BOOK REVIEWS


In trying to explain the extraordinary growth and development of Britain’s North American colonies, Adam Smith in 1776 put considerable stress upon the colonists’ “liberty to manage their own affairs their own way” through the representative institutions they had everywhere established under the authority of the British crown. By contriving systems of equitable laws designed to secure to families the products of their labor, those institutions, Smith was persuaded, were far “more favourable to the improvement and cultivation of . . . land” and the spread of property holding and individual economic competence than those of the colonies of either Spain, Portugal, or France. 1 “The case of a free country branching itself out in the manner Britain has done and sending to a distant world colonies which have there, from small beginnings and under free legislatures of their own, increased and formed a body of powerful states,” the philosopher Richard Price observed in the same year, “is a case which is new to the history of mankind.” 2

Strongly seconding these judgments, modern historians during the last century have devoted considerable energy to the study of the transfer of representative government from England to America and its development during the colonial period. During the 1960s and 1970s, a few historians, in imitation of Sir Lewis Namier and other students of British Parliament, undertook to examine systematically for a few places and for short periods the lives and careers of colonial legislators. 3 Yet, the large number of such

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legislators, the obscurity of most of them, and the absence of personal papers for all but a few of them made it extremely difficult to do the sort of rich prosopographical studies produced by the History of Parliament Trust for Britain. As a result, our knowledge about such questions as who served as legislators, how they conceived of their tasks, and how they interacted with their constituents and each other in the public spheres they were helping to create has remained shallow and incomplete.

By calling attention to and teaching us how to use the wealth of personal data in local records, the new social history has increasingly made it possible—with a lot of work—to reconstruct at least the bare outlines of the lives of even quite obscure early Americans. During the past fifteen years, teams of scholars have produced impressive biographical dictionaries for the legislatures of South Carolina and Maryland. The first in a projected three-volume project that will cover the years from 1682 to 1790 and include biographies of about 1,100 people, the even more ambitious volume here reviewed represents a highly successful effort to do the same for colonial and revolutionary Pennsylvania. Treating the years from the establishment of the Pennsylvania legislature in 1682 through 1709, it contains entries on the 338 men who were elected to either the assembly or, before the legislature became unicameral in 1701, the council and from the three lower counties of Delaware before they obtained an independent legislature in 1704. Like existing dictionaries for South Carolina and Maryland, it provides information on date and place of birth, family, education, pre-immigration history, occupation and economic activities, landholding, religious affiliation, and officeholding. But this volume goes well beyond its predecessors in the depth of detail it offers on each individual's public activities. Depending upon a combination of available material and extent of legislative and other public activities, the length of individual life histories ranges from a few paragraphs up to thirty columns. Each sketch concludes with an extensive note on sources and references to known collections of personal papers and portraits.

Introductory sections and appendixes contain much valuable supplementary material. These include the authors' informed summary of the principal themes and issues that dominated legislative politics; lists of members and assembly officers, committee members, laws passed at each session, and those involved in the Keithian controversy of 1692-1693; tables showing the

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4 Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1754-1790* (New York, 1964) represented one of the earliest fruits of this effort.


religious affiliation of legislators and attendance at meetings of the council; and figures illustrating the length and type of legislative experience among representatives, their age at first election, religious affiliation by constituencies, patterns of officeholding, occupations, geographical origins and places of last residence before settlement in the Delaware Valley, and kinship ties to other legislators.

A preliminary reading of the biographies suggests that, throughout these early years of settlement, Pennsylvania legislators were mostly men who were busily engrossed in creating a space for themselves and their families and communities in their new Delaware Valley homes. Rarely extending over long periods of time, their largely volunteer and part-time activities as legislators represented an endeavor to secure the fruits of their collective labors through the creation of a coherent sociopolitical and legal order. None had ever had any experience in either the English, Irish, or Scottish parliaments. Relatively few served for more than five terms. Annual turnover rates usually ran from sixty to eighty percent and only once dropped to twenty percent. Although David Lloyd, the most visible legislator in this period, was a lawyer and many of the more prominent representatives were overseas traders or provincial officeholders, most seem to have come out of middling social origins and to have improved their situations only modestly in the Delaware Valley. Having been glovers, fellmongers, pewterers, bakers, brewers, linen drapers, glassmakers, or yeomen farmers in the old world, they engaged in multiple occupations—often some combination of trade, farming, and artisanry—in the new.

They also came not, as David Hackett Fischer has recently argued, predominantly from what he calls the North Midlands of England but from a wide area of central, southern, and northern England. Of the 193 English and Welsh immigrants whose place of origin and residence is reasonably certain, just thirty-nine (20.2%) came from the area conventionally known as the North Midlands. Another thirty (15.5%) came from the north country, including Yorkshire, Lancashire, Westmorland, and Durham, while 14 (7.25%) derived from North Wales. A far larger number (over 54.1%) came from farther south, sixty (31.1%) from the south and southwestern midlands, twenty-seven (13.9%) from London and the home counties, twelve (6.2%) from the counties along the south coast, six (3.1%) from south Wales, and five (2.6%) from East Anglia.

Testing of the Fischer thesis is only one of the myriad possible uses to which the extensive data base provided by this marvelous volume can be put in the quest to achieve a fuller understanding of the origins, nature, and function of representative institutions in early America. Its authors, sponsors, and publisher deserve the heartiest praise for their achievement. One hopes that their example will inspire still other states to undertake similar projects.
In the meantime, this reviewer eagerly awaits publication of the final two volumes of the project.

University of California, Irvine

JACK P. GREENE


The first volume of The Correspondence of Henry Melchior Mühlenberg was published in 1986. Since then Kurt Aland together with Beate Köster and Karl-Otto Strohmidel and their assistants have adhered to an impressive schedule of publishing one volume every other year. While volumes one and two covered thirteen (1740-1752) and ten (1753-1762) years, respectively, the third volume spans only six years, thereby attesting indirectly to the enormous growth of Mühlenberg’s influence and responsibilities in the period extending from the end of the French and Indian War to the recessionary impact of the Townshend Act. As in many multivolume series, the most recent book (volume three) constitutes a distinct and coherent segment of the letters to and from the patriarch of the Lutherans in North America, yet it is also an integral part of the complete edition, which means that the latest volume cannot be read without the preceding volumes at hand. The editorial methods and the list of archival materials for the entire series appear only in the first volume (with important additional materials listed in volume three [pp. 687-690]), and many of the issues that concern Mühlenberg’s ministry in Pennsylvania and the adjoining colonies extend over long periods of time quite irrespective of the dictates by which editors and publishers have to abide.

