

BOOK REVIEWS

Common Landscape of America, 1580-1845. By JOHN R. STILGOE. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. xi, 429p. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

This is an imaginative and fascinating book which takes as its subject the shifting nature of American man-made landscape over a period of 265 years. Landscape, according to Stilgoe, is essentially rural, the antithesis of wilderness, but also the opposite of urban space. He uses a great variety of printed sources in several languages, and he employs insights from a number of disciplines as well as his own keen observations to complete this ambitious project. Stilgoe ranges from the ancient and medieval world to the present, from New England to the Spanish settlements in the Southwest, to explain how common people confronted, shaped and thought about the land, and the buildings and communities they constructed on the land. He concentrates on the process by which the settlers in America, comfortable with the landscape, the roads, fields and buildings of early modern Europe, were forced to innovate even as they clung to old and familiar patterns. He stops his account in 1845 because he argues that the railroad and the industrial city altered the traditional landscape, although he admits that vestiges of that landscape survive even today.

On one level this book is a fascinating collection of anecdotes and sketches. We learn the kinds and colors of paints used by early Americans and the reasons behind those colors. We discover how various grasses were imported from Europe both consciously and accidentally to replace the inferior native varieties. "Herd's grass or Timothy announced the coming of civilization or shaped land," Stilgoe asserts at one point. And in the Ohio valley where New England settlers confronted those who had migrated from the South, they disagreed not only over slavery, but also over what kind of grass and what kind of cattle to raise. We learn that the early settlers feared the mill and the miller because his complicated machinery represented magic and sorcery, and the blacksmith because his fire conjured up thoughts of hell. We discover how women's work shaped the architectural form of the house, especially of the kitchen ell. We are constantly reminded of the derivation of words and their special meaning. We will never again visit Longmeadow, Springfield or Las Vegas without remembering the importance of grass-covered land to the early settlers, and we will never forget that the verb "to launder" came from the same root as "land," and why Americans rarely used the English word, "glade." "Glade" is ignored by people whose ancestors laundered the earth, who created grasslands in the midst of the forest and who labored to keep it free of brush and trees. Stilgoe

writes that "Americans imagine glades with difficulty because the labor of clearing is continuous and constantly reinforces the struggle of the past."

Any book which tries in 357 pages to cover so much ground will find critics who disagree with the details or find a subject left out. I wondered why Stilgoe didn't include the production of potash along with the making of charcoal and fences in his discussion of the destruction of the forests and the changing look of the landscape. In a book which derives its meaning from the changing landscape and how things looked I would have appreciated more illustrations. What does Timothy look like, by the way? I also found the index failed me on several occasions as I tried to retrieve a story or a bit of information. But this is a book worth reading and pondering. It is a great deal more than a series of anecdotes. There is much that is familiar but Stilgoe usually finds a new way of looking at old material, and he adds the unusual as well. The total effect is to offer an important reinterpretation of how Europeans created an American civilization in the new world. What is perhaps more important, after reading this book you will look with new insight at the landscape around you, whether it be a modern suburb, the checkerboard pattern of fields as seen from the air, or one of the keepsakes from the past that survived from a preindustrial age when landscape was more than an attractive vista, but a vital part of the lives of common people.

Temple University

ALLEN F. DAVIS

Letters of Delegates of Congress, 1774-1789. By PAUL H. SMITH, ET AL. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981. Volume VI, January 1-April 30, 1777. xxviii, 760p. Illustrations, chronology, index. \$14.00; Volume VII, May 1-September 18, 1777. xxii, 749p. Illustrations, chronology, index. \$14.00; Volume VIII, September 19, 1777-January 31, 1778. xxxi 745p. Illustrations, chronology, index. \$17.00.)

Volumes six, seven and eight of the history of the Congress of the United States, 1774-1789, cover the crucial thirteen month period of January 1, 1777 thru January 31, 1778. For an appraisal of volumes one thru four of this projected twenty-five volume documentary history, see Volume CIII (January 1979) and Volume CV (January 1981) of *PMHB*. Whereas these earlier volumes focused on the significant question of independence and the initial consideration for a plan of union, the three volumes under the review here deal

with the many problems Congress encountered in the aftermath of declaring independence, especially as it related to conducting a war with Great Britain. Volume six opens with the news of General George Washington's counter offensive victory at Princeton in January 1777, follows Congress's stay in Baltimore, and ends in April 1777 with the delegates of Congress safely back in Philadelphia. Volume seven, features the military campaigns of the spring and summer of 1777 and concludes with Congress's evacuation of Philadelphia on September 18, following the British victory at Brandywine Creek. Volume eight, which continues the account to January 31, 1778, opens with the delegates' flight to Lancaster and York, Pa., and concludes with the meeting of a special committee sent to confer with Washington at Valley Forge. The 1871 documents in volumes six thru eight represent an increase of 1290 documents from the same chronological period published in Edmund C. Burnett's 1920s edition of delegate *Letters*. Of particular interest here is the inclusion of the many notes and minutes kept by such delegates as Thomas Burke, Charles Thomson and Benjamin Rush.

Like volumes one thru five, the manuscripts printed in these three volumes contain pertinent new information. Among the many subjects and issues covered are the frequent political and military conflicts existing in-and-out of Congress over commands, commissions and strategies; the debates on the Articles of Confederation; likely responses to the British invasion of the Chesapeake; reorganization of the Board of War, Commissary Department and commerce committee; proposals to send diplomatic missions to Europe; appointment of special congressional committees; and the problems related to prisoners of war and ratification of the Saratoga Convention in the aftermath of Gen. Horatio Gates's capture of Gen. John Burgoyne's army. As for Pennsylvania, the documents in these volumes provide details on the relations between Congress and Pennsylvania authorities, on Philadelphia and York as the seats of government, on the "Conway Cabal," and on the activities of Thomas Mifflin, Robert Morris, Daniel Roberdeau, Benjamin Rush and Charles Thomson. Some delegates, following the adoption of the State Constitution of 1774, were concerned about Pennsylvania's ability to rule under the Supreme Executive Council. Typical is the remark of William Duer of 17 April 1777, to the New York Convention, in which he expressed a hope that the new government then "will exert itself with vigour, and that a little Quackery will save a powerful State, which must have fallen a sacrifice to a speculative system of politicks" (vol. 6, p. 602).

In making these basic research materials on the formative chapter of the American political experiment more widely available, we are indebted to the editors, the Library of Congress and to the Ford Foundation. Volumes six thru eight are crafted with the same judicious skill and scholarship displayed in the

previous volumes, and each includes an extensive subject index and is handsomely bound and printed on permanent/durable paper. If the price tag on these three volumes is higher than those released two or three years ago, they still remain a relatively good bargain when compared to the volumes produced by other documentary projects.

*Pennsylvania Historical and
Museum Commission*

ROLAND M. BAUMANN

George Washington, an American icon: The Eighteenth-Century Graphic Portraits. By WENDY C. WICK. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, for the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, 1982. xxi, 186p. Illustrations, catalogue, checklist of the exhibition, index. Cloth, \$17.50; paper, \$9.95.)

G. Washington: A Figure Upon the Stage. By MARGARET KLAPTHOR and HOWARD MORRISON. (Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982. 231p. Illustrations. \$12.50.)

Consider the plight of American artists in the wake of their infant nation's rebellion. They were to forge a celebratory "Americanized" iconography. But their principal resource had been and would continue to be a European-devised vocabulary of symbols in combination with compositional schemes, also of European origin. And their prime subject was not altogether tractable. George Washington, America's first native hero had, by early middle age, eaten himself out of a formerly handsome profile which, for the artist, is always the most heroicizing aspect of the face. By late middle age, retaining but a single tooth, Washington presented to the artist a sunken upper lip, a snaffle mouth, a jaw in ruin. Yet received European conventions dictated that this particular mound of flesh would be elevated in art to the status of an antique hero, a demi-god, or worse, a reigning monarch.

