

Book Reviews

By Craig W. Horle, Jeffrey L. Scheib, Joseph S. Foster, David Haugaard, Carolyn M. Peters, and Laurie M. Wolfe. *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania: A Biographical Dictionary*. Volume II: 1710-1756.

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. Pp. xx, 1210. \$185.00 cloth.)

This is the second volume in a projected three-volume biographical dictionary of Pennsylvania legislators. It covers the years 1710 through 1756, a period of transformation in the province, characterized by population growth and territorial expansion. The primary theme that dominated these years was the often contentious relationship between the General Assembly and the proprietary governors, especially over the issues of paper money, provincial defense, and proprietary rights. Almost half of the laws enacted related to the "political administration and government of Pennsylvania because the growth of the province had necessitated increasingly complex governmental and judicial structures" (p. 19). At the beginning of the period, Quakers dominated the unicameral legislature; however, their influence had decreased by 1756 due to the resignation of ten Quaker legislators over the issue of provincial military defense.

Craig W. Horle (chief editor and director of the biographical dictionary project) and his colleagues have written a comprehensive history of the Assembly and the lives of its members. The volume opens with two sections that provide a context for the subsequent biographical entries. "Lawmaking in Pennsylvania, 1710-1756: Themes and Issues," consists of detailed essays which examine topics such as assembly rules and procedures, committees, and legislation; election procedures and electoral politics; the affirmation controversy between Quakers and Anglicans; Pennsylvania's economy and the growth of the province; conflict and compromise between the Assembly and the proprietary governors; and Quaker pacifism, defense, and the Assembly. "Legislators of Pennsylvania, 1710-1756," includes sessions lists containing information about members and Assembly officers, committee members, and dates. This section also includes a useful collective biography of the legislators which analyzes legislative experience, age at first election, religious affiliations, patterns of office-holding, occupations, geographical origins, family members in the Assembly, percentage of slaveholders, and Assemblymen who borrowed from the General Loan Office.

The bulk of the volume consists of 224 biographical essays of the legislators. Each entry begins with a summary which includes birth and death dates, geographical origin, dates served in the Assembly and county represented, other political offices held, and genealogical information. The detailed narrative essay focuses on the legislator's political and social roles, occupation, financial

status, religious affiliation, and special interests. Each entry concludes with notes on sources which document the diverse range of mainly primary (and some secondary) sources consulted. The authors are to be commended for their thorough research in utilizing original sources which are widely dispersed in various repositories.

The appendices include a glossary, Pennsylvania chronology of the period, religious affiliation and township residences of elected legislators, laws enacted, and number of petitions presented to the Assembly. The volume contains indexes for subjects, and personal and place names.

This biographical dictionary contributes significantly to understanding the legislature and the men who shaped Pennsylvania politics from 1710 until 1756. It is a valuable reference book that should be purchased by university libraries, historical societies, and state and county archives, as well as serious researchers interested in colonial legislative history.

Lynn Ann Catanese, *Hagley Museum and Library*

By Douglas Anderson, *The Radical Enlightenments of Benjamin Franklin*. (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1997. Pp. 261.)

In *The Radical Enlightenment of Benjamin Franklin* Douglas Anderson examines the writings of the young Franklin in the period from the Silence Dogood letters of 1722 to the *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* almost thirty years later. He takes a fresh look at works he feels have been ignored by literary historians largely because Franklin himself played them down in his *Autobiography*. Far too often, laments the author, historians have used the *Autobiography* as almost the only "filter through which much of Franklin's earlier work is to be seen and sifted." They have therefore passed over lightly the very items which were most important to the development of Franklin's rhetoric and philosophy.

Anderson locates Franklin's greatest inspiration in the writings of contemporary English authors, particularly those to whom he was introduced on his first visit to England, 1724-1726, and those whose works he imported for sale when he settled in Philadelphia. (Anderson emphasizes, however, that although Franklin imported a great variety of books from England he preferred to focus his own reading on relatively few books, like Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, Mandeville's *Fables of the Bees*, and volumes of Addison's *Spectator*, which he went over with great care.) Pennsylvania readers will welcome the Appendix which contains two lists of books sold by Franklin and two other lists of those volumes which belonged to the Library Company of Philadelphia in the 1740s and 1750s.

