

BOOK REVIEWS

BY MICHAEL P. WEBER

CLASS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN AMERICAN HISTORY: A REVIEW ESSAY

BY WILLIAM G. SHADE, LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

Riches, Class, and Power Before the Civil War. By Edward Pessen. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1973. Pp. 378. \$8.95.)

The Decline of American Gentility. By Stow Persons. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973. Pp. 336. \$11.95.)

The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970. By Stephan Thernstrom. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973. Pp. 339. \$12.00.)

The Rich, Well Born, and the Powerful: Elites and Upper Classes in History. Ed. by Frederick C. Jaher. (Chicago-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973. Pp. 379. \$15.00.)

Although historians of the 1950s never denied great disparities between the rich and the poor in American history, they did tend to focus upon the vast middle and take what one might call a Tocquevillian view of the American past. They often insisted that even the earliest decades of the colonial era were characterized by middle-class democracy. Some may have disagreed with the nineteenth-century Frenchman's pessimism about mass society, but his general reputation as the premier student of American national character was never doubted. In the past decade (particularly since the publication of Stephan Thernstrom's *Poverty and Progress*, but mainly as a consequence from pressures from outside the profession) historians have shown a new curiosity about American social structure. Consequently, the Tocquevillian vision is being confronted by a relentless empiricism.

If there is any area of American history conducive to the interdisciplinary approach and quantitative methods associated with this generation's new history, it is the study of social structure. However, much of the recent work in this area has been written from a neo-Progressive perspective encompassing both old liberals and new left historians who, in the main, have steadfastly resisted what they believe to be antihumanistic tendencies involved in historical sociology. The books presently under review do not represent all of the headings on today's historical compass; but by revealing the limitations in traditional approaches, they point in the direction historians must go.

The most traditional approach is presented in Stow Persons's study of the

passing of nineteenth-century gentry, *The Decline of American Gentility*. The book includes thoughtful analyses of several individuals and insightful comments on numerous subjects from Tocqueville's elite sources to the emergence of American sociology. Of course, Persons has read everything—i.e., commentaries on gentility and the autobiographies of his gentry—and here and there he interjects a cautious bow to some sociological scholarship. Yet, it is very difficult to know exactly what Persons is trying to say. He asserts that he is simply exploring the disappearance of the gentleman and the changing make-up of the gentry whom he declares have evolved into today's alienated intellectuals. Unfortunately this jarring and perverse possibility receives little documentation from the text.

Equally unfortunate is the fact that the text is littered with generalizations of doubtful validity. Persons's analytical categories are fuzzy; and the crucial concept, the gentry, is never clearly defined nor made operational. Consequently the book is riddled with contradictory passages. When he writes about mental illness and the gentry, the methodological weaknesses of the book stand out clearly. Since he fails to identify the gentry and gives no measure of incidence of mental illness in the group, the reader is ill prepared to judge how their problems differed from those of other groups or the degree to which mental illness is a concept relevant to only certain elements of the class structure.

Persons's book begins with an ambiguous discussion of Tocqueville. Edward Pessen, conversely, makes a frontal assault on the Tocqueville myth, and his data throws doubt on nearly all of the base line generalizations of Persons. Not only did the French visitor discourse upon plantations without ever seeing one, he also seems to have written the major nineteenth-century treatise on mass society by combining his brilliant imagination with the anxious testimony of the new nation's upper classes. If Pessen's data is correct, the upper classes in American cities were quite wealthy even when compared to their European counterparts and had relatively little to be anxious about. Not only did the super rich exist in large numbers during the "Age of Equality," but they constituted a permanent and powerful elite. The aristocracy of Jacksonian America—or at least its major urban areas—were descendants of wealthy men, who clustered in gilded ghettos, married wealth, and joined with their own kind to command the benevolent empire and rule the nation's cities. In support of this self-consciously revisionist picture of ante-bellum society, Pessen displays an impressive array of quantitative data on the very wealthy of Philadelphia, New York, Brooklyn, and Boston that should convince most historians to reject the numerous textbook generalizations Pessen draws within his sights.

Because of the author's vast knowledge of ante-bellum America and the untold years of effort that have gone into the collection of data, this book deserves to be widely read. However, Pessen's major findings also deserve careful scrutiny. Although Pessen is not a narrative historian, he spouts the party line like a card carrying member. He arrays himself firmly within the humanistic tradition, harrasses quantification, bludgeons one social scientist unfairly with the findings of another, and then lectures all who will listen on the perversity and complexity of the facts of history that cannot be captured by neat generalizations. Yet the major contribution of this book lies in quan-

titative data Pessen has tirelessly assembled. Its major weakness lies in his unwillingness to exploit this data fully.