To establish how artists refashioned Washington according to Old World formulas, we can now turn to Wendy C. Wick's *George Washington, an American icon: The Eighteenth-Century Graphic Portraits*. These portraits readily break down into five types and twelve sub-types. There is Washington as the peerless chief: the commander with the cannon at the hip; pointing to the field of honor, in company with a rearing or obese horse; the champion at ease. Advancing in his career to First President, artists recorded Washington as rhetor, as Cincinnatus, as Pater Patriae. While alive, artists also portrayed Washington's profile in a medallion following the Roman imperial *imago*

clipeata; or else *Fama* crowned him with laurel. After death, Washington received the kind of treatment formerly reserved for those who were Olympus-bound. At the hands of John James Barralet and Rembrandt Peale, Washington underwent an apotheosis. Others chose to represent the deceased in a medallion next to a fictitious monument. In all these instances, the concept of the hero precedes, then supercedes, the individual. As a counter, there are the rectangular life portraits of Washington *au naturale*—the mortal without symbolic appurtenance or embellishment. Every one of the five types and twelve sub-types descends from European models because Americans were anxious to see their national hero the equal of heroes from any established nation.

What is more surprising is that Americans would turn iconodules. "Every American considers it his sacred duty to have a likeness of Washington in his home, just as we have the images of God's saints," observed the Russian visitor Paul Svinin in 1815. A generation later Emerson wrote of his copy of Stuart's Athenaeum portrait: "The head of Washington hangs in my dining-room . . . and I cannot keep my eyes off it. . . . The heavy, leaden eyes turn on you, as the eyes of an ox in a pasture."

For modern scrutiny, Wick brings together one hundred and one Washington prints. The definitive work on the subject, Charles Henry Hart's *Catalogue of the Engraved Portraits of Washington*, describes 880 prints, illustrating just a handful. And since Hart's book was published by the Grolier Club in 1904 in a limited edition, it is now rare. Wick's catalogue builds upon Hart's. Unfortunately, she does not always continue his, or William Baker's pioneering investigations of European sources. The new catalogue is perfectly adequate where the task is to itemize the hack work replicas of a standard portrait. But when a theoretical question arises, the explanation may prove inadequate. This defect is brought to the fore in the case of a unique print, sufficiently striking to illustrate the brochure for the book's attendant exhibition. Attributed to John Norman, the print shows Washington strutting before the field of honor in a coat of mail. Gleaning her information from the print's legend, Wick tells the reader that Norman illustrates an antique equestrian statue legislated in 1783 by resolution of the Continental Congress. We are immediately in a quandry. Why would Norman supplant the antique equestrian George with a stalwart pedestrian in Baroque parade armor? Over a hundred years ago, Baker identified Norman's source as a plate representing Sir William de la More in John Guillim's very popular *Display of Heraldry* (first edition, 1610). Norman translated this source line for line, with two deviations. He omitted More's heraldic banner. Second, he substituted Charles Willson Peale's 1776 likeness of Washington, after the fashion of antique acrolithic statues designed for removeable heads to accommodate a

rapid change of imperial succession. Because of this loan from an English book of heraldry to indicate Washington's succession, Baker ventured the suggestion that Norman was burlesquing the intent of Congress. Wick neither illustrates the Guillim engraving nor seriously considers Baker's speculation. And she overlooks Arthur Marks's recent discussion about the equestrian statue Norman purports to illustrate. Marks believes the over life-size bronze of George was to be the "mirror image" of its immediate predecessor, that of George III after the equestrian Marcus Aurelius, a statue pulled down by an angry mob at New York City's Bowling Green. In voting the bronze replacement, then, Congress revived an ancient European monarchical and mystical sentiment: *imperium semper est*. It is at least possible that Norman did intend a burlesque, that Baker's speculation is not entirely dumb, that Marks's contribution should be taken into account. The print raises questions yet to be answered.

Did the European origins of the Washington iconography put Wick too much on her guard? Her choice of a subtitle, "an American icon," sets up a democratic anomaly which she nonetheless refuses to confront in the text. Yet scholarship will not advance beyond Hart and Baker until, putting the veil of democratic ideology aside, we confront the truth that many hot blooded patriots were comforted by images of a saintly, heroic, monarchical or paternal PATER PATRIAE.

The exhibition catalogue *G. Washington: A Figure Upon the Stage*, which trumpets his two hundred fiftieth birthday, only reinforces this central idea of Washington's monumentality, despite Marcus Cunliffe's intelligent introductory remarks to the contrary. Here we find no single commonplace object, like Washington's sponge toothbrushes, of which he had dozens. Rather the catalogue presents a plethora of Washingtoniana, together with such regalia as baby George's china silk christening robe, all glossed by a text that contains not one sour anecdote. More than once we are reminded in Washington's stoic words that at the beck of artists he would "sit like patience on a Monument." But nowhere do we find the great man's grumpy—and more revealing—account: "Inclination having yielded to Importunity, I am now contrary to all expectation under the hands of Mr. Peale; but in so grave—and so sullen a mood—and now and then under the influence of Morpheus, when some critical strokes are making, that I fancy the skill of this Gentleman's Pencil, will be put to it, in describing to the World what manner of man I am."

George Washington was one with his contemporaries in understanding that even before death his humanity would undergo transformation. Consider this clause in the will of one John Greenwood, dentist: "Item. I give to my oldest surviving sone my gold watch and chain, with that valuable relic hanging to the chain, the only or last tooth that remained growing in the mouth of our late and

worthy president, George Washington, which tooth he sent to me from Mount Vernon, Virginia state, as may be seen in his own handwriting now in my possession. The said tooth must be kept as a relic and given to the next male heir of my children.”*

University of Pennsylvania

PHOEBE LLOYD

Standards and Colors of the American Revolution. By EDWARD W. RICHARDSON. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press and the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution and Its Color Guard, 1982. xvii, 341p. Illustrations, appendices, glossary, bibliography, index. \$50.00.)

In *Standards and Colors of the American Revolution* Edward W. Richardson painstakingly describes the symbolic importance of flags to eighteenth-century armies and navies. Standards, colors, and guidons were proud symbols from colonial times through the end of the Indian wars.

Richardson has adopted an encyclopedic style which should receive enthusiastic acceptance from scholars and buffs. Vignettes provide a detailed description of each Continental and state standard with accompanying historical background. Through meticulous research Richardson has carefully traced the development of all known flags of the Revolution. With many records lost or destroyed, it is impossible to determine the exact number of flags, although they unquestionably totaled several hundred.

Heraldic devices influenced the decisions of most Continental and state leaders and artists in the design and development of their flags. Each standard was primarily individualistic in character with symbols, emblems, or mottoes frequently borrowed and used interchangeably by the various designers. Usually colors were painted on embroidered symbolic layouts and highlighted by Latin or English mottoes. A deviation from this use was often found on the Continental flags where, before the adoption of the stars and stripes, the union

*Answering her professor's urgent question about whether Washington could have owned a toothbrush—"yes," she said—Emily Feldman then wisely pointed me in the direction of the University of Pennsylvania's Dental School. There, John Whittock, the School's dedicated librarian, quickly put at my disposal volumes and loose-leaf material concerning not only the first toothbrush (invented in China, June 25, 1498), but Washington's dental history, down to the last tooth.

was often represented by thirteen crossed swords. Flags were made from any available serviceable cloth, usually taffeta, silk, or linen.

The evolution of most standards began with the Liberty flags which were observed springing into existence before the colonies united in their opposition to Parliamentary acts.

Although this volume is mainly concerned with American standards, Richardson has included a somewhat abbreviated description of British, Hessian, Loyalist, and French colors. Three informative appendices include a chronological listing of documents pertaining to flags and colors; a review of Philadelphia flagmakers (important for Continental and local colors but not definitive for the thirteen states); and a glossary of military terms.