Anderson sees a shift in Franklin's primary interests from religion to science and economics, and finally to politics. Six chapters form the core of the book.

The first two show Franklin's theology of works reflected especially in his "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion." Chapter III focuses on *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Chapter IV looks at some of Franklin's scientific interests, revealed in the *Experiments and Observations on Electricity*. The last two chapters examine the political thinking behind the "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind." Each chapter analyzes Franklin as a writer transmitting English ideas to the colonies and revealing, sometimes expanding, the complexity of those ideas in the process. Franklin was thus a mediator in the North Atlantic world of letters. It is beyond the scope of the book but the reader is drawn to ask whether Franklin's Philadelphia readers were finding their English thought filtered in the same way as Swift's readers in Dublin, or Hume's in Edinburgh.

My wish list for the book? I wish first for a better index: I found largely a "name" index, lacking many of the "subject" categories I wanted to see. I wish, second, that the style of the book was a little more welcoming to the general reader, who may find some of the arguments loose and some of the conclusions unclear. It would be a pity to lose readers who would otherwise find the questions raised by the book, and of course the subject itself, eternally fascinating.

Alison Olson, *University of Maryland*

By James Kirby Martin. *Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered*.

(New York: New York University Press, 1997. Pp. 540. \$34.95 cloth.)

What are historians to make of Benedict Arnold? He has been presented to generations of Americans as the personification of evil, a shadowy villain whose mercenary tendencies eventually got the best of him. But Arnold was also a dynamic leader who ably directed American forces in the Champlain corridor, at Quebec, and in the great victory at Saratoga. One of the most dedicated and capable of Washington's commanders, in the end he proved a traitor. How are we to understand the fall of such a man?

James Kirby Martin's new biography, *Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero*, comes closer to solving the riddle of Arnold than any previous study. Unlike Arnold's earlier biographers, beginning with Jared Sparks and including George Canning Hill, Malcolm Decker, and James Thomas Flexner, Martin's new study attempts to strip away the layers of ingrained mythology to understand Arnold's character, motivation, and contributions to the cause of liberty, without viewing him retrospectively through the prism of his treason. Martin's focus on Arnold as a virtuous soldier who struggled to preserve the glorious cause during the early years of the War for Independence offers a valuable corrective to the age-old image of Arnold as a one-dimensional miscreant.

What emerges from Martin's study is a portrait of a proud and mercurial man, haunted by the resentment of his mother's vengeful Calvinist God whose capricious will made the mature Arnold resistant to all forms of despotic power. That resentment helped fuel his revolutionary ardor, and combined with an intense ambition and a propensity to develop plans which no one knew better than himself how to execute. Proclaimed America's Hannibal for his epic march across the Maine wilderness against great adversity, Arnold exhibited the essence of republicanism and gave concrete meaning to its ideals. But in the end he succumbed to his own petulance and mounting bitterness at Congressional leadership. There is for Martin something almost Shakespearean about Arnold: the very qualities that distinguished him as a soldier rendered him tragically ineffective in dealing with everyday human affairs.

Martin reveals how the Continental Congress's failure to address the psychological needs of its officer corps created deep distrust between civil and military authorities. After Arnold's significant contributions at Ticonderoga, at Quebec, and in the defense of Lake Champlain, Congress passed over Arnold and named five new major generals in 1777, all of whom were junior to the American Hannibal and had done far less to advance the American cause. His protests ignored, even after he again proved himself at Saratoga, Arnold grew increasingly bitter.

