Book Reviews

By Barry Levy. *Quakers and the American Family: British Settlement in the Delaware Valley.*


Barry Levy's *Quakers and the American Family* explores the origins of contemporary American family ideology in the seventeenth century Quaker family system. Levy also examines the lives of Northwest British Quakers, their migration to Pennsylvania, the adjustments they made in their religious practices and family ideology to 1790, and the ways in which Quaker family ideology became American family ideology. Levy narrates the story of a group of Northwest British Quaker farmers; explains their development of a new religious, family, and communal system in response to economic necessities in Britain in the 1650s; and describes the adjustments the immigrants made in their value system in response to their experience in Pennsylvania from 1681 to 1790.

*Quakers and the American Family* is structured around three sections encompassing seven chapters. In Part One Levy traces the origins of Quaker domestic ideology. He examines the "middling roots," "spiritual tribalism" and costly family system that developed in North Britain. In the second section Levy analyzes the transfer of the Quaker family system and its triumph in the Delaware Valley between 1681 and 1750. In the third section the author elaborates on the main thesis of the book, explaining how Quaker family ideas became American concepts of domesticity. In Levy's words, "when sufficient attention is devoted to their British experience, the story of the northwestern Quakers provides the best focus available for the story of the social history of the ideas, people, places, and events which created, introduced, and partly established America's distinctive, major family ideology" (p. 11).

The study is solidly grounded in extensive and detailed research in archival resources located in Wales, England, and Pennsylvania. Levy utilizes sociological, demographic and economic concepts with facility. He develops themes and generalizations and reaches conclusions with strong foundations in literary sources and, wherever possible, quantifies economic and demographic data to bolster his conclusions. Most of the quantifiable data is presented as seven tables in an appendix, "Comparative Statistics on Quaker Families and Communities" (pp. 269-276). Levy documents his conclusions with fifty pages of notes (pp. 277-326). The index is helpful. However, James T. Lemon and James Henretta are not included in it, even though their works are crucial to Levy's overall conceptualization and his discussion in the introduction, "Intimate Frontiers" and in Chapter One, "Middling Roots."

Levy relies on a variety of archival source materials to construct his elaborate conceptualization. Crucial to his analysis is reliance on various sets of probate records located in the National Library of Wales: Cheshire Co., 1660, 1681; Merionethshire, 1670-1691; Radnorshire and Brecknockshire, 1675, 1685. Levy has collected a mass of data from Society of Friends' Monthly Meeting Records that produce valuable demographic and family data on 72 reconstructed first generation families who settled in
the Welsh tract and Chester County, Pennsylvania. The technique of family reconstitution also yielded vital data on 93 second generation Quaker settler families. Levy's methods yield an analysis rich in texture, for he weaves together family history, demographic trends (marriage ages, family sizes and longevity), and economic developments (drawn from analysis of wills, deeds, inventories of estate and orphans' court records).

Using these methods, Levy raises a number of important questions about the experiences of the migrant generation and their offspring. For example, why did Quakers gain so many adherents in North Britain? What was the relationship between family wealth and religious values of Quakers in Wales? How does one account for the success of Quaker domestic ideology? What was the role of women in Quaker families? How did migration to Pennsylvania transform Quaker approaches to marriage, family and inheritance? Levy concludes that "poor and failing households suffered more religious stigma from fellow Quakers in the Delaware Valley than they had in Cheshire and Wales. Among the first generation of . . . emigrants to Pennsylvania, the Quakers' tender, involving familialism and domesticity had been transformed from a formula for frustration relieved by group therapy into an economically and socially successful family and community system. Troubled households were no longer the majority, but an annoying minority, a drag on general success in the Peaceable Kingdom" (p. 143).

Levy is at his best in discussing the importance of children and women in the Quaker family system. Quaker men in Pennsylvania remembered "vividly how the dispersal of propertyless children had destroyed so many 'tender plants' " and uprooted so many entire communities in Cheshire and Wales. Therefore, these men "gave their wives so little economic discretion . . . less because they thought them inherently incompetent than because they were especially keen on their children's economic security and protection" (p. 205).

A most serious difficulty with Levy's analysis is his discussion of the manner in which the Quaker domestic system became the American family ideology. The discussion remains a problem because of the issue of scale or proportion. How are we to get from a few religious Quaker families' experience to the dominant ideology of an increasingly secularized republican society by 1800 and thereafter? Nevertheless, scholars of Pennsylvania history, family history and social history will find much here to ponder.

Rodger C. Henderson, Penn State University—Fayette Campus


Robert W. Johannsen, the James G. Randall Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Illinois and author or editor of six previous books, is certainly one of the major students of the coming of the American Civil War. His most widely read book
is the definitive biography of Stephen A. Douglas. In the preface of this collection of his essays he writes: "Although it may be sacrilege to suggest it, a better case might be made for Douglas [than Lincoln] as the representative of America's golden midcentury years, for it was Douglas more than Lincoln who "felt the beatings" of romantic America, and who embodied the diverse strands—from foreign policy to the encouragement of the arts and sciences—that together expressed what the romantics called the 'spirit of the age.'" (p. xii.)

This book brings together fifteen essays written over the past three and a half decades that taken together sustain this view. It is almost as though when he wrote, "The Secession Crisis and the Frontier," he knew exactly where his future interest lay.

The book is divided into four sections. The first four essays deal with the response of the Pacific Northwest to the crisis of the 1850s. The next six deal with Douglas. Although one would not know from the book's title, four essays are devoted to Lincoln. The final section consists of a single essay, "America’s Golden Midcentury."

