

Book Reviews

Joe William Trotter, Jr. and Eric Ledell Smith, eds., *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives*.

(University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press and The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1997. Pp. 519. \$16.95 paper.)

One of the most important areas of growth in African American history is regional studies. While there has been a substantial body of literature regarding African Americans in the major urban centers of America, fresh appraisals or outright new histories of black Americans in rural areas, states, or entire regions (such as the West in Quintard Taylor's recent work on African Americans in the West) are beginning to surface.

The book under review is a fine example of this growing body of literature. Edited capably by Joe William Trotter, Jr., Mellon Bank Professor of History at Carnegie Mellon University and Eric Ledell Smith, historian for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, this volume of historical essays covering the African-American experience in Pennsylvania should be the model for future collections of state studies of African Americans history. Divided into four sections, this volume uses as its organizing principle the shifting economy of the state and black Pennsylvanians' presence and role in its development. Hence, the seven essays in the section "The Industrial Era: Race, Class, and Ethnicity, 1870-1945" cover the period from Reconstruction to the end of World War II. At this time black Pennsylvanians migrated to the cities and began to work in the leading industries of the state.

All of the essays have much to offer future historians. I hope that this book and others like it will encourage comparative studies. We need to know how African American culture, for example, differs regionally. How has that culture pervaded American culture such that music, sports, comedy, and in later years motion pictures and television, have increasingly become Africanized, to use John Blassingame's memorable term? Trotter's and Smith's volume contains essays that suggest how mining work and life experiences of blacks in places such as nineteenth-century Harrisburg, early twentieth-century Steelton, or late twentieth-century Pittsburgh could be compared with cities such as Durham, North Carolina, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Seattle. Likewise they offer signals of the ways in which culture can be addressed, especially in the essays that look at the church's role in Pennsylvania's African American's efforts to combat racism.

To their credit, Trotter and Smith incorporate the roles that African American women have played in black Pennsylvanians' history. An entire volume could be given over to this area as recent work in African-American women's history has demonstrated. Trotter and Smith have presented us with

cogent essays that consider gender, and not just in a politically correct fashion. Family, gender, and community may well be the next areas of inquiry in black community studies in the next century.

In short, Joe Trotter and Eric Ledell Smith have given us a rich compilation that sets a standard for doing African-American state and regional history. It deserves consideration by every serious historian in the field.

Charles Pete Banner-Haley, *Colgate University*

By Chris Dixon. *Perfecting the Family: Antislavery Marriages in Nineteenth-Century America.*

(Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997. Pp. xiii, 322.)

In *Perfecting the Family*, Chris Dixon seeks to understand the connection between the reformist ideology of radical Garrisonian abolitionists and their domestic relations. He focuses on the marriages of eight antislavery couples: Quakers Lucretia and James Mott of Philadelphia, the most senior and perhaps most contented of the group; Henry and Elizabeth Cady Stanton of Seneca Falls, New York, respectively abolitionist and women's rights activists; Angelina Grimké and Theodore Weld, who withdrew from antislavery campaigning after they wed; L. Maria and David Child, who lived separately while Maria edited the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* in New York City; Stephen Foster and Abby Kelley, both avid supporters of women's rights and abolition; Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell; William Lloyd Garrison and his wife Helen, who was not active in Garrison's crusade; and the fiery orator Wendell Phillips and his wife Ann, who remained a stalwart abolitionist despite an incapacitating illness.

Dixon argues convincingly that antislavery ideology and the movement's demands resulted in marriages that both reflected nineteenth-century social mores and pushed the limits of those norms. A central abolitionist critique of antebellum slavery was its destruction of African-American families through slave sales and sexual abuse of women. Abolitionists upheld the sanctity of families yet often questioned patriarchal norms. Dixon suggests that all eight couples had loving, mutually respectful relationships. Only one wife—Helen Garrison—assumed an entirely domestic role. Though William L. Garrison believed women should participate fully in the fight against slavery, he was content to have “a home, a wife, and a beautiful retreat from a turbulent city” (p. 210). In each of the other abolitionist marriages discussed here, however, wives (and sometimes husbands) took roles outside what Dixon describes as the accepted norms of the antebellum United States. Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, L. Maria Child, Abby Kelley, and Lucy Stone all pursued public careers after marriage; Lucy Stone kept her family name. On the other hand, Wendell Phillips assumed a more domestic role because of Ann's invalidism.

