
Paul B. Beers has dovetailed his factual Profiles from the Susquehanna Valley with John O'Hara's fictional tales about the same area. Readers of Ten North Frederick, A Rage to Live, or Appointment in Samarra have long been intrigued by wondering about just which families Mr. O'Hara was describing. Mr. Beers relates a few more stories, some fact, and some surmise, to add to the game O'Hara inadvertently started.

Mr. Beers starts his narrative on old Front Street where it all started. He proceeds to the sins of the area and the attendant hypocrisy. This led him into a discussion of racial relations in the valley. Whether sin or hypocrisy dictated this order, the author does not indicate. At any rate, the subject matter needed cooling off, and Beers switched to the weather, a normally safe subject. Only he became engulfed by the great flood of 1972. He tells why Camp Hill is such a desirable address, how Steelton accidentally elected a Democrat, and of the wonders of sparsely populated Perry County.

No annals of the Susquehanna Valley would be complete without the part the railroads and canals played in its development and growth, and, of course, these facts are included, as well as the history of the bridges that have spanned the Susquehanna River. Horse breeding and racing are given their place in this fine book along with the famous unsolved murders of the area. Education and the arts are duly chronicled, including Western Pennsylvania's own Janet DeCoux's William Penn and the various reactions this work of art inspired.

Politics is what it is all about; or so one would expect of the region containing the capital of Pennsylvania. According to Mr. Beers, with a few notable exceptions, this is not the way it is at all. William Maclay, the Camerons, Ed Beidleman, Harve Taylor, and George Wade were the only residents of the valley with political interests in its two hundred-year history. All other politicking has been carried on by Pennsylvanians from other regions.

Simon Girty is the notorious renegade who continues to surface all over the northeast. He is claimed strongly by Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio; although why anyone would want him is a puzzle. Sure enough, the Susquehanna Valley claims him and solely on the basis of a fictional biography written by Uriah J. Jones
and published by A. Monroe Aurand, Jr. — both of Harrisburg. Simon Girty is followed by Lewis the Robber, Abraham Lincoln, Dan Drawbaugh, Silas Comfort Swallow, John O'Hara, and John F. Kennedy. It would seem Beers's style is chronological order no matter who follows whom.

Paul Beers is probably the most logical person in the valley to write a book of this type. Mr. Beers is associate editor of the Patriot-News and has, for many years, written a daily column — "Reporter At Large" — in the Harrisburg Evening News. He had access to much primary source material, and he packed so much historical material into these few pages, it is a shame he did not take the time to compile an index. His work would have had a great deal more value.

Richmond, Virginia

HELEN COLLINS


Reframing the Constitution: An Imperative for Modern America. By LELAND BALDWIN. (Santa Barbara, Calif.: American Bibliographical Center, Clio Press, 1971. Pp. 142. cloth $15.00, paper $5.50.)

With the bicentennial but three years away much will be written and more said about the events which took place during those hot, humid, and suspense-filled days at Philadelphia in 1776. These were days which were followed hard on by the Revolution and then the final Continental Congress when the Constitution was written. To students of political science, to all who are steeped in our history, and to the interested reading public, the two works here reviewed offer pertinent observations on both documents refined in the crucible of freedom at Philadelphia.

The first volume, The Development of a Revolutionary Mentality, is the result of the first Library of Congress Symposium and made possible through a grant from the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation in Washington, D. C. At this meeting many distinguished historians and political scientists discussed some of the sources of ideas which helped to develop the American revolutionary mentality