boiling-down, also suggests that as to Elizabeth Drinker's diary Pennsylvania would welcome the whole watter-mellon.

*University of Pittsburgh*  
E. Douglas Branch


This work depicts the life and activities of a Pennsylvanian who was prominent in social circles, politics, commerce, and finance from 1750 to 1807. It is simply an additional product of a man who has devoted many years of study to important men and events in eastern Pennsylvania during those stirring years of the American Revolution and the formative period of the republic. As such, it sheds more light upon those interesting Philadelphians who were so closely associated with the commercial activities of the colonies, the financing of the Revolution, and the financial stabilization of the new nation.

Thomas Willing, son of an English immigrant of good family connections and of Anne Shippen of Philadelphia, was born in 1731. He received his formal education in England and returned to the colony to participate in his father's mercantile business. Unusually successful in commerce, clothed with social prestige, and surrounded by an able group of young men that included Robert Morris, James Wilson, Tench Francis, and Charles Thomson, Thomas Willing entered politics in 1763 as the mayor of Philadelphia. Soon he was plunged into the early revolutionary struggles that followed the Stamp Act of 1765. He served as chairman of the committee of citizens of his city that drafted non-importation resolutions in that year; he represented Philadelphia in the colonial assembly from 1764 to 1767; he served as president of the provincial conference in 1774; and acted as a Pennsylvania delegate to the Continental Congress in the years 1775 and 1776. In the latter capacity, he and only one other colleague opposed the Declaration of Independence.

From 1781 to 1807, when illness necessitated his retirement, he was closely associated with the more significant efforts to establish a sound financial system in the new nation. He was affiliated with Robert Morris and James Wilson in the founding of the Bank of Pennsylvania, and in 1781 he became the president of the Bank of North America. The latter bank aided the cause of the patriots in financing the closing years of the Revolution and contributed to the development of a spirit of nationalism that eventually led to the return of the conservatives to power in 1786. More than any other
agency, perhaps, the Bank of North America resisted the movement for paper currency during the lean years from 1781 to 1789. Naturally, Hamilton, Morris, and Washington turned to Willing in their search for the first president of the Bank of the United States upon its formation in 1791. For sixteen years, he was the guiding factor in that bank, carrying it through against the opposition of the Democratic-Republicans and cheap-money men.

The author of this monographic work of 237 pages has revealed, more clearly than the historian has generally realized was possible, the significance of Thomas Willing in the establishment of credit and finance in Pennsylvania and in the young republic. The language is clear, but the pursuit of details frequently retards the speed of the reader. There are very few errors and these are chiefly typographical mistakes; Cromwell, for example, is referred to as "Cornwell" (p. 115). The general reader may wonder, however, at the author’s repeated comparison of Thomas Willing and George Washington. Willing may very well stand on his own achievements without reference to Washington. The work has a good index, but lacks a bibliography. As a whole, the student of eastern Pennsylvania history will find it valuable for the period of Willing’s life.

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Russell J. Ferguson


It is unusual to write the history of a bed of coal. However, when the opening paragraph tells us that the Pittsburgh coal bed or seam has produced an output that represents a greater value than that yielded by any other single mineral deposit of the world, one realizes what a tremendous effect this bed has had on the economic life of western Pennsylvania.

Mr. Howard N. Eavenson, the author, is a leading professional mining engineer and past president of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers. In the brief volume at hand he has combined this background with a research covering 282 separate articles and references. It will long endure as the authoritative reference to the general subject. In addition, the student of western Pennsylvania history will find copies of rare maps in the pocket of the volume.

Highlights of the early history of the bed are the interest of the proprietors of Pennsylvania, the descendants of William Penn, in the “Cole Mine