Yorke’s Book of Laws, 1676–82*, and *Charter to William Penn, and Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania Passed between 1682 and 1700*, compiled by Staughton George and others (Harrisburg, 1879); and *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801*, compiled by J. T. Mitchell and Henry Flanders, volumes 2 to 13, 1700–90 (Harrisburg, 1896–1908). A canvass of such material is an essential preparation for the scholarly treatment of this particular approach. Probably special attention should be given to the frontier of settlement in the first half of the eighteenth century. The westward movement and settlement of Germans, Scotch-Irish, and others is a vital part of the background. The growing population and new settlements established by these people were the foundations upon which all later commercial, political, and military enterprises were
built and carried on. Writers such as Albert B. Faust, in his *German Element in the United States* (2 vols., Boston and New York, 1909), and Charles A. Hanna, in his work on the *Scotch-Irish* (New York and London, 1902), have treated this movement and indicated this approach to the history of later times and affairs.

Vitally connected with the westward movement and with the Pennsylvania approach are another movement and virtually another approach. These are the movement of Indians into the Ohio Valley and the Indian history approach to the story of the eventful years from 1748 to 1795 in western Pennsylvania, the period when affairs in the upper Ohio Valley loomed large in the military and political thought of the country. In point of time the westward retreat of the Indians was virtually contemporaneous with the early stages of the westward movement of the whites. So far as the history of the upper Ohio Valley is concerned, the settlement of the westward-moving Indians there in the second quarter of the eighteenth century is the real beginning of recorded human events in that region. Many local historians, including Dr. George P. Donehoo, Dr. C. Hale Sipe, and Dr. Randolph C. Downes, have used this approach. For original materials on the subject one must look to such publications as the *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, the *Pennsylvania Archives*, and the *Papers of Sir William Johnson* (8 vols., Albany, 1921–33). The writings of Conrad Weiser, Christian Frederick Post, John Heckewelder, and David Zeisberger, printed or unprinted, should also be used.

Another approach, closely related to the two just considered, particularly in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, is through the history of the fur trade. This subject is a fascinating theme and upon it many books and articles have been written. Possibly the most helpful single monograph on the fur trade is that of Charles H. McIlwain in the introduction to his edition of Peter Wraxall's *Abridgment of the Indian Affairs... Transacted in the Colony of New York, from the Year 1678 to the Year 1751* (Cambridge, 1915), and the use of this approach is best seen in Albert T. Volwiler’s *George Croghan and the Westward Movement* (Cleveland, 1926). But the latter work, important though it be, is biographical, and since George Croghan was only one of many
significant figures in the history of the fur trade, other men and additional materials call for consideration and exposition. Max Savelle, in his *George Morgan, Colony Builder* (New York, 1932), has demonstrated that still further research and publication is possible along this line.

Among still other approaches are several that are not primarily connected with the earlier history of eastern and central Pennsylvania but that supply for the background certain essential features that not even a loyal Pennsylvanian would be justified in omitting.

The early history of Virginia and Maryland offers a valid approach to the history of western Pennsylvania. As in the case of Pennsylvania, this approach entails a study of charters, provincial boundaries, early settlements, governmental institutions, land systems, Indian policies, westward expansion, and other aspects of the early history of the colonies along the Potomac. General and special histories of Virginia and Maryland during the colonial period give some idea of this part of the background of early western Pennsylvania, but original materials should also be examined. For Virginia the latter would certainly include *Narratives of Early Virginia*, edited by Lyon G. Tyler (New York, 1907); the *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 1619–80, edited by T. S. Wynne and W. S. Gilman (Richmond, 1874); the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts*, edited by W. P. Palmer and others (11 vols., Richmond, 1875–93); *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 1727–76, edited by H. R. McIlwaine and J. P. Kennedy (8 vols., Richmond, 1905–10); and *Statutes-at-Large, Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia*, 1619–1792, edited by William W. Hening (13 vols., Philadelphia and New York, 1823). For Maryland should be included *Narratives of Early Maryland*, edited by Clayton C. Hall (New York, 1910); and, particularly, the *Archives of Maryland*, edited by W. H. Browne (30 vols., Baltimore, 1883–1910), and *Laws of Maryland at Large*, 1637–1763 (Annapolis, 1765).