The essays on the frontier have a Turnerian flavor derived perhaps from Johannsen's far western upbringing and the influence of Stull Holt. Although Johannsen agrees that the area was marginal in most every way, he shows that these territories were deeply involved in both the process of frontier development and the looming sectional crisis.

In the essays on Douglas, Johannsen moves from the periphery to the center. Few would argue with his focus upon Douglas as the main player in the game. Although "Stephen A. Douglas and the American Mission" is most closely related to his general thesis, two of the articles best represent Johannsen's views. They are probably his best known essays as well and I assume are still assigned in most advanced courses on the period. One stands as the ultimate defense of Douglas's somewhat prolix argument sustaining popular sovereignty after the Dred Scott decision that appeared in the September, 1859, issue of Harper's Magazine. The other deals with Douglas's personal and political relations with the South and his personal torment as the war came over the question, if he had leaned too far in that direction. Johannsen dissents: "Douglas's failure lay precisely in his national outlook, his attempt to occupy the middle ground at a time when aroused sectional passions and moral commitment drowned out the voice of moderation." (p. 206.)

Certainly, James G. Randall would have approved. Although a biographer of Lincoln, he had great sympathy for Douglas. In these essays, Douglas's biographer, who admittedly finds Lincoln something of an enigma hidden in the "crust" of myth, succeeds it treating him with measured fairness. Johanssen, however, does not see a convergence of Lincoln and Douglas in the debates of 1858. As hard as it is for Johanssen to admit that an opponent of Andrew Jackson might have any redeeming characteristics, he writes, "For all of Lincoln's social conservatism there was something insistently democratic in his position that set him apart." (p. 255.)

The final essay which does not mention Douglas is essential to understanding Johannsen's thesis. Douglas is the representative American, because like all Americans
he looked with romantic optimism for the future of the Republic. Drawing on his most recent book, *To the Halls of the Montezumas*, Johannsen argues that, "The Mexican War inspired that surge of romantic feeling." Like the abortive revolution in France, it was a "contest between monarchy and democracy."

A good portion of the essay praises the romantic historians—Parkman, Bancroft, Prescott, Motley—and rather sadly laments the decline of history. "History was never more popular, nor did it ever seem more relevant than in mid-nineteenth-century America." Yet there are two questions one must ask Professor Johannsen: just who were "the Americans" whose "spirit" he describes? And by his own canon how accurate were the "great" historians? The answer to the first is that his sources come from predominantly pro-Democratic intellectuals and no-party elitists. The Mexican War was not popular. To the second, a century of historiography has shredded the romantics' dichotomies, and contemporary Americans wanting a good read are more likely to choose Gary Jennings than Prescott.

The irony is that Johannsen shows practically none of the qualities he admires in the romantic historians. He is a fine writer, but, as Don Fehrenbacker says on the dust jacket, Johannsen's essays are characterized by "discernment, grasp, equitableness, and lucidity." While I can not imagine many people running out to pay thirty-five dollars for this book, it is useful for students of the coming of the Civil War to have these essays in a single collection. One can easily disagree with Johannsen, but one must first calmly hear his arguments.

William G. Shade, *Lehigh University*

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**By Hans L. Trefousse. *Andrew Johnson: A Biography.***


Andrew Johnson stands at the historical crossroads of several key themes and threads in American history. He literally rose—"Horatio Alger" like—from abject poverty to become president of the United States. He remains the only president to have been impeached. Johnson's political trajectory is bound up with the dramatic history of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Despite all this, Johnson has been a vague figure in American history, long overshadowed by the likes of Abraham Lincoln, Thaddeus Stevens, and Ben Butler.

Hans L. Trefousse has long been one of the deans of Reconstruction historiography. This is his eighth book in the field. He has brought his vast expertise to the topic at hand. He has also chosen to remain within the bounds of traditional political biography. The resulting picture of Johnson which emerges adds considerably to our existing knowledge about him.

Johnson did not simply "rise" from his original lowly station by hard work and perseverance. Rather, he recognized in the politics of the 1830s-1840s a possible route upward from his tailor shop in Greenville, Tennessee. Time and again over the next
decades, Johnson found ways to appease politicians of diverse views. In so doing, he continued to develop his political career. The rungs on the ladder were arranged in logical order: mayor, state representative, congressman, governor, senator, vice-president, and then president. With each step on the political ladder, Johnson’s personal wealth grew, as he left tailoring far behind for politics and real estate. Despite Trefousse’s effort to practice the “objectivity” of traditional political biography, the portrait that emerges is one of an opportunist—perhaps one of the first national political figures to see politics itself as a “career.”

And yet, in the historical events for which he is best remembered, Johnson risked his political career by opposing the Congressional forces that sought to reconstruct the South. Trefousse reminds readers that Johnson believed that the Southern states had never seceded, since they had no right to do so. Therefore, he contended, they did not have to be “readmitted” into the Union. Johnson did not merely object to some of the specific conditions proposed in Congress (though he certainly did oppose them, such as black enfranchisement). Rather, he resisted the very notion that the Southern states could be required to submit to any conditions. Trefousse argues that this deeply held belief underpinned Johnson’s specific conflicts with Congress. At the most critical point in his career, at the helm of his nation, Johnson set aside career for principle.