Chris Dixon's study is well researched and employs the most recent literature on the antebellum antislavery movement, yet his conclusions are predictable to readers familiar with the Garrisonians. He chastises these white reformers for failing to accept African American leaders on an entirely equal basis—another example of their ambivalence toward American cultural norms—but does not himself expand the circle of significant abolitionists. While the reader appreciates Dixon's substantial documentation of these eight marriages, one wonders how they compare with non-Garrisonians: temperance advocates, more moderate abolitionists, and just ordinary folks. As Dixon and others suggest, separate spheres was much more an ideology than the way nineteenth-century Americans, including the middle class, actually organized their lives.

Jean R. Soderlund, *Lehigh University*

Donald Yacovone, ed. *A Voice of Thunder: The Civil War Letters of George E. Stephens*.

(Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997. Pp. xxi, 350.)

Students of the Civil War will treasure this book. Yacovone, associate editor of publications at the Massachusetts Historical Society, has rediscovered a set of wartime letters first printed in New York's *Weekly Anglo-African*, the foremost black newspaper of its time, that afford valuable insights into the experience of black soldiers, so-called "contraband" slaves, and the African-American press during the Civil War.

The author of the letters, George E. Stevens, was born in 1832 in Philadelphia into an upper-class family of free blacks. As a youth, Stevens evidently acquired a sound education, before unsuccessfully attempting to make his living as a cabinet maker. In 1857, he signed on to the U.S.S. *Walker*, a steamer attached to the Coastal Survey, and experienced his first direct contact with slavery when white officials in Charleston, South Carolina, imprisoned him during a port call, intending to sell him into servitude. Stevens won release through timely intervention by a friend of the *Walker's* captain, but, according to Yacovone, the incident left the young man "churning with hate." (p. 11) Stevens apparently needed little encouragement to sign on as a cook and servant with the Twentieth-sixth Pennsylvania Regiment at the outset of the Civil War and to muster into the famed Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment shortly after it formed in 1863.

Yacovone has included fifty-four letters that Stevens wrote from Philadelphia, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, and Florida between 1859 and 1864. Stevens witnessed the flight of slaves into Union lines, their pursuit by former masters, and their return to captivity—often with the complicity of Union soldiers, who, according to Stevens, at times used escapees for target

practice. Stevens went out of his way to dispel criticism with gripping accounts of black heroism on the battlefield, most notably at Battery Wagner, South Carolina (July 18, 1863), and at the ill-fated Battle of Olustee, Florida (February 20, 1864). One of the most moving parts in the book is Stevens' first-hand account of the protest that troops of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment waged against unequal pay, and of isolated mutinies before Congress equalized compensation for white and black soldiers in August 1864.

Yacovone has divided his book into two segments. The first lucidly recounts the story of Stevens' life, from birth through his postwar careers as a teacher in Virginia and craftsman in Brooklyn, where he died in 1888. In the second, Yacovone edits the letters in seven separate chapters. Annotation for this book is sparing, but the notes are researched with tenacity and explained with brevity. In addition, Yacovone has followed the praiseworthy practice of citing his evidence. The only controversial editorial decision of consequence in this book is Yacovone's policy of correcting misspellings and misprints without comment, thus depriving readers of potential insights into Stephens. The editor justifies this decision as an attempt "to avoid confusion and because the original manuscripts do not survive for verification." (p. xiii) This is a minor quibble, however. *A Voice of Thunder* is an important, compelling, and well-edited book that students of the Civil War will read for years to come.

Leigh Johnsen, *Claremont Graduate University*

By Mark David Hall. *The Political and Legal Philosophy of James Wilson, 1742-1798*.

(Columbia, Missouri and London, England: University of Missouri Press, 1997. Pp. 201. \$37.50 cloth.)

Could a Federalist be a democrat? Mark David Hall, a political scientist teaching at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma, argues that James Wilson was the "founding period's most important advocate of a strong and democratic national government that also protects individual rights" (p. 1). He analyzes Wilson's view of natural law, of human nature, and of epistemology, to demonstrate this Federalist's deep commitment to "popular sovereignty, constitutionalism, majority rule, and natural rights" (p. 201).

Wilson, Hall writes, built his "moral and legal theory on a traditional Christian conception of natural law" created by the all-wise God as the "absolute standard against which individual and community acts must be measured" (pp. 37, 35). All human beings can know natural law through their moral sense which, like hearing and seeing, is independent of reason. This moral sense or conscience provides human beings with direct access to "the first principles of morality" (p. 72) from which they may reason toward answers to the most complex moral questions. Moreover, Wilson also assumed that all

people “are naturally sociable, generally benevolent, and through proper education and laws can progress towards perfection” (p. 80).

These views undergirded Wilson’s democratic belief that “the surest way to know moral truth is to look at the opinions of the people, not those of philosophers, theologians, or other so-called experts” (p. 87) and his commitment to the principle that consent is the only legitimate basis for authority. Neither superior intelligence, higher social status, advanced education, or unusual virtue confer political privilege on the few.

