This biography is the fourth in the series of volumes being issued by the University of Pennsylvania Press under the general title of Pennsylvania Lives, and again justifies the launching of this venture. This series serves a useful purpose in bringing into clearer light some of the less familiar figures who have played a worthy role in the history of Pennsylvania and of the country, but whose activities have become somewhat dimmed by the lapse of time. Among these figures is James Burd, whom Miss Nixon has rescued from threatened obscurity and has placed before us in a full-length portrait. The author has given us a readable and well-balanced book, placing emphasis where it belongs and avoiding the temptation to hero worship to which biographers are often prone.

James Burd, born of highly respectable parentage in Scotland in 1826, had a normal childhood and received a good academic education. Emigrating to America in 1747 at the age of twenty-one, he landed in Philadelphia and became a merchant. Mingling with the colonial aristocracy and being well received socially, he shortly married Sally Shippen, daughter of Edward Shippen, sometime mayor of Philadelphia. Unsuccessful as a merchant, he accepted employment offered by his father-in-law, who was engaged in the fur trade as a member of the firm of Shippen and Lawrence. He now located at Shippensburg and from this time forth became thoroughly identified with the interests and problems of the frontier.

The turning point in Burd’s career was the outbreak of the French and Indian War, which afforded a suitable outlet for his talents and gave him his chief title to fame. He now became a soldier and road builder, rendering notable service to the province in both these capacities. In 1755 he was appointed by Governor Morris on a commission, along with George Croghan, William Buchanan, John Armstrong, and Adam Hoops, to survey and construct the frontier road needed for the western campaign against Fort Duquesne. After surveying the road, the other members of the commission became inactive, and Burd was soon in full charge of the work. With a force of about two hundred men he built a road from the vicinity of Chambersburg to within some twenty miles of Turkey Foot (Confluence). At this point he heard of
Braddock's defeat, and his road building came to an end for the time being. At a cost to the province of three thousand pounds, he had made a wagon road sixty-five miles long through a wilderness country. This work rendered Burd widely and favorably known throughout the province.

Following Braddock's defeat occurred a series of Indian ravages, which caused the frontier settlers to flee in panic to the eastward. The assembly at length aroused itself to take aggressive measures to defend the province and undertook the building of numerous frontier forts. Burd was given a captain's commission with instructions to build Fort Granville. Having completed this task satisfactorily, he was rewarded by being made a major and was directed to complete the fortifications at McKee's Store, above Harris's Ferry. Following this he was commissioned lieutenant-colonel and made commandant at Fort Augusta. It was now 1758 and Forbes's campaign against Fort Duquesne was in the making. At the head of two hundred men Burd joined Colonel Bouquet at Harris's Ferry and was the latter's principal aid in the vanguard of Forbes's army. Promoted to a colonelcy, Burd was placed in command of the forces at Loyal Hanna, where, while erecting fortifications, he repulsed an attack by the French and Indians. When Forbes and the main army arrived at Loyal Hanna and marched on to Fort Duquesne, Colonel Burd was left in command of the rear guard at that post.

After the capture of Fort Duquesne, Colonel Burd, acting under the orders of General Stanwix, built a road from Gist's plantation to the Monongahela at the mouth of Redstone Creek, where he erected Fort Burd (Brownsville), completed in 1759. In 1761, with his provincials, he spent four months at Fort Pitt, following which he returned to his old post as commandant at Fort Augusta, being now senior colonel of the provincial militia. During Pontiac's Conspiracy he was busily engaged making preparations to defend the fort and the surrounding region from Indian attacks. With the return of peace in 1764 he resigned his commission.

In 1764 Colonel Burd again became a merchant and opened a grocery store and wineshop at Lancaster, where he also engaged in politics and was elected chief magistrate of the town in 1765. He did not feel settled, however, but, with a thousand pounds at his disposal, was looking around for a suitable country estate. In 1766 he purchased five hundred acres of land in Paxtang Township (in the present Dauphin County), and there he built his home, known as Tinian, completed in 1768. Here at the age of forty-one he settled down as a country gentleman, entertaining largely, taking an active part in community life, and enjoying the companionship of his devoted wife and growing family.
When trouble with the mother country was brewing, Burd espoused the patriot cause, becoming chairman of the Lancaster County Committee of Correspondence, and doing his part to forward military preparedness. He received but little recognition from headquarters in Philadelphia, however, and resigned his commission in the summer of 1775. Nevertheless, in September of that year, he was commissioned colonel of the Fourth Battalion of Lancaster County Associators. Yet he did not feel secure in his position because baseless rumors as to his loyalty began to be circulated, causing his popularity to decline. The enthusiasm of his troops waned, and his connection with the Shippens, the Allens, and other conservatives was held against him, while less capable and experienced officers were elevated over him. Furthermore, he was now fifty years old, suffered from rheumatism, and was in financial straits. For whatever reason, or combination of reasons, he resigned his commission a second time; his military career was at an end. In 1784 his wife died, leaving him inconsolable. His family rallied to him, and “every one tried to help, but he missed his Sally.” On October 5, 1793, the end came.

Miss Nixon has woven the details of Colonel Burd’s life into a sprightly narrative, displaying considerable literary skill. Her book, which is well worth reading, is a worthy contribution to the history of Pennsylvania. She is to be commended for succeeding in the none too easy task of writing a satisfactory biography. The format of the book is pleasing; it contains a bibliography and a satisfactory index, and appears to be free from typographical errors.

Miss Nixon’s Flood Tides along the Allegheny. By Francis R. Harbison. (Pittsburgh, Francis R. Harbison, 1941. 205 p. End-paper map.)

Despite the bitter and pessimistic paragraph which closes Francis R. Harbison’s Flood Tides along the Allegheny, his book is a record and revelation of progress onward and upward. He tells how “the panther still roamed the wilderness, and its night cry, like the wail of a lost soul in purgatory, still made brave men shiver within the safety of cabin walls.” Those brave men survived the panther and the wolf, so Mr. Harbison need not shiver amid “the shadows of a threatened recurrence of the Dark Ages.” Our planet still rotates from west to east, and the sun also rises on time. Mr. Harbison’s book furnishes ample evidence in its 205 lively pages.

To the reader without imagination many of these records will appear to be indeed “a monotonous rotation of winters, springs, summers, and autumns, of clearing, planting, cultivating, and reaping, and the birth, care, and training of