Hershberg and his company of "quantificators." [Journal of American History 68 (June 1981): 78-79.] Admittedly, the PSHP articles are unabashedly ecological in approach, and on the whole ignore the political and ideological/cultural elements in the community complex. This neglect of the "soft" side of human experience, while not necessarily detracting from the significance of the PSHP heritage, renders the portrait of nineteenth-century Philadelphia society incomplete. Recently, a few historians have ventured to flush out the voids left by the "accountants" of history. James Borchert's study of Alley Life in Washington [D.C.] (1980) blended "hard" and "soft" data to illustrate how poor black Washingtonians constructed a functional urban life style out of the materials of a resilient black culture. Thomas Kessner in The Golden Door performed a similar alloying of "hard" and lyrstic data to contrast the Jewish and Italian ethnic experience in New York. Hershberg and his corps of PSHP scholars have erected a well-furnished stage for the analysis of nineteenth-century Philadelphia as an opportunity structure; now historians are presented the enviable task of peopling the historical drama with actors.

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The contradictions in Matthew Stanley Quay have fascinated historians. He loved literature (particularly that of Augustan Rome), and his library was so dear to him that one of his last requests was "to see my books once more before I die" (p. 250). Though an urbane guest and a gracious host, Quay was a quiet, reserved man who would rather read at home in Beaver or fish on Florida’s Indian River than attend a fashionable ball in Washington. And yet when Quay entered politics he earned a reputation not as a statesman — for his name is associated with no movement, no issue, and no legislation — but as an unsavory party boss. He was one of the most astute organizers in the history of American political parties and one of the
most corrupt. Professor Kehl of the University of Pittsburgh neatly
delineates Quay's ambiguities.

With good reason Quay chose *Implora Pacem* — I pray for
peace — as his epitaph. Attack after attack mounted by rival bosses
and outraged independents threatened his political career, but Quay,
a superb tactician, emerged from each battle more resourceful, and in
the end triumphed over his enemies. Initially a protégé of Andrew
Gregg Curtin, later a lieutenant of Simon Cameron, Quay by the
1880s had made the Pennsylvania Republican machine his own and
in 1887 was elected to the United States Senate.

Quay used his talents to win elections, not to originate or legis-
late policy. His absenteeism from the Senate and his silence when
there were legendary, and he shunned important committee assign-
ments, preferring to distribute favors as chairman of the Committee
on Public Buildings and Grounds. His interest in the tariff was neither
theoretical nor national and ended when his constituents were pro-
tected. But he was a master organizer and a brilliant administrator
of the Pennsylvania Republican machine. Issues did not interest him
because he believed good organization would defeat good ideas.
Recognizing that good organization depended upon control of the
thousands of election units in Pennsylvania, Quay kept cardbox
records — "Quay's Coffins" — of local politicians, listing favors done
them, their strengths, weaknesses, and secrets (including personal in-
discretions). When in trouble, he utilized this information to line up
support. Money to run this machine — to provide favors — came
both from political assessments of officeholders and industrialists who
were willing to contribute to the Republican party as long as Quay
— the political broker — could protect their interests in the legisla-
ture or their tariff schedules in the Senate. In addition, Quay was an
audacious and sagacious captain in a political campaign. In 1888 he
became chairman of the Republican National Committee and engi-
neered Benjamin Harrison's victory, though Harrison had 100,000
fewer votes than his Democratic rival, Grover Cleveland. Quay
accomplished this feat by frying $400,000 of "fat" out of Pennsylvania
manufacturers and spending it in the doubtful state of New York.
Recognizing that the election would be won or lost in New York City,
Quay spent $150,000 compiling an accurate New York City directory
to identify legitimate voters and to eliminate fraudulent ones. To
Quay's chagrin, Harrison thanked the Almighty, rather than him, for
the victory, and though Quay was reputed to control the new admin-
istration, the president ignored him.
Quay was corrupt as well as astute. To supplement political assessments and business contributions, he repeatedly utilized state funds. From the early 1870s until his death in 1904, with a few brief exceptions, Quay was either state treasurer or close to the person who was treasurer. The state treasurer was empowered to deposit state money in banks but not required to receive interest from these accounts. Anxious to secure these funds, banks showered favors on state treasurers who invariably left that office far wealthier than they entered it. In 1880 Quay speculated with state funds and lost $250,000 (an associate committed suicide) and was saved by a $100,000 loan from Don Cameron. After Quay audaciously ran for and won the state treasurer’s post in 1885, he apparently speculated with $400,000 in state funds in North Chicago Railroad Company securities, resold them at a profit, returned the embezzled $400,000, and on May 19, 1886, repaid Don Cameron. When in 1898 the Peoples Bank, Quay’s favorite depository for state funds, went bankrupt and its cashier committed suicide, Quay was again implicated since he had earlier written the cashier, “if you buy and carry a thousand Met. [rropolitan Traction of New York] for me, I’ll shake the plum tree” (p. 215). While the evidence was insufficient to convict Quay, it is obvious that he had state funds in mind when he spoke of the plum tree. A passionate speculator on the stock market, Quay could lose $10,000 a day and laugh at his bad luck, but “since,” as Kehl remarks, “the funds he had ventured often belonged to a private bank or the Commonwealth, why shouldn’t he laugh?” (p. 187).

Writing a biography of Quay is a difficult task. Not only was he a reticent politician, but his surviving papers are “scattered in time, and hopelessly incomplete” (p. 282). Resisting temptation, Kehl does not attempt to titillate or moralize. His portrayal of Quay is unvarnished. While Kehl plays up neither the few virtues nor the many vices of Quay, his claim that Quay, with his quiet backstage maneuvering, “exercised more influence over legislation than almost any other senator” (p. 178) is contradicted by his evidence. Four or five senators led by Nelson Aldrich dominated the Senate in 1900, and Quay was too absorbed with machine politics and too occupied with reading and fishing to influence significant legislation. Only bills affecting his constituents directly (tariffs) or aiding his private speculations (statehood for New Mexico) aroused Quay’s interest. We are indebted to Kehl for his interesting portrait of this brilliant, audacious, resourceful, innovative, and corrupt politician.

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