But Wilson was not a misty-eyed Utopian. Although people can know right from wrong, human freedom allows some to choose that which they know to be wrong. Wilson, therefore, supported checks and balances, bicameral legislatures, and other counter-majoritarian measures in order to avoid “minority and majority tyranny” (p. 5).

This Hall’s view of Wilson may help us understand the political success of Pennsylvania’s Federalists. We now know that they gained solid control over the state’s unicameral legislature in 1786, engineered the popular ratification of the Federal Constitution in 1787-88, increased their electoral strength yearly throughout the rest of the decade, and then maintained their power into the 1790s. Some historians have ignored the Federalist’s popularity; others have sought to explain it away. Hall’s thesis, however, suggests that the Federalists’ electoral success in one of America’s most democratic states may have reflected their own solid democratic ideals. If Hall is correct, we may have some rethinking to do about the Federalists in late eighteenth century Pennsylvania.

But is Hall correct? He is aware that some scholars believe Wilson “merely pretended to be one (i.e., a democrat) for propaganda purposes” (p. 34). And, Hall admits that, on occasion, “Wilson the politician took precedence over Wilson the theoretician” (p. 160); and that Wilson sometimes bowed “to political expediency” (p. 159). Hall himself sometimes relies rather heavily on what Wilson said in his political, and possibly partisan, speeches, which leaves his interpretation open to criticism by those who see Wilson as a politician saying in public whatever satisfied his audience. On the other hand, the frequent conjunction between Wilson’s law lectures and his stump speeches strengthens Hall’s conclusion about Wilson’s authentic democratic credentials.

Finally, Hall writes well. He avoids jargon, organizes his material logically, and deals with intellectual abstractions effectively. He has crafted an intellectually sophisticated and important book that is both readable and of reasonable length—no small accomplishment.

Owen S. Ireland, *SUNY College at Brockport*

By Harry M. Ward. *General William Maxwell and the New Jersey Continentals*. (Contributions in Military Studies, No. 168.)

(Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997. Pp. xii, 241. \$59.95.)

With the publication of this well-researched, engagingly written military biography, Professor Harry M. Ward has added yet another worthwhile title to his ever-growing list of significant historical works. He contends that William Maxwell was one of George Washington's most reliable brigade commanders and as such is well deserving of this first full-length biography. The absence of Maxwell Papers helps explain why he has not received the historical attention one of New Jersey's most celebrated revolutionary generals would normally command. Ward had to rely on his enviable knowledge of the vast manuscript collections of the late colonial and revolutionary periods to craft this "public" biography.

Born in 1733 near Newtonstewart, County Tyrone in northern Ireland, William migrated to America with his parents, John and Ann, and three siblings in 1747. Landing at Philadelphia, the family traveled up the Delaware River to the Forks, settling on the New Jersey side of what became Sussex County. Initially they were subsistence farmers growing Indian corn and wheat. As Ulster Scots, the Maxwell family embraced the Presbyterian Church and the anti-English biases of most Scots-Irish immigrants. Very little is known of William's early years, but he apparently worked on his farmer's farm and received at least an elementary education.

In 1758, at age 25, William first entered the military as an ensign in the New Jersey militia regiment called to service by the new British commander Lord Loudoun. He gained valuable combat experience during the latter years of the French and Indian War. From 1760 to 1772, the ambitious William served as a commissary officer in the British army, spending most of this period at Fort Michilimackinac gaining additional useful knowledge in military supply. In 1775 William again entered the military as commander of one of the two New Jersey militia regiments incorporated into the Continental army. Initially outranked by Lord Stirling (William Alexander) as the senior New Jersey officer, Maxwell became commander of the New Jersey Continental Line when Stirling was promoted and reassigned.

As commander of the New Jersey brigade during most of the war, William Maxwell served with distinction in most of the significant military campaigns in the New York-New Jersey-Pennsylvania theater. He led the New Jersey "Blues" in the battles of Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth, and numerous minor battles and skirmishes. Also he endured, along with his battle-weary troops, the hardships of the Valley Forge and Morristown winter encampments. Throughout the war, Maxwell proved to be one of Washington's most dependable, steady, resourceful, combat field commanders. This study fills a gap at the brigade level in our knowledge of the field military administration of the Continental army.

Ward is to be commended for this well-ordered, informative, study of a revolutionary general of admitted secondary rank. Numerous maps, extensive endnotes, a useful bibliography of unpublished primary sources, and detailed index all help to make this work especially valuable for the scholar.