The author states that although his study consumed several years and "several thousand hours," he probably covered only "twenty percent of the pertinent material." A bibliography lists numerous printed sources and secondary studies but, unfortunately, omits reference to most manuscript collections, especially those in state archives. The reviewer made a concentrated search for manuscript collections pertaining to the Pennsylvania Navy and located bits and pieces referring to services rendered in the making of flags. However, except for the names of seamstresses, their cost of services, and the names of boats or ships, they added nothing to Mr. Richardson's research.

A number of minor mistakes were observed in several historical accounts. Richardson appears to have "hypothesized" too frequently when accepting positions taken in outdated studies. Nevertheless, his excellent work on the standards and colors of the Revolution will be the standard on the subject for countless years to come.

Richardson, the Sons of the Revolution, and the University of Pennsylvania Press have produced a superb book which has been enhanced by scores of black and white illustrations and sixty-five pages of beautiful color plates.

Flourtown, Pa.

JOHN W. JACKSON

Sovereign States in an Age of Uncertainty. Edited by RONALD HOFFMAN and PETER J. ALBERT. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1982. xiv, 261p. Contributors, index. \$20.00.)

These essays are quite properly dedicated to the memory of the late Merrill Jensen (1905-1980), Vilas Research Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, a remarkable man who did so much to emphasize the importance of

the States in the American Revolutionary Era. Both editors were once students of Jensen at Wisconsin, as were some of the contributors; and Jensen himself contributed an essay (apparently his "swansong"). His convictions and writings necessarily lie behind these essays.

The problem of divided sovereignty is even older than our American Revolution. On the dust jacket of this book is the symbol of a divided snake, but that symbol was actually first used in connection with the Albany Congress of 1754. Thus, American unity *versus* local autonomy (or "states' rights" as it was later called) began in an imperial, if defensive, setting. The symbol was invented by Benjamin Franklin, and the Albany Plan (the basis in 1774 for the ill-starred plan of Joseph Galloway, once an ally of Franklin in Pennsylvania politics) was supported at the time by the later Loyalist, Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts. Soon after the American Revolution began, a "states' rights" attitude raised its head in debates over the Articles of Confederation.

The essays comprising this book are eight in number, including Jensen's "The Sovereign States: Their Antagonisms and Rivalries and some Consequences," which is largely about sectional rivalries, especially between New England and the South, in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The other essays range from social ideas about Revolutionary changes to experiences in the various States, the roots of Federalism in Massachusetts, the "democratization" of South Carolina, the advocates of the Constitution of 1776 in Pennsylvania, fiscal problems in Maryland, the "power struggle" in New York, and wartime leadership in Virginia. The philosophy of "ordinary" folks, as reflected in state and local politics, is apparently the underlying theme.

These essays all make contributions to our knowledge of the period, but one wonders what older authorities might have said about some things. For example, Jefferson is held to have been a good governor of Virginia, whereas older historians are said to have focused on his last months in office so that "in the popular mind, he is considered not to have been a very good chief executive" (p. 215). One wonders, also, what may have been left out of these accounts—such as how the war was won. They are especially weak on the economic side. Why, for example, was there so much eagerness for banks after the war, especially for those in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston which were operating before the Constitutional Convention met?

American unity may have been established during and after our Revolution, but questions have been raised by the "state sovereignty" school as to the "Federal" methods employed. John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, original author of the Articles of Confederation, has especially been suspect because he long advocated a more powerful Union; the Critical Period was not really "critical," etc.

In short, while admirable in its objectives and heart-warming in its dedi-

cation, such a volume as a reflection of the "state sovereignty" school raises questions that can only be answered if a companion volume is forthcoming. It is not that its contents are not true, but that other things are also true.

Brooklyn College, CUNY, emeritus

ROBERT A. EAST

Alexander Hamilton: A Biography. By JACOB ERNEST COOKE. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982. vi, 277p. Illustrations, index. \$17.95.)

Jacob Cooke's new biography of Alexander Hamilton is a solid achievement, which should occasion no surprise among those familiar with his impeccable credentials as a Hamilton scholar. Some readers may approach the book with the question the author poses in the first sentence of his preface: why another biography of Hamilton, when we already have so many fine biographical studies? Believing that he has "something new to say," Professor Cooke notes that he has discovered no new documentary evidence; rather, his contribution is interpretive, as he has endeavored to "look at familiar episodes in a different way." To this extent he has written for other scholars, although the informal tone and cast of the biography reflects its intended appeal to a much wider, non-professional audience. Above all, this is a very personal book. It represents, Cooke states, "one student's version of the career of a 'great man' whose life is intrinsically interesting and who was instrumental in building, launching, and navigating a new nation that would in time fulfill his aspirations and dreams for it." And as this statement suggests, the student's perspective on his subject is emphatically, if not overwhelmingly, approving.

Since the essential flaw of most Hamilton biographies has been, in Cooke's opinion, their failure to explain his enigmatic personality, the approach in this revisionist account is to regard the familiar events of Hamilton's public life as largely inseparable from his personal and private life. Cooke has an especially sharp eye for patterns of behavior; he scrutinizes his subject's character and personality for the threads or continuities that might help us understand better a career that can appear to have been as erratic as it was brilliant. Cooke emphasizes Hamilton's obsessive pride and chronic insecurity as the dominant themes in his recurrent bursts of self-destructive behavior, behavior exemplified best, perhaps, by his vehement and politically obtuse attacks on President John Adams during the campaign of 1800 that effectively ended Hamilton's influence in public life. Cooke is not writing psychobiography, but he draws on the work of Erik H. Erikson and others to shed light on the inner dynamics of Hamilton's behavior in such well-known episodes as his quarrel with General Washington in 1782, his extramarital affair in the 1790s, his

personal and political battles with Jefferson, and his participation in the events leading to the fatal duel with Burr in 1804. Some readers may greet at least some of Cooke's speculations—his suggestion, for instance, that in choosing the openly promiscuous Maria Reynolds (a symbol of his mother) as his mistress Hamilton was “unconsciously acting out unresolved conflicts of his early life”—with skepticism. But few readers should be profoundly troubled by this potentially controversial dimension of the biography, because Cooke invariably presents his speculations so modestly and so sensibly that the skeptic can comfortably move on to the next subject. Indeed, Cooke's psychological conjectures may be too timid, or at least too sketchy, to satisfy those who will regard Hamilton's complex personality as fair game for more rigorous and systematic analysis.

Cooke's many reinterpretations of various phases of Hamilton's public career cannot be effectively summarized in a brief review, but a few examples deserve mention. According to Cooke, Hamilton's role in the Annapolis Convention and in other events leading to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 has generally been exaggerated; Hamilton's and James Madison's views on the proposed Constitution in 1787-88 were, despite later differences, “virtually identical”; Hamilton's influence on members of the Adams cabinet in the late 1790s has been “greatly magnified”; and the actual differences between Adams and Hamilton in that period on the management of Franco-American relations “has been persistently, even perversely, misunderstood.” More important, perhaps, Cooke asserts in a chapter entitled “Hamilton Versus Jefferson: A Skirmish, Not a War” that American historians have, for the sake of easy labeling, greatly exaggerated the ideological differences between the two men. In fact, according to Cooke, the most important historical consideration is “the complementary nature of many of their policies.”

Interested scholars should find Cooke's observations on these and other issues stimulating, even if they will no doubt continue to disagree with him and with each other. Some of these interpretations are not especially fresh; Cooke's downplaying of the differences between Hamilton and Jefferson, for example, is strikingly reminiscent of the familiar view advanced by the so-called “consensus” school of American historians. In this connection, moreover, some readers may be troubled—at least this reviewer was—by Professor Cooke's rather superficial portrayal of Jefferson and the broader Jeffersonian movement that arose in opposition to Hamilton. Cooke's characterization of Jefferson as “at heart a Virginia aristocrat” and “the prototypical American conservative” is at best simplistic, and to say further that “the way of life he wished to preserve was that which he had known in Virginia” overlooks not only the complexity of Jefferson's vision but also his lifelong quarrel with so much of Virginia's social and political system. Similarly, Cooke's portrait of

the political opposition led by Jefferson and Madison is too narrowly drawn, even one-dimensional, in large part because he declines to consider it in the broader ideological context recently brought to light by several historians, most notably by Lance Banning in *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology*. Such matters of interpretive emphasis will, of course, be of far greater concern to Cooke's scholarly than to his general audience.

