McWhiney thus explains Southern exceptionalism by cutting the South into the main conduit of American history: sociocultural transplantation. His sense of this process comports well with much recent immigration scholar-

Southerners in this account came largely from the fringes of the British Isles: Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the north edge of England.

ship. Equally valuable is his anatomy of the Celtic-Crackers's socio-economic base. Old World and New, these were tribal, pastoral people, living by open-range herding and along kinship lines. These two fundamentals had two correlates. First, these subjects simply did not have to work hard to get by; so they lived by and for a leisure ethic. Second, as their identity inhered not in doing but in being, maintenance of status required defense of honor and the cultivation of combative abilities. Within this matrix, every item on the above list of "Southern traits" has a place, makes sense.

The reader should be forewarned, however, that the preceding paragraph packs more analytical punch than do McWhiney's 300 pages in toto. His approach is term-paper traditional: give a topical sentence, assemble a bevy of supportive quotations, repeat indefinitely until the reader presumably surrenders to the sheer mass of prose. As I said, his thesis comports well with recent immigration scholarship, but McWhiney shows no acquaintance with it; amazingly, he also interacts mini-

mally with previous scholarship on "Southern character," which is only one of the hoariest topics in American historiography. Bertram Wyatt-Brown's Southern Honor gets mentioned in a footnote, but the works of William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee, C. Vann Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, Edmund Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, Eugene Genovese and Donald G. Mathews, Religion in the Old South, and George Tindall, The Ethnic Southerners, pass unnoticed there, much less in the text. Perhaps McWhiney is reserving such disputes for a later volume; he could at least inform us of that here.

His methodology falters only a little less. Being an oral folk, Crackers did not write much, so the author has taken recourse to contemporary travelers' accounts. Fair enough. But while noting aforehand the possibilities of bias in such sources, he proceeds innocently thereafter. We do not know the background (besides "Yankee" or "a foreigner") of many of his travelers, nor the purpose of their tours, the agenda for their observations nor even, too often, the date of their journey, since the book is organized topically rather than chronologically. Would not "Yankee" travelogues be slightly more partisan in, say, 1857 than in 1817? Not from their treatment in this book. For the same reason we do not get any sense of changes over time. In some ways Cracker culture might have been static; but it surely was not so in religion, for instance. From 1750 to 1850, the South changed from the least to the most churched section of the country, and at the hands of evangelical denominations that championed an ascetic discipline at odds with much of McWhiney's profile. The author does not address that challenge, does not even notice the change. A lacuna of this magnitude makes me wonder how well his thesis holds up with readers in other specialties.

Finally, as a comparative treatment the book falls over the edge of simplicity into crudity. Crackers are aligned with Celts, Yankees with Englishmen, and that's it, except for an occasional German. Every similarity within each pair is noted, but the possibility of disparities is not even countenanced, nor are possible pairings of Southerners and Northerners as Americans vis a vis Celts and Englishmen as Britishers. The author does not ask about ethnic differences among his "Northerns," nor about class differences, North or South. The one hint of flexibility enters with consideration of modernization. McWhiney offers, but does not pursue, the possibility that much of what was supposedly "Celtic" constituted a particular type of pre-modern, rural culture that gave way to Anglo commercialization, first in Britain, then in the United States.

McWhiney's preference for tradition over "progress" is legitimate; his reevaluation, interesting; his general thesis, plausible. Maybe his book will provoke others to demonstrate the theory more rigorously. Problem is, by this book's lights, while Crackers have always been provocative, rigor belongs to the Yankees. For the thesis to stand, it has to become outmoded.

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Private Matters: American Attitudes Toward Childbearing and Infant Nurture in the Urban North 1800-1860
By Sylvia D. Hoffert
Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989. $24.95

The discovery that the parameters of history extend beyond the traditional con-
BOOKCASE

The Headwaters District Roundtable: An Eyewitness History of the Pittsburgh District, United States Army Corps of Engineers 1936-1988
By Leland R. Johnson and Jacque S. Minnotte
Pittsburgh: United States Army Engineers District, 1989
Pp. 249. $15, $10 paperback

This book on the last 50 years of flood control in Pittsburgh presents the essence of roundtable discussions held four years ago to commemorate the disastrous 1936 flood. The Corps of Engineers saw the anniversary as an appropriate point to capture the experiences of personnel who witnessed the event, as well as to assess the Corps’ achievements since then. The discussions covered topics such as post-war flood control, dam operations, and safety and emergency management, to name a few. The book is based largely on interviews with active and retired personnel.

The Fee Family and the Daily Notes of Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania: The Evolution of a Family, Its Newspaper, and Its Community
By William W. Fee
Published by the author, 1990. Introduction, prologue, notes, bibliography, illustrations. Pp. 88. $9 paperback, postpaid from William Fee, 3300 N. Leisure World Blvd. #714, Silver Spring, MD 20906

A solid book of history that combines genealogy — of the Fee family, whose members were early settlers in the Cannonsburg area and later, most prominently, publishers of the Daily Notes newspaper — with a general political and social history, through the 1920s. Without becoming simply another cheerleader, Fee writes with conviction about the independence, strong will, and religious fervor of his family, and like-minded Scotch-Irish Presbyterian immigrants who left an indelible mark on Western Pennsylvania. Fee, for many years a federal bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., also wrote and published a 100-page biography of his parents, whose love of adventure, patriotism and religious commitment drove them to military service in World War I and onto missionary work in Egypt.