Pessen denies the necessity of systematic research designs while affirming the necessity of hypothesis testing and empirical research. The most reckless generalizations are invariably prefaced by claims that the subtlety of their subjects eludes quantification although their meaning depends upon small segments, representative individuals, and nonquantitative statistical generalizations. At many crucial points suggestive impressionistic hypotheses are not subjected to systematic tests. Pessen simply will not consider the idea of measurement as it is understood by contemporary social scientists. In Kuhnian terms Pessen is unable to break out of the paradigm of normal history and function as a social scientist.

Certainly Pessen has stretched normal history a great deal, but one who wishes to see what is really new about the new history must compare *Riches, Class and Power* with *The Other Bostonians*, Stephan Thernstrom's most recent book. In this massive analysis of social mobility in Boston, and particularly in the superb final chapter in which he synthesizes the present literature, Thernstrom provides the most solid study yet detailing the incredible rates of residential mobility and the consistent pattern of modest upward mobility in the middle reaches of the economic structure. In a series of crisply focused chapters he examines the effects of ethnicity, religion, and race on occupational mobility. These clearly show important variations between particular groups which can be traced to various aspects of each subculture and throw doubt upon the last-of-the-immigrants hypothesis concerning the position of blacks who clearly faced discrimination of quite a different order.

However, Thernstrom's findings do not necessarily conflict with Pessen's data nor the findings of a number of recent studies of the distribution of wealth in the American past which reveal similar long run disproportion in the size of holdings. Few who began at the bottom ever made it to the top and few on the top fell very far, but in terms of small steps from rags to respectability upward movement is impressive. "The American class system . . ." he concludes, "allowed substantial privilege for the privileged and extensive opportunity for the underprivileged to coexist simultaneously."

While some of Thernstrom's methods are open to criticism, his major contribution to the study of American social structure lies in his approach. On the one hand he vigorously affirms the importance of careful attention to the historical dimension of most questions of interest to social scientists; yet, on the other he shows that only by framing and empirically testing theoretically relevant hypotheses can the historian advance our general understanding of American society. Each of the chapters on Boston is structured around the quantitative testing of one or several hypotheses with the final chapter combining these findings with those of other recent studies. Thernstrom's most startling findings growing out of this systematic approach are that patterns of mobility have been strikingly similar from one community to the next regardless of differences usually thought to affect this process, and that there has been no long term trend toward either lesser or greater opportunity. All future studies of American society will have to

come to terms with these impressively documented findings.

Comments on the meaning of social mobility in the United States from Tocqueville to these recent books by Persons, Pessen, and Thernstrom are obviously made within a comparative context. Yet few works have been adequately designed to present such comparisons. Thus, *The Rich, the Well Born and the Powerful*, edited by Frederic C. Jaher, seems to present a unique opportunity for such comparison. If this is its goal, the book is a distinct failure. The editor and authors eschew a rigorous approach in favor of conceptual and methodological individualism which makes explicit comparison impossible and makes it highly improbable that these essays "will contribute to more informed, elegant, and comprehensive theories." There is much of interest in these dozen essays which range in subject matter from fifth-century Athens to the New Deal in the United States, but most historians will focus on the essays related to their own interest.

Three are of special interest to American historians. Jaher contributes an essay on New York's four hundred in the late nineteenth century which complements his earlier work but runs head-on into assertions by Persons whose gentry seem to be a related elite. Jaher's smart set are an exceedingly frivolous crowd, dominated by women, "undistracted by community obligations or cultural interests," and tending in this century toward dissipation and sexual promiscuity. Perhaps most interesting Jaher reveals that in the 1890s only 50 of Mrs. Astor's set were among New York's nearly 1,400 millionaires although one-half were related to large wealth.

Richard Jensen includes a previously published essay on the social characteristics of Midwestern urban elites in the early twentieth century which clearly exhibits the usefulness of electronic computers in handling large masses of data. Although mature consideration of these findings based on 7,000 men drawn from who's who directories must await the future, Jensen shows how systematic analysis allows historians to free their generalizations from the prejudices introduced by "dependence on the haphazard generalizations of journalists, novelists, and biographers of famous men." Finally, Thomas A. Krueger and William Glidden present the results of a collective biography of 380 New Deal intellectuals. Not surprisingly, they show that while this elite included more ethnics, blacks, Jews, and women than other similar groups in modern America, its members came from the upper elements of the economic structure and were themselves highly educated upper-middle-class members of the professions. This is followed by a rather ambiguous commentary on the elite. It is not always related to the collective biography, sometimes confuses general outlooks with those of the elite, and concludes with a modest criticism of government by experts.

