tion and his relationship to his classmate, Commander Robley Evans, in available public documents and secondary sources.

The book also suffers from a lack of national and geopolitical insights concerning the growth of imperialism among industrialized nations at the end of the nineteenth century.

Despite its limitations, I recommend Schoenfeld's work because it demonstrates how the biography of an Erie County historical hero can be woven into the fabric of the larger tapestries of the nation. Secondly, the book gives a brief history of the modernization of the American navy and the political, technological, and many other problems involved in this process. Thirdly, even though this is a partial portrait of Charles Vernon Gridley, it reminds us that our American experience is a product of forgotten persons, as well as those remembered in most of our books of history.

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In his book The Electrical Workers, Ronald Schatz investigates the rise and decline of militant unionism among workers employed by Westinghouse and General Electric between 1923 and 1960. In the process he develops an explanation for management's liberal and comprehensive "corporatist" policies that is grounded in both the industry and the market. Preunion labor policies reflected this more sophisticated view of the economy and were geared to provide a measure of economic security for male, semiskilled operatives. Indeed, throughout the 1920s, managers sought to control costly labor turnover by hiring "employment managers" and offering "works councils," welfare programs, a seniority system, and incentive pay. From management's point of view, a harmony of interests between labor and management could be maintained by meeting the needs of employees as individuals and appealing "to every man's desire for a larger income" (p. 24).

Schatz counterposes this analysis of corporatism with an equally complex analysis of the sources of mutualism among electrical workers and in so doing delineates the structure and function of these com-
peting world views. Noting that the labor force reflected the "mirror image of the corporations" (p. 28), Schatz links the electrical workers' more comprehensive conception of their self-interest to their experience in these sophisticated corporations. He relates mutualism also to the process of the work, the design of the factory, and, in some cases, to a politically radical heritage. His discussion of restriction of output, for example, effectively demonstrates differences in perception and behavior between managers and workers. When he notes that, by 1929, electrical workers had come to expect steady employment, pensions, and semiannual bonuses, he relates both the corporations' and the workers' strategies and aspirations to the kind of unionism that developed in the 1930s.

If Schatz is particularly persuasive as he details this dynamic interrelation, he is less satisfying in his discussion of militant unionism. Although he carefully locates the sources of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America's (UE) strength in the organizing campaign and demonstrates that skilled workers placed in unskilled positions led the fight, he never actually explains his criteria for judging militant or "progressive" unionism. It is well known that many national UE leaders espoused a radical critique of capitalism and sought to unite an aggressive working class, but Schatz offers few concrete examples of "militancy" in action. Local 601's quick dismissal of a black stenographer, for example, raises questions about rank and file commitment to or definition of "progressive" unionism. Indeed the security minded program developed by UE leaders looks very much like "bread and butter" unionism, perhaps because Schatz never critically evaluates the political conceptions that propelled left-wing unionists and never rigorously demonstrates how this radical ideology was translated into union policy. Since he appears to measure militancy by a union's relation to the Communist party, Schatz is left in the puzzling position of finding East Pittsburgh's Local 601, which eventually broke with the UE, more militant than Erie's Local 506, which voted to stay. This conclusion raises real questions about the role and function of 601's militant leadership and that leadership's relation to the rank and file that are not investigated here. Indeed Schatz's assertion that "had circumstances differed, a majority of the members of the Erie and East Pittsburgh insurgent groups could have ended up in the opposite political camp," does not clarify the issue (p. 216).

Although questions can be raised about his strong reliance on interviews to document his case and about the suitability of his sample,
Ronald Schatz has produced an analytical yet exciting study of electrical workers and their struggles. He captures the courage and vitality of these workers who fought hard not only to build a union but to preserve that union in the face of serious political repression. If they did not always succeed, Schatz makes clear that it was not for lack of effort.

*The Samuel Gompers Papers*
*University of Maryland*
*College Park, Maryland*


In her review of the most recent biography of Willa Cather, *Willa*, by Phyllis Robinson, Carolyn See, writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, says, “The phrase that best describes this new biography of Willa Cather might be ‘brisk synthesis.’” She notes that most of the material in the book has been included in other biographies. She is correct that this book is a reworking of earlier books and collected letters, together with Robinson’s own sometimes curious interpretations. She is also correct that the book moves along briskly, enlivened by a certain amount of unadmitted fiction. Despite the generous amount of printed material available to her, Robinson has made a number of mistakes in names and dates. Of special interest to Pittsburghers is her misidentification of Pittsburgh author Margaret Deland’s Old Chester (generally recognized as the Manchester section of the North Side) as a New England village.

At first glance the documentation of the book appears good. Some other reviewers, indeed, have commented favorably on it. However, scholars who are familiar with Cather material are less enthusiastic. Susan J. Rosowski, a Cather specialist at the University of Nebraska, comments that the text contains no internal references to the endnotes. She notes that “Robinson, who seldom authenticates her source, proceeds even when she has none.” Robinson’s book contrasts sharply with *Chrysalis: Willa Cather in Pittsburgh, 1896-1906*, by Kathleen D. Byrne and Richard C. Snyder. This thoroughly documented biography was published by the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania in 1980 and is now in its second printing.