Joseph C. Morton, *Northeastern Illinois University*

Edited by Dwight L. Smith and Ray Sweek: *A Journey Through the West: Thomas Rodney's 1803 Journal from Delaware to the Mississippi Territory.*

(Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997, pp. xii, 280 pages; map, photos. \$44.95 cloth.)

In 1803 Lewis and Clark began their famous expedition that would bring them fame and lead to a recent best-seller by Stephen Ambrose. At the same time, Thomas Rodney, a fifty-nine year old politician and public servant, undertook a much less arduous journey from Dover, Delaware to Natchez, Mississippi. Rodney, in the course of his trip through southern Pennsylvania and then down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, actually met Captain Lewes at Wheeling. Yet the account of the less exciting trip taken by Mr. Rodney tells us a great deal more about the actual western frontier than Lewis and Clark's more famous journals.

Rodney expends relatively little space (around 28 of the approximately 199 pages in his edited journal) on his journey through southern Pennsylvania from Delaware and Lancaster to Parkinson's Ferry and Washington. He describes road conditions, the topography of the route, the quality of inns, and the characteristics of small towns. He then gives a detailed description of Wheeling where he waited for his boat to be constructed. The major portion of his journal tells of his journey down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and contains detailed descriptions of the condition of these rivers and their channels, hazards to navigation, the land along the shore, and the towns along the banks. At times his account becomes tedious. It must, after all, have been a boring trip enlivened only by an occasional emergency or a visit to town.

Rodney tells us much, by omission, about the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys in 1803. The tedium of the trip indicates the peacefulness of the residents along these rivers. Rodney encounters Native Americans on several occasions and never expresses fear or even disquiet about them. They traded travelers food stuffs in exchange for tropical and manufactured products. Rodney's account also fails to note any violence in the towns or among the European residents of the valleys. His stay at Wheeling for several weeks does not mention to the often supposed carnival of violence that many writers have associated with frontier and river towns during the early nineteenth century. Rodney often steps from his boat to make lengthy and lonely trips through the woods bordering the river, yet he never describes a situation where he felt fear. In short, the 59-year-old politician, felt quite secure floating down these rivers

until nature, in the form of a snag, poked a hole in the bottom of his boat, several miles above Natchez.

Rodney's account, though not especially rich for Pennsylvania, is well worth a read by all historians of the early nineteenth century. Its sense of serenity and peace tell us something about a frontier that is often overlooked by those interested in tales of heroism, gore, violence, and conflict.

The editors, Dwight Smith and Ray Sweek have done an excellent job in annotating the text, providing explanatory notes about individuals and locations and important yet often overlooked travel accounts. They also include map references to current survey quadrangles that illustrate his route.

Van Beck Hall, *University of Pittsburgh*

By David Curtis Skaggs and Gerald T. Althoff. *A Signal Victory: The Lake Erie Campaign of 1812-1813*.

(Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 1997. Pp. 244.)

This fine new study of the Lake Erie campaign during the War of 1812 brings modern scholarship to bear in monographic form for the first serious reassessment since Alfred Thayer Mahan. Utilizing the widest range of appropriate sources, Skaggs and Althoff manage to combine acute analyses, meticulously presented data, and judicious impartiality into an impressive single volume. This book will be the benchmark for its subject for the foreseeable future.

Beginning with an analysis of the war's strategic background, the authors succinctly weight the potential and actual advantage of both sides in combination with their respective vulnerabilities. Using chronological perspective, they investigate every topic bearing on their main story. The geography of the Great Lakes frontier area and the difficulties of building and manning a sizable navy receive careful consideration. Close attention is paid to individuals and personalities and how they influenced events, thus avoiding a dehumanized report on policies and statistics. Indeed, this highly effective interweaving of individual and collective elements is a hallmark of Skaggs and Althoff's history.

Notable items in their narrative are the struggles of both sides to prepare hastily for naval warfare and to win the ship construction race, and the importance of naval superiority on Lake Erie for undertaking land operations, especially a planned United States invasion of Canada. Master Commandant Oliver H. Perry was chosen to command at Lake Erie to supervise construction there of a squadron, in part because of his experience in building ships at Newport, Rhode Island. The authors provide a series of tables tracing in great detail the changing composition of the two opposing naval forces on the Upper Lakes. The American success in quick and speedy ship construction,

emphasizing quantity rather than quality, was an important factor in the outcome of the subsequent Battle of Lake Erie. Nearly equal consideration is given to the formation of the British squadron under Commander Robert H. Barclay on the Canadian side of the lake.

