BOOK REVIEWS


Offset reprints of scarce old books continue to be offered at prices seemingly high, yet usually much below today's prices of the original publications, if one can be found on a rare or used book list. The limited demand and consequently small editions of these reprints preclude the possibility of low prices. Judicious libraries, such as the Library of Congress and New York Public Library, are handing reprints, when available, to their readers in lieu of perishable old works. There is not, of course, the pleasurableness of holding the cherished old volumes or of feeling the soft touch of the resilient old paper. Yet, to the student, the functional purpose is equal: the pagination, the spelling (or misspelling), punctuation (or lack of it), are the same; and quotation can be excerpted exactly as from the original. The old tome is thus spared the hazards from wear and acids, oil and grime from normal handling.

All of this is to say that the appearance of the offset reproduction of Christopher Gist's Journals, so worthily edited and annotated by William M. Darlington, in 1893, is timely and performs a service in making this sourcebook of western exploration available to an ever widening circle of history-conscious public. One hundred copies of the Darlington publication were produced, part on quarto size handmade rag paper with uncut edges, part octavo. With all of the great libraries of the East and Midwest having one or several copies in their collections, it is small wonder that the originals have become rare.

Certain of Gist's journals have been printed in such monumental works as Charles Hanna's The Wilderness Trail, Reuben Gold Thwaites' Early Western Travels, and the fine facsimile reproductions of the journals in Lois Mulkern's George Mercer Papers. Then there were the printings of Gist's journals in the interest of particular geographical areas, such as the pairing of Gist's and Washington's diaries of their joint trip to the French forts on French Creek, edited
by D. F. Larribee, the Massachusetts Historical Society's publication of the same in their *Collections*, and J. S. Johnston's *The First Explorations of Kentucky*. None, however, except Hanna had the first-hand geographical knowledge of Gist's itineraries, reference points and landmarks as had Darlington, at a time long before the era of the highway improvement when visible traces yet remained as guideposts on the original trails. Much of the primary source materials necessary to illuminate these journals Darlington collected, and they are now found in the great library bearing his name.

The reader may be a little mystified by a maze of introductory text that has been added: a Prefatory Note by Pennsylvania historian Dr. Sylvester K. Stevens, and an Introduction by Dr. Frank Monaghan, noted editor and historical writer. Mr. Darlington had prefaced his work with an able Introductory Memoir, which placed the journals in their proper historical setting, but much has been learned since that writing concerning Gist's origin and earlier life, genealogy, his death and the administration of his estate by his cousin, General Mordecai Gist of Revolutionary note. Especially has there been much brought to light regarding the great frontiersman's distinguished and numerous progeny: generals, United States Senators, one of Lincoln's cabinet members, two candidates for the vice-presidency, one the wife of the brother of Mrs. Henry Clay, one the mistress of the famous Blair House in Washington and wife of the confidential advisor of two Presidents, lawyers, doctors, leaders in the western expansion of last century.

Gist was of sufficient reputation as a surveyor and man of affairs to warrant his having been chosen by the Ohio Company, composed of great landowners of America and England, to explore, locate and survey the greatest real estate speculation up to that time in America (excluding the proprietorships). His father had been a surveyor, plantation owner, member of the Maryland Assembly, a justice, and one of the commissioners who laid out the town of Baltimore. Dr. Monaghan points out that Gist was many years ahead of Nemacolin upon the identical trail that later bore the name of the Indian chief, just as he preceded Boone upon the Kentucky paths that eighteen years later were associated with that adventurous frontiersman. All of the foregoing hardly supports the averment found in the Prefatory Note that Gist "... appeared truly out of nowhere to become a strangely remote figure in determining the course of empire...".

It is unusual that two parts of introductory material should be in disagreement on matters of historical fact. Dr. Monaghan, with con-
currence of Washington's own correspondence and journal, concludes that Gist was on his way, bearing Washington's letter to Governor Dinwiddie, to Winchester at the time of the Jumonville affair.

The fact remains that Christopher Gist has only in recent years been accorded credit for his full share in the western expansion of Anglo-Saxon civilization in North America. The attention of the reader and student is directed toward the journals themselves and the copious and valuable historiographical notes. The writer of the Introduction could not have done better than to quote our own Dr. Alfred Procter James concerning Gist: "His reward for his great work . . . . was not to be financial . . . . He earned an imperishable name in the history of the American frontier."

*Note: Our own Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* (vol. XV, pp. 193-198) stands in need of correction in relation to the genealogy of the Gist family. The author there, relying upon the table printed in the *Maryland Historical Magazine* (vol. VIII, pp. 376-379) misread the genealogical notation for Col. Nathaniel Gist (Christopher, Richard, Christopher), confusing Nathaniel, the brother of Christopher for his son Nathaniel. Thus the record is set right, that the children of Nathaniel, not of Nathaniel, were those enumerated above and thus the progeny of Christopher our journalist.

*Pittsburgh*  
Edward G. Williams


Here, under one cover, are thumbnail descriptions and photographic illustrations of several hundred structures in Allegheny County deemed architecturally significant and worthy of preservation.

Financed by a grant from the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust to the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, the book represents the results of a two-year research into and visitation of the county's architectural past. It is a book with a purpose — to indicate categorically all structures that should be preserved and saved from the bulldozer and the demolition ball. As the well qualified architect-authors from the Carnegie-Mellon University faculty point