University of Texas at Austin

DREW R. MCCOY

Citizens in Arms: The Army and Militia in American Society to the War of 1812.

By LAWRENCE DELBERT CRESS. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982. xiv, 240p. Bibliography, index. \$22.50.)

For an academic like myself, the prime measure of the quality of a book is the number and calibre of the notes I take from it. If I find no "quotable quotes," no tables worth copying for potential classroom use, no noteworthy theories, claims, or bits of evidence, then, regardless of the work's literary or polemical force, I regard it as a waste of time and (someone's) money. This book may have some shortcomings, in my view, but they are offset by its virtues—its thesis is sophisticated and clear, the evidence evincing that thesis is ample and interesting, and the "quotable quotes" appear reasonably often. (I'd say that the average interested reader would want to jot down ten or twelve, which isn't bad at all; if a product of my pen was to find its way into that many file cards, I would be very pleased indeed.)

What does Professor Cress add to our understanding of the "standing army" question? Firstly, he offers a clear exposition of the debate between the "radical Whig" (Commonwealth men, "real Whig") and "moderate Whig" regarding the military. "Radical Whigs" (such as Harrington, Sydney, James Burgh, and John Taylor of Caroline) felt the standing army was dangerous in that it represented a decline in public virtue and an opportunity for a corrupt administration to misbehave. A people who sought escape from their military responsibilities courted disaster, for they had surrendered their chief protection against the abuse of power. "Moderate Whigs" (such as Daniel Defoe, Adam Smith, and Joseph Priestley) felt that the economic order was too sophisticated and specialized for Britain or America to persist in removing men regularly from their pastimes for militia service. They also believed that a properly constructed legislature would serve as an adequate check against executive misuse of a standing army. And they believe that the professional, "regular" character of the standing army had become a necessity for proper security.

Cress demonstrates that the colonists generally adhered to the "moderate Whig" view until the Coercive Acts of 1774, which struck many as evidence of the very danger the "radical Whigs" had identified. Hence most colonies re-vitalized their militia systems in the winter of 1774-75. The Revolution itself prompted the creation of a standing army (the Continental Line), but the Congress reverted to a militia structure as soon as the danger had receded, and Cress offers a more familiar account of this process, and of the relationship between Shays Rebellion and the military powers of Congress and President in the Constitution.

The "radical Whig" ideology persisted, of course, preventing the creation of any substantial federal military system until the quasi-war with France, and Cress is good on the political character of these Federalist forces. He also adds somewhat to the familiar image of the Jeffersonian dilemma regarding the military, but here his account lacks bite, because it rests essentially on Congressional debates, editorials, and pamphlets. These are important in reconstructing the ideological positions, but Cress sometimes fails to ground these debates in the daily crises that provoked them. One of these consisted of the refusal of Vermont and coastal state governors to call out their militias to enforce the Embargo, and Jefferson's subsequent use of federal troops. There is no discussion of this crisis, nor of an earlier crisis of comparable character, Fries Rebellion. Placing his ideological story in the context of such crises, Cress might have brought them more to life, but I don't want to overstate the criticism. Professor Cress has provided an excellent analysis of the central controversy in early American military history, and his book deserves a place besides those of Richard Kohn, John Shy, and Lois Schwoerer.

University of Pittsburgh

PETER KARSTEN

Revolutions in Americans' Lives: A Demographic Perspective on the History of Americans, Their Families, and Their Society. By ROBERT V. WELLS. (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1982. xvi, 311p. Charts, tables, map, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

Writing demographic history is often a slow and arduous process, involving time-consuming data collection and evaluation. As a result, research in the field tends to be narrowly focused both temporally and spatially, and it is often difficult to tie together the findings from disparate studies. In the context of this state of the art, Robert V. Wells provides a welcome synthesis of work which has been done on the United States. Wells has a broad view of demographic

history. He reminds us that a population inhabited, cleared and settled the land in America before the Europeans arrived. He is attuned to the differences in the demographic experiences of blacks and whites. Finally, he uses the new and developing women's history to illuminate the discussion of the lives of the female population. Wells summarizes studies of the United States population before 1770, but focusses primarily on the period from 1770 to 1920. During that time period, changes in fertility, mortality and mobility were significant enough to be labelled revolutions, according to Wells. The impact of these changes on several areas of American life are examined, with special emphasis on the changes in family life brought about by changes in demographic behavior. It should be emphasized that *Revolutions in American Lives* is synthetic. Few new data or findings are reported here. The book's strength is in summarizing the influence of demographic changes on the lives of Americans.

His effort is laudable, but his book has some shortcomings. In synthesizing, Wells sometimes oversimplifies. For example, in a discussion of the geographic mobility of the United States population, Wells fails even to hint at the controversy surrounding the issue or the difficulties in estimating geographic mobility from record linkage procedures. Wells frequently makes assertions without referring to the literature on all sides of controversial and complicated issues.

In addition, Wells's overarching theoretical perspective is questionable. Demographic revolutions occurred, says Wells, because the population became increasingly composed of *more* individuals with *more* "modern personalities." People with "modern personalities" are basically rational; they believe they can and, therefore, try to improve the present and future conditions of themselves and their families. Wells contrasts modern people to traditional people who allegedly feel powerless, believe their situations hopeless, and attempt little rational control of their lives. One can argue, however, that the decision to have eight children in 1800 is as rational as the decision to have two children today. The difference in demographic behavior is the consequence of separate economic realities confronting couples making child-bearing decisions in the two periods. The influx of immigrants into the United States is not explained by the existence of people who want to take control of their lives. Most people have always wanted to control their lives. Migration to this country can be explained in terms of the conditions of labor supply and demand here and in the sending countries. The view that changes in demographic behavior have historically involved a change from irrational to rational thought can be both dangerous and costly especially when, as is inevitable, it is applied to the current world situation. Europeans and Americans are perceived as rational, while Africans and Asians are not. Policies based on this idea have been doomed to failure. The other problem with the idea is that it is essentially

tautological. People behave in modern ways because they have modern ways of thinking. We have no evidence for the latter except the former. If human nature has really changed, i.e. if Americans became "rational" between 1770 and 1920, the interesting question is why; and that question is neither raised nor answered in this book.

University of Pennsylvania

GRETCHAN CONDRAN

The Origin of the Whig and Democratic Parties: New Jersey Politics, 1820-1837.

By HERBERT ERSHKOWITZ. (Washington: University Press of America, 1983. xiv, 286p. Map, tables, bibliography. \$23.00.)

In the 1960s the works of Lee Benson and Richard McCormick spurred a number of scholars to re-examine the state politics of the 1820s and 1830s and to probe into the process of party development that led to the establishment of the "Second Party System." One of the many dissertations on the subject was that of Herbert Ershkowitz which has been often cited, and praised by Edward Pessen as "fine and detailed." Now under the title *The Origin of the Whig and Democratic Parties*, it has been published in a revised and somewhat condensed version.

Ershkowitz is known to scholars in the field through a number of articles and papers which have been characterized by wide ranging research and even-handed interpretation. These qualities mark the present book as well. Not only has Ershkowitz mined thirty-three manuscript collections, the most useful of which is the Samuel Southard papers, but also thirty-two newspapers some of which, such as the *New Jersey Journal*, the *New Jersey Eagle*, the *Trenton Emporium* and the *Newark Sentinel of Freedom*, have extant runs for the entire period. In structuring his study Ershkowitz prefers what he calls a "third model" between the poles represented by the Progressive emphasis upon economic conflict and the more recent "electoral machine" view of parties. His major thesis is that "the political parties of the Jacksonian era were neither strictly ideological nor were they electoral machines. They were, instead, composed of persons of varying motives, some of whom were drawn to the parties by reasons of personal ambition and some of whom were drawn to them by . . . principles."