As in most editions of such complexity, there is opportunity for praise and regrets. Overall, the care with which the material is presented and referenced (especially the extensive cross-referencing of all of Mühlenberg’s writings in the endnotes to each document) is highly commendable. The absence of a subject index is regrettable, however, since only the well-informed specialist can make efficient use of an index that covers the names of persons and places and the register of the letters by authors and recipients. Maps of Germany and the North American colonies showing the locations of the most frequently mentioned towns and congregations would have been helpful. A certain unevenness in the scholarly apparatus demonstrates the difficulties all editorial projects face that embrace two cultures on two continents but that are primarily based in one or the other. In this case, the proficiency of
Aland and his staff favors the German side of the story—to the great advantage of the American scholar whose access to reference materials that illuminate the careers of ministers, professors, and government officials in the eighteenth century is often severely limited. The background offered for the more ordinary people in the American colonies (vestrymen as opposed to ministers, for example) is less complete, and the editors' grasp of the American context is less firm than the biblical and theological framework provided for the letters by Mühlenberg and his correspondents. An American translation of Mühlenberg's correspondence might adjust this imbalance.

The scope of Mühlenberg's letters is vast, most of them in German, some in English, a few in Latin, and several with a spattering of Greek and French, ranging from certificates for parishioners (no. 269) to the greetings extended to Governor John Penn upon his arrival in the colony (no. 283). The heart of Mühlenberg's correspondence is found in his reports to superiors in London and Halle—and their replies—in which three major themes dominate. The first centers on Mühlenberg's move to Philadelphia (1761) in his effort to prevent the congregation of St. Michaels from splitting into two opposing factions. The difficulties among the German Lutherans in Philadelphia mirrored the tensions in many other congregations. Much of Mühlenberg's energy was spent in bridgebuilding among the ever increasing number of communities of German settlers without compromising his unwavering commitment to planting Lutheranism in America. The need for a reliable supply of suitable ministers is the second important—and interconnected—theme. Mühlenberg and most of his brethren sent from Halle to minister to the German Lutherans in Pennsylvania were constantly overworked and at times severely depressed about the inability of their mother church in Europe to grant them more support. Especially in 1767 and 1768, when many congregations carried heavy debts because they had expanded in number and built more and larger churches and schools, Mühlenberg wrote many letters begging for money. The funds usually collected for the Pennsylvania congregations through Halle were totally inadequate.

From the correspondence, Mühlenberg appears to be totally preoccupied with the well-being of the Lutherans in Pennsylvania and its adjoining colonies. Yet a careful reading of his letters reveals that he is very aware of the political and economic situation. Although direct comments on the Indians, the war, and the recessionary impact of the Stamp and Townshend acts are rare, it is clear that he supported the "church" (proprietary) party over the "Quaker" party in Pennsylvania and that he was openly thankful for the repeal of the Stamp Act, even though he advised the Germans against participating in any riotous action. His correspondence also allows glimpses of his family life. In particular, his decision to send his three oldest sons to Germany for their education is well documented (including references to his
letters to them in English). The wealth of material covered in Mühlengen's correspondence defies brief description, but there is no doubt that his letters deserve to reach a far wider audience than the relatively small group of scholars, students, and interested laypersons who can read these important documents in German.

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MARIANNE S. WOKECK


This is the first volume to appear under the editorship of Barbara Oberg. The reader will be pleased to find no changes in the high editorial standards that distinguish previous volumes in this series.

In an introductory note the editors—no doubt aware of the impatience in some quarters with the slow pace of many of the NHPRC-sponsored multivolume editorial projects—apologize that "the amount of material under our rubric has forced us once again to confine the time span of this volume to four months." They further explain the methods they have taken to quicken their pace, grouping and summarizing, for example, what they describe as "inconsequential" documents. This strategy is certainly necessary, given the mountains of papers in Franklin's French period, but if the abstracted documents are so "inconsequential" to merit only calendar-type entries, why are they extensively footnoted, as many of them are? Such a practice seems inconsistent with expediting the editing.

The subject matter covered in this volume mainly concerns the implementation of the treaties of alliance and of amity and commerce concluded by the United States and France earlier in 1778. Franklin and his fellow commissioners are immersed in maritime matters, especially in trying to arrange convoys for American shipping and in the complexities of privateering. The cast of characters involved is enormous and multinational, and the editors' bibliographical control over a broad range of frequently obscure secondary literature, in French and English, bearing on these subjects is remarkable. The unrivalled expertise of Associate Editor Jonathan Dull shines through in these notes on Franco-American maritime affairs.

Franklin's spirits were raised when he officially received word, February 12, 1779, that he had been appointed sole minister to France. He was thus relieved of the burden of cooperating with Arthur Lee and his turbulent associates, although these individuals, joined in due time by John Adams,
continued to plague Franklin for years to come. In subsequent volumes we can expect more “pure” Franklin and fewer joint productions with Adams and Lee.

Franklin’s social life continues to be illuminated by learned annotations. During 1778 he had time to turn his hand to science, writing a paper on the Aurora Borealis that was published by the Journal de Physique but not, significantly, by the French Academy of Science before whose learned members he initially read it.

It is reassuring to observe that the editors have not fallen into the common trap of being hagiographers of their subject. Franklin is criticized (p. 99) for failing to transmit military intelligence to Congress and (p. 603) for exceeding his instructions in requesting French forces to attack the British in Rhode Island. Such objectivity will be needed in future volumes as controversy continues to swirl about the conduct of the American mission in Paris.

Library of Congress

JAMES H. HUTSON


Smith calls Franklin & Bache a “dual biography” (p. 8). In fact, it is nearer a dual essay. To provide focus, Smith looks at both men through the broad lens of an Enlightenment ideology that he defines as liberal, “affirmative,” and optimistic. The Benjamin Franklin that Smith portrays within this ideology was one who held sympathy for the “exploited and oppressed,” and one who supported “a practical and compassionate sense of morality” (pp. 15-16). Rejecting structural solutions to moral problems, Franklin promoted the “efficacy of human reason” (p. 14), emphasized the critical role of “opinion,” and anticipated that “freedom, education, and the proper environment” would produce “civic virtue” (pp. 20, 28) and would instill in individuals “a sense of obligation to live not only for oneself, but also for others” (p. 47). Playing down both classical republicanism and Lockean liberalism, Smith suggests that Franklin articulated a philosophy
that sought to merge private interest with the public good, that Bache inherited this philosophy from his grandfather, and that the Jeffersonian-Republicans carried this moral banner forward into the nineteenth century.

