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.

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
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (the area encompasses contemporary Lebanon, Lancaster, and Dauphin counties). The appendix includes letters to and from the Committee of Lancaster and rosters of various military companies.

The typical reader of this review and perhaps some researchers and genealogists would peruse the monograph with gusto and conclude that the author achieved his goal. However, the reviewer doubts that the casual or curious reader would be enthralled by the notations of births, deaths, marriages, sales, calls to arms, rosters, robberies, and political intrigue. The historically inclined might well read the Diary in one sitting; others probably would not get to July 4, 1776, unless they skipped pages to do so.

In contrast to the Diary is Snyder's Union County, Pennsylvania, which fills a distinct void in the history of the central part of the state. According to the Bibliography of Pennsylvania History, several works have been produced dealing with various regions or topics related to Union County. Somehow, though, the county itself was bypassed when so many other county histories were being written during the nation's centennial era.

Union County is the type of book that would be of interest to both the serious and the general reader. The development of such a manuscript was not an easy task, because not only is Union one of the smallest counties in the state, it also has the dubious distinction of qualifying very few of its inhabitants for the pages of Who's Who in America. The problem for Snyder was one of how to produce a readable history with little to write about. Snyder's approach was to follow the basic pattern of standard county histories, but with some refreshing variations. First and foremost is that the writer's style makes the book highly readable. Secondly, the book is profusely illustrated with a wide variety of photographs. Another commendable factor is the fashion in which the author blends scholarly, well-documented material with oral history and folklore.

An examination of the text reveals some pleasant surprises. This is probably one of the first of the current vintage county histories to include a chapter on women. Another plus is the absence of those endless thumbnail sketches of every local merchant, mail carrier, politician, gentleman farmer, and bootblack who managed to stay out of jail and thus qualified for inclusion in the county "Who's Who."

As with other such works, the book includes chapters or sections dealing with settlement of the county, each of its political subdivisions,
its role in the American Revolution and the Civil War, transportation, architecture, and education. The near-omission of several other areas also tells us something about the county. For example, there is little attention devoted to Indians, heavy industry, journalism, medicine, banking, the legal profession, or ethnic groups. Not including certain other materials may be a shortcoming. Considering that "Agriculture remained basic to the region's economy through the second and third quarters of the twentieth century" (p. 282), it seems more material could have been included on the topic. Also, in analyzing the coverage provided for each quarter century of the county's history from the mid-1750s to 1976, it appears that the most recent half century, and particularly the decades since World War II, received insufficient attention.

All things considered, however, Snyder's *Union County, Pennsylvania* is more significant, scholarly, and readable than Ayars's *Lancaster Diary 1776*.

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In 1949 Louis C. Hunter published his classic history of early river transportation, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers*. His work was massive in size — fully 684 pages — and comprehensive in scope. In it Hunter discussed nearly every facet of the industry: technology, investment, labor, legislation, and safety, as well as touching upon the steamboat's role in American culture. So exhaustive was Hunter's examination that he cornered the market, so to speak, co-opting everyone else working on the trade. The huge superstructure of his monograph has served as a point of reference and a point of departure for every study of the business launched since that time.

Our purpose here, of course, is not to review Hunter's book, published more than a quarter century ago, but rather to discuss a new study, *Western River Transportation: The Era of Early Internal Development, 1810-1860*, assembled by three econometric historians, Erik