The book is divided into two parts which coincide with what Ershkowitz believes were two distinct periods of party development. The years from 1820 to 1828 featured the "Displacement of the Federalist and Republican Parties"; those from 1829 to 1837 formed a period characterized by a "Two Party

System in Operation." The chapters dealing with the first period focus on the moving about of political leaders. While the detail in these chapters is interesting and reveals much about the nature of politics in the 1820s, Ershkowitz's main argument is that in contrast to the long held position of the Progressive historians there were no clear lines of continuity from the Federalists and Republicans of the earlier period to the groups that contested the election of 1828. The Jackson Party and the National Republicans were new coalitions. There were few significant differences between these groups and neither "emerged as a party of reform."

The remaining chapters deal with the consolidations of the two major parties by the mid-1830s. In rough terms, the two new parties were in place after 1828. However, labels were slow to evolve, some elite leaders jumped ship for one reason or another and voter behavior remained in flux. Only gradually did the new parties extend their influence into state politics. "Few differences appeared between the parties either on state or national issues before 1832." In three issue-oriented chapters on banks, canals and corporations, Ershkowitz details the complex path by which the emerging parties came to stand on opposite sides in these debates. If, in the end, his picture bears a resemblance to that of the Progressive historians, it is a modest resemblance indeed.

The chapter on electoral support for each of the new parties takes a similar position. "The Whig party had its greatest strength in New Jersey's urban centers, in townships with concentrations of Quakers in former Federalist counties, and in counties in which persons of English origins predominated. On the other hand, the Democratic party was strongest in agricultural areas, in former Republican areas and in townships with concentrations of persons of Dutch and German ethnicity." He concludes by disagreeing with McCormick that there were no differences between the Whig and Democratic parties. At the same time, he argues that those differences which existed did not reflect the deep social and ideological cleavages portrayed by the Progressives.

This is a useful, well researched and fair minded book that must be read by all the scholars in the field.

Lehigh University

WILLIAM G. SHADE

Emulation And Invention. By BROOKE HINDLE. (New York: New York University Press, 1981. xii, 162p. Illustrations, index. \$22.50.)

In *Emulation and Invention*, delivered as the Phelps Lectures at New York University, Brooke Hindle writes on the nature of the creative impulse in "mechanical technology." Historians will recognize this current work as an

expansion of Hindle's previous work on the connections of art and technology in America in the first half of the nineteenth century [in *The Pursuit of Knowledge in the Early American Republic*. A. Olesen and S.C. Brown, eds., (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1976), pp. 84-116]; and Eugene S. Ferguson's "The Mind's Eye: Nonverbal Thought in Technology," [in *Science*, v. 197 (1977), pp. 827-836]. Hindle's major concern is to distinguish the act of mechanical invention from other areas of human creativity, and by so doing to stake out a separate realm for the history of technology. Two case studies—Fulton's steamboat and Morse's telegraph—demonstrate the author's thesis that mechanical invention is the product of a spatial, nonverbal intelligence. The case studies are each followed by a "pictorial essay" in which Hindle has assembled sixty-seven "images" relevant to these inventions. An important sub-theme is an analysis of the factors in the American environment which encouraged technology.

In recounting the development of the steamboat and telegraph, Hindle is able to counter effectively the notion, institutionalized by the patent system, of the invention as a single new idea. Interestingly, however, the "heroic" or "great man" theory of invention—albeit in the guise of an engineer-designer—is at the heart of Hindle's account. Hindle shows that for both the steamboat and the telegraph the real inventions were the acts of spatial imagination which "fit" together for the first time components which had previously been developed but never successfully engineered and designed into a working product. Hindle also argues against what historians of technology refer to as a "demand-pull" theory of invention. Inventions, he writes, are more the products of new perceptions than responses to critical needs or problems.

The creative act of mechanical invention, Hindle believes, results from an "exercise in spatial thinking,"—a vision in the mind of the inventor—and is a separate type of intelligence, equal to but entirely different from verbal and analytical intelligence. Science, although concerned with the same phenomena and requiring spatial ability, is different from technology because it is dependent "upon the sequential, linear logic derived through man's greatest invention: verbal language" (p. 133). Thus, technology should not be viewed as applied science. It is significant, according to Hindle, that Fulton and Morse, as well as many mechanics and inventors of the early national period, were artists, and were thus adept in spatial thinking. Inventors, mechanics, and artists learn best the nonverbal skills of spatial thinking through emulation, rather than by the more classical or literary form of education. Hindle briefly discusses recent studies in brain physiology which seem to give experimental verification to the existence of a distinct type of intelligence in the right hemisphere which is visual, auditory, and tactile; as opposed to the left hemisphere, which is verbal and sequential.

Scholars of American cultural and intellectual history will have problems with the thesis of this work. Although Hindle devotes the first chapter to describing the great enthusiasm for technology in post-Revolutionary America, he cannot explain the “bubbling” enthusiasm in America for machines, except by referring to such generalities as a shared Western heritage and a familiarity with machines. In the concluding chapter Hindle writes of the absence of structure and rigidity in America which allowed for innovation. But while this may account for the lack of opposition to technology, it does not explain America’s love of the machine. Certainly invention requires spatial ability, but there are cultural and intellectual influences which motivate the inventor. Charles Willson Peale devoted his energy and time to invent machines which would “encrease the comforts of life,” and not merely because he was an artist with a spatial orientation.

Hindle has written a graceful and intelligent essay, but historians must question whether “the mind of the individual inventor” gifted with spatial intelligence “was the ultimate key” to the technological progress in America (p. 56). Such a view makes the specific American cultural and intellectual environment a mere stage set or backdrop. One does not have to accept a deterministic scheme of things to ascribe to history—one’s time and place—a greater influence.

The Charles Willson Peale Papers

SIDNEY HART

Carl Schurz: A Biography. By HANS L. TREFOUSSE. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1982. xiii, 386p. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$29.50.)

Hans L. Trefousse has given us another distinguished biography of a Radical Republican. Author of the standard works on Ben Butler and Benjamin Franklin Wade, Trefousse is adept in crafting rich political narratives out of the public lives of middle-level Republican leaders. Carl Schurz deserves such treatment. An antislavery leader during the 1850s, Lincoln’s first Minister to Spain, a moderately successful political general during the Civil War, author of an influential report on postwar conditions in the South, United States Senator from Missouri, Liberal Republican leader, cabinet member, civil service reformer, famed independent, and outspoken anti-imperialist, Schurz belies the surprising judgment Trefousse offers in the preface that “none of these accomplishments would earn him more than a subordinate place in the history of his time” (p. viii). As Trefousse himself shows in this well-researched, clearly written biography, Schurz played important public

roles for half a century and had a knack for thrusting himself forward at many of the most critical political junctures of his age.

If Trefousse downplays the lasting significance of his subject's formal political accomplishments, he does so in the service of this book's stated thesis: Schurz's "great role" was that of "teacher and leader of German-Americans" (p. viii). The theme of ethnic politics pervades Trefousse's account of Schurz's life. Embracing a distinctive amalgam of what later generations would term the melting-pot ideal and ethnic pluralism, Schurz became the most famous and successful ethnic politician of the nineteenth century. In his every political task, this celebrated former student-leader of the German revolution of 1848 capitalized upon his identity as a German-American and persuaded two generations of party politicians that he was the key to the German vote. Yet while Trefousse has imaginatively brought the ethnocultural voting hypothesis to biography, his account of Schurz's electoral importance may not persuade devotees of the ethnocultural school. On the much-debated matter of whether most rank-and-file Germans followed leaders like Schurz into the GOP in 1860, Trefousse sidesteps a bit by declaring that, whatever the electoral realities, the important thing is that Schurz "convinced [Republican as well as Democratic leaders] of his decisive influence" (p. 94). Surprisingly absent from this study, given its thesis, is a detailed discussion of the values, wants, and political expectations of the ordinary German-Americans Schurz purportedly led. How often and in what manner Schurz spoke to their cultural, communal, and ethnic concerns goes largely unexplored.