Having failed in his feeble attempts to impose this morality on his own son William or his grandson William Temple, Franklin discovered in his daughter’s first son, Benjamin Franklin Bache, a subject both “malleable” (p. 67) and worthy of improvement through strict philosophical and moral discipline. Smith traces how Franklin whisked seven-year-old Benny Bache off to France and began the process of molding the boy into “an enlightened republican” (p. 69). Acting the full role of surrogate parent, Franklin looked after the details of Bache’s education in the early years and later chose printing and publishing as the proper moral careers for his grandson. Through example and instruction, if not through design, Franklin must have convinced Bache that “unfettered journalism” could be “a force against political injustice” (p. 94).

Because Franklin believed, however, that “a pristine, positive newspaper” was also needed, Bache’s General Advertiser, better known later as the Aurora, was first issued as a journal of broad subject matter directed at improving readers’ lives. But, as Smith clearly shows, Bache was “not about to produce plodding journalism” (p. 112), and with the advent of the French Revolution made his newspaper more polemical. Smith then summarizes Bache’s subsequent attachment to enlightened republicanism and reform, pointing out the pivotal importance of the Jay Treaty controversy for Bache while emphasizing Bache’s attacks on presidents Washington and Adams and several other political foes.

Some readers might find Smith’s Enlightenment paradigm too facile and imprecise. Others may find him too kind in applying moral rectitude to the sometimes manipulative and behaviorist Franklin. His survey of Aurora responses to the issues of the day, while fair in summary and accomplished in brevity, falls short in narrative development. Having made Bache the product of his grandfather’s philosophy and morality, Smith fails to square Bache’s propensity for political confrontation and unrelenting political attacks with Franklin’s clear abhorrence of personal invective and unrestrained journalism. And the implication that the Aurora was a party press, inextricably and primarily linked to Jeffersonian-Republican designs, is not fully proven.

Altogether, however, this extensively researched and documented book is an intelligent addition to the literature on Franklin’s moral philosophy as well as an excellent and long-needed biographic introduction to Bache. Smith is clearly correct in concluding that “Bache, like his grandfather, was among those Enlightenment egalitarians who promoted the idea of a magnanimous
moral code for the American republic that associated virtue with utility and reason with a passion for justice” (p. 164).


In his preface, James Tagg explains why he waited almost twenty years to publish this book based on his dissertation. He was “discouraged somewhat by the celebrity of social history alone in the 1970s” and did not want to publish his work until “it was clear that political and narrative history was going to be revived.” Dissatisfied with the dissertation, he also wanted to take “a different analytic approach.”

The resulting book will not be confused with either social history or Tagg’s relatively subdued doctoral project. Benjamin Franklin Bache and the Philadelphia Aurora may be the most detailed treatment of an eighteenth-century American editor ever published, but it is also perhaps the most overwrought and disappointing. Although thorough in its research, the book does not accomplish its goal of presenting “a more realistic picture of Bache, politics, and the press” than has been available before.

Evidently intrigued by the possibilities of psychohistory, even at a distance of 200 years, the author purports to have found in Benjamin Franklin’s grandson “a fertile field for investigating the development of personal identity” that, in Bache’s case, “bespoke a profound personal psychology and rage.” The adolescent Benny Bache is depicted in a struggle for “personal autonomy” that in turn gave way to “a broader dream regarding world revolution.”

Although a seemingly plausible indictment is offered, such psychoanalyzing flattens a historical figure like Bache beyond recognition. The leading Jeffersonian editor, as national parties emerged, becomes a “pretentious” and “naive” practitioner of revolutionary romanticism. The Bache who advocated universal public education, reforms in criminal justice, and attention to the plight of blacks and the laboring poor is dismissed as a mere “ideologue” who was “premature in supporting the ideal of a broadly cast democracy shouldered by an honest working class of farmers, artisans, and mechanics.”

After more than 400 pages of finding fault with Bache’s hopes that the ideas of the American and French revolutions would spread to other nations and with his attacks on what he saw as monarchical and aristocratic tendencies in the United States, Tagg suggests that Bache was so attached to radical
principles that he would have had no difficulty accepting nineteenth-century notions of a socialist utopia.

Bache was, in fact, no more radical than Paine, Jefferson, or Franklin, all of whom respected and relied on him in one way or another. Bache published Paine's writings, advanced Jefferson's political cause, and, as Franklin apparently hoped, helped keep his grandfather's vision of a more peaceful and egalitarian America alive in the years following his death. The reader of this book will gain little insight into why Franklin spent so much time and money preparing his grandson to follow in his footsteps as a printer and journalist.

Not only does this work lack an adequate sense of the humanitarian aspirations of the 1790s, it also lacks any serious recognition of the actual anti-democratic threats of the time. It was, after all, the relatively moderate Federalist John Adams who proposed having the President addressed as "Majesty" and who signed the Sedition Act of 1798, a statute written to suspend the press clause of the First Amendment. Bache can hardly be condemned, as Tagg does, for depicting the Federalists as a danger to republican government. One does not need to resort to psychological explanations for Bache's anger. The "identity" crisis Tagg claims to discover is not so much Bache's as the nation's.

In contrast to the book's Bache bashing, the Federalists emerge virtually unscathed. With regard to the sedition law (which was created, in large part, in response to Bache and which included the death penalty in an early version), Tagg does go so far as to admit that the party of Adams and Hamilton had "a very limited understanding of civil liberties."

An uninformed reader would barely suspect that on the horizon was Jefferson's "Revolution of 1800," which Bache helped to bring about but did not live long enough to see. Nor would that reader understand why Jefferson would regard Bache as a man "of abilities, and of principles the most friendly to liberty." Bache's newspaper, Jefferson acknowledged, provided "incalculable services" to the Republicans and was their "comfort in the gloomiest days."

_Jeffrey A. Smith

_University of Iowa_
upper Hudson River that ended with Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga and French recognition of American independence. As Max Mintz tells it, this is the story of a reversal of fortunes.