Trefousse’s portrait is interesting, but it leaves too many questions unanswered for the reader. Why was Johnson’s approach to politics as a career successful in its time and place? What relationship did it have to the widening of the franchise in the South in the 1830s? What did his “humble origins” have to do with his political success? Why did Johnson decide to jettison his career concerns during Reconstruction and act on principle, apparently for the first time in his life? To what extent did his vision of Reconstruction come to prevail, despite his personal setbacks? Even after almost 400 pages of detailed text, Andrew Johnson: A Biography leaves the reader hungry for more.

It is unfortunate that Professor Trefousse chose to restrict himself to traditional political biography. The reader’s understanding of this complex political figure—and through him, of the dynamics of secession and Reconstruction—might have been enhanced by the incorporation of alternative approaches to political biography. Some of these approaches move outward, towards the social processes out of which individuals emerge. Others are more interior-oriented, exploring the psychological dimensions of the subject’s behavior. Virtually all recognize the necessity of pushing beyond the subject’s “public life” into his/her private life as well. Had Professor Trefousse ventured onto this terrain, the readers’ appetites might have been satiated by this study.

Peter Rachleff, Macalester College

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. Pp. xvi, 332. $25.00)
This book is the best historical interpretation and analysis of the American city to appear in recent years. It represents an ambitious effort to pull together a rich but fragmented and specialized literature in urban geography and political, social, and economic history into a unified interpretive framework that emphasizes the importance of social and political organization and human action in shaping the distinctive characteristics of American urban places.

The book takes as its subject an urban world which includes not only "great" cities such as Philadelphia and Saint Louis but smaller centers such as Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, and the conglomerations of houses, office buildings, and super highways found in such relatively new and sprawling suburbs as Monroeville outside of Pittsburgh. Monkkonen sees the development of this world as the product of remarkable human endeavor, the very successes of which are not only reflected but obscured by how ordinary and routine the provision of a range of urban services has come to seem. He places his interpretation in sharp contrast to what he characterizes as the elitism, preoccupation with physical planning, and susceptibility to the "architectural fallacy" of reading "economy, politics, and society through building" that he finds in the work of planning critics such as Lewis Mumford and the otherwise quite different Jane Jacobs. (p. 14)

There is much to learn here even if one takes a less positive view of the American city than does Monkkonen, or is inclined to take its critics more seriously. The book represents a real stride toward an understanding of urban America that integrates the focus on elite decision making characteristic of more traditional forms of political history with the attention to experiences of ordinary people, large-scale aspects of social structure, and long-term processes of change characteristic of sociological and statistical approaches and the various "new" histories of the 1960s and 1970s. Although elements of continuity are noted, the emphasis is on ways in which nineteenth and twentieth century American cities differ in function as well as form from both their medieval European and colonial American predecessors.

Urbanization, Monkkonen rightly points out, encompassed not just shifts in where people lived and how they made their living, but transformations in existing institutional and political arrangements and the emergence of new ones. Local incorporated governments were major actors in the process. Over the course of the nineteenth century, they took on increasingly conscious, active, and entrepreneurial roles in both promoting and underwriting the economic growth of their communities and in providing services to citizens and local businesses. Even in the case of such apparently exogenous developments as innovations in transport technologies, local governmental units played important roles in shaping the ways in which changes occurred. Thus, while the increased mobility made possible by technologies such as street cars and later automobiles constituted an essential underpinning for the emergence of spread-out residential suburbs during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, "aggressive, highly conscious, local action," Monkkonen emphasizes, "created the economic and legal
environment that fostered the new technologies and their subsequent adoptions." (p. 164)

It is impossible to do justice in the space of a short review to the richness, sophistication, and subtlety of many aspects of this presentation. One example is Monkkonen's delineation of relationships between the politics of municipal infrastructure investment and the conflicting interests of property owners who sought both to minimize property tax rates and also obtain a range of public services that would maximize property values. The willingness of many city governments to go into debt to subsidize investments in streets, sewers, water supplies, and even parks, their extreme reluctance to increase property tax rates, and the almost universal failure in the United States of "grand" physical planning schemes like those proposed by Burnham for San Francisco around the turn of the century can all be understood more clearly in light of the account here. There are interesting explorations as well of such issues as the unintended and unanticipated ways in which the creation of uniformed police forces spurred widespread acceptance of the idea that local governments had duties to protect safety and provide services in non-crime related areas and of the roles played by both geographic sprawl and bureaucratic service provision in reducing occasions for violent conflict in an heterogeneous society.

The account also suggests interesting questions as to the uses to which historical understanding of American cities can and should be put. A great importance is claimed for the role of conscious decision-making as opposed to simple functional or technological determinisms in shaping American cities. But, a sustained analysis is not offered of the roles played (and not played) by different sorts of thinking about cities in determining the ways in which urban areas have changed. Given that the city is a human creation, what role can an historically informed criticism play in helping us to see ways to make it work more in accord with our aspirations?

Even with respect to issues that are explicitly taken up, some points need to be developed more carefully and precisely than they are. In the case of the origins of uniformed police forces, for example, Monkkonen rightly criticizes the explanatory value and faithfulness to reality of apparently plausible functionalist accounts of the formula, "increased crime resulted in the formation of police forces." But his own explanation of the underlying pressures that resulted in the establishment of police "as an early step in the creation of the new service providing city government" is itself poorly specified and lacking in analytical rigor. (p. 100) The author's emphasis on critiquing what he sees as misconceptions in other people's understanding of our cities also makes for an exposition that is discursive and convoluted in places, shifting back and forth between points in ways that make major elements of the author's own arguments both more difficult to follow and to evaluate than they need be.

