accidents and poor health may have strengthened the safety net function of the family, the prominence of the issue rated note. Despite the occasional contradiction, some stretched data here and there, and a forgivable omission, read as an apologia for oral history *Workers' World* is a useful, and as always with John Bodnar, a well-written book. Definitely read the last chapter first.

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J. Howard Pew (1882-1971), longtime president of Sun Oil Company, was once characterized as "not only talking like, but looking like, an affidavit" (p. 8). A man who shaved with a straight razor, J. Howard is remembered by his daughter to have had a razor "for each day in the week," and to have "kept them neatly aligned in a leather case" (p. 9). Together with his brother, J. Newton, J. Howard would run Sun Oil with a singleminded entrepreneurial zeal befitting so punctilious a man. From its beginnings at the turn of the century, Sun Oil would emerge as a major domestic producer of lubricants and gasoline, an upstart among giants, and by the end of World War II would be one of the few large American corporations, and the only large oil firm, still controlled by its founding family. This would soon change, as the postwar years saw the Pews relinquish operating control to professional managers while reducing their ownership shares. Still, Pew influence was felt, most notably in the decisions to pioneer in the development of synthetic crude oil, participate in the merger movement of the 1960s, adopt the Sloan-Du Pont scheme of decentralized operations and centralized financial control, and begin to diversify out of oil.

It is this story of the transition from closely-held family company to diversified and professionally managed firm that Arthur M. Johnson presents in exhaustive and revealing detail. Johnson, professor of history at the University of Maine, has written extensively on the oil industry, and the present volume is a valuable addition to the management history of big oil. Through unrestricted access to Sun Oil
Company records, the papers of its chief officers, and personal interviews, Johnson has reconstructed the evolving managerial "culture" of one firm, its changing goals and structure, as it sought to manage its market and political environments in the years since 1945.

Assuming the company presidency at his father's death in 1912, J. Howard Pew inherited a firm already successful in exploiting the rich Texas fields of Spindletop. By World War I, the Pew family had established a production and transport system that made them a major regional firm in the East and Midwest. Under J. Howard, Sun moved into the rapidly expanding gasoline market, introducing the popular "Blue Sunoco" in 1927 and adopting the Houdry catalytic cracking process, thus improving the quality and volume of gasoline production without having to pay tribute to Standard Oil for its ethyl antiknock technology.

Until the 1930s, Standard Oil had been Sun's chief adversary. But this would change with New Deal efforts to "correct" oversupply in oil as in other industries. As businessmen, Johnson notes, the Pews "asked no quarter and gave none. They believed in free enterprise and practiced it" (p. 20). Thus they opposed both NRA-sponsored cartelization and later antitrust actions, became leading anti-New Deal spokesmen of the American Petroleum Institute and the National Association of Manufacturers, and following World War II opposed the peacetime continuation of wartime price controls.

By war's end Sun had emerged as the nation's twelfth largest oil firm and would launch a vigorous expansion to take advantage of rising postwar demand. With the Pews beginning to step aside and outside managers assuming operating control, the company expanded its service station operations, introduced the custom-blended gasoline pump, and for the first time took steps to secure foreign oil in response to domestic production controls. Johnson is particularly helpful in tracing the complexities of Sun's pursuit of foreign supplies, its management struggling to reconcile the company's free enterprising tradition with the twists and turns in federal energy policy. He is both tough and fair in his assessment of what was probably the company's greatest postwar gamble: the decision in 1963 to launch a long-term and risky effort to produce synthetic crude oil from Canadian oil tar sands, an effort both damaging and draining in the short term but one which would place Sun, according to Johnson, in the forefront of alternative petroleum technologies by the 1980s.

Professor Johnson takes the Sun Oil story through the 1960s and 1970s, examining in particular the difficulties encountered through its
merger with Sunray DX, management's efforts to negotiate a political environment shaped now by popular protest movements and new forms of government regulation, and the restructuring of the company's operations, including new efforts to diversify into nonenergy areas. The Challenge of Change is excellent business history, concerned not only with the microeconomic story, but with the larger social environment within which business decisions are shaped.

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The author of Behind the Beginnings has given a considerable segment of her life to the study of American Benedictinism, and so it is within that same research perspective that she explains the purpose of her book is "to find out and to write about [the] hidden part of our [Benedictine] history" (p. 201).

With that intention, Sister M. Incarnata has produced a historical work which relies heavily upon a collection of letters which she had earlier translated from German into English. In brief, the author relies upon the original text of the letters, interspersed with some brief commentary, to "give the reader not only a grasp of the part played by faith and suffering but also an appreciation of the personalities behind the beginnings of our history" (p. 201).

Among the personalities most reflected in the letters is Mother Benedicta Riepp, a native of Swabia, Germany, and recognized as the founder of numerous groups of Benedictine women in America. Her letters reveal her as a woman of great courage and dedication, impelled by a strong will. She was one of several volunteers chosen from the Eichstatt Benedictines of Bavaria to establish the first American Benedictine convent in St. Marys, Pennsylvania, in 1852 at the request of Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., first abbot of St. Vincent Arch-abbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

The scope of Behind the Beginnings covers the years between 1840 and 1914, a period of time in which Mothers Benedicta Riepp and Willibald Scherbauer heroically expanded the movement of