Burgoyne and Gates began their military careers in the British army. Both were men of talent and ambition. But only Burgoyne had the family connections and the money to attain high rank. He was able to turn his aggressive leadership in the Seven Years' War into a seat in Parliament and a generalship in the army. When the American Revolution began, he volunteered to help sustain royal government in the colonies and by 1777 had used powerful friends to gain command of British forces ordered south from Canada to isolate and conquer New England. Gates too had distinguished himself in the Seven Years' War, winning a reputation as an able administrator. Yet he never had the money or the connections to rise above major in the king's service. Frustrated, he sold his commission, moved to Virginia, and developed republican sympathies. After the Battle of Lexington and Concord, he became adjutant general of the Continental Army. Gates proved once again to be a skilled administrator; he also proved to be an ambitious colleague who criticized his superiors and lobbied with members of Congress for independent commands. In August 1777—after other officers had failed to stop Burgoyne's advance from Canada—Gates was appointed to lead American forces assembling near Albany.

In the ensuing campaign circumstance as well as personality clearly favored Gates. The British government had ordered Burgoyne to Albany; it had not made sure that other British generals would cooperate with him. Nor had the government provided all the men, horses, and wagons necessary to sustain an advance beyond Lake Champlain. But Burgoyne went south, trusting that he would be able to solve his transport and supply problems as he went. His aggressiveness and his determination to reach Albany soon carried him beyond his resources. After reaching the upper Hudson, he delayed six weeks to gather supplies. The delay gave Gates time to do what he did best, to build an army out of demoralized militiamen and to take up a formidable blocking position on the road to Albany. When Burgoyne was at last ready to advance, Gates was well prepared to parry his attacks and to wait until cold and hunger had broken the British army.

Although Mintz has provided a dramatic retelling of a familiar story, he has not substantially altered our understanding of that story. His work lacks the precision and sustained analysis to do more than add details to our knowledge of the campaign of 1777. It is not just that Mintz uses scholarly works indiscriminately or that he rarely explains how his interpretations compare with those of other historians. Rather, he seems oblivious to his own drifting explanations. Consider, for example, how he deals with Burgoyne's determination to press on to Albany. He says at first that Burgoyne wanted
to achieve glory, escape a northern winter, and fulfill an obligation to join Sir William Howe (p. 136); he then says that Burgoyne felt bound by his instructions to go to Albany because he was determined to “risk all for victory” and to escape a harsh winter (pp. 156, 176); and finally, he concludes that Burgoyne, bent on glory, could not conceive that he would be unsupported in his drive to Albany (p. 226). Burgoyne’s motives were no doubt complex and shifting, but Mintz’s descriptions are far from precise. Even worse are his attempts to locate the campaign of 1777 in the history of the American War. It is simply not true that Sir Henry Clinton was left after Saratoga as commander in chief of British forces “with only three or four thousand men” (p. 235). Clinton had roughly 25,000 in the middle states. Nor were Americans after Saratoga free “to focus their efforts upon the enemy in the south” (p. 235). Until October 1780, two-thirds of the British army remained at New York with Washington and the French close by.

This is, in short, an attractive but frustrating book.

Rice University

IRA D. GRUBER


This is a book of dramatic contrasts. Shields’s use of unusual and, in many cases, highly entertaining poetry from American colonial pens casts a new, relevant light on the ultimate controversies between mother country and provinces in the 1760s and 1770s. He shows with an original touch how England’s “ethical empire,” based on the desirability and worth of trade, lost its moorings in the era following the Great War of Empire. After Britain’s overwhelming victory in 1763, subtle changes emerged in the mother country-colonial relationship. No longer fearful of the French and freed from the reality of serious Spanish competition, the colonies became obsessed with the accumulation of land and less concerned with the theory of mercantilism and the ties that had long bound Americans to empire. At the same time British policy altered. Imperial administrators as well as the general reading public began to resent the American assumption that England should pay the bills bred by expansion, war, and defense. This ill feeling on both sides of the Atlantic frontier bode no good for the future of the first British empire. The sentiments of disloyalty and alienation that typify the 1760s, Shields implies, had their origins in the decade preceding England’s
signal victory. But as long as commerce and trade were the mortar of empire all might be well.

Shields's book concentrates on the sixty-year period ending in 1750. His research has been prodigious. All historians are in his debt for bringing to light any number of poets and poems that have, in the past, been little known at best. He also demonstrates with finality the importance of the circulated manuscript poem in this period. Such a tactic served to block any legal charges that might be initiated should the verse be published. The author shows the widespread use of these satires, ballads, and other forms of poetry in the political wars of the first half of the eighteenth century. Their importance can no longer be overlooked or underestimated in future monographs. It need also be noted that these colonials wrote witty, clever, and bitingly effective verse. Its quality, bearing in mind the genre, is surprisingly high.

Shields's discussions of Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania are the heart of the book. He is intimately familiar with the sources, and the key to these chapters seems to be the spread of "Boston principles" to the other colonies. His passages on the southern colonies are less successful, but he still makes useful points that call for elaboration at some future date. For instance, he poses a shift in southern thinking that had extraordinary ramifications. In Shields's view, the concentration on "the exchange value of commodities" in the 1720s and 1730s was replaced in the 1750s and 1760s with an "emphasis on agricultural production of staples" (p. 225) with all that such a shift implies. In discussing James Oglethorpe and the colony of Georgia, however, he appears to be on unfamiliar ground. Although he sees Oglethorpe as a sort of link between the empire of trade and that of imperial ambitions, he has missed many secondary sources on Georgia's founder that might have deepened his interpretation. His handling of the Louisbourg and Cartagena expeditions is more than competent, but he includes no treatment whatever of the 1740 expedition led by Oglethorpe against St. Augustine—an expedition that preceded the other two and that precipitated a revealing pamphlet and poetic war that Shields has completely missed. Finally, the spelling errors of proper names (Zinzandorf, David Douglas, and Whitfield in the text on p. 217 but Whitefield in the index) make the reader wonder. Even worse, however, are the factual bloopers that have John Adams presenting his ministerial credentials to Oglethorpe in 1785 (p. 55) and the claim that slavery was outlawed in Georgia by the colony's charter (p. 50). Other factual and interpretive problems puzzle the reader in this section, but there is no time to detail them in this review.

As mentioned in the first sentence of this review, Oracles of Empire is a book of contrasts. Shields's brilliant use of "new" data and his rediscovery of many stimulating poets and verses is sorely compromised by a badly flawed delivery. The author, in fact, finds it difficult to communicate at
crucial times. His overwhelming reliance on jargon and buzzwords—in addition to painful syntactical problems—sorely jeopardizes his meaning. One or two examples must suffice. In an otherwise sensible section on Alexander Martin, which includes an excerpt from one of Martin’s poems, Shields concludes that the author had “amplified the neoclassical ethos of his ode by wedding the pindaric form to a faux-Roman imagery” (p. 34). Even more outlandish: “Cotton Mather lambasted the Old Charter critics with an extended erotema on behalf of his father’s good intentions” (p. 111). Finally, Simon Bolivar made “the most determinative reproclamation of the millennial reversal of the Black Legend” (p. 185). And the buzzwords! Autarky (in many forms), intuited (ditto), conflate, theonomy, topos (in variations), locus, and a whole list of others belabor the reader’s sensibilities. Such style may be de rigeur for papers at MLA conventions, but between hard covers it obscures major points the author is trying to make.