Still, the book is a major achievement. More than any other single work of urban history extant, it conveys an understanding of ways in which "bad things" about contemporary American cities such as inequities in the provision of many publicly
funded services, "patch work quilts" of local governments, and urban sprawl are both related to "good things" such as relatively open electoral franchises and widespread home ownership and deeply rooted in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century developments in political and social history. The book also brings an important local perspective to an emerging history and social science literature on processes of "state building" that has heretofore been focused in large part on events at the federal and state levels of government.

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Edited by Gabor S. Boritt. The Historian's Lincoln: Pseudohistory, Psychohistory, and History.


Gabor Boritt has compiled twelve provocative studies by Lincoln scholars with commentaries and rebuttals. There are also reviews of Stephen Oates's and the Handlins' biographies of Lincoln and of Gore Vidal's Lincoln. The essays, presented at a conference called "Lincoln 175" in commemoration of Lincoln's 175th birthday, summarize (and sometimes revise) book length studies. The collection provides a "halfway step between the harsh abbreviations of the historiographical summary and the often unsurmountable obstacle of reading a dozen books in a particular field" (ix-x). Its greatest value lies in the Lincoln that the scholars and critics reveal. Here is the master story-teller, the leader who transcended private yearnings in his quest for Union, the idealist moving toward liberation and expanded opportunities for black Americans, and the consummately practical pol who cajoled and pressured other pols to do his bidding.

The scholars' rebuttals to critics transform the point/counter-point format of the published volume into a debate. In the exchanges between scholar and critic, civility is the rule, but acrimony surfaces too, particularly among the historians who invoke psychological constructs to explain the private Lincoln. The University of Illinois Press did not print the rebuttals, but they are available in a pamphlet titled "The Historian's Lincoln: Rebuttals. What the University Press Would Not Print," from the Civil War Institute, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 17325.

In the first section "The Common People's Lincoln," P.M. Zall presents "Abe Lincoln Laughing." Zall's Lincoln is an enthusiastic storyteller with natural empathy for his audience. Most of his jokes were anecdotal (and adopted), but Lincoln unleashed one-liners too. With his home-spun, self-deprecating tales redolent of the barn-yard, he was a popular stump speaker. Commentator Norman Graebner points out that Lincoln used humor to whistle down sadness, while Mark Neely, Jr. places Lincoln's humor in the context of a rowdy, back-slapping, dominantly masculine political culture. Neely also points out that Lincoln's joke-telling exasperated colleagues and enemies alike, and his opponents depicted him either as a socially inept naif or a ribald, clownish humorist who fiddled while republic and constitution burned.
The longest section, "Ideology and Politics," contains seven essays and twelve commentaries. The central theme is Lincoln’s devotion to liberty and his rival commitment to the Union. In "Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream," Boritt’s Lincoln, as Whig, believed that economic growth would secure the individual’s ‘right to rise.’ He also wanted those who toiled to enjoy the fruits of their labor. As president, Lincoln’s mission was to liberate Americans, Black and White, and move them toward equality through economic opportunity. Phillip Paludan appreciates Boritt on Lincoln’s devotion to liberty and broadened opportunity but complains that he did not acknowledge “the ugly fruition of Lincoln’s Whiggish ideas” in the rampant capitalism of the post-Civil War world.

Three other strong essays in this segment are those of Glen E. Thurow, “Abraham Lincoln and American Political Religion,” LaWanda Cox, “Lincoln and Black Freedom,” and Charles B. Strozier, “Lincoln’s Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings.” Cox recounts the pressures that Lincoln imposed on reluctant Congressmen, cajoling them to move further and more rapidly than they intended toward establishing freed men’s rights. Taking aim at James Randall, Richard Hofstadter and Kenneth Stampp, she argues that the Emancipation Proclamation was not a document with “all the moral grandeur of a bill of lading” (Hofstadter). Cox’s Lincoln, unlike Justice Taney, believed that black Americans had rights that must be respected. Yet in the 1860s, assumptions about black inferiority constrained Lincoln. Given his unfavorable environment, he extended opportunity for black Americans as rapidly as he could.

Cox fails to convince Armistead Robinson that Lincoln was not a racial gradualist, adamant about emancipating black Americans but equivocating on post-emancipation rights. Had Lincoln lived to the 1890s, Robinson contends, consistency would have forced him to support the separate-but-equal-doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson. Cox replies that the distinction between her reading of Lincoln and that of others, including Richard Current’s, is her insistence that Lincoln’s work on behalf of Blacks quickened during his last years, “not because he was pressured by events but because he was freed by events.”

In his examination of the private Lincoln, Strozier argues that his yearning for resolution in private relationships melded with a quest for Union in the public arena. The result was the imagery of the “house divided.” Belz discounts Strozier’s analysis on the ground that the alternative explanation he provides is as persuasive as Strozier’s. Strozier retorts that the private and public Lincoln were of a piece. With one’s perception of the private Lincoln comes an understanding of the public man. Dwight Anderson and George B. Forgie, also psycho-historians, see a symbolic son as rival to George Washington. Anderson’s Lincoln pre-empts Washington, the father, as the foremost American president, while Forgie’s Lincoln, ambitious, yet committed to republican ideals, hunts down the tyrants, himself included, who assail the republic that the fathers have created.

William Hanchett and Thomas Reed Turner focus on the assassination. They tell historians that to disdain assassination episodes as subjects of scholarly investigation is
to let these become the domain of sensationalists and populizers. Hanchett, as historian, notes that Lincoln's enemies believed that his emancipation policy would engulf the nation in racial warfare. Thus bitterness against Lincoln, rather than insanity, demonic passion or the conspiracies postulated by populizers drove John Wilkes Booth and his co-conspirators to kill the President.

