and reached Alleghenytown where locks and a basin were used to drop the canal boats into the Allegheny River. From here they could continue around the Point to the steamboat wharf on the Monongahela River by using the two rivers. Pittsburgh objected to this plan and sent a committee to the state capital to make sure the Canal Commissioners built the canal to Pittsburgh as originally planned. The aqueduct across the river, the Pittsburgh Basin, the tunnel under Grant's Hill and four locks along Suke's Run leading to the steamboat wharf on the Monongahela were constructed. The Grant's Hill tunnel was never satisfactory as water seemed to leak away through the rocks, and it served mainly as a spillway for the Pittsburgh Basin, as it was impossible to keep enough water in the canal to operate the four locks.

The history contains no bibliography or footnotes. However, throughout the text the authors refer to many newspaper accounts and other articles. It would also appear that the authors gained some of their information by conversation with people who followed the canal, as is indicated by their talk with Oliver Rice of Port Treverton, an old canal hand. A study of this history will reward the reader with a brief but fairly complete picture of the Pennsylvania Canal system.

Pittsburgh

WILLARD R. RHoads

*The Western Journals of John May: Ohio Company Agent and Business Adventurer.* Edited and with an Introduction by Dwight L. Smith. (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1961. $5.50.)

Readers of *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* are always interested in diaries, journals, letters and early documents that relate to the planting of settlements in the Upper Ohio Valley. And if they contain observations about early Pittsburgh they are doubly welcome. Thus we welcome another printing of *The Western Journals of John May.* (I emphasize another printing for reasons that follow.) In this printing and editing, we have the perfect illustration of scholarly editing at its best. Professor Smith has demonstrated a masterful technique in ferreting out the errors and misleading editorial comments contained in the earlier printings.
of May's *Journals*. This reviewer can not recall any similar case equal to such historical sleuthing. Any one interested in the many pitfalls that oftentimes are dragged in by editors who feel they must improvise and paraphrase the original document should read Professor Smith's Introduction. His unwillingness to accept the editions previously printed, and his determination to set the record straight place other editors in debt to this critical crusader.

The value of May's *Journals* lies in the fact that he, a prominent merchant of Boston and a patriot of the Revolution, was one of those who helped organize The Ohio Company which established the first permanent settlement in The Northwest Territory. He was a stockholder, an agent, and a landowner. He made two journeys to the West, 1788 and 1789, and kept a day-by-day record. He spent several days in and around Pittsburgh, met many prominent people, and jotted down some favorable—some not so favorable—comments. While here he had conversations with Generals Harmar, Parsons; Governor Arthur St. Clair, recently appointed governor of The Northwest Territory; and a member of the Continental Congress, a Mr. James White presently visiting in Pittsburgh. He was especially glad to have a conference with Arthur St. Clair, since he hoped to persuade him to establish the seat of government at Marietta. His nightly rests in Pittsburgh were none too serene. It seems there were too many dogs, barking dogs, "two dogs for every man, and no less than seventeen of these wide-throated son's of B's yell and echo with great vehemence outside my door."

On his trip down the Ohio during the latter part of May 1788 he was impressed by the scenery, the thick forests, the abundance of fish, and the daily thunder showers. Arriving at Marietta he found the site "to answer the best description I have ever heard of it." Cotton, planted only a few weeks earlier, "was growing to perfection, also a fine nursery of apple and peach trees." The Indians seemed to be friendly. He plunged into the work of clearing a site for a house, and built the first frame house in Marietta. He planted gardens, took an active part in organizing the settlement, but never became a permanent settler. His daily comments during the months of June and July 1788 give a good picture of the activities of that summer. But in early August he set out on a return trip to Boston, travelled by boat up to Wheeling, then by horseback. His route took him through Washington, Pennsylvania, then over portions of the Glade Road and the Forbes Road, via Reading, Bethlehem, on to New York. He reached home September 28th.
In late April 1789 he started on a return trip to the West, this time as a merchant. In partnership with two companions, he loaded a large supply of provisions on board boat in Boston and sailed for Baltimore. But from there on out into Western Pennsylvinia, and on down to Wheeling, everything went wrong. Contractors overcharged him, stole or pilfered his supplies, and heavy rains and tornadoes slowed down his travel during the first weeks; but after reaching Pittsburgh he found the rivers too low for boating due to prolonged droughts. Troubles mounted; his boatmen were the laziest of any in all the West. They lay around with "the greatest of ease," and they "rows'd my old addam . . ." August 11th found him at wheeling where he opened up a store. However, his business never thrived. Lack of cash, defaulting customers, and sickness are given as the reason. "Cursed with scotch-Irish itch, and where the Devil it came from, I don't know unless Pandora herself throw'd a few seeds at me out of Her general assortment of Plagues . . ." He sweat it out for a few weeks, then decided to sell off his goods and start back East, November 6, 1789. He travelled by horseback. His notes on his return trip add little of importance. His clothes showed the effects of hard wear after several days in the saddle, and Sunday, December 6th, "My Britches got holes in them and serves as an excuse for not going to Meeting—but no excuse for not keeping it a Day of Rest."

Ten days later he arrived at Boston at 5 o'clock in the afternoon glad to rejoin his family. "But I would rather seen them alltogether in that Land which so amply rewards the Industrious planter and where Trade is honored and profitable." So he leaves us, still debating whether or not he made a mistake in not settling down permanently with The Ohio Company Associates.

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