

Mittazen. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985, \$42.50, which is really an anthology of eighteenth and nineteenth century sources on mining. Probably the focus is too narrow for most of the journal's constituencies; certainly the price, \$42.50, is not low. But for those who really want to know about mining, the selections do make fascinating reading. Ham reports further that Richard H. Stroud, editor, **NATIONAL LEADERS OF AMERICAN CONSERVATION**. Second edition, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985, \$24.95, may not, at first blush, even appear to be a book an academic journal would want to review, for its publication was sponsored by the Natural Resources Council of America, a well-known federation of numerous regional, as well as local, conservation organizations. Ostensibly a non-profit, non-political organization, it is dedicated to advancing the attainment of "sound management of natural resources in the public interest," an admirable goal, surely, but not a non-political one. Yet the book does have a use, as a kind of original source, and in that regard in a way that may not seem obvious to those who have not seen the volume, namely, it is a kind of a search for a usable past for the organization, its cause and its constituencies. The biographical sketches of past and present "leaders" of conservation are often full and not entirely sentimental, although they do vary in utility.

More useful for scholars is **WOMEN IN THE SCIENTIFIC SEARCH: An American Bio-Bibliography, 1724-1979**. By Patricia Joan Siegel and Kay Thomas Finley, Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1985, \$32.50, which is precisely what the title indicates, a compilation of the facts and of the sources about a relatively large number of American women who became scientists but not famous. The volume is intended as a stimulus to further research. The authors make no claim that they have found every possible item for each person depicted. It should also be understood that the women scientists here are not necessarily marginal or insignificant in their own time, Ham adds (although he also says he is not sure that such a labelling would make sense; but that is a different issue). It is simply, he explains, that they are not well known to history, as the saying goes. This seems a very useful volume, Ham concludes, hoping that it will stimulate new work. It is inspired by Margaret Rossiter's **WOMEN SCIENTISTS IN AMERICA: Strategies and Struggles to 1940** (Johns Hopkins, 1982).

Finally come two works by scientists still alive who were participants in certain aspects of the modern history of science, modern meaning "since the 1930s." Martin Kamen, **RADIANT SCIENCE, DARK POLITICS** Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, \$19.95, is the autobiography of the co-discoverer of Carbon-14. Kamen spent the 1930s at Berkeley, did a stint with the Manhattan Project, and later became a victim of the postwar Red Scare. Kamen was able to clear his name, so that the

story has a happy ending, but it certainly had its harrowing aspects. A far more interesting book, at least to Ham, is Gladys L. Hobby, **PENICILLIN: Meeting the Challenge**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985, \$32.50. Hobby was a participant in the grand story of this wonder drug of World War II. Her account is more than mere autobiography; it is much closer to being a book about the research and development of the drug. It is somewhat technical, here and there, as is Kamen's, but it is not hard to understand. All too often humanists think that modern science is too hard and mystifying to grasp. Actually, as Hobby's book elegantly shows, the ideas are not hard at all, and the book makes for fascinating reading about how science as an intellectual, institutional, personal, impersonal, national and international enterprise actually works or did work in the 1930s and 1940s. It is not the only book on penicillin, and may not be the best; but it is clearly readable and well documented. If Hobby does not mean to deconstruct science, and certainly does not do so, and probably does not know what "to deconstruct" means, thank goodness, she nevertheless lets us us have a nice picture of science at work without too much myth and with only understandable biases.

**AMERICAN POTTERY:** Archeologists, of course, use pottery because it survives. The study of pottery from historic, as opposed to prehistoric, times is, by and large, a matter of



FIGURE ONE: Vase by F. Rothenbusch (1900).

aesthetics. Certainly American Studies has done very little with social or cultural interpretations of commercially-produced modern pottery. But



FIGURE TWO: Vase by T. Doat (1913).

a fine show now traveling under the aegis of the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service, "New Vistas/American Pottery from the Cooper-Hewitt Museum 1880-1930," speaks social and cultural language quite eloquently. The following approaches suggest themselves; there are undoubtedly others. 1) In both arts and industries, American Studies is concerned with where things are produced and how lines of influence run—witness, for instance, Ronald J. Zboray's recent article in the Spring 1986 *AQ*, "The Transportation Revolution and Antebellum Book Distribution Reconsidered," which