In reviews of recent Lincoln biographies, Richard Current and Don E. Fehrenbacher reprove the Handlins and Gore Vidal for deficiencies in their work, but praise Oates. Fehrenbacher comments that Vidal has so mingled fact, fiction and error, that critics have trouble deciding whether his work is a novel or biography. Richard Current dismisses the Handlins' *Abraham Lincoln and the Union* (1980) as a poorly structured effort that includes no synthesis of recent scholarship. He praises Oates's *Man Behind the Myths* (1984) as an engrossing account that does incorporate recent scholarship. Current notes that Oates's Lincoln moved inexorably toward realizing the promise of equality but warns that the case is a bit overplayed. Lincoln, entangled in a new myth, could become "the most radical of Radicals."

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In the last two decades, the history of childbirth and child nurture in America has received considerable attention. Sylvia D. Hoffert's new book contributes to the historical understanding of childbearing through a sensitive reading of the personal diaries and correspondence of a number of upper and middle-class women living in cities and towns in the Northeastern United States in the first six decades of the nineteenth century. Hoffert argues that although the biological experience of birthing for these women remained virtually unchanged from the experiences of their grandmothers and great-grandmothers, a number of factors combined to promote a reexamination of the boundaries of private life, especially in the realm of maternity, for some American women and men. According to Hoffert, the "ideology of motherhood," the increasing availability of birth control information, geographic mobility, the growth of cities, the rise of the publishing industry, the anonymity of urban life, opportunities for social mobility, advances in medical knowledge, and the availability of physicians and monthly nurses all contributed to significant changes in the conduct of maternity.

What were these changes? Hoffert identifies the attempts to limit fertility by both wives and husbands as an important development, which even in an age characterized by high infant mortality allowed a greater emotional stake in individual children and in the notion of childhood itself. Although the "ideology of motherhood" invested women with responsibility for child development in the womb and after, Hoffert challenges the assumption that women in the last months of pregnancy restricted their public activities
because of social pressure. Although societal obligation to withdraw from public activities would come later in the century, before the Civil War women exercised a range of options during their pregnancies, which could accommodate not only attendance at the opera or at fancy dress balls, but also the right to retire from society if health demanded it. Although Hoffert consistently invokes the "cult of motherhood," which in her view so colored the experiences of women and men, and presumably their children as well, in the decades before the Civil War, it is surprising that it receives so little sustained discussion in the text.

Perhaps the most important changes in the conduct of childbearing that Hoffert identifies in the years before 1860 were the increasing use of male physicians in the birthing room and the employment of monthly nurses during the recovery period. In an era of high maternal and infant mortality, the likelihood of pain, injury, and death led many women to fear childbirth. Upper and middle class women increasingly turned to male physicians who could offer services that female midwives could not, namely, the application of forceps, the use of ergot to speed labor, and, after 1846, "the greatest blessing of this age," ether.

The entry of male physicians into the birthing rooms of upper and middle class American women and the tensions this produced is well known to historians through the elegant work of Judith Walzer Leavitt, among others. Hoffert's use of personal diaries and correspondence adds important details to the larger canvas. In recounting the first use of ether during childbirth, for example, she relates how in 1847 Fanny Appleton Longfellow and her husband sought to persuade several Boston physicians to administer ether to Fanny during her labor. Undeterred by their lack of success, the Longfellows engaged a local dentist to give the vapor. After the successful delivery of their third child, the couple then informed a larger circle of relatives, friends, and acquaintances, including some physicians, about the new anesthetic. These details about the informal information networks for birthing innovations are a significant contribution.

In addition to chapters on attitudes toward childbearing and childbirth, Hoffert devotes chapters to the recovery period, infant nurture, and infant death. She describes the introduction of monthly nurses in the recovery period. As much to help care for the mother and child, these nurses represented yet another means by which to demonstrate gentility and economic prosperity, according to Hoffert. For some women, separated from their families and bereft of the traditional childbirth setting in which female relatives provided moral support and actual nursing care and household help during the birth and in the recovery period, engaging a good nurse was a source of considerable anxiety. Although these nurses helped educate mothers about infant care, their appearance in the nursery was often accompanied by tensions similar to those which occurred with the entry of male physicians into the birthing rooms. Male physicians and monthly nurses negotiated their roles not only with mothers, but with female friends and relatives and occasionally with some fathers, who insisted on attending the birth or dictating the manner of care for their spouse and child.
The chapters on infant nurture and infant death are rather general. Discussion of attitudes toward infant feeding, wet nursing, teething, and weaning adds comparatively little new to our understanding of infant and child nurture in this period. Given the attention to maternity dress, lack of discussion of infant clothing, for example, is somewhat surprising. Details about attitudes toward cleanliness and infant development would be extremely useful, as would attitudes toward miscarriage and stillbirth, and the resumption of conjugal relations. We can hope that perhaps in a later work Hoffert will return to the archival sources which she has mined so fruitfully.

Susan E. Lederer, Penn State University, College of Medicine

By John Phillip Reid. The Concept of Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution.


Over the past decade, no scholar has contributed more to our understanding of the American Revolution than the legal historian John Reid. Without challenging the central interpretations of that event produced during the great flourishing of Revolutionary scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s, Reid has added substantially to our knowledge of the legal and constitutional dimensions of the pre-Revolutionary debate between those who supported and opposed the claims of parliamentary supremacy that lay at the heart of the imperial struggle.