A disenchanted and sullen Arnold attempted to take his case directly to Congress, entering Philadelphia as the new American military commander shortly after Sir Henry Clinton had removed British troops from the city. Initially Philadelphia welcomed him as a hero; but, as profits from goods under his control steadily flowed into Arnold's purse, and as his friendships with Tories and moderates like the wealthy local merchant Edward Shippen grew, the town's favorable opinion of Arnold slowly came to match Congress's negative assessment. Arnold ignored public opinion and continued to live extravagantly, in the process winning the hand of Shippen's daughter Margaret. Finally reprimanded by Congress for his abuses of power, he felt the cause no longer worth serving and severed his ties to it in early 1780. Ironically, Arnold had always feared that his greatest contributions would go unappreciated. His apostasy made that fear a reality.

Placing Arnold firmly in the context of the Revolutionary generation, bypassing myths and legends that have influenced previous historical treatments, Martin's *Benedict Arnold* is well researched, carefully documented, and eminently readable. Specialists will not be surprised at the extent provincial politics played in Arnold's perfidy, or that he defined the public good in terms of his own private concerns as his frustration with Congress grew, but the work is an important contribution to literature on the Revolutionary era because of its fresh insights and its balanced judgments. Readers will complete this biography knowing the complex man better than before, even though they

may be disappointed that the study stops short of Arnold's last years in England. No understanding of the American Revolution is possible without an appreciation of the strains administration and command placed upon citizens called to military leadership in the 1770s. One can only hope that Martin's fine biography will encourage other historians to look more closely at the dynamics of Revolutionary leadership.

Dennis M. Shannon, *Auburn University Montgomery*

By Jenny Graham. *Revolutionary in Exile: The Emigration of Joseph Priestley to America, 1794-1804*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 85, Part 2, 1995.

(Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, Pp. xii, 213, illus.)

The American political climate at the end of the eighteenth century is of vital interest to historians interested in the shaping of American political life. The primary sources available concerning the genesis of political factions and parties in the young Republic indicate that America was deeply influenced by European political theorists, particularly the writers of the Enlightenment.

One can well imagine the tremendous importance to a country in the process of forming its embryonic public arena of an event such as the French Revolution, which had by 1794 experimented with so many shades of political participation and governmental regulation. Such a dramatic fulfillment (indeed, an excess) of the most revolutionary canons of Enlightenment thought played a key role in the debates over the limits of American republicanism. Jenny Graham's *Revolutionary in Exile: The Emigration of Joseph Priestley to America, 1794-1804* is a densely-documented account of English *philosophe* Joseph Priestley's years as an exile in America, following his outspoken support for the radical phase of the French Revolution.

The republicanism of the French Revolution was considered excessive and even dangerous by most of his English contemporaries, but Priestley refused to condemn the revolutionary experiment. As a result, the eminent thinker found himself unwelcome in Great Britain. Thus, Priestley found shelter, and indeed, considerable celebrity (or, if one prefers, notoriety) for a time in America. It is Priestley's American experience that forms the basis for Graham's study.

Priestley carried on a voluminous correspondence while he tarried in America, and Graham relies heavily on the letters to document his stay in the former colonies. The portrait of Priestley's influence on American political development that emerges in Graham's effort does an admirable job of connecting the Englishman's outspoken support for the radicalization of the French revolution after Louis XVI's execution in January 1793 to the shaping of democracy in the former British colonies. In 1794, when Priestley came to

America, the French Revolution was in its most radical phase, severely trying the devotion of those who held that popular sovereignty would result in enlightened, democratic government. Priestley, like many other Enlightenment writers, held an unwavering belief in the idea of social progress, and steadfastly held to the conviction that the horrors of the radicalization of the revolution in France would ultimately give way before the altar of an enlightened state where reason prevailed.

As a true believer in republican government, Priestley found himself in the awkward position of being an apologist for the bloody excesses of the institutionalized Terror of the Committee of Public Safety. His exile from England coincided with his continued support for the French experiment in radical democracy across the Channel, and led him to the shores of America, where he was received with vociferous, if not universal, enthusiasm. Priestley claimed that he remained apolitical during his years in America, but Graham's evidence suggests that Priestley's claim that he did not involve himself in American politics was somewhat disingenuous, given the strong public expressions of approval by Thomas Jefferson (p. 2) Although Priestley wrote that it was only news from Europe that interested him (p. 79), it is Graham's contention that Priestley played an important, if largely symbolic role in the republican electoral victory of 1800. (p. 167) Certainly, the presence of arguably the most famous living *philosophe* bolstered the Jeffersonians' enlightenment spirits.