FIGURE THREE: Vase by M. L. Nichols (1880).

covered the connection between publishing and the railroad network, or any number of pieces on what it means that New York (or another town) dominates or fails to dominate a field. In pottery at least there was in the period 1880-1930 no national capital. High-grade pottery of various sorts came from Louisiana, Missouri, Cincinnati; Marblehead, Massachusetts; Boston, Galesburg, Ohio; Berkeley, California; Colorado Springs and elsewhere. 2) The "decorators" at



FIGURE FOUR: Vase by Carl Schmidt (1912).

those pottery plants shown in photographs are young women. Although there were individual men who were noted as "decorators," at those places which were represented in the show by photographs of the shops in action, what one saw were ladies. Some interesting sex-role definitions must have been involved. The young ladies in the photographs look very much like the people in a class picture Your Faithful Editor's mother has saved of her art school class. She earned a good living as a commercial artist after that training. In the classroom photo almost all of the students were young women. 3) Transit of culture is nicely visible in these pieces. One sees the influence of Japan, France and Japan *via* France; of the Arts and Crafts movement, of Art Nouveau, of late Romantic landscape painting.

And there is a special dividend, one that has no necessary connection with American social or cultural history: the works in the show are very beautiful and very surprising. YFE had never before seen pottery plaques with slips applied to produce what look like conventionally painted landscapes, for example. The combination of

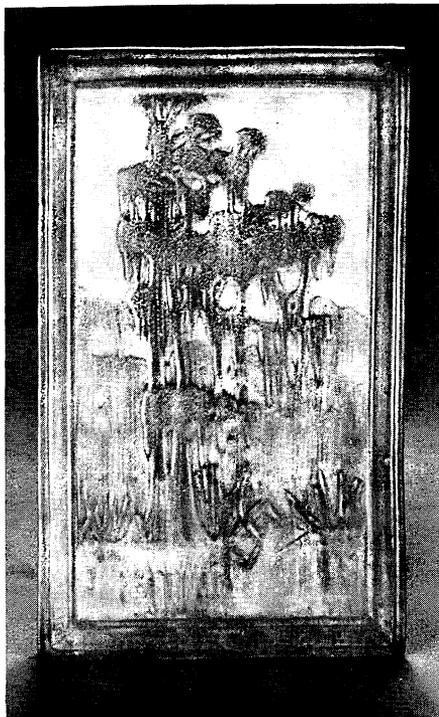


FIGURE FIVE: Newcomb College, Plaque, 20c. Undated.

influences and the indisputable talent of the "decorators," male and female, produced a number of works of great delicacy and originality. YFE is an inveterate museum eavesdropper. He hung around the show when he saw it at the St. Louis Art Museum and listened to people's reactions. Gallery goers hadn't known



FIGURE SIX: E. G. Diers, plaque (Vellum), 20c. Undated.

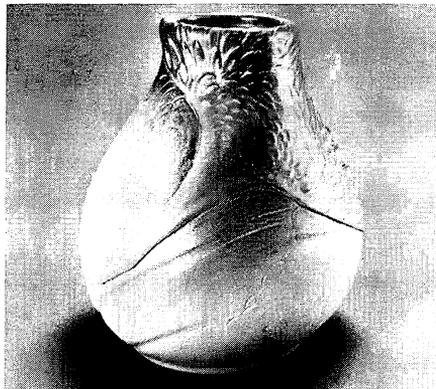
before anything about why Grandma or Aunt Fanny loved that vase or pot; the range of objects evoked a body of taste, style, mode into which the objects fit. With a sense of the "language," one could intuit what the items said. The show moves around some before the pieces return home to the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Its 1986 schedule was

July 5-August 17: Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Ontario; September 6-October 18: Norton Art Gallery, Shreveport, La.; November 8-December 21: Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Logan, Utah;

You can catch it in 1987 at the following places:

January 10-February 22: Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue, Washington; March 14-April 26: Anchorage Historical & Fine Arts Museum, Anchorage, Alaska; May 23-July 5: Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA; August 1-September 13: Museum of San Diego History, San Diego, California.

FIGURE SEVEN: Vase by K. Shirayamadani (1901).



Photographs courtesy of the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Services (SITES).