Each of these books and essays represents a great deal of work to produce some concrete and very useful data. Yet taken together they highlight the necessity of rooting studies of American social structure in theoretically relevant questions and focusing on potentially verifiable hypotheses composed of clearly delineated concepts. In particular an adequate typology of elites is obviously necessary to relate the distinctly different groups studied by these scholars. Whatever the methodological problems inherent in *The Other Bostonians*, Thernstrom has taken a giant step in terms of research design that must be followed by subsequent scholars if the vast amounts of energy

they seem willing to invest in the study of American social structure are to bear fruit.

Paine. By David Freeman Hawke. (New York: Harper & Row, 1974. Pp. 500. \$15.00.)

This should become the standard biography of a truly remarkable, though highly controversial and not always likeable, individual. He was a major participant in both the American and French revolutions and the author of three of the eighteenth-century's best sellers. Thomas Paine had a humble beginning as the son of a Quaker staymaker in England. The first thirty-seven years of his life brought him one failure after another until he decided to begin life anew.

He arrived in the American colonies in 1774 armed only with a letter of introduction from Benjamin Franklin, a penchant for causes, and an undying hatred for George III and the British political system which he blamed for his lack of success. Franklin's letter enabled Paine to meet prominent Philadelphians and to obtain a position on the newly organized *Pennsylvania Magazine*. Paine soon developed a talent for writing essays, especially those attacking England—something he did with relish for the rest of his life. His hatred for his native England drew him into the revolutionary movement, and he fell in with Dr. Benjamin Rush and others who were pushing for independence. At Rush's suggestion Paine began writing his most significant contribution to the American Revolution. Rush himself considered writing a pamphlet to inspire lukewarm Americans but shied away because he had too much to lose from an unfavorable reception. So Paine, with great zeal, wrote the pamphlet he called, at Rush's suggestion, *Common Sense*. Almost immediately Paine gained the fame which followed him to his grave.

Spurred by his desire to defeat the British, Paine continued to write pamphlets and essays for the American cause, the most famous being his series *The Crisis*. Recognizing his talent for propaganda, the Continental Congress subsidized Paine with sinecures and secret grants so that he could continue his work. Before long, however, he was surrounded by controversy stemming from his views on internal political matters. He almost achieved the dubious distinction of being the first person removed from office (he held a minor position as secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs) by the United States government. Only resignation saved him from this humiliation.

Undaunted, Paine continued to support the Revolution and wrote many pamphlets designed to promote stronger central government and unity among the states. He also backed Robert Morris's Bank of North America because he thought it would rid the nation of the evils of paper money. His support for the bank even led him to denounce the Pennsylvania Constitution, based largely on the philosophy expressed in *Common Sense*, when that state's assembly rescinded the bank's charter.

By the end of the war Paine had achieved international fame, a modest income, and many powerful friends. He could have settled down at a time when, as Hawke points out, he had said nothing especially radical and lived

out his days as an admired patriot. But this was not Thomas Paine's nature. Without a cause he was restless. And so with a firm desire to destroy monarchy and establish republicanism everywhere, he began the whole process over again with the French Revolution.

In England and France in the late 1780s, primarily to promote his design for an iron bridge, Paine easily gained access to leading politicians in those two countries. He developed a friendship with Edmund Burke, for instance. But the two became bitter enemies when they took opposite views of the French Revolution. Despite an almost total inability to speak French, Paine was more intimately involved in this movement than he had been in the American Revolution. The literary hero of the American Revolution quickly became the literary hero of the French, first with *The Rights of Man*, an answer to Burke's attack on the French Revolution, and then with *The Age of Reason*, a diatribe against Christianity. Paine was elected to the French National Assembly and helped draft the Constitution of 1792, which drew inspiration from the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776. The French Revolution soon went beyond Paine, however. He was not always the radical, and this "citizen of the world," as he styled himself, ended up in a French prison daily expecting the guillotine.

Though eventually released, Paine was broken by the experience. He left prison with a deep hatred for President Washington, a former companion who Paine believed had not done enough to secure his release. Paine's active political career was largely over. But from France he followed American politics and denounced Federalist politicians, particularly Washington and John Adams (another old enemy). Finally, when his friend Thomas Jefferson became president, Paine ended his fifteen-year absence and returned to his adopted country. Often an embarrassment to Republicans—especially because of *The Age of Reason* and a printed attack on Washington—Paine moved around for several years, visiting one friend after another (often for much longer than the hosts anticipated), until he finally died in New York.