More important and persuasive than the ethnic-politics thesis is Trefousse's deft account of how Schurz merged his monumental political ambitions with the cause of Radical Republicanism during the 1850s and 1860s. Schurz's appetite for his own political advancement was insatiable. Trefousse compares it to Lincoln's own, and, indeed, the reader is reminded of William H. Herndon's description of his law partner's ambition as "a little engine that knew no rest." Trefousse's best chapters show Schurz's greed for prominence as his career soared after 1856, and some of the book's finest passages place him in the company of his fellow career politician, Lincoln. The author's tale of the machinations in which Schurz engaged to have the President name him Minister to Spain in 1861 makes marvelous reading. Yet few readers of this biography will doubt that Schurz was genuinely and passionately committed to antislavery and, after the war, to the forceful, radical reconstruction of southern society. For this phase of his subject's career, at least, Trefousse is thoroughly persuasive in his conclusion that Schurz had not abandoned the revolutionary principles of his youth, but only adapted them to America. In the details he gives and the stories he tells, the author makes plain how political ambition was put to the service of radical purposes. To judge from Schurz's

early career, the debate over whether the Radical Republicans were moved mainly by politics or principle has been overdrawn; the two were inseparable.

The later phase of Schurz's career, when he "abandon[ed] his radical outlook to become identified with the decidedly unrevolutionary liberal movement," presents the familiar historical problem of assessing how much a man changed and what, precisely, remained the same (p. 182). Trefousse is less attracted to the liberal Schurz than to the radical one and, despite admirable efforts, less able to explain him. Why he abandoned radical Reconstruction, why civil service reform became his passion, and why the cause of black equality apparently ceased to concern him are all given the attention they merit, yet the explanations are muddled. Indeed, Trefousse is not entirely consistent on whether and to what degree Schurz's liberal brand of politics was different from his radical one. Certainly the ambition remained; so did his perpetual self-identification as the political leader of German-Americans. Other (dis)continuities are less clear. Trefousse says that Schurz gave up the cause of blacks (and then reclaimed it late in life amidst his attack on imperialism), but it is not obvious that black equality had ever been a high personal priority for Schurz. Trefousse's closing judgment that—despite the changes he went through—Schurz always "remained true to the liberal and democratic ideals of his youth" is neither proved nor disproved by this book (p. 299). The author, to his credit, confronts the sticky problem of consistency, but he does not fully resolve it.

Except for his ambition (and some occasional comments on his poor financial judgment), Schurz the man does not come fully alive in Trefousse's biography. This is particularly true in the author's scattered accounts of Schurz's relationships with the two women in his life: his wife, Margarethe Meyer Schurz, and his lover (later in life, after Margarethe's death), Fanny Chapman. Schurz often ignored Margarethe and put his career far ahead of his marriage; she, for her part, was anything but a submissive politician's wife, sometimes refusing even to visit—let alone reside—where her husband's ambition took him. But in his relations with Fanny, Schurz behaved differently, even to the point of making career decisions in order to be near her. They never married. These things pique the reader's curiosity, but—in fairness to Trefousse—explaining such matters was not his purpose. Rather, Trefousse has written a good, modern account of the public life of a figure who pioneered the practice of ethnic politics and exemplified mid-and-late-nineteenth-century political leadership in several of its most creative and successful guises.

The Politics of Race in New York: The Struggle for Black Suffrage in the Civil War Era. By PHYLLIS F. FIELD. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982. 264p. Maps, tables, appendices, bibliography, index. \$19.50.)

There have been several studies of the black suffrage struggle in New York state, most notably those by Dixon Ryan Fox, John Langley Stanley, and Herman D. Bloch. But we have long needed an analysis, including all the tenets of the new political history, of this important subject. Despite some serious shortcomings, *The Politics of Race in New York* meets this need.

The main features of the suffrage struggle in New York are fairly well known. Three times, in 1846, in 1860, and 1869, black suffrage was turned down by the voters, and only the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 gave blacks this long-sought right. But with the effective use of quantification, and a clear analysis of the statistical material in election returns, Field has filled in the picture, presented much previously overlooked information on some of the groups in favor of and opposed to black suffrage, and reached some interesting and sometimes unexpected conclusions.

From her analysis it is clear that support for equal suffrage came from areas of substantial New England, Welsh, Scotch and English settlement. Opposition came from working class districts, especially those peopled by the Irish and to a lesser extent, the Germans. Both appeared to have been greatly influenced by Democratic Party racist propaganda depicting an influx of blacks from the South once equal suffrage was secured. Areas inhabited by native-born groups other than Yankees and Dutch were generally hostile to black voting. Towns where many New Jerseyites had settled were almost exclusively anti-black suffrage. The eastern part of the state tended to be more anti-suffrage than the western and northern regions. Equal suffrage did not do well in cities where competition between whites and blacks for jobs was intense.

The Liberty Party emerges from Field's study with high honors for equalitarianism. Unfortunately, because of its small size, it had little effect on the outcome of the balloting. The Republican Party could have, but as Field makes abundantly clear Republicans agreed on the *principle* of black suffrage, but split on how much to risk politically in its behalf, with the pragmatists invariably winning out over the advocates of racial equality. Moreover, some Republicans were quite willing to compete with the Democrats in racist attacks on black suffrage. While much of this Republican ambivalence towards black equality has been spelled out in recent years, no study has done this as effectively as has Field in her presentation.

Field also demonstrates that, in the end, the Republicans were literally forced to adopt a united attitude in favor of black suffrage. The fact that the Republican Party had been responsible for black suffrage in the South, and had endorsed the Fifteenth Amendment, compelled the New York Republicans to

join together in pushing for equal voting rights for blacks and to get out the vote in the 1869 referendum. Even at that the referendum was defeated, but at least the Republicans emerged from the campaign, unlike the situation in 1860, with some honor. Although the Democrats tried to withdraw New York's ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, the Grant administration ignored the effort and declared the amendment ratified on March 30, 1870. As if to atone for past neglect on the black suffrage issue, the next Republican legislature in 1872 rescinded the resolutions which the Democrats had passed and by which they hoped to revoke the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. Thereafter black males voted in New York with little resistance.

While a significant work, this is also an uneven one. The opening chapter, "The Tradition of Discrimination," relies too much on a few sources, especially Litwack's *North of Slavery*. It shows no awareness of such new studies as Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850*, George E. Walker, "The Afro-American in New York City, 1820-1860," a Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation and John B. Jentz, "The Anti-Slavery Constituency in Jacksonian New York" (*Civil War History*). The last-mentioned is important in revealing that important sections of the New York City working class supported anti-slavery and equal rights for blacks, and might have modified some of Field's simplistic conclusions.

A more serious weakness is the treatment of black activity in the suffrage movement. Field tells us that the "most dedicated group supporting equal suffrage proved to be New York's black community" (p. 59). But she tells us little about this "dedicated group," and its work in behalf of equal suffrage. She has only one reference to Dr. James McCune Smith, that remarkable black physician and civil rights activist, who was in the forefront of several of the battles for equal suffrage. She devotes more attention to Frederick Douglass, but, as a whole, the treatment of blacks and of their activity in behalf of suffrage is inadequate. Only in the chapter "Black Suffrage and the Electorate, 1860" (which is also the best chapter in the book, with a detailed picture of Democratic Party racism) does the role of blacks emerge. Between page 146 and page 198 which begins the concluding chapter, blacks disappear from the suffrage struggle. And in the twelve page conclusion, Field does not once mention the role of blacks in the suffrage struggle.

