more than five or six pages) of Pennsylvania colonial history. Such a survey would have enhanced the value of this book for those unfamiliar with the commonwealth's colonial past.

Dr. Waddell and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission are to be commended for making available this popularly-priced, paperback edition of selected historical documents. This collection can be profitably used by student, citizen, and scholar.

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Taciturn to the point of awkwardness, terse in his professional correspondence, childless and unattached to any family save that he found in the business world, the Pennsylvania Railroad's third president created a series of roadblocks for the biographer. Ward solves the problem (if, indeed, it has a solution) by focusing almost exclusively on his subject's business ventures. Thomson began his career in railroading in 1827 as a rodman on a survey crew. In 1834 he became chief engineer for the Georgia Railroad. He accepted a similar position with the Pennsylvania in 1847 and held its presidency from 1852 until his death in 1874. Thomson's investments on his own account are also treated at length.

The book is perhaps too much filled with the nuts and bolts of corporate life: board meetings, bond issues, and the like. Behind it all, however, is the author's firm grasp of the inner workings of the business corporation; an ability to read between the lines of minutes and reports; and a commitment to discovering what was typical and what was unique in Thomson's life. Thomson emerges withdrawn but not dull. He pioneered in the separation of ownership from control, in decentralized management systems, and in rate-fixing. He seems to have shared his contemporaries' conservative social values (slaves were property, unions unnecessary, government generally a nuisance). Unlike the Vanderbilts and the Goulds, however, Thomson cared deeply about the mechanics and technology of railroading and, until
late in life, he believed that business relationships could be carried on through a community of confidence and trust.

Behind the book's subtitle is Ward's belief that Thomson transformed the Pennsylvania from a road dominated by Philadelphia merchants, the board of directors, and stockholders into a "personal fiefdom" in which, as the representative of the railroad, he protected the line from the "parochialism" of these interests (pp. 91, 93). There is no doubt that Thomson's power was great, but he was not without his own master — an ideology of expansion. As chief engineer of the Georgia Railroad, Thomson dreamed of a southern transcontinental. As president of the Pennsylvania, he continued to hold that a road that failed to grow would die, and he took the Pennsylvania west to Pittsburgh, then into the Ohio Valley, St. Louis, and Chicago, attempting to realize his vision of a "great national enterprise" (p. 78).

Without examining it, Ward accepts this vision as reasonable and rational. Yet Thomson's commitment to expansion was as much emotional as rational — so much so that by the 1860s he had committed his personal resources to several half-baked trans-Mississippi ventures and had allowed Vice-President Tom Scott to fritter away millions on his Texas and Pacific project. Ward ascribes these western problems to Thomson's failure to understand the special requirements of transcontinental business. True enough, but Thomson was also driven beyond his abilities by an expansionist ideology which permeated nineteenth-century business culture.

It is questionable, too, whether Thomson was any less parochial than the interests he supplanted. Although Thomson's vision would seem broader than that of the Philadelphia merchants who desperately wanted to see the city keep pace with New York, Ward's descriptions reveal Thomson's devotion to the railroad rather than to any larger entity. Thomson "assumed that whatever was good for the Pennsylvania was also beneficial for his native state and the nation. . . . He wanted all the Pacific basin trade funneled across the Horseshoe Curve" (pp. 120, 189). The fact is that nineteenth-century American economic development was the product of the accumulated provincialisms of cities, states, regions, corporations like the Pennsylvania Railroad, and people like J. Edgar Thomson.

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