The climax of the book is, of course, the naval battle of September 10, 1813, a resounding success for the United States forces which paved the way for General Harrison's invasion of Ontario. It is a mark of the book's excellence that the Battle of Lake Erie is so thoroughly and impartially recounted that the outcome seems anything but assured. Skaggs and Althoff pay careful attention to tactical issues and some traditional views of the various ships' positions at different stages of the fight. Still a point of controversy is the apparent failure of Perry's second-in-command, Master Commandant Jesse D. Elliott, to bring to bear in a timely fashion the rear portion of the squadron. His conduct became a source of ill-will between Elliott and Perry.

The volume concludes with an appendix, reference notes, a glossary of nautical terms, and an accurate index. A word of commendation is also in order for the publishers, The Naval Institute Press. What a pleasure it is to pick up this handsome, well-made, and meticulously crafted volume—splendid history in a fine book.

James R. Boomfield, *Thiel College*

Dianne Ashton. *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America.* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997. Pp. 329.)

American women's historians (including myself) have written widely about nineteenth-century Protestant women who invoked the ideology of female benevolence to describe and justify their charitable endeavors. Dianne Ashton frames the story of Rebecca Gratz in light of this scholarly literature. This thoroughly-researched biography explores the life and ideology of the nineteenth century's most famous American Jewish woman, a founder and leader of the first Jewish women's charitable organization, the first Jewish Sunday School, and other important Philadelphia institutions. Ashton focuses on the complexities of living both as a member of the largely Christian economic and social elite and as a Jew, on "the tension [between] the weight of Jewish history and the desire for American acceptance," (p. 252) and on the fragility of a society that advocated tolerance of all religions even as it witnessed growing Christian intrusiveness in all realms of life.

Born in 1781, Gratz's life spanned nine decades of charitable organizing, growing Jewish immigration, increasing urban conflict, Christian revivalism, and, of course, national crisis. In coordination with her close friends among the Christian elite, Gratz devoted her life to building and maintaining institutions for the Jewish poor, needy, young, and orphaned—institutions

that she viewed as essential for demonstrating to Christian society the Jews' own piety, domesticity, and commitment to the social good. According to Ashton, Gratz constructed a life that embodied Jewish women's social respectability in the face of mounting pressure to define respectability itself as Christian.

Controversial issues among American Jews, such as growing sanctions against intermarriage, also provide the frame for Gratz's life as well as for Ashton's discussion of their modern implications. Ashton's description of Gratz's role in developing a peculiarly American version of Jewish education (where piety was exemplified by female teachers) was especially informative in showing how Gratz sought to blend American ideals of female godliness and teaching with Jewish education and community life.

Certainly there is a wealth of historical information here. Unfortunately, the book also suffers from frequent repetition, overuse of quotations, and erratic organization. More important, its scholarly analysis is limited by the author's claim of a too-tidy ideological system by which to understand Gratz's life. Although Ashton wishes to present the "real" Rebecca Gratz (and thus offers some scholarly distance from the Gratz "legend," having to do with an alleged gentile lover and whether Gratz was the model for the Jewish woman in *Ivanhoe*), she never tells us what other people—including members of Gratz's large and intense family—thought of her subject. Gratz remains in this account more a symbol of her own and Ashton's than a fully complex woman. In addition, there is little critical distance here, as in Ashton's overly gentle discussion of Gratz's hostility toward abolitionists. For this reader, the ways that both Gratz's membership in Philadelphia's elite society and her Judaism helped shape her ideology and her relationships to the burning issues of her day merited more subtle and more complex analysis.

Lori D. Ginzberg, *Pennsylvania State University*

Edited by Nina Mjakij and Margaret Spratt with prefaces by Clyde Griffen and Joanne Meyerowitz. *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City.*

(New York: New York University Press, 1997. Pp. 311. \$55.00 cloth, \$19.50 paper.)

In the 1880s Luther Gulick, an instructor at the YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts, created the YMCA symbol: a triangle representing "mind, body and spirit." The same Luther Gulick, a firm believer in muscular Christianity, gave James Naismith the task of inventing a game, less violent than football, that could be played indoors in a YMCA building. Thus basketball was born. We learn little about either Gulick or basketball in this interesting collection of essays, but there is a great deal about "mind, body

and spirit,” and how the Y gradually began to emphasize the body over mind and spirit.

The YMCA and the YWCA have been peculiarly neglected by social and cultural historians. C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the YMCA in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951) is still a useful reference, and there are a few other studies. But the recent opening of several manuscript collections, especially the YMCA United States Papers at the Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota, have led to a flurry of research. These essays, based most on recent dissertations and forthcoming books, suggest that by careful study the Y can tell us a lot about the shifting currents of urban culture over the past 150 years.