Sesquicentennial History of Greenville
By Earl Miller
Greenville, Pa: Greenville Sesquicentennial Corp., 1988
Pp. 124. Photographs. $12.50, $10 paperback postpaid from the Greenville Municipal Building, 125 Main Street, Box 604, Greenville, PA 16125

This publication represents an updated version of the history of Greenville, about 80 miles north of Pittsburgh, and is an attempt to blend the past and present. It also brings into focus the current status of many of the town’s institutions, industries and agencies. Although much of the volume is based on turn-of-the-century records, it also includes commentary by Greenville citizens. The volume includes photographs, old and new, that make it an interesting book for residents of the town.

New Eagle Memories: A History of the Borough of New Eagle, Pennsylvania
By Linda Fetchen and Terry A. Necciai, with others

Necciai’s main article on the history of New Eagle, a Monongahela River town south of Pittsburgh, is a well-done broad sweep, with citations. There’s lots of other material — recollections, round-ups on the river, roads, and recreation, and bits about industry, churches, hospitals, famous firsts, and all the other happenings that make up the past and present of a small town.
transitional period during which both attitudes and experiences pertaining to childrearing and infant nurture changed significantly. During this period, middle- and upper-class family life became increasingly privatized; geographic and social mobility combined with urbanization to distance young couples from traditional family and community influences regarding the conduct of the events surrounding pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care. At the same time, the increasing availability of birth control information, doctors, private nurses, new technology, and medical knowledge also affected the bearing and rearing of children. New parents were influenced by the ideology of motherhood as it was propounded through various published sources of advice and commentary.

Hoffert examines in considerable detail the attitudes of middle- and upper-class women and men in the urban North toward five specific aspects of family formation: the period of pregnancy; the birth process; the recovery period; the care of infants; and the death of infants. She offers evidence drawn from both the private writings of childbearing women and their friends and relatives, and from representative public sources to support her contention that the context in which these people bore and nurtured their children provided them with opportunities to make new, untraditional choices regarding their responsibilities as parents. Such choices included, for example, increasing efforts to limit family size, the increasing tendency of women to seek medical assistance with pregnancy and labor, and the concomitant reliance on physicians and private nurses rather than on midwives and female friends.

In her extensive research for this book, Hoffert examined a variety of private and public documents. An appendix to the volume provides biographical information on 40 women, arranged chronologically according to marriage date. A comprehensive bibliography of unpublished and published primary sources cites the correspondence and diaries of these women, as well as that of other women for whom biographic information was unavailable; it also includes novels, medical texts, health manuals, popular and religious periodicals, medical journals, and miscellaneous materials.

The author has used these diverse sources skillfully to illustrate both private and public perspectives on childbearing and infant nurture, and to document the interaction between the two. She concludes that while women took their maternal responsibilities seriously, their concerns were primarily individual and personal as opposed to ideological. Typically, when they conformed to the prescriptions of social commentators regarding standards for the conduct of childbearing and infant nurture, they were motivated by the desire to cultivate an image of refinement and respectability rather than by any significant commitment to culturally defined conceptions of maternal responsibility. When women chose to be more independently, their decisions often drew criticism from commentators who accused them of making selfish and irresponsible choices in their own interests rather than the best choices for their babies. Thus Hoffert observes that despite the trend toward privatization in family life, private matters such as family formation and child care continued to be the focus of public scrutiny.

This study offers interesting insights into the specific subject of the history of child-birth in America, the history of social and cultural definitions of women's maternal roles and obligations, and the development of middle-class values. It also contributes additional evidence in support of the argument advanced by a number of social historians that middle-class women experienced a significant increase in power and autonomy within the American family during the course of the nineteenth century. Existing documentation of this trend, which has been termed the rise of domestic feminism, focuses on women's exercise of control over sex and reproduction within marriage.' Hoffert's data and her analysis of the development and exercise of opportunities for choice with regard to the conduct of childbirth and infant nurture provide further documentation regarding the emergence of nineteenth century domestic feminism.

Private Matters offers a thoughtful and intriguing presentation of nineteenth century American attitudes toward a fundamental part of women's lives. It reflects solid research and careful scholarship, but it is easily accessible to the nonspecialist. Both the subject matter and the judiciously selected quotations from private and public sources will interest the general reader. In addition to her bibliography, Hoffert's interpretations of changes in the conduct of childbearing and baby care, and of the effect of public attitudes on private behavior, will be useful for scholars in the fields of women's and family history, and also the social history of medicine. This book is a good social history and also good reading.

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"See, for example, Daniel Scott Smith, "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America," in Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner, eds., Clio's Consciousness Raised (New York, 1974), 119-36; Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New York, 1973); Glenna Matthews, 'Just a Housewife,' The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America (New York, 1987); and Barbara Harris, Beyond Her Sphere: Women and the Professions in American History (Westport, Conn., 1978)."