But while the book certainly suffers from an unduly narrow focus, Field has produced an impressive analysis of one of the crucial issues of the Civil War era. I only wish it had been a more rounded treatment on the subject.

In the Eyes of the Law: Women, Marriage, and Property in Nineteenth-Century New York. By NORMA BASCH. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982. 255p. Appendix, bibliography, index. \$19.50.)

Professor Basch has written an important book on two levels. First, she expertly outlines the legal boundaries of married women's lives in the first half of the nineteenth century. Second, she demonstrates the complexities of the New York drive for reform in women's rights during the period 1820-1860. On both subjects *In the Eyes of the Law* includes significant new information and interpretations. Particularly compelling is Basch's rejection of Mary R. Beard's Blackstone thesis, for which she substitutes a sophisticated analysis of the goals and needs of New York women's rights activists in the nineteenth century. Such a reinterpretation has been needed, and Basch performs the task without damaging the valuable, enduring portions of Beard's work on the legal status of American women.

The first three chapters of *In the Eyes of the Law* focus on the theory and the reality of women's rights in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Here Basch's research, although focusing on New York property law, applies to the situation of most American women. In addition to providing an excellent summary of changing statutory provisions on women's property rights, the book analyzes the influence of commentators (including William Blackstone, Tapping Reeve, Joseph Story, and James Kent) on the status of women, delineates the relationship between equity law and the common law, and discusses significant nineteenth-century New York cases on various aspects of property law. The chapters provide a fine summary of our current understanding of women's property rights, particularly in the antebellum period. But this is not for the beginning student of legal or women's history, because Basch often assumes knowledge of legal terms and historical arguments.

Chapters four to six concentrate on the early women's rights movement in New York state. Here Basch demonstrates the subtle interplay between three disparate forces that together brought about passage of the Married Women's Property Act of 1848 and the Married Women's Earnings Act of 1860. The statutes resulted from "a confluence of interests"—New Yorkers' concern over the ineffectiveness of debtor-creditor legislation, a desire for more complete codification, and embarrassment regarding outmoded laws on women's property rights. Perhaps no single issue could have moved conservative New York assemblymen to change the law in this area, but together they proved to be a powerful force for reform.

Legislators may have been embarrassed by certain aspects of the old laws, but they were still afraid of the "new woman" and what she represented. In the final two chapters of her study, Basch demonstrates that contrary to current historical belief, reform in the area of women's property rights in nine-

teenth-century New York was not revolutionary. Legislators purposefully wrote the laws to be vague, thereby leaving many questions open for judicial review. According to Basch, the courts ruled consistently against the right of wives to act independently of husbands in managing property. Instead, courts used the new statutes in much the same way they had used equitable precedents earlier, to provide certain women with protection in certain instances. As a result, the intent of the acts of 1848 and 1860—to give women the same property rights enjoyed by men—was not enforced, and women had to wait decades longer for even a semblance of equal property rights.

Basch asks the question women's rights advocates of the mid-nineteenth century also pondered, "Why was the legislation so ineffectual?" She concludes that the pervasiveness of the Blackstonian ideal of marital unity thwarted the first attempts at legal change. The strength of that standard—a standard, Basch notes, that persists even today—made meaningful reform impossible. This is the point where Basch differs with Beard. Beard criticized nineteenth-century suffragists for placing too much emphasis on Blackstone and too little on equity law precedents that mitigated the hardships of the common law. They therefore misrepresented their status, creating misunderstanding and ill will rather than the pride and strength they should have promoted. But Basch explains that while the suffragists did overemphasize Blackstone, they did so self-consciously. Stanton and her colleagues exploited Blackstone's statements as a convenient ideological backdrop to their arguments against the pervasiveness of the ideal of marital unity. They correctly perceived what Beard did not, that equity law could not change their status, just as the statutes of 1848 and 1860 could not, due to the continuing belief in unity of person. That basic premise had to be shattered, before women could gain equal rights to property.

Basch is strongest when discussing the relationship between the women's rights movement in antebellum New York and legal reform. She argues persuasively that reformers used the demand for better property legislation as a way of introducing even more radical proposals. Without the push of the movement for property rights—moderate in its stand that women needed such rights to protect their traditional homemaking and childrearing roles—legislators could have avoided more easily questions on suffrage. In this respect, then, the debates over savings accounts and life insurance policies served as a bridge between the private world of family and the public world of political activism.

Historians of early American law and policy, as well as social and women's historians, will find *In the Eyes of the Law* a valuable book. Basch succeeds at a task few legal historians seem able to master. She writes about difficult issues in

a clear and straightforward manner, thereby making her work accessible to the general student of history.

University of Maryland
Baltimore County

MARYLYNN SALMON

Abraham Went Out: A Biography of A.J. Muste. By JO ANN OOIMAN ROBINSON. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982. xvii, 341 p. Frontpiece, bibliography, index. \$22.50.)

A.J. Muste was a remarkable person. Born in the tiny Dutch port of Zierekzee in 1885, he emigrated with his parents six years later to the United States, where they settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan. As followers of the Reformed Church of America, the Mustes sent A.J. to church schools, and he turned naturally toward the ministry. Soon, though, he began to outgrow his cramped immigrant background. He attended classes at Union Theological Seminary, worked on New York's Lower East Side, and cast his Presidential ballot for Eugene V. Debs. With the onset of the First World War, the Reverend Muste—after a brief period of indecision—became a pacifist. Dismissed from his Congregational pulpit, he found employment for a time with the Friends Meeting of Providence, Rhode Island. Subsequently, he veered leftward, becoming a leader of the bitter Lawrence textile strike, general secretary of the Amalgamated Textile Workers, director of Brookwood Labor College, organizer of the American Workers Party, and national secretary of the Trotskyist Workers Party. Nor was this the end of his political journey. After a spiritual revelation, Muste returned to the church and pacifism. In the next three decades, he became secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a prominent advocate of nuclear pacifism, a sharp critic of Niebuhrian neo-orthodoxy, America's best-known promoter of non-violent resistance, and the most important leader of the struggle against the Vietnam War. Indeed, it is impossible to make sense of the diverse aspects of twentieth-century American radicalism without exploring the influence of this extraordinary individual.

As the first scholarly biography of A.J. Muste, *Abraham Went Out* is a work of major significance. Drawing upon numerous manuscript collections, including Muste's own papers at the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Jo Ann Robinson has done a fine job of illuminating Muste's lengthy and fascinating career. The writing is clear and, on occasion, moving; the research thorough; and the organization logical. Although it is difficult to avoid some overlap when recounting a life of such sweeping concerns, Robinson has

managed to keep repetition to a minimum and to find a unifying theme in Muste's extraordinary personal growth. At the same time, she refrains from proffering an hypothesis to explain the breadth of Muste's interests, the intensity of his commitment, and his unusual charm. Instead, Robinson chronicles a life of extraordinary integrity as it intersected with political events.

What, then inspired the curious phenomenon of A.J. Muste—this forty-eight-year-old intellectual forming a revolutionary workers movement; this seventy-four-year-old grandfather painfully scaling the fence of a U.S. nuclear missile base; this eighty-year-old clergyman travelling to war-torn Hanoi to meet with Ho Chi Minh? Muste appears to have discovered the secret of happiness through living a principled life. A striking illustration occurred in 1967, when he and a small band of other pacifists sought to hold an antiwar demonstration outside the U.S. embassy in Saigon. The regime's police immediately arrested them and—after leaving them to roast for a time in the broiling sun—began processing them for deportation. Conscious of the eighty-one-year-old Muste's frailty, one of the pacifists turned to see how he was doing. She recalled: "He looked back with a sparkling smile and with that sudden lighting up of his eyes. . . said, 'It's a good life!'" (p. 208). Having done what was necessary, Muste was content.

Abraham Went Out shows how a person of uncompromising virtue may be not only irrepressible, but can move the world.

*State University of New York
Albany*

LAWRENCE S. WITTNER

To the Lesser Heights of Morningside: A Memoir. By REXFORD G. TUGWELL. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982. xvii, 234p. Index. \$25.00.)