One of the special phases of the Virginia-Maryland approach is illustrated in Clarence W. Alvord and Lee Bidgood’s *First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region by the Virginians*, 1650–1674 (Cleveland, 1912). Another feature is the expansion of Virginia and Maryland in the occupation of the Piedmont section and especially of the great valleys
of the Appalachian system. Settlements in that region were among the bases from which British operations in the Ohio Valley were conducted. Largely from that region came the first agricultural settlers in southwestern Pennsylvania, some of whom, it is true, had previously removed into Virginia and Maryland from the frontier of Pennsylvania. On this subject a number of books may be read, including Samuel Kercheva’s *History of the Valley of Virginia* (Winchester, 1833) and Alvord’s *Mississippi Valley in British Politics* (2 vols., Cleveland, 1917). Yet another feature of this approach that might be emphasized is the Virginia and Maryland fur trade, a subject that has received no adequate treatment by the historiographers of western Pennsylvania. Only incidental references to the rivalry between Pennsylvania fur traders and those from Virginia and Maryland have crept into the general accounts of the region. And of all phases of the Virginia-Maryland approach probably the most immediately important is land speculation. This subject is a familiar theme on which much has been said, and new studies of it frequently appear, but much work remains to be done in revealing fully the facts and importance of land-speculation activities in the promotion of the British-American decision to contend with the French for the possession of the Ohio Valley. Not only public records but also private family papers, printed and unprinted, must be canvassed before a definitive treatment of the subject can be presented.

Probably as important as the better-known Virginia-Maryland approach is that from the direction of New York. It involves a study of the entire colonial history of that state from the time of Henry Hudson in 1607 until western Pennsylvania became a settled area more than a century and a half later. Here, in addition to general histories, important bodies of original material should be looked into, such as *Narratives of New Netherland*, edited by J. Franklin Jameson (New York, 1909); *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, edited by E. B. O’Callaghan and B. Fernow (15 vols., Albany, 1856–87); *Documentary History of the State of New York*, edited by E. B. O’Callaghan (4 vols., Albany, 1849–51); *the Colonial Laws of New York from the Year 1664 to the Revolution* (5 vols., Albany, 1894–96); and the *Papers of Sir William Johnson*. 
So far as western Pennsylvania is concerned the central theme of the New York approach is the fur trade, a study of which from this point of view embraces the establishment of New Netherland and the founding of Albany, the whole history of the Iroquois family of Indians, the conquest of New Netherland by the English, the Indian policies of both the Dutch and their conquerors, and the trading ventures and trips from Albany up the Mohawk, on the Great Lakes, and even into the Ohio Valley. This story is a long-drawn-out drama and is too much neglected in the history of western Pennsylvania, although adequate source material, some of which has been mentioned above, is available in print.

The counterpart of the New York approach is that from Quebec, Montreal, and New France. Owing to the final great clash between the French and the English, this approach is very well known. Probably here, too, the central theme is the fur trade, sought alike by the French and the English, although international rivalry in imperial expansion, power, and prestige is also involved, and a comprehensive study must include such subjects as the French explorations, especially of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River; French Indian policy; the diplomatic relations of New France with the English colonies, and even those of France with England; and the climax of the contest in the attempt of the French to link New France with Louisiana by way of control of the route from Lake Erie along the Ohio River. Upon this approach to the early history of western Pennsylvania the New York historical materials already mentioned throw much light, but William S. Kingford's History of Canada, 1608–1841 (10 vols., London and Toronto, 1888–98), and the Reports of the Public Archives of Canada (Ottawa, 1872–date), which contain not only calendars of documents, but also much documentary material printed in full, should also be consulted.

A special feature of the New France approach, and one so significant that it almost deserves consideration as another approach, is the settlement of the French at Detroit, Michilimackinac, Green Bay, Fort Charters, Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes before English settlement had crossed the Alleghenies, whereby the French were provided with human and material resources for an approach to western Pennsylvania from the west and northwest. Thus the student has to go through materials pub-
lished in midwestern states such as Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Illinois. Moreover, since the French settlements in Illinois were at times under the jurisdiction of Louisiana, it is also necessary to consult materials relating to the history of Louisiana. Generally such materials are to be found in the publications of historical societies or commissions in the several states concerned, and a bibliography of the subject, much too voluminous for inclusion here, is easily found in Channing, Hart, and Turner's *Guide to the Study and Reading of American History* (revised and augmented edition, Boston, 1914).