One last caveat. The editing and proofreading of this volume are by no means up to standard and the index is far from complete. To an old author from the University of Chicago stable, it seems inexcusable for a typo to rear its ugly head in the next-to-last sentence in the book (p. 228).

In sum, the volume has value in that it brings fresh ideas and introduces new authors into our historical perception. The book’s message is desperately compromised, though, by Shields’s writing style. Still, I will use one of the quotations from Oracles to clarify my final stand on the worth of the volume: “but he, was no such ninny Oaf,/as nott to know, that half a loaf,/was better than no bread” (p. 158).

University of Georgia

Phinizy Spalding


In six bold, complex essays, Michael Warner challenges “Whig-McLuhanite” models of print history. Emphasizing “the reciprocal” relationship “between a medium and its politics” (p. xii), Warner discards notions of “social changes affected by” a print medium ruled by “its own unchanging logic” (p. 5) with a series of transformations by which the act of publishing, the meaning of political discourse, and the cultural uses of knowledge evolved in complex interaction between 1720 and 1800. Tracing assumptions about the public sphere throughout the eighteenth century, he analyzes the “special conditions” of meaning that “make printed works intelligible as publications” and help shape the political arena (p. xi).
“The *Res Publica* of Letters,” the pivotal second chapter, delineates “one of the most profound and consequential developments of the eighteenth century” (pp. 34-35), a shift from a traditional to a republican culture of print and model of the public sphere. Coinciding with the establishment of colonial newspapers, this shift entailed interaction between “an emerging political language—republicanism—and a new set of ground rules for discourse—the public sphere” (p. xiii). The result was a “new way of perceiving printedness,” as readers imagined themselves as part of a new arena, distinct from the state.

Until about 1720, “customary” print discourse relied on the “common social exchanges” of a public coterminous with the “natural order.” Because “expressly political” debate was rare and signaled “failure in public affairs,” publishing mainly served “as an extension of personal visitation.” Thereafter, “public print discourse” emerged in Boston and down the coast, reconceptualizing the public sphere, differentiating between society and state, and restructuring “relations of power” by establishing “new meanings for the practices of writing, printing, and publication” (pp. 34-36). By the 1750s newspapers “were sustaining an abstract but local political discourse” in which “the *res publica* of letters” was a distinct cultural construct—an imaginary, constructed community never localizable in any relation between persons” (p. 61).

Citizens’ understanding of this fiction—a “new set of ground rules for discourse”—enabled cultural dialogue and shaped a “republican ideology of print” that linked “letters with the public sphere, . . . literacy with virtue, and . . . reading with supervision” (p. 131). Warner’s linguistic interpretation assumes that the “politics of printed texts in republican America lay as much in the cultural meaning of their printedness” as in their substance (p. xi). Four chapters apply this conception of cultural formation: to Franklin as a “republican man of letters”; to the Constitution, in which the “national state grounded its legitimacy not just in the people or the rule of law” but in “print discourse itself” (p. xiv); to a contest in late eighteenth-century America between a republican, “civic humanism paradigm of print” and “a proto-liberal paradigm as an arena for managed esteem and distinction” (p. 138) through the private character values of “politeness, fame and luxury” (p. 151); and to an explication of *Arthur Mervyn* in these terms.

The weakest aspect of this pioneering study is its understanding of power in the emergence and expansion of the public sphere. Warner seriously underestimates the role of religious, legal, governmental, and economic regulation of entrance and legitimacy. A substantial body of scholarship discussing several hundred legal proceedings across all colonies reveals that the public sphere remained deeply contested terrain into the early republic. The long history of changing standards of admission and of legally acceptable
expression comprises a tumultuous struggle to create and amplify a republican conception of the role of print. Colonial governors and legislatures used arrest and bond posting into the 1770s to thwart what they perceived as unlawful intrusions into a public arena governed by their power and controlled by their stewardship. Warner’s angle of vision is valuable; his story is but one phase of a more adversarial and extended conflict in which another discourse—the power of the state—contested every halting step toward a New World republican tradition.

Stockton State College

WILLIAM J. GILMORE-LEHNE

Creating the Bill of Rights: The Documentary Record From the First Federal Congress. Edited by HELEN E. VEIT, KENNETH R. BOWLING, and CHARLENE BANGS BICKFORD. (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991. xxiv, 323p. Bibliography, index. Cloth, $42.50; paper, $10.95.)

Aren’t we fortunate that they had no public opinion polls in 1789? What the documentary records in this volume show is that a poll of James Madison’s fellow congressmen would have revealed their preference that he forget all his campaign promises about a Bill of Rights and instead pay attention to really important matters such as tariffs or tonnage bills or coinage emblems. But Madison persisted, when they called his proposed amendments “a tub to a whale,” and so we can celebrate the close call of 1789. Madison did not believe in popularity contests.

There are other important messages in this excellent compendium of speeches, bills, amendments, and other paraphernalia that eventually gave the new nation a Bill of Rights in 1791. But the clearest message is that it was Madison’s courage and commitment to “the great rights of mankind” that gave the American Revolution its finest fruit: a bill of rights. Madison’s persistence kept the other congressmen from postponing ad infinitum action on the desperate campaign promises of Federalists in 1788. Madison was their conscience; they could not ignore the demands of voters who barely ratified the Constitution. Among all of the men in the House of Representatives assembled in April 1789, none was as aware of how close the squeak had been or how his presence was owing to promises made that had to be kept.

Everybody knows, of course, that Madison was indifferent to a bill of rights until his friend Jefferson sent a raft of letters to Virginia calling for a conditional ratification. Jefferson’s subtle means for extracting a bill of rights certainly drew Madison’s attention from the outset, and when the vote in
the crucial Virginia ratifying convention in June 1788 hung in the balance, he was foremost among the Federalists who promised that they would work for a bill of rights after the delegates ratified the Constitution unconditionally. The closeness of the vote, 88 for the Constitution and 80 against, convinced Madison he had done the right thing; later, in his race to win a seat in the House against James Monroe, Madison underscored his pledge as he again won without landslide proportions.

