

scendants after him, collected. Beginning with George Washington's oft-chronicled journey to the French Fort Le Boëuf, the author carries the reader through the early settlement of Meadville, its prominent settlers, the activities of the Holland Land Company, pioneer farm life, and town development and progress. Extensive excerpts from contemporary diaries and memoirs has materially increased the work's historical value. Chapter seven, for example, is devoted entirely to the "Reminiscences" of John Reynolds, who came to Meadville in 1805. He depicts with realism the life of the pioneer farmer and his wife. Once again are recalled the rude plowshare, the sickle and scythe, the tinder box and spinning wheel. Pleasant hours spent at relaxation and social intercourse enliven this brief account. *In French Creek Valley*, though not without defects of organization, is a distinct contribution to "western Pennsylvania."

*Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania*

FRANK B. SESSA

*Our Fathers Have Told Us: The Story of the Founding of Methodism in Western Pennsylvania.* By JACOB SIMPSON PAYTON. (Cincinnati, The Ruter Press, 1938. 141 p.)

THIS little book is a history of the coming of Methodism to western Pennsylvania and of its development within the territory of the Pittsburgh region up until 1800.

The volume is appropriately dedicated to the memory of William Francis Conner, who, through a long life of eminence in Pittsburgh Conference Methodism, was always interested in preserving the record of the historic past. The author is the greatest living authority on the story of Methodism in the territory with which this volume deals. Through the years he has collected a large personal library touching Methodist history in general, and western Pennsylvania Methodist history in particular. The wealth of his general reading and information in this field gives breadth of scope and intimacy of detail to the story as told here.

The occasion for this volume is described in an introduction written by Adna Wright Leonard, resident bishop of the Pittsburgh Area of the Methodist Episcopal Church. From July 22 to July 25, 1788, American Methodism's heroic pioneer bishop, Francis Asbury, held the first Methodist Conference of this transmontane region at Uniontown. The sesquicentennial of that event was celebrated at the annual session of the Pittsburgh Conference, also held at Uniontown, from September 27 to October 2, 1938. This volume was

published under the direction of a sesquicentennial committee, as a phase of this anniversary celebration.

The book is well bound, has the above-noted introduction, a foreword by the author, ten chapters of text, numerous footnote documentations, and a well-arranged index. It lists briefly the coming of the various Protestant communions to western Pennsylvania between the French and Indian and the Revolutionary wars. The obscure origins of the first Methodist societies in "The Redstone Country" from 1772 until 1784 are noted. With the appointment of two Methodist itinerants to the Redstone Circuit in 1784, the official story of Methodism begins. Most of the book is devoted to naming the preachers appointed from year to year until 1800; to outlining something of the Circuits that they rode; to giving information concerning the early preachers; and to showing how, by diligent witnessing on the part of the Methodists, preachers and people, Methodism expanded in the region under consideration.

Considerable space is given to events and items of special importance, such as the travels of Bishop Francis Asbury through western Pennsylvania, and the four Conferences that he held in Uniontown; the significance of Uniontown as the headquarters of early western Pennsylvania Methodism, and the founding there of the Union School, later Madison College; the Valentine Cook-Jamison debate near Greensburg; and the leadership of John Wrenshall in the establishment of Methodism in Pittsburgh. For this last subject, hitherto unpublished material derived from the manuscript journal of John Wrenshall was used.

This work is a significant contribution to the preserving of the early religious history of western Pennsylvania. The limitations of time placed upon the author prevented sufficient research to outline with clarity two important phases of the story of early Methodism in the Pittsburgh region. The first of these is the story of the beginnings from 1772 until the sending of the first itinerants in 1784. The second is the definite naming of all of the present western Pennsylvania Methodist churches that have their origins before 1800. This last task is a matter of greater difficulty for the Methodist historian than for the historian of any other communion. The Methodist Circuits were extensive and shifted from year to year. The statistics and appointments are listed for the Circuits as a whole. Only intensive research into the history of local churches can provide the answer as to the time and circumstances of their founding.

It is hoped that this volume may be the first step toward the publishing of a more complete history of Methodism in western Pennsylvania. Such a history

will trace the process by which the 523 Methodists reported on the Redstone Circuit in 1786 have grown to the present number of more than 130,000 members of the Methodist Church in the Pittsburgh Conference territory. That complete story will tell of the growth from 1800, where this story ends, until 1825 when the Pittsburgh Conference was formed; it will tell how three other great Conferences have been mothered by Pittsburgh Conference Methodism; and it will permanently record numerous matters the significance of which merit a better fate than historic oblivion.

*Trafford, Pennsylvania*

WALLACE GUY SMELTZER

*The Monongahela: The River and Its Region.* By RICHARD T. WILEY, Litt.D., Author of "Sim Greene and Tom the Tinker's Men," "The Whisky Insurrection," "Early Western Pennsylvania," "Elizabeth and Her Neighbors," etc. ([Butler, Pa., The Ziegler Company, 1937.] 257 p. Illustration.)

*The Allegheny River.* By MRS. S. KUSSART, Pittsburgh, Pa. (Pittsburgh, Pa., Burgum Printing Company, 1938. 342 p. Maps, illustrations.)

THESE books have even more in common than the obvious fact that each traces and enlarges upon the influence of an outstanding factor in the opening up, development, and later history of the trans-Allegheny region. Neither of the authors is a professional historian, though each has previously made useful contributions to the published records of western Pennsylvania history and lore, and with each, his or her present work has been largely a labor of love. Each necessarily repeats some of the oft told stories of the beginnings of human occupation of the region about the headwaters of the Ohio, but both—with variable success, perhaps, in respect of logic, balance, and definitiveness of treatment—have presented new syntheses of useful data about the special aspects and the more recent phases of the rivers' histories. Each draws upon primary as well as secondary sources, including, among the former, contemporary newspapers, directories, yearbooks, and government reports.

Dr. Wiley needs no introduction as the leading lay historian of the Monongahela Valley, where he has spent most of his four-score years, with eyes constantly open for light on the region's past, present, and future, and with the production of the present volume in view for a quarter of a century. He has succeeded admirably in his avowed purpose of presenting an interesting and