After the historical materials relating to these approaches have been applied in filling out the background of the early history of western Pennsylvania, one particularly significant fact is apparent—the close relation of this complex background to geography. Reduced to their lowest terms the approaches mentioned may be looked upon as four important geographical routes, or systems of waterways and trails or roads, to western Pennsylvania.

First is the system of Susquehanna or all-Pennsylvania routes. From the eastern and central parts of the state the western waters of the Susquehanna, such as the West Branch and the Juniata, gave easy access to western Pennsylvania and the upper branches of the Ohio River. The whole Pennsylvania approach is intimately connected with this geographical feature. Along the Shamokin Path to the north and more extensively along the Frankstown Path or Kittanning Trail traveled the Pennsylvania fur traders from 1725 to 1755; along the western course of the latter route Colonel John Armstrong conducted his expedition against Kittanning in 1756; and along the Raystown or Traders' Path farther south General John Forbes made the final thrust that expelled the French from the forks of the Ohio in 1758.

The second is the Potomac route leading northwestward from Virginia and Maryland to the Youghiogheny and Monongahela rivers. Over it passed Nemacolin and perhaps Thomas Cresap in 1750; Christopher Gist in 1750, 1752, and 1753; George Washington in 1753 and 1754; General Braddock in 1755; and the Virginia and Maryland settlers who early established farm homes in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Earlier in use and at first more important was the third or Great
Lakes route, which comprehended not only the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, used by the Dutch and English of Albany, but also the St. Lawrence River, used by the French of Montreal and Quebec. Secure use of the route required control, at first, of navigation on Lake Ontario, and later, of the portage at Niagara, the key to the navigation of Lake Erie and to portages leading to the headwaters of the Ohio. In the struggle between the French and the English for possession of this route temporary victory for the French gave them dominance in the upper Ohio Valley for nearly a decade. Over the Great Lakes route traveled Céloron de Blainville in 1749, Marin and Péan in 1753, Contrecœur in 1754, and French reinforcements from Montreal and Quebec during the French régime in the upper Ohio Valley and along the Great Lakes. The initial success of the French in the use of this route led Virginia and the British government to try to drive them out by use of the Potomac route, and Pennsylvania in turn struck at the French and their Indian allies at Kittanning along one of the Susquehanna routes, but at the same time the English were struggling in the north for control of the Great Lakes route. It is quite impossible fully to understand the decade of warfare in the Ohio Valley while confining one’s attention to operations along the Susquehanna and Potomac routes. Documents that are easily accessible show the primary importance, throughout the struggle, of the Great Lakes route. It was the loss of Fort Frontenac in August, 1758, and the capture of Niagara in 1759 that doomed French power in the whole Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes area.

The fourth route is from the west by way of the Ohio River. Along it came men and supplies from the Illinois country during the French régime at Fort Duquesne. Without this aid from the west it is certain that French and Indian ravages on the English frontier would have been much less serious and it is possible that without it Fort Duquesne might have been abandoned long before the approach of the army of General Forbes in November, 1758. Much light on the use of this route remains to be revealed from unpublished manuscript material in French archives.

The significance of these geographical approaches is clear when one notes the present great railways and highways entering Pittsburgh. The
Pennsylvania Railroad, the William Penn Highway, and, to a lesser extent, the Lincoln Highway make use of portions of the Susquehanna routes. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the National Highway make use of the Potomac route. Several railroads and highways lie in the belt of the Great Lakes route to western Pennsylvania, which is possibly best represented by the New York Central Railroad, extending as it does along the courses of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers and the south shore of Lake Erie, with connections at Buffalo for Montreal and Quebec, and at Ashtabula for Pittsburgh by way of the affiliated Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad. In the belt of the old Ohio River route are today located numerous highways leading up from the lower Ohio Valley and railroads entering from Beaver, Pennsylvania; Steubenville, Ohio; and Wheeling, West Virginia, including particularly the Ohio River division of the Baltimore & Ohio. And shipping on the Ohio still continues in operation along the exact route used by the French nearly two hundred years ago.

In these great modern systems of transportation are visible reminders of the varied approaches to the background of the early history of western Pennsylvania.