Thus, as this work shows, Madison was the man of the hour when the promises came due in the First Congress. Discouraged by wayward Federalists, Madison finally forced the issue apologetically. "If I thought I could fulfill the duty which I owe to myself and to my constituents, to let the subject pass over in silence, I most certainly should not trespass upon the indulgence of this house. But I cannot do this." Now the fat was in the fire, and newspapers up and down the coast printed Mr. Madison's proposals. Within weeks the opposition in North Carolina and Rhode Island, the two recalcitrant non-members of the Union, was in full retreat. Madison's idea that the amendments would be considered part of the original Constitution was rejected, but most of his proposed list made it through the committees and forced the Senate to take action. Spared the whims of public opinion pollsters, Congress had the twelve surviving amendments ready for the constitutional process by September. The ratification process took more than three years. As this collection shows, a goodly number of Madison's colleagues thought the entire business a waste of time. The results of the summer's debate, Senator Grayson of Virginia told Patrick Henry, was a list of amendments "so mutilated & gutted that in fact they are good for nothing, & I believe as many others do, that they will do more harm than benefit." The editors might have added, in a footnote, the same kind of comments were issued by congressmen when the Morrill Land Grant Act was passed seventy years later!

A useful "Biographical Gazetteer" and well-planned index enhance the value of this splendid collection.

University of Tulsa

Robert Allen Rutland


In The Selling of the Constitutional Convention, John K. Alexander does several things that are new and interesting. First, he concentrates on the public discussion of the Constitutional Convention before its results were
made known, and in fact even before the Convention convened. He thus demonstrates unmistakably that the debate over the Federal Constitution began well before it was even written and that many of its advocates were prepared to accept the recommendations of the Convention whatever they were, primarily because of their sense of the desperate state of the nation and because of their adoring trust in the delegates. Second, he has some important things to say about the virtual unanimity of the newspaper press of the day on the question of strengthening the central government. Third, he employs an interesting research strategy that in its very simplicity is both effective and well adapted, as far as it goes, to answering certain questions about the eighteenth-century American newspaper press. In the end, however, the book raises as many questions as it answers.

The subject of The Selling of the Constitutional Convention is newspaper coverage of the Convention between February 21, 1787, when the Confederation Congress requested each state to appoint delegates, to the next September 17, when the Convention finished its work. Its method is to assess the relative “popularity” of 114 printed items relating to the Convention by counting the number of times each was reprinted. Well before the American Revolution, the American newspaper press had become characterized by widespread, even systematic, mutual copying up and down the seaboard. Some items got copied more times than others, and some appeared once but were not copied by any other newspapers at all. Alexander’s findings rest upon his analysis of the reprint history of 114 items relating to the Philadelphia Convention that had been identified by the Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Project at the University of Wisconsin, at Madison.

The argument of the book is that nearly all the eighty or so publishers of newspapers in the thirteen states and Vermont consciously prepared the way for acceptance of the Constitution by printing—and reprinting—articles expressing what even then was a recognizably “federal” view and deciding not to copy the relatively few “antifederal” articles that found their sporadic way into print.

This conclusion provides Alexander with the occasion to point out thoughtfully in his preface that the experience of the eighteenth century does not necessarily provide grounds for confidence that greater diversification in the ownership of modern news media might create a freer and more informative press, as some contemporary critics suggest. What it does not do is provoke from Alexander any real probing into the question why the diversely owned press of 1787 demonstrated such “stunning single-mindedness,” as he puts it on page viii, in its treatment of the Constitutional Convention. The suggestions he offers on the last page of his book are neither adequate nor completely persuasive. Especially lacking is any consideration of the likely relationship
between publishers and readers and advertisers in the urban seaboard communities in which most of the papers were printed.

The question of "popularity," interesting as it is, does not fully address the larger question of the place of the newspaper in the political culture of post-Revolutionary America. The reader is never actually asked to consider, in the larger scheme of things, the impact of pro-Convention propaganda in the newspapers might have made.

The reader thus gets the feeling of being exposed—dramatically, creatively, and informatively, to be sure—to one strand in a tapestry of which the author would have done well, through a much more thorough use of recent historiography on both the Constitutional period and the press, to have taken into account. The relative thinness of both material and argument is exacerbated, sadly, by the author's distracting habit of clothing his findings in the political and journalistic jargon of our own time.

University of New Hampshire

CHARLES E. CLARK


*Through a Fiery Trial* relates the history of the first ten years of Washington, D.C., when the capital was being planned and laid out, and when the construction of the official buildings was begun, though not finished by the time the federal government moved there in November, 1800. Without an explanatory preface, the exact purpose of the book is not clear. However, in introducing the endnotes, the author explains that he has "tried to show readers what a good story the history of Washington is, rather than tell them what to think about it" (p. 629). By and large, that is what he has done.

Arnebeck's purpose is, at once, both a strength and a weakness of the book. The strength is that he has packed his more than 600 pages of text with detail after detail; the political, financial, technical, and human problems encountered during the city's first decade are all included. Nothing seems to have been left out. But Arnebeck writes in a half-serious style that does not always do justice to his subject matter. He remarks, for example, that Robert Morris came to New York in 1789, "with a sobriquet that has never failed to impress Americans: he was the richest man in the country" (p. 15). True enough, but what else does it say about Morris, other than that he was reputed to be (and was then) quite wealthy? And, when he strays from the District, Arnebeck is not always reliable. His treatment of Alexander Hamilton's proposals for handling the Congressional and state debts in 1790
(pp. 20-21) reads as if it was lifted from a stray copy of Claude Bowers's old pot-boiler, *Jefferson and Hamilton* (1925). He also repeats the discredited story of the Jay Treaty appropriations being approved by the House of Representatives in 1796 only after the eloquence of Massachusetts's Fisher Ames brought tears to the eyes and ayes from the mouths of obstinate Congressmen (p. 368). It should be noted, however, that the author seldom ventures far from the District, instead narrating just about every incident he could unearth, however important or trivial, related to the construction of the city.

Therein lies the main weakness of the work. Arnebeck's account suffers from too much mind-numbing detail about all the various events that marked the city's history during the 1790s. Seldom, if ever, does Arnebeck step back and give the reader the big picture, just where the city was at that point and how much remained to be done. Nor does he give the reader the benefit of the insights he may be presumed to have obtained from his research. For example, after several extended descriptions of the contest between William Thornton and George Hadfield for the honor of being the architect of the Capitol, a contest which became low comedy on occasion, the author draws no conclusions as to which of the two men was correct in labeling the other's plans dangerous or unbuildable or both.