Graham carefully mined the extensive correspondence of Priestley for a wealth of detail and an impressive re-creation of the American sojourn of the radical political philosopher, scientist, and preacher. Graham prefers to allow Priestley's American experience to be told almost entirely through his letters, a style that lets the reader acquire a sensitivity for the nuances of Priestley's thought, but that can be rather distracting due to the sometimes strained transitions. This is no mere pastiche of quotations, however, Graham's style enables the author to avoid the stale, pedantic plodding that sometimes characterizes works based so heavily on primary sources. Still, one wishes occasionally that the author spent more time on analysis and less on the cumbersome task of micro-documentation.

Graham's work is at its best when the author recounts Priestley's activities from 1797-1800, from the time of his break with the Federalists through the election of Thomas Jefferson to the presidency. Somewhat less fascinating is the drier recounting of Priestley's time in Northumberland, Pennsylvania. All in all, however, *Revolutionary in Exile: The Emigration of Joseph Priestley to America, 1794-1804* is a worthwhile study which succeeds by shedding more light on the intellectual cross-fertilization between the European Enlightenment and the formation of America's core political philosophy. In Graham's work, Priestley is a living, present symbol of continental, enlightened political theory;

as such, he served as a visible monument to his American counterparts of the promise of enlightened political discourse.

Michael D. Slaven, *California University of Pennsylvania*

By Debra Adleman. *Waiting for the Lord: Nineteenth Century Black Communities in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania.*

(Camden, Maine: Picture Press, 1997. Pp. 151, \$19.95.)

Susquehanna County, located just below the New York State line in northeastern Pennsylvania, is a sparsely populated wooded county. Lumbering has been one of its major industries since the Revolutionary War. One of its earliest settlers was a Philadelphia doctor, Dr. Robert Rose. Rose had almost 100,000 acres of land, making him the wealthiest Susquehanna County landowner in his day. In Silver Lake Township, Rose built a magnificent mansion, for his Quaker friends he founded settlements at Friendsville and Quaker Lake. We learn from Emily C. Blackman's 1873 *History of Susquehanna County* that "the English had come and gone, when in 1836 Rose undertook "an experiment . . . to form a colony of *colored* farmers, but it failed." (p. 457)

Blackman never elaborates what happened to this "colony of colored farmers," but Debra Adleman in her fascinating book, *Waiting for the Lord: Nineteenth Century Black Communities in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, offers some insight. Adleman tells us that the black farming settlement survived for about two years and that it failed largely because Dr. Rose and the African Americans disagreed about how it should be run. Recent fugitive slaves, the blacks were jubilant when Dr. Rose offered "'free' land and equipment in exchange for labor and 'shares.' " (p. 18) Although Dr. Rose, a Quaker, was "liberal" enough to offer help to blacks, his manner of help was paternalistic. "There were," Adleman contends, "too many parallels between living on Dr. Rose's land and their lives in slavery." In a letter written March 28, 1838, Dr. Rose complained that "the cleaning of land, cutting of firewood and making of rails on this farm, which were offered to the coloured people, and which they would not do, are now all done by white people." Although Adleman cites several letters from Dr. Rose offering his view of the controversy, she only offers one letter from a black man, Henry Johnson who complains that Dr. Rose and associates failed to pay him for his labor. This example from *Waiting for the Lord* illustrates its great merit: "an attempt to recover a part of the past, add back into this county's history a part that has rarely been included, for whatever reason."

This book is a welcome addition to the growing literature of Pennsylvania historiography on African American communities outside Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. During the 1990s we have seen a number of these studies published including Richard E. Harris' *Politics and Prejudice: A History of Chester*

(PA) *Negroes* (1991), Emerson I. Moss' *African Americans in the Wyoming Valley 1778-1990* (1992), James T. Williams' *Northern Fried Chicken: A Historical Adventure into the Black Community of Scranton, Pa.* (1993), Alice Roston Carter's *Can I Get A Witness? Growing Up in the Black Middle Class in Erie, Pennsylvania* (1991), and Sarah S. Thompson's *Journey from Jerusalem: An Illustrated Introduction to Erie's African American History 1795-1995* (1996). Adleman's work is important in that it spotlights not only a rural area of Pennsylvania but a smaller and lesser-known cluster of historical black communities.