This elegant essay can best be seen as a companion to Reid's more ambitious Constitutional History of the American Revolution, two of whose projected three volumes have been published by the University of Wisconsin Press since 1986. Here as elsewhere, Reid sets out to rescue a vital eighteenth-century concept from oversimplification and anachronism. The great difficulty in explicating the concept of liberty, Reid suggests, stems from the ubiquity of its usage, the way in which it was relished for its very abstraction, and the ease and frequency with which it was invoked by contending parties across the political spectrum. Yet this flabbiness should not disguise the vital authority that the concept exercised over eighteenth-century political debate.

Reid's venture in historical reconstruction takes the form of an extended series of short essays probing and defining particular components of the (essentially legal) concept of liberty. Eighteenth-century liberty, he insists throughout, cannot be understood in terms of "the freedom to do what one wished to do without restraint" (p. 56). Rather, liberty is best approached in terms of what it was not. "Licentiousness"—liberty carried to excess—was its "bane." Slavery—not the chattel slavery of the southern colonies, but the political condition of living under laws to which one could not somehow give consent—was its "opposite." And the "antithesis" of liberty was arbitrary power, of the many sorts exercised by virtually all other governments than Britain's.

This intense and graphic consciousness of all the dangers to which true liberty was exposed must be kept in mind, Reid insists, if we are to understand how and why the
eighteenth-century Anglo-American concept of liberty seems to diverge so far from our own. True liberty was a matter of restraint, of adherence to all those legal institutions and constitutional traditions that afforded hope for its preservation in a dangerous world. "As a pragmatic, working constitutional doctrine," Reid concludes, "the concept of liberty taught not what the individual was free to do, but what the rule of law permitted" (p. 118).

Above all, true liberty meant "security," which Reid describes as "the most absolute principle in eighteenth-century constitutional theory" (p. 68). This concept of security both subsumed the protection of property and rested on its possession. But the idea of property in this sense could never be confined to material possessions alone: "liberty itself was property possessed" (p. 72). (James Madison would echo this point as late as 1792, when he observed that "as a man is said to have a right in his property, he may be equally said to have a property in his rights"; Robert Rutland et al. eds., The Papers of James Madison [Chicago and Charlottesville, 1962-1989], XIV, 266.)

So, too, just as the British "constitution was an instrument of liberty ... liberty was the spirit, the soul, the essence of the constitution" (p. 82).

Nothing better illustrates the archaeological precision of Reid's book than the care with which he delineates the dialectical, reciprocal, and paradoxical dimensions of the concept of liberty. In doing so, he also explains how the rhetoric of liberty could be deployed so easily by both the American revolutionaries and their loyalist and British opponents. Just as the claims made in behalf of parliamentary jurisdiction over America evoked the danger of arbitrary power, liberty's antithesis, so the resistance movement itself seemed to embody the "licentiousness" that was liberty's bane.

To the enormous mansion of Revolutionary scholarship, it now seems clear, John Reid has erected a separate wing of his own. What is remarkable about his achievement is the way in which, for all its originality and attention to detail, it extends the existing lines of the structure. Here and there the architect finds fault with his colleagues. But in his insistence on recovering the nuances of eighteenth-century legal thought, Reid demonstrates that a legal historian can also be a historian's historian.

Jack N. Rakove, Stanford University


This hefty volume will serve as a valuable reference for individuals interested in Afro-American slavery. It is wide-ranging (280 topics are discussed) and scholarly (231 specialists in Afro-American history have contributed essays). The entries, which range in length from 1 page to 10 pages, each include a brief bibliography of 6 to 10 references. Many of the essays have convenient internal cross-references to other selections in the
As the editors explain in the introduction, the purpose of this volume is to sort out and synthesize the vast quantity of research done on slavery in the past few decades. This perceived need for synthesis shapes the volume in two ways: in the choice of subjects to be covered and in the way the material is presented. Overall, the editors have done a fine job of selecting topics that mirror the main currents of recent scholarly inquiry. Just as the richest and most interesting scholarship has focused on topics such as abolition, the economics of slavery, and slave culture, resistance, family, and demography, so too do these topics receive the lion's share of coverage in this volume; by contrast, political aspects of slavery receive considerably less attention (for example, 1860 presidential candidates John Bell and John C. Breckinridge receive no special mention).

The attention accorded black beliefs and behavior is especially noteworthy, and stands out as one of the volume's strengths. Not only are there 30 or so essays that address some aspect of slave culture, but another 30 sketch out the lives of individual Afro-Americans; 4 more describe and critique black autobiographies and interviews as historical sources. This celebration of black resilience, resistance, and creative activity is both justified and important; it reflects the ongoing interests of scholars and laypeople alike in what slaves did and said and rectifies many decades of neglect by the historical establishment.

Yet such coverage need not come—as it does in this volume—at the expense of our knowledge of individual slaveowners and the sources they generated. Aside from essays on planter-politicians like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, no slaveholders, such as the infamous whip-master, Bennet Barrow, or the agricultural reformer, Edmund Ruffin, receive attention simply as slaveholding planters. Similarly, there is no discussion or evaluation of plantation records, which, for all their weaknesses, remain a bread-and-butter source for our understanding of slavery. This imbalance, which is not pervasive throughout the volume, nonetheless parallels the unfortunate conceptual tendency of some scholars to examine slave culture in relative isolation from the web of master-slave relations within which it evolved and flourished.

