livestock, debts, and the difficulty of getting goods to market. As the title of the book suggests, when the creeks and rivers could not be used, economic times were indeed bleak.

Still, Raymond does not confine himself to a mere description of the community's economic life. Current events, national politics and foreign affairs also receive his attention. Nor does he hesitate to express his opinion on these matters. Though he had limited formal education, he was a reader who followed the news with keen interest. His comments imply a responsible attitude. He was active in the church, the temperance movement and a local literary society.

Raymond’s diary is well edited. Carolee K. Michener and the staff at the Venango County Historical Society deserve praise in preparing this work for publication. They are particularly effective in supporting the original diary with inventories, letters from the Raymond family, and information from the Venango Spectator, a weekly newspaper published at Franklin. These help provide a strong historical context for the diary.

*The Year the Freshet Didn’t Come* is a fine addition to a growing list of publications of primary sources on the history of northwest Pennsylvania. As more of these sources are being discovered in historical societies and private collections, historians are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of this region of the state. Probing these sources will generate study in a neglected area of Pennsylvania history.

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In this work, Patricia Bonomi draws upon her own research as well as an impressive array of recent studies to present a new synthesis of colonial religious history. Rejecting the view of a declension during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, she asserts that a "rising vitality in religious life" and an "increasing interpenetration of religion and politics" characterized the era (pp. 6, 8-9). Unfortu-
nately the theme of "rising vitality" is so broad and imprecise that Bonomi misses some important analytic opportunities.

Religious disorder was widespread in the early colonial period, she suggests. In New England, Puritans struggled against challenges from a variety of dissidents. Everywhere on the continent, the dispersal of population, the hardships of frontier life, the scarcity of ministers, and the absence of supporting institutions common in Europe impeded the growth of religious life.

The clergy gradually surmounted these problems. Anglicans gained support from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and in Virginia the appointment of a commissary reduced the lay vestry's control of parish clergy. New England ministers met the growth of dissent and the decline of commitment among the orthodox through greater collaboration and self-regulation among the clergy, and they revitalized worship by improving congregational singing and encouraging more careful composition and delivery of sermons. The scarcity of ministers led many German congregations to receive unworthy ministers and to rely heavily on lay leaders. When qualified clergymen arrived, they often had to accept greater lay control than prevailed in Europe, which ultimately strengthened their churches in the pluralistic American environment.

Despite the scarcity of communicants in many denominations, the churches decisively affected eighteenth-century Americans. Bonomi asserts that most adults attended church regularly and were influenced by their religious beliefs. Even the supposedly anticlerical Virginia gentry attended church, read religious literature, and reflected upon its practical implications. Yet the spread of rationalism among Virginia leaders made religion more private and less likely to affect other areas of their lives. Similar changes shaped upper-class attitudes in other colonies.

Although Bonomi refutes the stereotype of religious stagnation before the Awakening, her assertion of a universal expansion of religious interest obscures the complexity of colonial developments and leaves some important questions unanswered. If Virginia's Anglican church gained vitality by the reduction of lay control over the clergy, why did change in the opposite direction bring vitality in many German churches? Why did a growing rationalism characterize elite but not popular religion? Or was elite rationalism paralleled by a decline of pre-Christian beliefs among the lower classes? Presumably these developments reflected the differing adjustments of particular regions and classes to commercialization, secularization, pluralism, and
other forces transforming eighteenth century America, but the subject deserves more detailed attention.

Although two chapters examine the Great Awakening, an emphasis on frictions within the clergy leads to the relative neglect of the Awakening's impact upon the laity. Bonomi asserts that the revival transformed patterns of "popular participation in organized opposition to authority" (p. 161). Yet her discussion of Pennsylvania focuses upon ethno-religious conflicts without establishing a connection to the Awakening. The analyses of the Awakening's consequences in Connecticut and Virginia are brief but much better.

Bonomi convincingly shows that the religious as well as political background of Americans shaped their approach to the Revolution. They inherited from England not only the commonwealth's traditional fear of conspiracies against its liberty but also the tradition of opposition to an intolerant religious establishment. It was the fusing of these religious and political concerns that united rationalists and evangelicals in opposition to England.

Despite its problems, this is a valuable reassessment of colonial religious developments. That it fails to integrate them completely into a comprehensive whole ultimately illuminates their complexity.

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Dennis C. Dickerson has written an important and well-researched book, documenting the experience of blacks in the steel industry in its most important regional setting, Western Pennsylvania. Dickerson, the son and grandson of black steelworkers from Western Pennsylvania, is now a History Professor at Rhodes College. He breaks from community-based studies of blacks and associates himself with Meier, Rudwick and Trotter, by utilizing an occupation-based approach.

Beginning with a chapter on the pre-World War I period, Dickerson takes us through the heavy black migration of the 1916-50 period and