

elucidation in support of the author's theses, this may be less a problem than the book's lack of scholarly documentation. Although the flow of the text is often interrupted by a reference to newspapers or secondary sources, the absence of footnotes detracts from the book's intended directness and effect. There is no index (perhaps understandable in such a brief work), and the bibliography of almost eight-and-a-half pages includes a number of references that appear to bear little relevance to the text. Despite these shortcomings Barendse's point is well taken and his book is necessary reading for students of labor, immigrant, and social history, particularly for those in Pennsylvania.

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*My Voice Was Heard.* Edited by IDA COHEN SELAVAN. (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., and National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section, 1981. Pp. xxii, 278. Introduction, preface, list of respondents, list of contributors, bibliography, index, illustrations. \$15.00, hardbound; \$9.95, paper.)

Oral history projects have become quite popular in recent years in high school and college classrooms, church and synagogue groups, and local community organizations. Volunteers, sometimes under the guidance of professional historians or anthropologists, prepare a questionnaire and interview older members of the community in an effort to preserve fragments of the past that would otherwise be lost forever with the passing of the generation that still remembers. Sometimes the resulting transcriptions are published in whole or in part; in other cases, where resources are more slender, they become a valuable archive for future historians.

Publications based on oral history techniques vary widely in form, ranging from the fairly straightforward biographical or autobiographical study of a prominent person, which simply uses the tape recorder instead of the typewriter to capture the subject's words more easily and naturally, to analytical studies which use the recorded statements of ordinary men and women to arrive at a view of history "from the bottom up." In between are autobiographical statements by ordinary folk, allowed to stand largely on their own as case histories, with a minimum of editorial intervention. Perhaps the most crucial

question for the director of an oral history project is how to handle the material after it has been collected, and this is the weakest point of the present work.

The National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section got involved with oral history in the late 1960s, with a project of interviewing selected members of the Pittsburgh Jewish community who had immigrated between 1890 and 1924. In the published result of this project, *By Myself I'm a Book!* (Waltham, Mass., 1972), emphasis was on the commonality of the immigrant experience; an editorial generalization about immigrant life would be followed by a series of very brief quotations from unidentified respondents which confirmed it.

The new book is quite different, for its focus is emphatically not on the nameless participants in a historical drama, but on an elite. As the introduction states, they were people whose "achievements stood out in the Pittsburgh community. . . ." Individually important, the source of each autobiographical statement is clearly identified. Wealthy, self-assured, disproportionately German-Jewish, deeply involved in organizing and operating philanthropies and synagogues as well as businesses, they are the ones who created the institutional framework within which the rest of the Jewish community lived out a significant portion of their lives. The book is full of interesting material. There is information here on how people made their money, and on the marital and organizational connections which turned them from a collection of individuals into a functioning elite. We also get a sense of the policy and personality conflicts that accompanied maturation of the institutions founded in the early days of the community, as institutions like Montefiore Hospital or the Irene Kaufmann Center, to name two, had to readjust their goals and procedures to a changing clientele and modern technology. On the other hand, the published portions of the interviews lack any profound exploration of the emotional meanings the respondents attached to their experiences, and the reader also misses the color that makes a book like *Our Appalachia* (edited by Laurel Shackelford and Bill Weinberg; New York, 1977) so vivid.

For the historian there is a major organizational problem, however. Although the segments quoted are far more substantial than in the council's earlier work, none is more than a few paragraphs in length; as with the earlier volume, we have a collection of excerpts from various respondents grouped around a number of themes, such as education, religious life, economic activity, and so on. Editorial

comment is limited to occasional explanations and to quotations from secondary sources which confirm or amplify the information provided by the respondents. Because the age and experience of the respondents varied so greatly, these collections of data cannot be put together to form useful generalizations. Nor can the reader easily form an image of the individual respondents, for each autobiography is cut up into many segments and distributed across the various chapters. What this means is that the editor of *My Voice Was Heard* has not turned the raw material obtained through the interviews into a history book. To do this she would have had to create a coherent narrative, drawing her facts from the interview data, among other sources, but providing the basic structure herself. Alternatively, the editor could have made the choice taken by the editors of a work with rather similar subject matter, *Jewish Grandmothers* (edited by Sydelle Kramer and Jenny Masur; Boston, 1976), and chosen a number of the most interesting autobiographies and let them stand by themselves as representative of the common experience. (Since the subjects of *My Voice Was Heard* were leaders, however, this approach would also have had serious problems.) As it is, the reader is forced to do the job of analysis and synthesis which properly belongs to the editor.

Fortunately, the tapes of these interviews are available for scholars who wish to use them in a more structured manner. And all of us can enjoy learning a great deal about our city and its unsung leaders.

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*A Guide to Genealogical Sources at the Pennsylvania State Archives.*  
By ROBERT M. DRUTOR. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1980. Pp. iv, 129. Introduction, appendix, index. \$5.00.)

The genealogist, like the historian, seeks out and uses a wide variety of sources of information in his or her research. One of the principal repositories of Pennsylvania research material is the Division of Archives and Manuscripts (Pennsylvania State Archives) of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in Harrisburg. *A Guide to Genealogical Sources at the Pennsylvania State Archives* provides a much needed consolidated key to collections held there.