The historian should not try to escape a major responsibility of his craft—that of understanding the past. If that involves telling the reader "what to think about it," so be it. As long as the author provides sufficient examples drawn from the sources to support and illustrate the argument, no brain washing is taking place. Historians must engage and interpret the sources, not just narrate them. Arnebeck has given readers everything by way of examples, but little understanding of what it all means. The result is an entertaining scrapbook of what might be called the pre-history of Washington, nothing more.

*Fordham University*  
ROBERT F. JONES


On the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Charles Willson Peale's birth, Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward, two of the editors of the Peale Family Papers, have collected fifteen essays that honor his achievements as artist, naturalist, museum operator, author, founding member of the Columbianum and later the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, inventor, farmer/
gardener, and moralist. Written by mature and emerging scholars, these wide-ranging, thoughtful, well-researched papers—nine of which were published earlier—argue for Peale’s distinguished place in American history as an exemplar of contemporary social, political, intellectual, scientific, and cultural life. Developing thematically and more or less chronologically, the essays trace a cohesive narrative through the meandering path of significant events in Peale’s life.

In the American Studies tradition, the authors demonstrate interest in multidisciplinary approaches. Jules David Prown, Charles Coleman Sellers, Lillian B. Miller, Carol Eaton Hevner, David Steinberg, Roger B. Stein, and Therese O’Malley combine art historical attention to technical, formal, iconographic, stylistic, critical, and aesthetic categories with supplemental references to documentary, biographical, literary, political, and philosophical evidence. Following the example set by Lillian B. Miller’s important first book, *Patrons and Patriotism* (1966), Robert J.H. Janson-Lapalme and Karol A. Schmiegel examine Peale’s patrons—the former carefully mapping out kinship and other links among Peale’s sponsors, the latter detailing the taste of his early buyers. Sidney Hart and David C. Ward demonstrate Peale’s debt to such Enlightenment values as order, harmony, and progress, and to such republican concepts as civic virtue and liberty. Stein convincingly argues the importance of European emblems, American nationalism, Linnaean taxonomy, and Lockean psychology to Peale’s world view. Avoiding a nationalistic interpretation in their scholarship, Prown, Miller, Steinberg, and Stein demonstrate British and Continental influence upon Peale’s art, and Hart shows the relevance of British political theory to Peale’s portraits of William Pitt and John Beale Bordley.

Despite the range of topics and approaches, the arguments maintain a consistent assessment of Peale in which there are only minor disagreements. Janson-Lapalme reidentifies Peale’s Thomas Ringgold, Sr., portrait, whereas Schmiegel, in omitting the work, accepts Sellers’s suggestion that it depicts Thomas Ringgold, Jr. A bolder dialogue emerges between Miller’s assessment of Peale’s “inventiveness, originality, energy, and daring” (p. 89) in comparison with Rembrandt Peale’s excellent sense of color, but vastly more limited range, and Hevner’s proposal of the son’s long and important artistic influence upon his father. Still more pronounced is Ward’s critique that O’Malley’s and others’ discussions of Belfield favor aesthetic categories over material ones; this enterprise was “a working farm,” not simply “an ornamental garden,” he asserts (p. 284). But the Peale literature offers the exciting possibility of opposing and conflicting interpretations, the presentation of which in this volume would have allowed a less unified but more critical and complex reading of Peale’s life. If Phoebe Lloyd’s controversial essay had been included and grouped with Miller’s and Hevner’s, the reader could
assess the dynamics of another father-son relationship, the one between Charles Willson Peale and the allegedly prodigal son Raphaelle, a case study in the breakdown of the Enlightenment ideal of domestic harmony. Laura Rigal's work, too, would have added appreciably to the book, bringing to the study of Peale a degree of theoretical complexity and challenging the reader to link Peale's political identification to the Jeffersonian assertion of social control. And finally Ruth Helm's study assesses Peale's commitments to a career in the arts and to a close-knit extended family as choices counterproductive to his chances for success, a critical approach that would have been welcome.¹

As the editors propose in the introduction, "This is a good time . . . to stop and assess the Peale terrain, to see where we came from, what we have done, and from this, to realize what still remains to be done by future scholars of the American scene" (pp. 3-4). Vast accomplishments have been made in collecting and publishing Peale documents, in identifying and cataloguing his artistic and other productions, and in fleshing out the intellectual, political, and cultural world within which Peale lived, yet considerable hard work remains in the realm of interpretation. The papers presented in this volume were researched and written by art historians and historians, and many first appeared in art historical, material cultural, historical, and cultural historical journals. This suggests simultaneously a breadth and a number of gaps in the existing literature. Among the strategies that may inform our next layers of understanding of Charles Willson Peale, I would suggest the need for more theoretically informed readings, more socially and materially grounded interpretations, and a more scientifically sophisticated assessment of Peale's accomplishments. Perhaps the roots of these trends may be found in Roger Stein's theoretically rich examination of historical, pictorial, emblematic, and epistemological levels of meaning²; in Janson-Lapalme's readings of self-interest in acts of patronage; in David C. Ward's tabulations of the labor practices at Belfield; and in Sidney Hart's study of Peale's technological interests. One very specific task that awaits scholarly attention is a critical reading of Peale's act of self-creation in the Autobiography, just as David


² In the original version of his essay, Stein acknowledged such theoretical precedents to his work as Raymond Williams, T.J. Clark, and Nicos Hadjinicolaou (Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies 6 [1981]: 176 n. 2). It is unfortunate that, in revising the essay for this volume, Stein chose to omit those models from his notes.
Steinberg and Roger Stein have already examined the artist’s carefully constructed acts of self-portrayal on canvas. The full promise—and that potential is great—of the *Collected Papers* (microfiche, 1980) and *Selected Papers* (3 vols. to date) has only begun to be realized.

*University of Pennsylvania*  
DAVID R. BRIGHAM


This book pays fitting tribute to two men and the project that bound them for more than two decades. When in the mid-1960s Dartmouth College undertook to collect, edit, and publish the papers of its most famous alumnus, Daniel Webster, its sponsors invited the distinguished biographer of John C. Calhoun to direct the enterprise. This was an audacious choice, not only because of Charles Wiltse’s scholarly reputation as a Calhoun enthusiast, but also because he was entirely unschooled in the arcane methodology of documentary editing.