We learn about the architectural styles of the YMCAs and the shifting uses of interior spaces from religious meetings rooms to “efficient manhood factories designed to socialize young men in the city.” (p. 41) We read that in some Ys there was a contest between residents and leaders over what games should be played. Chess and checkers were approved but billiards was associated too much with gambling and drinking. “Yet by the early twentieth century, workers had forced the YMCA to make concessions and to accept billiards, smoking rooms and bowling alleys” (p. 72). A number of essays deal with race and gender separation, with the separate African-American Ys and with the role of the YWCAs in serving young women alone in the city. One of the most interesting essays is the ironic role of the YMCA as a center for gay activity. “The YMCA, founded to provide young men adrift in the city with ‘a home away from home’, had inadvertently created safe, accessible, public spaces for young men to explore their sexual identities” (p. 251).

This interesting collection of essays will be most useful in suggesting other areas to be researched and other topics to be explored. Most of the essays contain extensive footnotes (a sure sign that they are reworked chapters from dissertations) with many references to manuscript collections as well as to books and articles. The last essay, “Without Documents No History: Sources and Strategies for Researching the YWCA,” is a valuable introduction for future researchers and for those searching for a Ph.D thesis topic. But we still need a study of Luther Gulick and Muscular Christianity, and an account of how the Y provided an early home for basketball for both men and women.

Allen F. Davis, *Temple University*

By Charles H. McCormick. *Seeing Reds: Federal Surveillance of Radicals in the Pittsburgh Mill District 1917-1921.*

(Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press. 1997. Pp. 244.)

One distinguishing mark of a good book is that it takes a topic which people think they know well and shows them that they still have a great deal to

learn about it. By this criterion, *Seeing Reds* is a very good book indeed. It takes a well-trodden theme, the persecution of real and suspected radicals during the First World War and the ensuing Red Scare, and shows unequivocally that the federal government played a critical role throughout this notorious period of repression. Federal law enforcement agencies were acting in a way which would cause no surprise if the events in question had occurred in 1942 or 1958. This account calls into question many of the standard assumptions about the emergence of federal internal security programs, what in any European country would be called national policing. It affects our preconceived notions of the wartime radical scare, which has often been presented as a largely spontaneous outbreak by xenophobic citizens' groups and vigilante societies. All along we have neglected the activity of these first "G-Men".

Seeing Reds describes how the exigencies of war forced the federal government to evolve a domestic intelligence system, based on the existing mechanisms of the Bureau of Intelligence (BI, the predecessor of the FBI), the Military Intelligence Division, and the Office of Naval Intelligence. Naturally enough, the emerging network operated in intimate alliance with the substantial pre-existing intelligence activities of local police forces, corporate security services, private detective agencies, and the right-wing "professional patriots" who combined during the war to form the American Protective League. As in the 1960 (or indeed today) political policing operations were constantly bedeviled by conflicts between these different components: one agency was quite capable of wasting its efforts on so-called radicals who were in fact paid provocateurs directed by another.

McCormick tells his story chiefly through the career of the BI's L. M. Wendell, who organized the successful penetration of the main Pittsburgh-based radical groups, a bewildering mix of socialists, anarchists, pacifists, and ethnic nationalists. The best-known and most feared of these initially was the IWW, the Wobblies, but by 1920, a potent Communist movement was emerging. In fact, McCormick makes the fascinating suggestion (p. 203) that the vigor of federal intervention against Wobblies, Tolstoyans, and pacifists may have had unintended consequences, in clearing the older radical terrain, and permitting the mushroom growth of these newer Communist forces.

Though this is not McCormick's chief concern, he does offer abundant materials for the history of radicalism in the "Pittsburgh Mill District", a term which extended to the crucial industrial complex which sprawled over parts of Ohio and West Virginia as well as Western Pennsylvania. The book is also a rich resource for ethnic history, as the leftist groups being pursued were drawn from most of the countless nationalities who had flooded into the mill district in the previous three decades. The Union of Russian Workers in particular seems to have provided recurrent nightmares for Wendell and his political cops. *Seeing Reds* is, in short, a richly informative and well-written account,

which offers many surprises.

Philip Jenkins, *Pennsylvania State University*

By Barringer Fifield. *Seeing Pittsburgh*.

(Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996. 288 pages. \$12.95 paper.)

Raconteur Barringer Fifield has written a series of well-designed and thought-provoking tours of Pittsburgh in his book *Seeing Pittsburgh*. The stereotype of the rusting steel-town at death's door with the downsizing of its major industries is turned upside down when he notes in the introduction: "The Pittsburgh of clean rivers and green slopes is going to be at least as spectacular as the old city, and far healthier."

