

JAMES T. LEMON. — *The Best Poor Man's Country. A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972.

The Best Poor Man's Country is a superb book which deserves the attention of any serious student of social history. Fundamentally, it is an examination of a traditional kind of topic, the social and economic development of an area during a given period. In its execution Dr. Lemon, who teaches at the University of Toronto, has left traditional writers far behind. He has been able to do so both because of the kinds of historical evidence he has used and because of his ability to bring that evidence to bear on significant historical questions. On the former count, Dr. Lemon has used, with painstaking care, such sources as tax lists, inventories of estates, and land records to reconstitute colonial society. His heavy reliance on these kinds of sources to supply the major guideposts for his reconstruction of the provincial social structure provides him with criteria for judging the merit of contradictory literary sources and, hence, the means of avoiding the confusion and bias that have plagued earlier studies of Pennsylvania's pluralistic society. The real test of an author, however, lies not in the material he uses but in the ends he achieves. Dr. Lemon uses these basic sources for the best possible purposes. Again and again he singles out questions which are of critical importance for the development of a sound socio-economic analysis. What promotes prosperity in Pennsylvania? What, in turn, limits prosperity and economic specialization in that society? What identifiable groups prosper best, and why do they? What does the distribution of wealth and changes in the distribution over time tell us about that society? By regularly posing, and speaking to questions of this order Dr. Lemon is able to sustain reader interest and maintain tight control at all times over the focus of the book.

Beyond this there are several ways in which Dr. Lemon's study is a model deserving of emulation. One of these is the way in which the author underpins his answers to large questions with precise detail. It is the presence of detailed information, carefully marshalled, that is largely responsible for producing the vivid impressions of Pennsylvania's evolving social structure that one gets from this book. Another is Dr. Lemon's understanding of, and ability to convey a sense of the complexity of, social analyses. In Chapter Two, for example, in which he discusses the factors influencing settlers' decisions on where to locate, he demonstrates how facile traditional answers have been, how fragile such causal analyses are, and how tentative conclusions about specific groups must be. Still another striking feature of the book is the way it combines realistic appraisals of what conclusions the evidence will bear with bold and imaginative use of that evidence. Dr. Lemon's chapter of horizontal mobility, is perhaps, the best illustration of this. After pointing out formidable obstacles that stand in the way of precise estimates of rates of geographical mobility, Dr. Lemon, goes on to make suggestive comments about the reasons for mobility, the effects of it on the structure of society and the possible meaning of Pennsylvanians' experiences in comparison their contemporaries in other areas. Finally, there is Dr. Lemon's solution to the problem that any author who decides to deal synchronically with a century-long period must face, the problem of convincingly showing change over time. What this solution is, is best exemplified in the author's treatment of urbanization. Here he elaborates on a functional analysis of all Pennsylvania towns, by providing a great deal of illustrative detail in urban development and with a periodization scheme that divides the urbanization process into carefully defined stages. The result is a successful marriage of the synchronic and diachronic approaches.

What is most surprising about *The Best Poor Man's Country* is that in a book so distinguished by technical competence there is a weakness in the way the author handles his main thesis. Dr. Lemon has imparted unity and direction to what in less skilled hands might have been a disastrously diffuse study by emphasizing the commonly shared liberal — i.e. individualistic and acquisitive — values that Pennsylvania residents held and the way in which these values determined the character of colonial society. In doing so, Dr. Lemon demonstrates the fallaciousness of theories ascribing the various social practices and conditions that emerged in Pennsylvania to differences between national groups and rejects the argument that the environment evoked certain kinds of critical social responses. Dr. Lemon argues that "...ideology... determined [Pennsylvanians'] actions..." and that ideology was the "...middle-class orientation of many of the settlers who elected to leave their European communities" (p. xv). It is not the thrust of the argument that I find disappointing, although personally I would stress the natural as well as the evolving social environment somewhat more, but the way in which it is presented. Despite the fact that the initial strength of the settlers' commitment to liberal values is untestable — for there is no way of controlling for the influence of environment — Dr. Lemon makes repeated generalizations about the unanimity and intensity with which newcomers embraced these imperatives. In a book so carefully constructed, documented, and controlled, such statements appear so sweeping, so dogmatically pronounced that they serve to irritate rather than illuminate. But this fault and the author's prose style, which is rough if not tortuous at times, are the only noteworthy flaws in a first-rate book.

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JULIAN GWYN. — *The Enterprising Admiral. The Personal Fortune of Admiral Sir Peter Warren*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974.

As the title suggests, this book is not so much a biography of a man, as a study of his money. The author has made exhaustive and intelligent use of a wide variety of sources on both sides of the Atlantic in order to lay bare the means by which Admiral Peter Warren (and his heirs) acquired and managed his fortune. Professor Gwyn's claim that such a study provides a method of re-examining certain assumptions concerning what may be termed life, land and loot in the 18th century British Empire would seem to be amply borne out by the evidence of his research, whilst the painstaking historical reconstruction involved leaves the reviewer filled with admiration. The fact that so complicated a study is presented in a lively and readable fashion is even more admirable. The book is to be highly commended.

In the light of this I hope the author will forgive me if I ignore most of his themes to concentrate upon that implied in the main title *The Enterprising Admiral*, and trust that other reviewers will treat the rest with the justice it deserves. Just how enterprising an Admiral was Peter Warren?

The history of eighteenth century England abounds with examples of crusty old admirals who, after a lifetime of hard fighting and triumph, retired amidst the plaudits of their fellow countrymen. Along the way many of them collected considerable fortunes from their share of the prize money earned from captured enemy shipping.