

BOOK REVIEWS

Paintings and Miniatures at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Revised edition compiled by NICHOLAS B. WAINWRIGHT. (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1974. Pp. 334. Foreword, photographs, catalogue entries, index to artists. \$20.00.)

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is the oldest historical society in the state of Pennsylvania. It is celebrating its sesqui-centennial with an exhibition entitled "One Hundred and Fifty Years of Collecting," which is scheduled from November 25, 1974, to March 25, 1975. This exhibition features major examples of painting, including seven portraits of George Washington, furniture, silver, manuscripts, minor arts, and historical memorabilia which the society has acquired since 1824. This exhibition is of special interest in these years approaching the Bicentennial, for the society has an unusually strong representation of items related to the history of Philadelphia and of Pennsylvania; items acquired over a period long enough to make the collection poignantly inclusive.

This year the society has also published Nicholas Wainwright's *One Hundred and Fifty Years of Collecting*; the contents of this volume parallel, but do not altogether duplicate, the material included in the current exhibition of the same title. Mr. Wainwright is the editor of the society's *Magazine of History and Biography* and the author of a number of books on Americana, including *Colonial Grandeur in Philadelphia: The House and Furniture of General John Cadwalader* and *Philadelphia in the Romantic Age of Lithography*.

Mr. Wainwright has compiled another component of the society's commemoration of its anniversary: the revised edition of William Sawitsky's 1942 *Catalogue, Descriptive and Critical, of the Paintings and Miniatures in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*. The 1974 edition, entitled *Paintings and Miniatures at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, is a much needed amplification, for the society's collection has grown from 616 paintings, with 166 artists represented, to 791 paintings and 201 identifiable artists.

The new catalogue contains a reprint of the foreword to the 1942 edition, the foreword to the 1974 edition, a list of illustrations arranged by period, the catalogue of portraits, miniatures, and other subjects, and an index to artists. The foreword's comment that, "The new paintings represent much in interest through the fame of their subjects, and also are rich in quality," warns the reader that the emphasis of this collection is upon the representation of illustrious personages.

The number of illustrations in the 1974 catalogue has been increased almost fourfold, from 63 to 240. The quality of the offset lithography, unfortunately, is rather uneven. The three color reproductions are an enlivening addition and testify to the distinction of a number of portraits in the collection: the Copley portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Mifflin, the Joseph Wright portrait of George Washington, and the Benjamin West portrait of Jane Galloway.

The catalogue of portraits is arranged alphabetically by sitter. A biography of the sitter and a description of the physical appearance of the painting are set down methodically. The name of the artist where known or ascribed, occasionally the date, the acquisition by gift, bequest, or purchase, and pertinent references are recorded. "Other Subjects," including views of Philadelphia and environs, are arranged alphabetically by artist's name. No reference is made to the illustrations which are accessible only by perusing the appropriate chronological section in the list of illustrations, pp. xii-xix. The index to artists gives a brief biography and lists the paintings in the catalogue; again, there is reference neither to the illustrations nor to the catalogue entries. The lack of correlation of visual and written information and the absence of a general index make this catalogue trying to use.

Walter Whitehill strongly urges in *The Arts in Early American History* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 16, that ". . . every institution possessing pertinent objects . . . publish promptly as many carefully prepared and liberally illustrated catalogues of picture books, or both, as their time and resources permit." The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, through this important, though somewhat prosaic, catalogue, has made available to the antiquarian, the genealogist, and the art historian a large collection of American paintings. It is to be hoped that they will continue to record their resources for the public.

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The Holy Experiment. By LOIS T. HENDERSON. (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1974. Pp. 237. \$7.50.)

Yankee Communes. Another American Way. By FLO MORSE. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971. Pp. 179. Illustrated. \$4.95.)