

Instead, much of the colonial data comes from English sources or from secondary works that are often a bit dated. This shortcoming is magnified by the absence of a bibliography or a bibliographic essay. Also, the author spends little time discussing the important role that the West Indian sugar islands played in England's imperial scheme. Despite these problems Sosin's work is a worthwhile contribution to the current historiography of the period and deserves to be read by scholars of colonial America. ■

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Penn State: An Illustrated History.

By John Gazella.

(University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985. Pp. xii, 415. Illustrations, foreword, preface, notes on the sources, index. \$39.50.)

The study of colleges and universities to determine their role in shaping American history has been rather neglected by historians. Before World War II, such studies were limited largely to the famous old liberal arts institutions of the East. These books made little stir because they were written for a limited audience somewhere between scholars and alumni, without really exciting either. After World War II, this situation began to change. Schools west of the Hudson River began to reach their centennial years and sponsored centennial histories. This stimulated a new interest in academic history.

This new academic history has taken a different approach to its subject. With their less hallowed reputations, the younger schools were more inclined to accept a popularized writing style from the historian. This has had both bad and good results. Superficial histories have been published which ought to embarrass the institutions they are supposed to be celebrating. These books seem designed to tease the interest of those with a minimal attention span. On the other hand, the younger schools have stimulated some academic history which deserves notice by historians. Beginning about the time of Robert Manley's *Centennial History of the University of Nebraska* (Univer-

sity of Nebraska Press, 1969), a new and useful kind of academic history has developed. It is a serious attempt to explain the rise, development and, yes, triumph of the public institutions of higher education. And it has succeeded in an important way. We now can understand more clearly the rocky path toward "mass" education on the college level: the vision of college presidents and faculty to develop more democratic goals for higher education, their sacrifices for those goals (even their own money at times in the case of Penn State), is largely an unsung story that Americans need to be more aware of. At the same time these newer books show that public colleges were dependent on legislative appropriations, not tuition, for survival. As a result, the interplay of academic vision balanced by political realities and skullduggery makes an interesting, at times even dramatic, story of great import in the history of many states in the Union, not least of all to Pennsylvania.

John Gazella's book, *Penn State: An Illustrated History*, is this latter kind of academic history. It is arguably the most informative yet interesting history of a public university yet to be written. With the well-developed documentary resources available to him, Gazella is able to tell a full and complete story interweaving state politics, faculty-administration disputes, and student life. The reader will see Penn State as more than Joe Paterno's school (Paterno is mentioned in passing just once), but as one of the most important educational experiments ever tried in the Commonwealth. ■

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"The Anticlinal Theory of Oil and Gas Accumulation in the Inception of the Natural Gas and Modern Oil Industries in North America." By John T. Galey.
In Geology and Ideas, a History of American Geology.
 (Geological Society of America: 1985. \$37.50.)

Most Western Pennsylvanians are aware that the oil industry began with the Drake Well discovery near Titusville in 1859. However, this discovery, and the yield from the wells drilled during the next forty