Hawke's biography is well written and often exciting, especially the part covering the French Revolution. His treatment is balanced, and Paine emerges as neither Theodore Roosevelt's "filthy little atheist" nor a faultless hero. Hawke is quick to reveal Paine's faults. He drank to excess, was slovenly in his appearance, constantly took advantage of friends for money and favors, and spared nothing to destroy an enemy. He was generally a popularizer rather than an original thinker, and his views were often naïve. Despite evidence to the contrary, he refused to believe that the British government could ever do anything right or the French anything wrong.

The book contains a good bibliography and is well indexed. The one major flaw, probably the fault of the publisher rather than the author, is in the documentation. To achieve a maximum of inconvenience, the notes are not only at the back of the book but are unidentified in the text. There are no superscript numbers, and citations are simply lumped together by page. A book as important as this one deserves better treatment.

Southern Indians in the American Revolution. By James H. O'Donnell III. (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1973. Pp. 171. \$8.50.)

In his preface Professor O'Donnell has written a paragraph summarizing his problems and, perhaps unintentionally, providing a standard by which to measure his accomplishment.

The story of Indian-white conflicts during the years of the American Revolution (1775-1783) has never been told in depth. General histories of the period present only cursory accounts at best, and even those scholarly treatments limited to one of the war's two theaters—North and South—have failed to assess the impact of the war on the Indian tribes or the influence of the Indians in effecting [sic] the course of the war. An understandable reason for this void, of course, is the basic complexity of the story, for Indian affairs during these years involved literally a 'cast of thousands.' There were two central governments, thirteen individual state governments, two military commands, thousands of warriors and frontiersmen, and dozens of officials in the British and American Indian departments. Then, too, there was the sweep of events from North to South.

Responding to the challenge so described, O'Donnell has concentrated an immense amount of research into a rather brief book which is both indispensable and disappointing. In spite of shortcomings it should be acquired by the library of every college where American history is taught because it contains information not easily obtainable elsewhere. The indefatigable author has traveled widely to track down the prime manuscript sources of all those multitudes of governments and officials, and he has not neglected appropriate printed sources; both bibliography and notes evidence respectable scholarship.

But it is scholarship limited by a fairly narrow conception of history. There are some, but not many, references to anthropological studies in O'Donnell's documentation. Even fewer efforts in the text analyze cultural traits and the issues of culture conflict. These are rather summarily disposed of as constant land hunger on the part of the colonial backwoodsmen and unpredictable vacillation by the Indians. The book casts its net wide but not deep. It tells of many Indian-white conflicts, but it veers away from disputes between one colony and another over conflicting claims to the same territory—disputes that inexorably involved the Indians occupying the territory.

The problem with O'Donnell's approach to this sort of issue is that he seems to accept the words in all those tons of sources at face value. An example is his approving quotation from Virginia's Governor Benjamin Harrison that "Indians have their rights and our Justice is called on to support them. Whilst we are nobly contending for liberty, will it not be an eternal blot on our National character if we deprive others of it who ought to be as free as ourselves." (p. 128) These are fine sentiments, but O'Donnell seems to have missed the significance of the fact that they were addressed not to Harrison's fellow Virginians, but rather to North Carolinians. Way back on page 42, O'Donnell notes that the border between the two states had not been surveyed west of the mountains, but he seems unaware of how colonies

and states used "rights of conquest" over Indians in order to claim territories outside their chartered bounds. To my jaundiced eye, it appears that those noble sentiments of Virginia's governor were an effort to hold back North Carolina from extorting an Indian cession until the Virginians could get into the act and protect their own interests. In that era as in our own, the rhetoric of ideals was the approved device for dealing with the facts of deals.

In this book there is little of the solid study of the Indians themselves that appears in exemplary fashion in Barbara Graymont's work on the Revolution in the North, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*. Yet there are compensations within the range of O'Donnell's effort. He has opened up a theater of operations of which I was completely unconscious—the campaigns on the Gulf Coast—and the participation of Spanish armies with as many as 7,000 men distracting the Florida-based British from attacking the southern American Colonies. This is fresh news to a reader whose revolutionary universe has revolved around Boston and Philadelphia, and its importance is enhanced by explicit description of the balance of power exerted at critical moments by Indian warriors. (Though I do wish that O'Donnell had not insisted on calling them "gunmen" and compounding that gang-war connotation by calling the Spaniards "Dons.")

What O'Donnell has done, in effect, is to compile an exhaustive chronology of military events which seems to be as authentic and dependable as we are likely to get. The book's virtues lie more in reference value than in readability or penetration of insight.