Fifield also describes a phenomenon many of us who moved to Pittsburgh have noticed over the years, the general reluctance of native Pittsburghers to gush about their city. He notes: "However provincial Pittsburgh may be from a strictly geographical point of view, its history is that of a great city - dense, violent, meaningful. As I worked on this book, I found that the Pittsburgh experience resonated as deeply as that of any capital."

The pleasure of Fifield's book lies not in its primary source historical research - he shamelessly and with few notes re-uses all the best quips written by others. The fun of the book lies in his incorporation of anecdotes in a series of short, targeted tours. The book talks about historical figures like William Pitt, General John Forbes, and Colonel Henry Bouquet as lively, decision-making characters. Fifield describes their relationship to Pittsburgh pithily and interestingly.

The layout of this guidebook is unusual. There are schematic maps for each of twelve tours, but rather than supplying detailed maps, Fifield correctly recommends buying a good current map of the city. The directions are included in the narrative for each tour. These are reasonable and show a great experience with the city; no one map of Pittsburgh is ever enough.

It is possible to be skeptical at first about the more than sixty black-and-white photographs by Michael Eastman, but, as one progresses through the narrative it becomes clear that the photographer's quirky take on the city scene amusingly enhances the text. Eastman's eye for shapes and rhythms is on target and he manages to find unexpected juxtapositions to push the reader to view every day sites in new ways.

Fifield's small book includes an excellent bibliography, full index, and a list of phone numbers for the churches and attractions on the tours, a very useful addition. I recommend this book as a light romp and a thought-provoking current analysis of Pittsburgh's built environment. Is it the only book on Pittsburgh you'll ever need? Franklin Toker's *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait* and Stephan Loran's *Pittsburgh* are better reference books for a student

of the city. But if you are having guests from out of town and need to show them around the city in a short time this is the book to use—it has all the best stories in one place.

Lu Donnelly, *Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

By Ivana Krajcinovic. *From Company Doctors to Managed Care: The United Mine Workers' Noble Experiment*. [Cornell Studies in Industrial and Labor Relations Number 31]

(Ithaca: ILR/Cornell University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 212. \$37.50 cloth.)

The focus of this book is the United Mine Workers of America's Welfare and Retirement Fund ("the Fund"). The Fund transformed the medical topography of the bituminous coal fields. It replaced the notorious "company doctor" with what was then considered to be one of the most innovative medical care delivery systems in the country. It attracted skilled specialists to the isolated coal fields, encouraged the development of group practices or clinics, and constructed ten state-of-the-art hospitals in Southern Appalachia. It also pioneered health care management by moving away from fee-for-service payment toward retainers. But in the 1970's, just as those innovations gained wide acceptance in America, the Fund's delivery system was dismantled.

Ivana Krajcinovic argues that the Fund's problems were inherent in the compromise of 1950. John L. Lewis then agreed to ensure the survival of the bituminous coal mining industry by supporting mechanization and industrial consolidation, even at the cost of great job displacement. In return the union would receive higher benefits, including a union controlled health and welfare program financed by a tonnage royalty. Thus the Fund was given two conflicting missions—promoting organizational loyalty among the membership and improving the quality of health care. As a result the Fund emphasized high-profile services such as rehabilitation of the severely disabled, which guaranteed the greatest political returns, but, after 1950, did not cover primary care. Such policies promoted hospitalization of clients thereby increasing per capita costs.

The internal dynamics of the bituminous industry also contributed to escalating costs. Mechanization of the mines increased safety hazards and respiratory problems by producing much finer dust. Downsizing combined with seniority ensure a graying of the work force, and older people tend to require more medical care. These pressures on the fund became unbearable when the decline in coal production in the late 1950s and early 1960s eroded income.

Rather than increase income flow, which would undermine the coal industry's competitive position, the union urged cost cutting. The Fund responded by radically reducing eligibility; over 17 per cent of the beneficiaries lost their benefits under the new guidelines. The cuts in the beneficiary pool

sparked a political rebellion against the union's entrenched leadership and the election of Arnold Miller. The new leadership, unable to separate procedure from substance, pursued ill-advised policies that led to the disintegration of the delivery system and its abandonment in the 1978 contract, which transferred provision of health care to individual coal companies.

One could ask that Josephine Roche be given fuller treatment; although a close friend of John L. Lewis, she also served under Franklin D. Roosevelt where she played a role in the formulation of social security, and helped draft the recommendations of the Committee on the Cost of Medical Care. But with this possible exception, Ivana Krajcinovic has produced a concise and balanced analysis of the development and decline of the United Mine Workers of America's Welfare and Retirement Fund.

Harold W. Aurand, *Penn State Hazleton Campus*

By Philip Scranton. *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925.*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. Pp. 432. \$39.50 cloth.)

