

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Sherman Day: Artist, Forty-Niner, Engineer.* By MURPHY D. SMITH. (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazer, Inc., 1980. Pp. xvi, 128. Preface, introduction, chronology, abbreviations, illustrations, footnotes, bibliography. \$30.00.)

While the title of this work implies that Sherman Day was a man of three vocations, it only tells part of the story of a man generally unknown throughout much of his life. A more realistic title would be "Sherman Day: Unsuccessful Merchant and Forty-niner, Unclaimed Artist-author, and Renowned Civil Engineer and Surveyor."

Day, born in 1806, was the son of Yale President Jeremiah Day. After attending boarding school young Day matriculated at Yale where he excelled in mathematics and science, the fields which provided skills for his most successful vocation. It appears that his first serious attempts at sketching occurred during his years at Yale.

Following graduation, Day engaged in mercantile pursuits in France and America. Failure of his business ventures led to a brief career as a civil engineer. During this time he laid out roads and designed bridges in Indiana and Ohio.

Returning to Pennsylvania in 1841, Day became immersed in the general rise of interest in antiquities. Through the influence of James Warner Barber, a noted state historian-author, Day embarked on a monumental research and writing project. Over the next two years Day traveled the length and breadth of Pennsylvania visiting towns and cities, farms and factories, interviewing preachers, teachers, merchants, farmers, artisans, and others while sketching numerous buildings, bridges, and geographical features. The result of the endeavor was a history book as monumental as its title: *Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania: Containing a Copious Selection of the Most Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, etc. Relating to Its History and Antiquities, Both General and Local, with Topographical Descriptions of Every County and all the Larger Towns in the State.* The most significant aspect of the work was the inclusion of 165 of Day's sketches.

Realizing minimal financial gain, Day went again to the Midwest where he experienced a second round of mercantile failures. "Gold fever" lured him to California in 1849. Day's prospecting efforts were as unsuccessful as his mercantile endeavors. As a matter of survival

Day again took up the only career in which he had experienced success — civil engineering and surveying. In this capacity Day was eminently successful, becoming a key figure in the early engineering history of California. He was acclaimed for his surveying and design of roads and railroads, was elected to the California state senate, and served as trustee and later Professor of Mine Construction and Surveying at California College (University of California). During his later years Day developed an interest in California's Indians and authored two treatises on the topic.

The text of Smith's work is only thirty-four pages long and perhaps this is a blessing. While this monograph is basically a biography, it is also a history book and travelogue. Like a history book, it is replete with names, dates, places, and facts. Also, like the typical history, this is not the kind of book that the average person would curl up with to read by the fireplace. In short, while some fascinating information is presented it is not fascinating reading. This is not to impugn the effort that went into producing the work. Documentation is exhaustive if not exhausting (there are 331 footnotes for only thirty-four pages of text). Some sixty sources are listed in the bibliography. The saving grace of this work is the reproduction of Day's sketches in sixty-three pages. Included are 154 sketches of Pennsylvania scenes — courthouses, penitentiaries, town squares, colleges, and scenery. Also included are ten miscellaneous sketches printed through the courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California (Berkeley).

My advice to anyone coming into possession of this book is to turn directly to the illustrations. For therein lies the true value of the work. The sketches, heretofore not readily available to the amateur historian and casual reader, present a vivid image of Pennsylvania 140 years ago.

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*A History of Retirement: The Meaning and Function of an American Institution, 1885-1978.* By WILLIAM GRAEBNER. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980. Pp. x, 293. Preface, bibliographical essay, footnotes, index. \$22.50.)

Retirement has been and continues to be an extremely important topic. Therefore, it is fortunate that an able historian, in this case