Waiting for the Lord is presented in a roughly chronological fashion, covering the historical source material, the early years or antebellum years, abolitionism and the Underground Railroad, the Civil War, and black churches. There is also an appendix of transcription of the black population enumerated in the federal censuses from 1820 to 1900 and a name index. The book is illustrated with interesting photographs of African Americans.

The author's reliance upon genealogy is paradoxically both a strength and weakness of the book. Adleman says that "the first step in re-constructing the black communities in Susquehanna County was to identify who the members were and where and when they lived." (p. 1) She rightfully observed that federal census data must be used warily, yet much of the book never goes beyond this "first step." For example, in the chapter on congregations when the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) is discussed, the author fails to seize the opportunity to compare the experience of the AME in Susquehanna County with that, for example, of Philadelphia as expounded by Robert Gregg and others. One wishes for more analysis and generalizations to put the black Susquehanna County experience into context within Pennsylvania history.

Perhaps the best assessment of Adleman's book is given by herself in the preface when she states that this work "is a beginning. It may answer some people's questions . . . but hopefully it will raise more questions that others will pursue." (p. v). Absolutely. Readers will want to know more about Dr. Rose's experiment and why blacks were unhappy there and what happened to those settlers when they moved off of Dr. Rose's property. In answering these questions, one hopes that more light is shed upon not only Susquehanna County's history but Pennsylvania's as well.

Eric Ledell Smith, *Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission*

Beverly Wilson Palmer, editor and Holly Beyers Ochoa, associate editor. *The Selected Papers of Thaddeus Stevens*, Volume 1: January 1814-March 1865.

(Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997. Pp. xxxii, 549. \$52.25.)

During a debate in the House of Representatives over the use of African-American soldiers in the Union army, Thaddeus Stevens said, "Yes, sir, I believe there is a God, an avenging God, who is now punishing the sins of this nation for the wicked wrongs which for centuries we have inflicted on a blameless race, and which many of you wish to make perpetual." (501) These lines, repeated over and over by the congressman from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, summed up his lifelong commitment to racial equality in the United States. This dedication to racial justice permeates his speeches and correspondence, making Stevens one of the most controversial politicians in Pennsylvania long before the Civil War.

The first volume of *The Selected Papers of Thaddeus Stevens* covers the years from 1814 when Stevens was 23 years old and a recent graduate of Dartmouth College, until March 2, 1865, when he was the head of the House Ways and Means Committee and as a consequence one of the most powerful voices during the great conflict. For Stevens the rise to this level of influence did not come easily. Never the usual electoral politician, he stood for most of his career on the fringes of power, using his great oratorical and legal talents to scrutinize those who held office. Although he served in the Pennsylvania legislature regularly in the 1830s and 1840s and in Congress beginning in the late 1840s, he was almost never a member of one of the two major political parties of the era. For over thirty years from the time of his first appearance in politics in Gettysburg in the late 1820s, Stevens was the conscience of Pennsylvania engaging in a series of moral crusades beginning with antimasonry and school reform and culminating with demands for abolition.

During the war, Stevens was one of the chief advocates of immediate emancipation and the use of African-American troops in the war, often ranting against the leadership of his party including President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of State William Seward. He was one of the harshest critics of the Confederacy, opposing any compromise and demanding that the South be treated as conquered territory when the war ended. Stevens' effort in pursuing the Confederacy is evident in both his speeches and private letters.

Because Stevens burned most of his own correspondence, *The Selected Papers* relies upon his published speeches rather than intimate personal correspondence. It also is meant to supplement the microfilm edition of the *Stevens' Papers* published by Scholarly Resources. Despite the paucity of personal papers, there are occasional glimpses of Thaddeus Stevens the man in his letters to friends and colleagues.