Cedar Crest College

FRANCIS JENNINGS

The Price of Independence, A Realistic View of the American Revolution.

By Broadus Mitchell. (New York: Oxford, 1974. Pp. 374. \$9.50.)

Broadus Mitchell, economic historian and the accomplished biographer of Alexander Hamilton, writes here about "misfortunes and discouragements . . . faithlessness, greed, anger . . . cruelties . . . and persecution . . ." Mitchell begins with the American invasion of Canada and proceeds through footnoteless chapters ranging from the patriot/loyalist conflict through the life-styles of soldiers and prisoners to the peace treaty. Each chapter is a separate entity based on published volumes, mostly secondary sources, listed in the bibliography. The result is a series of images but by no means an over-all picture of the war for independence nor of the Revolution. Students of the Revolution, be they historians or not, will find little in the book to merit its reading. It seems to be meant for the generally uninformed reader who, moved by the Bicentennial or the absence of it, desires to learn more about the Revolution. For that person it *may* be the best account available.

The over-all message to the general reader is traditional: despite painful, perhaps surprising realities, what you've always known was correct—Washington *was* an honest, modest, dedicated, unfairly treated, patriotic, human hero hampered by an unwise, neglectful, poverty-stricken, and usually honest congress. Only the personalities of military leaders such as Washington, Charles Lee, and Horatio Gates are developed. Domestic leaders such as Richard H. Lee, John Adams, and Charles Thomson are mere names

who seem to do nothing but write leaders to be quoted and botch things up. Gates is at best disloyal to Washington; James Wilkinson is a "laggard"; and Thomas Conway was obviously boastful. We are told next to nothing about the nature of the men who caused the need for military leaders. Sam Adams, however, is judged: he "used his talents as a propagandist to bring on a hysteria." To the indexer, he becomes a "master propagandist." Mitchell willingly challenges the recent decline in Washington's reputation but leaves those two colorful and vital personalities of the Revolution, Benjamin Franklin and Robert Morris, without judgment or personalities. One is constantly reinforced for believing that the domestic leadership made things very difficult for the real revolutionaries, the men in arms. Although the book describes some of the realities of the Revolution, it is to this reviewer by no means "A Realistic View of the American Revolution."

University of Wisconsin-Madison

KENNETH R. BOWLING

John Beckley: Zealous Partisan in a Nation Divided. By Edmund and Dorothy Smith Berkeley. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973. Pp. 312. \$6.00.)

In recent years a growing number of the lesser known Federalist and Republican leaders such as Robert Goodloe Harper and Samuel Smith have been the subjects of full length biographies. On the whole these studies have further illuminated the practice of politics in the early years of the Republic. With this biography of John Beckley, the first clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives and Librarian of Congress, another important Republican has been retrieved from obscurity. To accomplish this task, the Berkeleys spared no pains in their efforts to unearth sources that would shed light on the man described by one historian as the "Mystery Man of the Early Jeffersonians." The research upon which this work rests is indeed exhaustive.

John Beckley was one of those ambitious men who took full advantage of the new opportunities created by the Revolution. He began his life in the American colonies as an eleven-year-old English immigrant, indentured to a prominent Virginia planter, John Clayton. By the time he gained his freedom in 1773, he was far ahead of most bondsmen for he had secured a good education and a profession. His skill in the secretarial arts later brought him to prominence.

During and immediately after the War for Independence Beckley held various important clerkships in Virginia and skillfully cultivated friendships with a whole host of prominent state leaders including Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe. By the time the first House of Representatives under the Federal Constitution was ready to choose a clerk in 1789, John Beckley made his availability known. With his influential friends, a law practice, some political experience as mayor of Richmond, and twenty years service in a profession that was vital to the pre-machine age of the eighteenth century, he was not to be denied.

For the next seventeen years until his death in 1807, Beckley used his clerkship of the house to advance the Republican cause. The man who was described by Irving Brant as having "the keenest pair of ears in the country," never seemed to tire of political intrigue. According to the

authors, it was Beckley who first flushed out Alexander Hamilton's affair with Mrs. Reynolds and subsequently administered the coup de grace to the New Yorker's presidential aspirations by making the sordid affair public in 1797. The Berkeleys effectively demonstrate his value to the Republican party as a political intelligence agent.

The book also illustrates the full range and importance of Beckley's role as a political writer. His facile and usually barbed pen was of great assistance to the Republicans throughout the 1790s and early 1800s. It was Beckley who mounted the first damaging personal attack on the heretofore sacrosanct President Washington and who wrote a highly successful campaign biography of Thomas Jefferson in 1800. The media blitz that he organized in Pennsylvania during the 1796 campaign demonstrated that he clearly understood the political potential of the press better than most of his contemporaries.