Indeed, given the volume's broad and rich coverage of slave culture, it is simply inexcusable that no African ethnic group is singled out for special appraisal. By lumping together all Africans and their heritages within the blunt categories of "The African Background" and "Africanisms" (pp. 10–30), this volume short-changes its celebration of black culture and reproduces the racist assumption that Africans are an undifferentiated mass. This faux pas is all the more galling in that 17 different Euro-American ethno-religious groups receive separate essays describing their impact on slave life and slavery itself.

Aside from essays on slave breeding, the economics of slavery, comparative slavery, and the long-term evolution of slave scholarship, all of which are couched in historiographic terms, the topics in this volume are addressed in a descriptive, non-historiographic manner, with each author presenting an accurate and widely-agreed
upon synthesis or summary of the current research on a particular topic. This style of presentation works well for many subjects that have not received extensive scholarly attention or debate. Indeed, the dictionary performs a valuable service in simply introducing and describing lesser-known subjects, such as the life of William Still, a former slave and key participant in the underground railroad in southeastern Pennsylvania or the Christiana (Pa.) Riot, which was "the major episode of armed fugitive slave resistance to the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850" (p. 103).

In general, however, the voice of authoritativeness and consensus that shadows the descriptive, synthetic mode of explanation is jarring, if not problematic, when applied to a field where intellectual bloodletting has been the norm for the past 20 years. The unnerving sense of scholarly consensus that pervades this volume is heightened by the editors' decision to insist on a uniform writing style: the volume—when consumed whole—reads like it was written by a single individual. While the resulting air of definitiveness satisfies the claims of a dictionary, it is less clear whether it conveys the spirit and substance of what and how historians have debated. And where consensus has been reached, it is no less important to show the contentious process by which it was achieved. In short, this volume, despite its usefulness, offers a curious coda to recent slave historiography: it reflects the issues that have been debated, but drains the debate of its remarkable vitality and sense of contemporary urgency.

Finally, this volume is not as "user-friendly" as it might have been. Although the editors provide a uniform tone, the entries for the Southern states might have been made more consistent and comparable. The essays on slavery in Mississippi and Alabama, for example, include useful tables which summarize the evolution of the slave population (the number of slaves and their share of the total population), but the essays for states such as South and North Carolina do not.

These criticism aside, this volume will stand as an informative introduction to American slavery. The many fine essays will aid teachers in lecture preparation, while students and general readers will find useful summaries of the current scholarship on numerous aspects of Southern slavery.

John Campbell, University of Arizona


On the second page of the introduction S.J. Kleinberg asks a big question: how did "industrialization and urbanization change . . . family life and gender roles?" (p. xviii). Some three hundred pages later she summarizes her answers. Industrialization, and the other social changes which accompanied it, altered the daily lives of everyone, but working people suffered far more of the negative consequences than the middle class, and women experienced those changes differently from men. "A number of indicators of the quality and quantity of urban life . . . demonstrate these widening gaps between
the working and middle classes and between women and men.” (p. 303) In between, her well-conceived and well-crafted demonstration of these conclusions provides not only one of the most successful scholarly accounts of how industrialization shaped the daily lives of working people, but also one of the most thoughtful attempts to integrate class and gender analysis.

After initial chapters on the local economy, demography and mobility, and the city’s neighborhoods, the rest of the book is organized around the stages of the human life cycle: childhood, entrance into the labor force and the role of children’s and women’s work in the family economy, marriage and family life, old age and death. At each stage of life, she argues, the great class divide was fundamental. While the middle class had the resources, the leisure, and the space to escape much of the grit of the mills, to live in reasonable comfort, and to plan for the well-being of the next generation, the shadow of the mills, as the title suggests, loomed physically and emotionally over every stage of the lives of Pittsburgh’s working people. Mill schedules dictated daily family schedules; the physical setting shaped family life; the uncertainties of accident and unemployment created a backdrop of fear and uncertainty; and the limited financial resources industrial labor could provide established fundamental constraints on what was possible. Class, to Kleinberg is crucial to understanding industrialization and the changing character of urban life. Her conception of class is implicitly Marxist, but she does not emphasize theoretical issues or delve into the various controversies in class theory. Her approach to class is steadfastly empirical.

Yet class, to Kleinberg, is only the beginning of the story. Within the limits imposed by class realities, working-class families could and did make important choices: whether and when to send their children to work, whether to take in boarders, whether women should work outside the home. How working-class families answered such questions and how their answers affected each individual varied from household to household. Three factors, Kleinberg suggests, explain much of the variation among Pittsburgh’s working-class families and between Pittsburgh and other American cities: the character of the local economy, the cultural traditions of working people, and their attitudes about gender roles. Thus, Kleinberg argues, that the dominance of heavy industry in the Pittsburgh economy explains why fewer of Pittsburgh’s working-class women worked for wages than in many other cities. Both industrial and white collar employment opportunities for women were more limited than in most other big cities. Cultural traditions, as well as economic necessities, explain some of the differences between households, such as ethnic variations in the proportion of school age children who entered the labor force. And gender ideology was as crucial as practical concerns in the decisions families made about what was proper for boys and girls or men and women.

The author is well versed in the scholarly literature on American social history and makes frequent comparisons between her findings and those of historians studying other industrial cities. In many respects she has gone well beyond much of the literature she uses for comparison. While social historians have looked at most of the questions
Kleinberg examines in this volume, they have tended to do so piecemeal. Few scholars have attempted what Kleinberg has largely accomplished here—that is to tie together in one case study an analysis of class structure, gender roles, life course, family structure and the relationships between them.