This book is a masterful culmination of Philip Scranton's many years of research and writing about his specialty American industry. While others have focused on the advent of American corporate and mass-production industry during the "Second Industrialization," Scranton has long stressed the centrality of custom, batch, and even bulk producers, responsible for everything from turbines to cheap jewelry. His range is astonishing: New York printers, jewelry and silverware industries in Providence, Cincinnati toolmakers, furniture craftsmen from Grand Rapids, Chicago railway car makers, Westinghouse and General Electric manufactured goods, and textile and locomotive industries of Philadelphia.

But this book is more than a combination plate of mini-business histories from industries usually left off the academic menu. It explains why and how such companies flourished in the supposed age of merger, nationally recognized brand-name goods, oligopoly, vertical integration, Taylorism, and assembly lines. Scranton makes the obvious, but often forgotten point, that machine makers for industry inevitably remained custom or small batch producers and that, far from being stagnant backwaters, ship and locomotive builders survived by adapting quickly to technological changes and the demands of their clients. Furniture makers flourished not through mergers but by using trade associations to promote their goods and by remaining close to the demands of a frequently changing consumer market. These specialty producers needed less a pliant pool of machine tenders than skilled die makers and machinists. And local associations attempted with varying success to train and retrain workers to fit these special needs (Franklin and Worcester Institutes).

Scranton shows in detail (but often with the touch of a storyteller) how these various industries fared with depressions, tariff change, and technological innovations. He reveals that the fate of specialty producers was far from uniform. While electrical goods manufacturers managed to adapt to broad technological changes better than did locomotive and shipbuilders, furniture makers succeeded in shaping their consumer markets more effectively than did jewelry producers.

While this book is strong on quantitative data (descriptive, relatively specific statistics), Scranton makes every effort to identify the importance of personality and individual decision in his analysis. While he obviously has a deep understanding of business school terminology and is an expert interpreter of technological change, his story seldom gets bogged down in abstractions or specialist's detail. When he writes about "anchor" specialists (like makers of electric generators), he is clear and the term enlightens the narrative. Scranton is sympathetic with efforts of associations of furniture makers to rationalize production costs and pricing and is critical of government efforts to stop them, even though oligopolists in steel and automaking did very similar things with impunity. He sees specialty producers as critical players in technological innovation and consumer market diversity. But he also finds room in his book for periodic discussions of workers' struggles and goals. There is a wealth of information and ideas in this book of interest to regional specialists, business and labor historians, and even practical entrepreneurs.

Gary Cross, *Pennsylvania State University*

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Pennsylvania History Association invites submissions for its annual conference, to be held November 4-6, 1999, at the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center in downtown Pittsburgh. Individual papers, complete sessions, films, and other types of presentations should address the conference theme, "At the Confluence." Pittsburgh has often been described as being located "at the confluence" of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers, but Pennsylvania and also be understood as sitting "at the confluence" of many different geographical, chronological, social, political, economic, and cultural developments and forces. Submissions that adopt interdisciplinary approaches or addresses pedagogical issues are especially welcome, but all topics will be considered. Please send six copies of a one-page paper abstract and a short vita to David Hsiung, PHA Program Committee, History Department, Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA, 16652, or via e-mail to hsiumg@juniata.edu. Deadline: January 15, 1999.

The Pennsylvania Historical Association Conference for 1998 will be held Oct. 16 and 17 at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. Members of the Association will receive programs in due course. Others please contact Prof. Edwin Baldrige, History Dept., Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA 18104.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission invites applications for its 1999-2000 Scholars in Residence Program and its newly inaugurated Collaborative Residency Program. The Scholars in Residence program provides support for full-time research and study at any Commission facility, including the State Archives, The State Museum, and 26 historical sites and museums. The Collaborative Residency Program will fund original research that relates to the interpretive mission of PHMC sites and museums and advances a specific programmatic goal of the host site or museum. Proposals for a Collaborative Residency are to be filed jointly by the applicant institution and interested scholar. Both programs are open to all who are conducting research on Pennsylvania history, including academic scholars, public sector professionals, independent scholars, graduate students, writers, filmmakers, and others. Residencies are available for four to twelve weeks between May 1, 1999, and April 30, 2000, at the rate of \$1200 per month. For further information and application materials for the Scholars in Residence Program, including the Collaborative Residency Program, contact:

Division of History, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission,
Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108; 717/787-3034 (phone);
Robert_Weible@PHMC.state.pa.us (email); or consult the world wide web at
http://www.state.pa.us/PA_EXEC/Historical_Museum.

Deadline is January 15, 1999.



"Love Always La Familia." Third and Indiana. Philadelphia. 1998.

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