Although the authors present a full narration of his life and times, one finishes the biography without any clear interpretation of the personality and motives of this clever partisan. While they do examine his chronic ill health and financial woes, the inner man completely eludes them. As a result, the larger question of his place in history remains unresolved. Was he just "an indefatigable scandalmonger" and "hanger on of great men" as John C. Miller and Harry Ammon maintain or an important early political manager who shaped the tactics of American politics for future generations as Noble Cunningham, Jr., concludes? The Berkeleys obviously agree with the latter assessment. Their failure to come to grips with the man himself, however, makes it difficult to reach a final judgment on his career.

Other problems also exist. The straight chronological format of the volume creates endless transitional problems. The reader must brace himself with every turn of the page. The practice of introducing each chapter with a direct quote rather than a title also leaves much to be desired. Finally, the style in which the book is written is generally undistinguished save for some lively descriptions of period furnishings, recreational outlets, and city life.

Despite these difficulties the Berkeleys have provided a great deal of new information about John Beckley's political career, and for this scholars should be grateful. The book also serves to underscore the special hazards that biographers of secondary figures often encounter. The task of rescuing an individual from the shadows of great men demands that the exact nature of their relationship to such giants be explored. It is unfortunate that the authors were either unable, because of the limitations imposed by the sources, or unwilling, to devote more attention to such important assessments.

Carthage College

JOHN A. NEUENSCHWANDER

The Irwins and The Harrisons. By Dorothy W. Bowers. (Mercersburg, Pa.: Irwinton Publishers, 1973. Pp. 156. n.p.)

United by marriage, the Irwins and the Harrisons remain one of the lesser known first family alliances in American history. President for barely one month, William Henry Harrison's reputation is that of a successful Indian fighter. Except for historians of the Gilded Age, Benjamin Harrison lan-

guishes as an obscure nineteenth-century president. This brief but engaging narrative recites the history of the two families and how they met, with particular attention given to the Irwin and Harrison women. Throughout the author has attempted to place family affairs in the larger context of state and national development.

The Irwins were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who settled in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. Influential in local affairs and active in the American Revolution, they sired offspring who soon carved out names for themselves and their family. One married a member of General Washington's staff; another became the wife of a governor of Pennsylvania and the mother-in-law of another governor. Elizabeth Irwin Smith married the speaker of the Pennsylvania house, Jane Irwin Findlay's husband rose to prominence in Ohio politics, and Margaret Piper Smith Irwin's first husband laid out the town of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. And of course there were two Irwins who married Harrisons.

The Harrisons were early settlers of Virginia, and by the eighteenth century acquired considerable wealth and position. Benjamin Harrison served on several of Virginia's revolutionary committees and succeeded Thomas Jefferson as governor of Virginia. After his father's death in 1791, William joined the army and was assigned to duty in Ohio. There he eventually settled, along with other Easterners rushing to take-up land as the Indians were pushed out. (In later years as a general, Harrison did much of the pushing.) He later moved to Indiana, where William Henry Harrison, Jr., was born in September, 1802.

On the evening of February 18, 1824, Jane Irwin married William Henry Harrison, Jr., son of the general and future president. During her father-in-law's brief tenure in the White House Jane acted as co-hostess with her aunt, Jane Irwin Findlay. Another Irwin daughter, Elizabeth, married John Scott Harrison, another son of William Henry Harrison. They had several children, one of whom was Benjamin Harrison, twenty-third president of the United States. Since this is the story of the two families, not two presidents, the narrative ends in 1850, when Elizabeth Irwin Harrison died.

Although the author is unrelated to either the Irwins or the Harrisons, she became interested in the families when she purchased Irwinton, the family homestead. Much of her story is an exercise in family reconstitution, and her many debts are obvious (and thankfully acknowledged in a bibliography). Yet the plethora of names and family relationships is confusing at times to the outsider. This is a problem in writing narrative genealogies, and the reconstruction of eighteenth-century family life helps clarify the story at several points. The narrative is not tightly written, however, and occasional redundancies mar a fine effort. Mrs. Bowers is to be congratulated for her diligence and resourcefulness. In many ways her book should serve as a guide for other persons interested in fleshing out a family tree.

Franklin and Marshall College

JOHN A. ANDREW III

Free Men All: The Personal Liberty Laws of the North, 1780-1861. By Thomas D. Morris. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. Pp. 253. \$12.50.)