There are some costs to this approach. For example, as is often the case in social history, she has relatively little to say about politics or ideology. A brief concluding chapter on the evolution of public welfare and private philanthropy doesn’t really succeed in connecting her families to the public sphere. Religion, ethnic traditions, the labor movement all receive only occasional attention as they relate to other topics under discussion. The book is not a comprehensive study of the community or even of working-class life.

But Kleinberg succeeds admirably at what she set out to do: to look at the varieties of working-class family life in one of the nation’s most important industrial cities and to combine gender and class analysis. Her book should be widely read both by historians of this region and by a broad audience of American social historians.

Richard Oestreicher, University of Pittsburgh


It took seventy years, from its origin in 1887 to its postwar peak in 1957, for the Sparrows Point, Maryland plant of the Bethlehem Steel Company to become the most productive steel mill in the world. Twenty-five years later, in 1982, it was operating at less than half of its 1957 output, its labor force cut by almost two-thirds. As the subtitle of Mark Reutter’s book indicates, Sprawos Point chronicles this century-long process.

Reutter details the development of “the works,” initially a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Steel Company and located at the head of the Chesapeake Bay to take advantage of water access to Cuban ore fields; the rise of the company town, which, according to the terms of a gentlemen’s agreement with the state of Maryland, was solely governed by the Company; and Pennsylvania Steel’s purchase in 1916 by Bethlehem Steel and the orgy of war profiteering that followed. After World War I, the company continued to prosper, absorbing both Lackawanna Steel near Buffalo, New York and Midvale Steel & Ordinance in Pennsylvania, before being thwarted by the courts in its efforts to take over yet another company, Youngstown Sheet and Tube in Ohio. Militantly antiunion, Sparrows Point nonetheless succumbed to the CIO in 1941, as New Deal labor reforms forced changes in the company’s callous treatment of its workers. World War II and the consumer frenzy in the years after marked the company’s high point; by the 1960s, new materials and technologies were challenging Sparrows Point’s hegemony. According to Reutter, the company’s decline was rooted in a particularly ingrown, smug corporate culture that remained complacent in the face of these challenges and resisted new ways of conducting business.
Integrated into the narrative are a number of engaging individual portraits: Charles Parrish, who with the legal assistance of the United Steelworkers of America became the first black millwright at the Point; Elizabeth Alexander, "the Green Hornet," who ruled "her girls" in the tin inspection department with an iron hand, requiring them to wear uniforms and also protecting them—and herself—from the bullying of male coworkers and bosses; Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, who, after steelmen refused to be in the same room with AFL president William Green to sign a statement agreeing to the industry's NRA code, commented: "I felt as though I had entertained 11-year-old boys at their first party rather than men to whom the most important industry in the U.S. had been committed" (p. 237). Towering over them all was the extravagant, charismatic Charles Schwab, president and then chairman of the board of Bethlehem Steel and architect of its growth, who once paid Enrico Caruso the equivalent of a half-a-dozen years' wages for one of Bethlehem's employees to entertain guests at his Manhattan residence.

A professional journalist, Reutter has ably mined the historical record and produced a careful and exceptionally well-written case study of the paradigmatic American industry. His account cuts across historiographic specialties, skillfully joining business, labor, technological, and political history. It is particularly rich in telling the story of Sparrows Point's rise through the 1950s; its decline, however, is treated in a brief Epilogue, and the reader interested in a more thorough discussion of the recent plight of the U.S. steel industry might find John P. Hoerr's And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry (1988) or Paul A. Tiffany's The Decline of American Steel: How Management, Labor, and Government Went Wrong (1988) more useful.

Sparrows Point nonetheless makes an important contribution to the history of the steel industry. It is also an important work of local history. For a major urban center, Baltimore remains surprisingly unexamined, and Reutter's study of what was once the area's dominant industry is a welcome addition. In some ways an intensely local study, thick with particular references and details, Sparrows Point also reminds us that studies organized around essentially arbitrary geographical or jurisdictional boundaries are part of a much larger story. Reutter demonstrates that the history of Sparrows Point is linked, not only to the Bethlehem Steel Company in Pennsylvania, but to national and international affairs—the varying political climate of the nation, wars, and the exploitation of third world resources, for example.

My enthusiasm for the book is tempered by two criticisms, one rather technical, the other more substantial. Though Reutter documents his research well in hundreds of footnotes, the publishers apparently decided against a supplementary bibliography. Because citations after the initial reference are given in abbreviated form, the reader must frequently scan dozens of previous notes to find the full citation of a specific source—a minor point, but an annoyance to those wanting to follow some of Reutter's leads.

There is also an underlying conceptual difficulty with the book. Reutter first became interested in Sparrows Point while working as a reporter for the Baltimore Sun. He investigated a series of thirteen fatal accidents at the mill, apparently the result of the

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hard pressed company's failure to repair faulty equipment. His articles on dangerous working conditions at the plant led the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue, for the first time, massive penalties against Bethlehem for flagrant safety violations. A quality of reportorial muckraking remains in *Sparrows Point*. Not that there isn't plenty of muck to rake. And much of contemporary labor history is similarly partisan in its criticism of industrial practices and its sympathy for worker exploitation. But Reutter doesn't place his account within a more explicit analysis of class relations in American society. Thus the sympathetic reader is left outraged but without a framework for understanding what occurred at Sparrows Point as part of a larger historical pattern. This criticism is not intended to diminish Reutter's considerable achievement, but rather to suggest its limits.

Linda Shopes, *University of Maryland-Baltimore County*