

## James Logan

*James Logan and the Culture of Provincial America.* By Frederick B. Tolles. Boston, Toronto, Little, Brown and Company. 1957. *The Library of American Biography.* Edited by Oscar Handlin. pp. xi, 228. \$3.50. (Available from Adam and Charles Black at 18s.)

This life of James Logan (1674-1751), successively schoolmaster, secretary, fur trader, and Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, is at once solid history and enjoyable biography. The publishers' policy for the series in which Frederick Tolles's book appears doubtless accounts for the absence of the detailed apparatus of footnotes and references to sources (these being dealt with generally in a 5-page note at the end) which one looks for in historical work. The severe specialist will be alone in regretting this. Every page assures the reader of the careful collection, weighing and sifting of evidence which has gone into the making of this book.

James Logan's claim to fame rests on his connection with the development of Pennsylvania from the moment in 1699 when he took up employment with William Penn. At this distance we cannot say that Penn could have chosen a better secretary and factotum, but for his family's prosperity he probably chose better than he knew. The unpopularity among Pennsylvanians, which the austerity in Logan's personality engendered, only served to wed him more closely to the proprietors.

The debate as to whether the "Holy Experiment" as a Quaker adventure in statecraft was in all circumstances doomed to failure may not, on the basis of our present knowledge, yet be decided, but the evidence marshalled in Frederick Tolles's book can leave us in no doubt, that with James Logan playing a central part, no lasting success would be achieved. It is not to be wondered at that the clever young schoolmaster, largely self-educated, and (dare we say it) self-opinionated, saddled as he was with multifarious duties, with the task of resolving conflicting interests, and fundamentally out of sympathy with Penn's ideal of government, should have failed to show brilliant statesmanship in the spirit of his employer. The other aspect of James Logan's contribution to American life is well covered in this book, viz. Logan's remarkable scientific and humanistic interests, collecting mathematical instruments from Europe, and books on a wide range of subjects from classics to the Norse sagas. The Loganian library has recently been described as "the greatest single intellectual monument of colonial America which has survived."

This book is a satisfying account of one of the three or four most considerable men in colonial America. Local patriotism prompts a single correction! Philip Ford was no Bristol Quaker; he lived in London.

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