Of all the causes of sectional discord before the outbreak of the Civil War, Thomas D. Morris of Portland State University feels that the struggle over the enforcement of the fugitive slave acts must be considered one of the most important precipitating factors. In his study, *Free Men All: The Personal Liberty Laws of the North 1780-1861*, Morris focuses on the legal efforts by many abolitionists to limit the effectiveness of the fugitive slave laws. In the five representative states of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin he finds that many anti-slavery people and organizations made use of the judicial system in trying to limit the practice of reclaiming fugitives. They did this by insisting that northern states incorporate some of the basic common law practices of assuring justice such as trial by jury and the writ of *habeas corpus*. Collectively such efforts were manifested in a series of laws, called personal liberty laws, which were legislated to protect those in danger of being seized as slaves and taken south.

Morris traces the intellectual, legal, and constitutional evolution of those laws in the states mentioned. They included laws against kidnapping, laws providing counsel for persons claimed as slaves, orders prohibiting the use of state jails to detain alleged runaways, statutes punishing state officials for performing duties under the federal fugitive slave acts, authorization of jury trials before fugitives could be removed, and acts making state *habeas corpus* available to anyone claimed as a fugitive. Whether or not such state laws could be used for persons held under federal authority was one of the most hotly debated issues these laws raised. Morris skillfully illuminates this legal conflict within the union, and great attention is given to the two important Supreme Court decisions, *Prigg vs. Pennsylvania* 1843 and *Ableman vs. Booth* 1859, which upheld federal authority over certain state personal liberty practices.

Morris contends that given the nature of the American constitutional system, which made it difficult to launch any direct attack against slavery, there was relatively little that could be done at the national level. The state personal liberty laws, on the other hand, represent some of the more effective and creative efforts on the part of abolitionists. By translating into law the notion that all persons are born free and cannot be deprived of that freedom except by due process of law, these efforts not only led to open conflict between North and South, but they also form part of the backdrop to the civil war amendments. The ethical and legal rationale behind the personal liberty laws greatly influenced the drafting of the 14th Amendment and the broadened application of common law usage influenced legal practices later.

Scholars of the era will find Morris's legal and constitutional approach refreshing to the study of the anti-slavery movement. Here one finds particular focus on those practical abolitionists who used the institutional channels of society to effect reform. An appendix carries a checklist of personal liberty laws in other states not studied, as well as a helpful bibliography for the state by state study of the personal liberty laws.

Wilmington, Delaware Portrait of an Industrial City 1830-1910. By Carol E. Hoffecker. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974. Pp. 187. \$12.95.)

The theme of this book is stated in the introduction. Noting the familiar point of view that civic spirit and social cohesion declined as American cities became industrialized during the nineteenth century, Professor Hoffecker corrects it at least as far as Wilmington, Delaware, is concerned. In a book designed to prove her argument, she claims that the sense of community was strengthened rather than weakened.

Wilmington began as a grain processing and distribution center, slid into a predominantly industrial economy around 1840, and developed into a management and research center for the DuPont Corporation at the beginning of the twentieth century. After the Civil War Wilmington demonstrated its vitality in the face of urban problems by creating numerous public and private organizations and by extending those already in existence. Everything from new churches to baseball teams were responses of the private sector to the ills often associated with industrialization, while the municipal government demonstrated vigor in attacking the problems of a growing industrial city.

The author's point is well taken, and her book is a refreshing contrast to the dismal assertions provided by many American urban historians. There is no bias here against the city per se or against a free market economy. The book invites comparison with Asa Briggs's outstanding study of the English industrial town, *Victorian Cities*. Both Briggs and Hoffecker are able to recognize opportunity as well as difficulty in the growth of urban localities.

Of course, Wilmington was and is a small city by comparison with the giants. A historian of Pittsburgh or Cleveland might well reach less happy conclusions. The point is that Wilmington's problems were manageable because the city never exceeded 100,000 population in the nineteenth century. Also, it was not carved out of a raw prairie or frontier settlement as were so many other American urban areas. Thus, the city fathers had conditions in hand, and they were helped by a remarkably deferential and law-abiding working population.

The author began her study by walking through various neighborhoods of the city, the central core of which she describes today as a collection of modern high-rise office buildings, surrounded by older houses and parking lots. Clearly the modern city of Wilmington has entered a fourth phase of its development, and this book would have been even better if attention could have been paid to the roots of contemporary problems which Wilmington shares with other cities. Still, the author's point is well made, and her little book, though describing a situation which is unique, has value as a contribution to the total picture of urban America in the last century. The worth of the book is enhanced by some fine photographs.

