

*Washington County: The Second One Hundred Years.*  
 Edited by Edward A. Marotta.

(Washington: The Washington County Historical Publication Committee, 1985. Pp. 172. Foreword, illustrations. \$29.50.)

In view of the fact that most Pennsylvania county histories were written from fifty to one hundred years ago and deal principally with early periods, the idea of updates such as this is most laudable. The present work consists of twelve brief chapters: "The First Century," unsigned; "Agriculture," by Patrice M. Swihart; "Geography: The People and the Land," "Government," and "Religion," by Joan Jessen; "Health Care," by Colette Knight; "Industry" and "Recreation and Entertainment," by Russell Salminen; "The Military" and "Transportation," by Dennis Ardinger; and "Sports in Washington County," by Joseph Meledin. It is well illustrated with (by my count) no fewer than 294 pictures and maps which take up close to half the space.

As might be expected, these essays show considerable variation in quality. Among the best are those on agriculture, health care, industry, recreation, the military, sports, and transportation, but all are somewhat flawed. Unfortunately, the editing appears largely to have consisted of assembling the various papers and arranging them in order, which has resulted in much duplication and overlapping. Not only does the chapter on the county's first century stretch well over that period, and once up to 1900, but almost every subsequent chapter begins with a discussion of the early history of the subject of its concern. Duplications also occur from chapter to chapter: the Joseph Yablonski murder (pp. 71f, 98); Washington and Jefferson College's appearance in the Rose Bowl of 1922 (pp. 25, 144); Delvin Miller's farm and the Meadows racetrack (pp. 21, 122ff, 151); the Meadowcroft excavation (pp. 22, 124); and the Waynesburg and Washington Rail Road (cq) (pp. 6, 157f). One paragraph occurs twice on facing pages (pp. 34, 35). All this wasted space could have been well used for worthwhile materials apparently crowded out for lack of space.

The chapter on "Geography; The People and the Land" is almost solely concerned with ethnic changes and the growth of towns and villages, ignoring the part played by land variations. And William F. Donner would surely be amazed to learn that Nora, whose name appears in his town of Donora (p. 44), was his daughter, instead of Andrew Mellon's wife.

The government chapter would profit by at least a listing of such important officials as judges, sheriffs, commissioners, and congress-

men. That on religion is heavily weighted toward the Scotch-Irish tradition. That on education gives much more attention to Washington and Jefferson College (though completely ignoring its switch from church-related status to a private school) than to the larger, public California State University (now California University of Pennsylvania). Singularly, too, the discussion of public schools ends with 1953.

This work includes no index, no information on the writers (surely a sentence could have been given on each), and citations on sources or quoted matter are absent or inadequate.

Nevertheless, the work was a good idea, and includes a great deal of worthwhile material on events in Washington County since the publication of its last great histories. May other counties follow this example, although with more care. ■

George Swetnam *Pennsylvania Historical Association*  
Glenshaw, Pennsylvania

---

*English America and Imperial Inconstancy: The Rise of Provincial Autonomy, 1696-1715.* By J. M. Sosin.

(Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985.

Pp. xii, 287. Introduction, index. \$26.50.)

With this volume, the last in a three-volume work, J. M. Sosin has completed the most comprehensive study of England's imperial policy since Charles M. Andrews' *England's Commercial and Colonial Policy* (1938). In this volume, as in the two earlier ones, Sosin attempts to find a middle ground between the imperial interpretation of Andrews, Beers, and Osgood, and more recent historians such as David Lovejoy and Richard Johnson, who have stressed the growth of American autonomy and democracy. Using a syncretic approach, Sosin describes the years between 1691 and 1715 as a time when England's administrators were preoccupied with domestic politics and were shortsighted in their policies toward America. At the same time, a new class of opportunistic, self-interested colonial leaders compounded the difficulties of effective royal administration.

Sosin begins his monograph with a description of the political environment in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In this section the author challenges the imperial argument that a systematic colonial policy had evolved by the early eighteenth