Beverly Palmer has done a careful, scholarly job in editing this volume. Each section has a narrative introduction to the most important events in Stevens' life. The documents are annotated, identifying the individuals and events mentioned. These are useful tools for both the scholar and for students and the general reading public, but these references could have gained value if they had been more complete as they often lack important data about the persons mentioned. The lack of personal letters makes reading Stevens less interesting than papers of the other great leaders of the Civil War era. But Professor Palmer could have included some of his legal correspondence and some more of his letters at the expense of reproducing complete congressional speeches, many of which are redundant. But on the whole this is an important project, particularly since there are so few nineteenth-century Pennsylvania political leaders for whom we have had a similar project.

Herbert Ershkowitz, *Temple University*

By Carmen DiCiccio. *Coal and Coke in Pennsylvania.*

(Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1996. Pp. 1-223. \$16.95 paper.)

A recent addition to the growing list of works describing Pennsylvania's industrial history is Carmen DiCiccio's *Coal and Coke in Pennsylvania*. The title is a bit misleading; the book primarily describes the state's bituminous coal industry, with only scant attention to the Commonwealth's eastern anthracite fields. Even so, DiCiccio's chronicle of bituminous coal is exhaustive and, while telling us little that is new, tells us nearly all we need to know about the subject.

DiCiccio's study is well organized into four chronological eras. He begins in the first decades of the eighteenth century and concludes with the end of World War II. In his initial section, the author traces the industry from its emergence in the Age of Wood in the period before the Civil War. He discusses the geological and chemical compositions of coal, the location of the fields in Pennsylvania (including anthracite), and particularly the large bituminous fields in Western Pennsylvania. He describes early mining technology, early markets and transportation systems, and the relationship of coal and coke to the developing iron industry.

DiCiccio then discusses the iron industry, the new nationwide transportation systems, and how they affected the rapid expansion of bituminous coal and coke from about 1840 to 1880. In these years, transportation innovations in Pennsylvania and elsewhere increased significantly the commercial markets of bituminous coal, expanding the industry's production output and its workforce. River traffic, a canal system, and then the railroad boom of both pre- and post-Civil War years made bituminous

coal one of the nation's premier industries. By the 1880s, the state was producing over 80% of the nation's coke, with the Connellsville district in southwestern Pennsylvania alone accounting for over two-thirds of the country's coke. DiCiccio does not avoid the difficult, explaining the technology of coke as well as coal production.

The third section—the real heart of the book, and almost half its length—describes the so-called “Golden Age of King Coal, Queen Coke, and Princess Steel,” from about 1880 to 1920. Here DiCiccio broadens his heretofore primarily technical and economic study to include a discussion of the lives of coal and coke workers. As United States industry and trade expanded both nationwide and overseas, the demand for coal burgeoned, and coal properties submerged and emerged throughout Western Pennsylvania. The need for labor grew, and by 1920 Pennsylvania's bituminous coal industry employed almost 200,000 miners. In perhaps the most interesting part of his efforts, DiCiccio describes their lot and draws an ethnic profile of the “new American” immigrant coal miner and his (and her) life in the company-owned coal towns, or “patches” as they have so often been called. From a variety of printed and oral sources, DiCiccio details how the miners and their families survived the harsh (and sometimes dreadful) years in the coal villages under the dominance of such prominent patch features as the local company store and the peripatetic coal and iron police.

The miners and their families survived only to see the industry itself decline in the 1920s. In DiCiccio's fourth and final section, he describes how the overexpansion of coal, the competition from alternate energy sources, and the resultant decline in the demand for coal produced “. . . a mighty sick industry . . .” (p. 150) in the generally prosperous twenties. Ironically, the Great Depression of the thirties actually revived coal somewhat. Beneficial federal regulation, New Deal support, and the resurgence of the United Mine Workers of America brought a measure of stability during the years before World War II. The war itself, of course, increased the demand for coal, and those miners who did not go to war enjoyed productive years. However, the postwar years witnessed the decline of coal in a new world economic order. The use of mechanical loaders and the “continuous miner” machine reduced the miners' numbers to only a fraction of what they had been in what the old timers call the “olden days.”