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JOHN W. OSBORNE

Mother Jones: The Miners' Angel. By Dale Fetherling. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974. Pp. 263. \$11.85.)

Biographies of persons involved in the American labor movement have frequently acquainted the general public and students of history with colorful and forceful individuals traditionally ignored in American textbooks and scholarly literature. Ray Ginger's study of Eugene V. Debs and Saul Alinsky's portrayal of John L. Lewis led to a new appreciation and awareness of labor's contribution to American history. Increasingly Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and J. P. Morgan have had to share the nation's drama with their antagonists. It is likely that Dale Fetherling's study of the controversial Mary Harris "Mother" Jones will provoke similar interest—particularly now that colleges are rapidly initiating divisions of Women's Studies. Mother Jones is the type of person which today's reading public would appreciate. Her honesty, belligerency, forthrightness, and selfless dedication are qualities all too frequently absent in those who dominate today's headlines. The fact that she is a woman further enhances her appeal.

Fetherling's task of bringing continuity and cohesiveness to Mother Jones's myriad activities can be fully appreciated by those whose research in labor history has brought them into contact with this "Joan of Arc" of the labor movement. The author's depiction of Mother Jones as a political chameleon appears to be an accurate portrayal of more than just her political activities. She was a complex woman. Fetherling, a native West Virginian and reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, pieced together Mother Jones's life without benefit of any large body of letters or manuscript sources—a formidable task. Jones's incomplete *Autobiography* and those collections which mentioned her only in a peripheral manner had to be gleaned from scattered bits of information which could make Mother Jones understandable.

The author describes his study as a portrait of Mother Jones based upon selective and highly eclectic materials. This is an accurate assessment. He acknowledges the book's limitations and lack of definitiveness, indicating that the study "is an attempt to chronicle her (Mother Jones) major activities, to sketch her personality, (and) to begin to distill her legacy." Within the framework of these limitations the author has succeeded in his task.

A simple narrative of Mother Jones's remarkable life would provide fascinating reading because of her interaction with many key labor personalities and events in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her contacts with Terence Powderly, Samuel Gompers, Bill Haywood, Eugene Debs, and John Mitchell as well as participation in the violent Kanawha Valley strikes, her activities in the Pennsylvania anthracite region, the dramatic encounters with Rockefeller's Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, and the crusade against child labor placed Mother Jones at the forefront of some of labor's most poignant episodes. Her achievements demanded historical recognition, and Fetherling's study will undoubtedly precipitate further interest in Mother Jones. As the author indicates, there are many areas of conflicting and/or incomplete information about Mother Jones's personal life as well as her labor activities. Specific examples of limited data include Mother Jones's attitudes toward socialism and the Industrial Workers of the World, the charges of prostitution leveled against her, and her contradictory statements relating to violence as a method for attaining labor's goals.

From a scholarly viewpoint the author's attempt to place Mother Jones's activities within a larger framework of national events achieved mixed results. The researcher will not find any new interpretations or insights into such major events as the Haymarket Riot, Pullman Strike, or the Lattimer Massacre. The author relied primarily upon traditional secondary sources while inserting Mother Jones's activities into the labor panorama. Some of the difficulties he experienced in relating the role of Mother Jones could have been eliminated by consulting some good specialized works which he missed. For instance, the incomplete and complex story of Mother Jones's role in Pennsylvania anthracite would have made much more sense if the author had consulted Sister Mary Annunciata Merrick's unpublished dissertation "A Case in Practical Democracy: Settlement of the Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902" (University of Notre Dame, 1942). Likewise the author's perception of the complexities of Mother Jones's march to Oyster Bay in 1902 when she was fighting child labor in Pennsylvania would have been enhanced by consulting C. K. McFarland's article, "Crusade for Child Laborers: 'Mother' Jones and the March of the Mill Children," (*Pennsylvania History*, July, 1971).

The major disappointment of the book, however, is Fetherling's failure to come to grips with the intriguing question of the general role of women in the labor movement. At a number of points in the book the author seemed to be on the verge of offering a new insight on this subject, but he always returned to the theme of the uniqueness of Mother Jones. It is a shame he did not confront the general theme of women in the labor movement. Victor Greene's comments about women in labor, particularly the role of "Big Mary" Septek, as well as Dorothy Blumberg's assessment of Florence Kelley could have given Fetherling an indication of a general set of goals and similar activities undertaken by some female labor reformers. The growing awareness of the role of women in the labor movement demands the end of piecemeal examination of this significant subject by labor historians.

Fetherling has indeed made a significant contribution to labor history. His is a readable and interesting book about a fascinating woman reformer whose varied career should spark additional research.

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