By filling a gap in his previous memoirs, Rexford Tugwell's posthumously published account of the twenty years preceding his appointment to the Roosevelt administration promises to illuminate the intellectual development of a central figure in the New Deal era. Commenting broadly on the people and ideas which most influenced him during his higher education and his early teaching career, Tugwell satisfies at least an initial curiosity about his evolving reputation first as a liberal and then, in the 1930s, as "Rex the Red." And yet, as suggestive as his book is, Tugwell still leaves much to be guessed at.

According to the preface by Leon Keyserling, a former staff chief to Senator Robert Wagner, Tugwell entered the Wharton School in 1911, at the height of progressivism, already set upon a career of liberal reform. But in his text,

Tugwell asserts that college had a critical effect, exposing him to information about social movements "wholly new to me." So too he fell under the spell of social critics Simon Patten and his young protege, Scott Nearing, helping convince him that his career path would lead to public service, not into business. Yet as unsuited as he found himself to the school's business orientation, Tugwell could appreciate the knowledge he gained and feel confident that his criticism of the system in later years was well informed.

Tugwell remained satisfied enough at Wharton well into his graduate career in economics until the conservative University of Pennsylvania trustees decided to fire Nearing for carrying his criticism of business beyond the accepted "orthodox radicalism" of the day, confined to exposing "the sins even the sinners confessed." When Patten was pushed out of the University as well, a disillusioned Tugwell sought escape, finding an opportunity on the faculty at the University of Washington in Seattle. There he completed his political education when he discovered first hand the horrible work conditions nearby loggers suffered. "If I had not before been a convinced collectivist," he wrote of his visits to the logging camps to collect information for the War Industries Board in 1917, "that winter would have made me one."

After a brief stint in Paris at the end of the war, Tugwell took a job at Columbia, offered at Patton's insistence. Although he published frequently and helped develop an early prototype for courses in American civilization which quickly became influential around the country, he found himself passed over in the department and thus started to look for other compensations for his work. This led him in his growing interest in agriculture to an advisory role to several presidential candidates and ultimately to his long association with Franklin Roosevelt.

Tugwell's trip to Russia in 1927 and his outspoken advocacy of collectivist solutions to the problems of the depression undoubtedly contributed to his reputation as a radical within the New Deal. But as this account indicates, his reform vision, although consistent, was never narrowly ideological. If anything, he attempted to blend business principles to the call of higher public needs, largely through strong government regulation. If he was an ardent New Nationalist, as Otis Graham suggests in an incisive afterward, he was so without admiring Theodore Roosevelt. If he was critical of business, he still managed to retain an admiration, instilled at Wharton, for Frederick Taylor's principles of scientific management, even as other critics such as John Dos Passos wrote scathing critiques of Taylorism.

Tugwell's mixture of pragmatism and progressive ideals was not unusual in the New Deal, and one would thus hope to learn more from this account about his interaction with other progressives. Yet aside from his discussion of major academic figures such as Patten and John Dewey, Tugwell leaves political progressives largely in the shadows. He notes his association with Herbert

Croley and the *New Republic* after World War I, but without giving much detail of their relationship. Rudolph Blankenberg, the progressive mayor of Philadelphia while Tugwell was at Wharton, is confined to a footnote, while even fellow brains trusters Raymond Moley and Adolph Berle receive the most routine kind of attention. Indeed details of competitions for undergraduate class positions and internal academic politics receive as much attention as the decisions that led Tugwell to his distinguished career in public life.

In the end, as the title indicates, this book reveals much about some of Tugwell's lesser heights. As interesting as these details are about the private man, they fail to fully reveal the forces which shaped the public man.

George Washington University

HOWARD GILLETTE, JR.

Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America. By MEL PIEHL. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982. xv, 296p. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$19.95.)

The Depression experience evoked an unprecedented expansion in radical activism among American Catholics. Despite little in their historical traditions upon which to draw, priests and Catholic lay people experimented with new ideas, gospel interpretations, and institutions that placed their church in the thick of the battle for industrial unionism and social change. Many of the men and women involved in this upsurge received their first exposure to this religiously-influenced activism from the movement, the newspaper, and the houses of hospitality that all adopted the name, Catholic Worker. This movement, containing a complex mixture of radicalism and reactionary utopianism, class consciousness and European personalism, provided the base from which new approaches to the ills of American society found acceptance within the church. Mel Piehl's history of the Catholic Worker movement adds significantly to the growing body of literature on this important subject which, in the last decade, has included biographies of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, Neil Betten's *Catholic Activism and the Industrial Workers*, Douglas Seaton's book on the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU), and Ronald Schatz's outstanding overview of the Catholic Church and organized labor. Taken together, these works offer much new information on the relationship between religion and the working class.

It was just that relationship that moved Dorothy Day, in 1933, to begin the Catholic Worker. Her youth, as the daughter of a Protestant, Chicago sportswriter, and her early adulthood experiments in the radical bohemian lifestyle of Greenwich Village made her an unlikely leader of a Catholic social

movement. But her genuine, personal concern for the poor and an abiding interest in religion pushed her from secular radicalism to a more spiritual type. When joined by the French peasant and Catholic radical, Peter Maurin, Day's activism acquired a focus and vitality that she had previously lacked. If the blend of agrarian, handicraft utopianism and spiritually-inspired radicalism appeared out of place in Depression-era New York City, the commitment and vigor of the Catholic Worker movement allowed it to spread through many American cities. Its anarchic creed of personal sharing and voluntary poverty earned the Catholic Workers a standing among America's poor and working classes unmatched even by the earlier settlement movement.

Breaking Bread succeeds admirably in placing the Catholic Worker in a larger context. The author's comparisons between that movement and the earlier Protestant Social Gospel are stimulating. His description of Catholic Worker philosophy, from its origins in the European critique of industrialism, through Day's spiritual humanism and Maurin's "green revolution," is the best available. Piehl is also excellent when tracing the contradictory relationship between the personalism and anti-progressive attitudes of the Catholic Workers and the trend of American liberalism. Scornful of bureaucracy, government welfare, and collectivism, Maurin and Day nevertheless provided a congenial atmosphere for the budding Catholic influence in the CIO and the New Deal, and spawned one of the classic documents of Great Society liberalism, Michael Harrington's *The Other America*. In addition, *Breaking Bread* does not ignore the pitfalls, frustrations, and failures of the movement. As Piehl points out, the "Catholic Worker might therefore be considered not primarily as a movement for social change, but as a movement of utopian dissent" (p. 242). This, ironically, at just the time when Catholics were closer than ever before to positions of power and influence within the mainstream of American society.

Breaking Bread, though a fine piece of scholarship, should not, however, be seen as the final word in the story. The recent works on Catholic activism raise nearly as many questions as they answer. Piehl devotes little attention to the role of the Catholic Workers in the anti-Communist hysteria of the post-war era that so severely undercut all forms of trade unionism and social activism. If it was primarily the ACTU, and not Day's group, that was responsible for red-baiting in the CIO, the author can not ignore the fact that the *Catholic Worker* began as a direct competitor of the *Daily Worker*, or that it engaged in anti-Communist rhetoric. Was Catholicism, even of the radical variety, more successful at limiting rather than expanding the range of vision for social change? Similarly, Piehl accepts the outmoded interpretation that the Protestant Social Gospel never developed a following among the American working class. In fact, the AFL sponsored trade-union revivals in many cities between

1912 and 1916 that were patterned after Social Gospel camp meetings. In the Philadelphia revival, Catholic labor leaders worked closely with Protestant ministers, but rarely included priests. How did such apparent anomalies influence the course of Catholic activism in the 1930s? It will take far more detailed and intricate studies of particular cities to reveal the true development and significance of movements like the Catholic Worker. Until then, *Breaking Bread* should serve historians well as the most sophisticated statement on the subject.

Temple University

KEN FONES-WOLF