In describing coal and coke in Pennsylvania, Carmen DiCiccio gives us a bit of geology, technology, geography, demography, and the political and social history of an industry and a people crucial to any understanding of the American experience. He provides extensive notes at the end of each chapter. Taken together they comprise a rather comprehensive bibliography sufficient to sustain any further study of the industry. Those who would undertake it owe a debt to the author for his exhaustive survey of coal and coke in Pennsylvania.

Thomas H. Coode, *Volunteer State Community College*

Clarence Hooker, *Life in the Shadows of the Crystal Palace, 1910-1927. Ford Workers in the Model T Era.*

(Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997. Pp. 210. \$42.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.)

For as long as this reviewer can remember, Henry Ford has been seen as an industrial genius who gained a competitive advantage in the burgeoning auto industry on the eve of World War I by standardizing his product, putting chassis together on an assembly line, being the first auto maker to hire blacks, and being the first to pay his workers \$5.00 per day. In brief, he was both an innovator in manufacturing and an innovator in welfare capitalism. It is also commonly understood that later in his life many of his ideas were far less heroic and useful.

Henry Ford and his company have not lacked chroniclers, Ford himself did some writing and Allan Nevins made a major contribution in the 1950s. Beyond Nevins, James Flink and John Rae have chimed in from the perspective of lovers of "automobility" while Olivier Zunz and Stephen Meyer have recently focused on workers.

Like Zunz, Clarence Hooker focuses on workers, but, in one plant (Highland Park/Crystal Palace), in one era (1910-1927), and producing one product (the Model T). He has amassed a sea of demographic data and essentially addresses two issues: (1) What impact did the Highland Park plant have on skilled artisans, and (2) Why did two major waves of black workers from the South end up living in undesirable social conditions? (The latter issue is obviously a foreshadowing of Detroit slums of the mid twentieth century.)

What happened to skilled artisans in the Highland Park "Crystal Palace" setting, is that they became managers, part of the twentieth century managerial revolution that Alfred D. Chandler has described. Actually, there were a wide variety of employee classifications in the plant—transcending the antiquated and simplistic "unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled" categories.

Harry Braverman's work on "deskilling" is applied to the Model T plant, and here it may be applicable. Braverman essentially contends that all of modern American industry was committed to a high degree of mechanization as a means of reducing workers to mindless robots. (The same concept makes little sense when applied to John K. Brown's recent work on Baldwin Locomotive or this reviewer's study of Phoenix Bridge.)

Hooker's efforts to explain the poor social conditions that black Model T workers had to endure focus on (1) a severe shortage of decent housing, (2) the fact that Ford did not hire enough women, (3) gyrations in employment at the Crystal Palace; and, of course, (4) the nefarious character of industrial capitalism. Indeed, even when Ford's efforts through its Sociological Department seemed to be beneficial, the author quickly dismisses the benefits

as merely designed to enhance productivity and ultimately profits. Thus, even when the Ford Motor Company appeared to be doing good, the company was really doing evil.

The ideological bent of the author is most evident in a conclusion with observations borrowed from Olivier Zunz (p. 142):

Ford was the only employer in the city who initiated a new policy in 1919 employing Blacks in all hourly wage classifications, and the only employer to develop openly a hiring network among Blacks in Detroit. But this new policy toward Blacks, spectacular as it might have appeared, had only a limited impact on the sociological composition of the Black community, since most of the other employers continued to employ Blacks in backbreaking jobs. . . .

Thus, Ford policy is an abomination because it failed to control the *extended* environment and failed to control the hiring policies of *other* employers.

In conclusion, Clarence Hooker is engaged in rewriting history. Marching in lock step with the current generation of labor historians, he is sure that there could not have been a good or admirable phase in the early history of the Ford Motor Company. Several illustrations, maps, and large type enhance the publication, and scholars should appreciate the massing of data.

Thomas R. Winpenny, *Elizabethtown College*