fiction. Primary and secondary materials are lumped together in his first category, which includes everything from records in the British Museum to magazine articles.

Worst of all, while the so-called *Horn Papers* are not listed among the sources, nor cited as proof in many notes, their foul and forged presence permeates the entire book. Material from them is constantly used, without any citation of source. In several places in the work Bailey refers with great affection to these forgeries, and although citing the principal proofs of spuriousness, adds such approving comments as: “Yet they are interesting documents, and whoever compiled the diaries knew more about eastern [sic] Pennsylvania history than anyone we know... These papers have to be dealt with when studying the life of Christopher Gist.” This and similar assertions that proved forgeries should be given credence are enough to boggle the mind of an ariet!

“Many years have been involved in putting together this biography,” begins the author. Perhaps the time has been so long that it has outworn his capability as a historian. The book is worse than worthless.

*Pittsburgh*  
*George Swetnam*


This biography examines the public and, to a lesser extent, the private life of Thomas McKean, the son of a tavern keeper who became a signatory to the Declaration of Independence. Although a victim of scholarly neglect, McKean, a plural office holder in both Delaware and Pennsylvania, held a multitude of important positions between 1762 and 1814. His government service included tenure as Speaker of the Delaware assembly, delegate at the Stamp Act Congress, member of the First and Second Continental congresses, and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. While McKean’s career continued into the Jeffersonian era and included ten years as governor of Pennsylvania, Coleman’s account ends in 1780.

McKean won prominence throughout the colonies for his criticism of British policies during the Stamp Act Congress. Although ideologically committed to the radical faction by the autumn of 1775, Mc-
Kean's efforts on behalf of independence occurred largely behind the scenes because the government of Delaware instructed him to work at the Continental Congress for "the restoration of that harmony with the parent state which is so essential to the security and happiness of the whole British empire" (p. 143). According to Coleman, McKean vigorously and effectively promoted independence among his reluctant fellow delegates of the middle colonies while wearing "the mask of compromise" (p. 145).

Although Coleman convincingly illustrates McKean's centrality to the independence movement, the book's balance is askew. Coleman devotes several sections to peripheral matters such as McKean's distant genealogy and his brother's involvement with the New Jersey Medical Society. Conversely, Coleman occasionally allows major events of the Revolutionary era to overshadow his protagonist. Consequently the book's focus at times shifts away from McKean to well-known incidents and personalities. Furthermore, Coleman's rationale for ending his study in 1780, with McKean's service in the Continental Congress incomplete, remains unclear. This chronological division parallels no obvious dividing line in either McKean's personal or public life.

Coleman's narrative approach sometimes eschews analysis. He offers little interpretation of McKean's evident drive to achieve prominence, for example. When reading a memorial addressed to "the right Honorable Thomas McKean, Esq., Lord Justice of Pennsylvania," McKean proclaimed in open court: "These are, perhaps, more titles than I can fairly lay claim to, but at all events the petitioner has erred on the right side" (p. 231). Such remarks, combined with McKean's arrogance, compulsive quest for office, and reticence about his humble parentage, suggest the need for some analysis of his personality. Coleman, however, offers little insight into McKean's personality beyond a few scattered passages.

Undoubtedly Coleman was hampered by a limited data base. Many of McKean's contemporaries who served with him at Philadelphia left behind more ample materials for future biographers to work with than did McKean. John Adams, for instance, had family and constituents in the distant colony of Massachusetts, requiring him to commit his thoughts and feelings to pen more frequently than local figures such as McKean. This relative paucity of letters by McKean rendered some of the book's deficiencies unavoidable. Nevertheless, Coleman's prodigious research resulted in the utilization of an impressive array of Revolutionary manuscripts, contemporary printed ac-
counts, official records and documents, and secondary materials. Within the confines of the limitations imposed by the dimensions of McKean's written correspondence, Coleman's research appears exhaustive.

Despite its shortcomings, Coleman's book performs a valuable function. Except for Roberdeau Buchanan's genealogical work in 1890, Coleman's account represents the only biographical study of this important Revolutionary leader. Coleman's book fills an oversight in historical scholarship by calling attention to an influential figure in the Revolutionary generation. Coleman persuasively establishes McKean's position as a major participant in the creation of an independent United States.

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Lancaster Diary 1776. Compiled by Walter F. Ayars III. (Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Greater Lancaster Chapter of the Lancaster County Bicentennial Committee, 1976. Pp. 120. Foreword, acknowledgments, glossary, maps, appendix, index. $4.25.)


A century ago, during America's centennial era, a flurry of patriotic activity resulted in the publication of many historical works, particularly county histories. During the current bicentennial era, intense activity and historical interest has resulted in the printing of an almost countless number of borough, township, city, county, state, and other types of histories.

The titles here reviewed, both products of the bicentennial fervor, illustrate divergent approaches to analysis of the past. Walter Ayars, in his monograph, Lancaster Diary 1776, makes no claim of writing history. Rather he seeks to help the reader "gain the flavor of the period as well as find interest in the accounts of the clothing of the day, customs, and language" and to develop "the realization that Lancaster was people like you and I."

Using letters, newspaper articles, broadsides, and church and public records, Ayars develops a day-by-day chronology of life in