Wiltse proved to be an ideal editor-in-chief. From 1966, when he moved to Hanover to begin work on a comprehensive microfilm edition of Webster’s papers (University Microfilms, 1971), to 1989, when the final fat volumes of legal papers were published, Wiltse brilliantly directed the enterprise of collecting, evaluating, selecting, editing, and publishing the most representative and historically significant Websteriana in fifteen thick volumes. He edited several of the volumes himself, co-edited others, and proofread all of them, leavening the headnotes and annotations of other editors with his unmatchable knowledge of New Hampshire’s favorite son.

Once the work was completed, in 1989, Dartmouth College organized a symposium to thank Wiltse and celebrate Webster. It invited four leading scholars to deliver papers that would evaluate Webster’s achievement as a politician, orator, lawyer, and diplomat. This book collects those papers, along with a foreword by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist of the United States Supreme Court, an introduction and bibliographical essay by Kenneth M. Shewmaker, and substantial extracts from Webster’s papers, most of them drawn from the Dartmouth project. Despite one major editorial misstep, it is a welcome addition to the Webster canon.

Each of the authors—Richard Current, Irving Bartlett, Maurice Baxter, and Howard Jones—has written often and well on Daniel Webster. Each distills his knowledge and appreciation of Webster’s accomplishments, re-
minding us how versatile Webster was and how deeply he affected his contemporaries.

Current recapitulates Webster’s transition from sectionalism to nationalism and his aversion to party discipline, even as he held tight to party precepts as he perceived them. Despite his obvious talent, Current notes, Webster’s dream of the presidency was unrealistic: his Federalist background, his connections to the Bank of the United States, the impact of sectional prejudice (first directed to him from the South, latterly from the North) all reduced his availability and thwarted his ambition.

Fortunately, Webster could make an enormous contribution without ever realizing his fondest political hope. Baxter summarizes Webster’s remarkable impact on American commercial and constitutional law through his many arguments before the Supreme Court during the latter half of John Marshall’s tenure as Chief Justice. Bartlett captures Webster’s crucially important role as a “guardian” figure who eloquently connected the legacy of America’s founding to the destiny of anxious contemporaries. (Although Bartlett has dealt with this theme in his popular biography of Webster and two important articles, I have read no more compelling analysis of Webster’s oratorical “charisma” than he provides here.) Finally, Howard Jones ably chronicles Webster’s two important tours of duty as Secretary of State under Presidents John Tyler and Millard Fillmore respectively. Drawing on the work of Kenneth R. Stevens and on several of his own important monographs, Jones explains how Webster helped forge detente with the British and how, despite severe obstacles, he concluded and won support for the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842.

Had the publisher reproduced these talks together with Professor Shewmaker’s helpful prefatory and bibliographical comments, this work would have been a modest and satisfying remembrance of Webster and Wiltse. The decision to include selections from the Webster Papers, presumably for the benefit of students and lay readers, unfortunately, trebled the size of the book to no discernible advantage. While it is pleasant to have at hand once again some of Webster’s most pungent correspondence and excerpts from several of his most impressive orations, the fact remains that all of this material is readily available in published form. Few casual readers are likely to pick up this book, and no serious students will cite the documents reproduced here when they can go to the fifteen volume set or the microfilm edition which provides the documentary foundation for it.

This flaw is regrettable, but it is no more fatal to the volume than Webster’s well-known foibles were fatal to his reputation as one of America’s greatest statesmen. Charles Wiltse would hate the waste of paper, but without question he would applaud such attention called to “the completest man.”

_gettysburg college_  
_Michael J. Birkner_
By SHANE WHITE. (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1991. xxix, 278p. Tables, index. $35.00.)

This book is an excellent addition to the extraordinarily rich literature about American slavery and emancipation. Shane White’s analysis of racial bondage in New York City and its rural environs, its demise during the post-Revolutionary decades, and the nature of the life and culture of blacks, both slave and free, challenges and refines many conventional historical views. In the process, White’s book sheds considerable light on the history of New York City itself, and it thus assumes a well-deserved place among another set of recent remarkable volumes about the city authored by Sean Wilentz, Christine Stansell, Paul Gilje, Graham Hodges, and Elizabeth Blackmar.

One of the book’s major arguments concerns the way in which slavery ended. New York City was “the center of the heaviest slaveholding region north of the Mason-Dixon line” (p. 16) during most of the eighteenth century. On the eve of the Revolution, bondspeople accounted for 14% of urban dwellers and 20% of the population in the surrounding communities, and slaves toiled in jobs essential to the region’s economy. This peculiar institution, deeply rooted in New York soil, did not readily wither away under the scorching sun of Revolutionary ideology. Indeed, the 22% increase in the number of slaves in the city during the 1790s and the distinct lack of manumissions during that decade indicate a continuing strong commitment to the system of bondage. But as merchants began to purchase most slaves and to use them primarily as status symbols rather than as productive workers, the importance of slavery to the city’s economy diminished. In addition, the transition to capitalist labor relations and the evolution of what Sean Wilentz has labeled “metropolitan industrialization” at the end of the eighteenth century further undermined the value of racial bondage. These economic forces bolstered Revolutionary libertarian ideas to help bring about New York’s Gradual Manumission Act of 1799.

Still, blacks assumed an active role in their own emancipation and greatly hastened the end of slavery. The “demise of slavery,” according to White, was “worked out on an individual basis rather than by legislative fiat” (p. 149). New York blacks had always struggled with their masters in a give-and-take relationship, and the Gradual Manumission Act provided just an additional, albeit vital, leverage that enabled many bondspeople to negotiate successfully with their owners. In return for promises of years of faithful service or a cash payment, slaves often were able to convince their masters to grant their freedom.

On this and other valuable points too numerous to cover in a brief review, White’s interpretation fits within a major trend in African-American history
to adopt a "balanced" approach, emphasizing the ability of blacks to fashion their own destinies yet not ignoring their victimization by slavery and white racism. Thus, for example, White argues that due to the limitations of bondage, New York slaves generally led fragmented family lives, and their ability to forge a distinctive black culture was circumscribed. An excellent chapter on runaways concludes that, in contrast to fugitives in the South who often fled for more limited goals, escapees in New York most often sought to gain permanent freedom. During the early national period, thousands of free blacks flocked to New York City and successfully established families, secured jobs, and constructed a community.

This is among the most difficult type of social history to research. To his great credit, White spent countless hours meticulously mining a host of records for the bits and pieces that enabled him to write so knowledgeably and convincingly about the subject. The author—a white who can write black history—has produced a work of excellence and enduring scholarly value.

Montana State University

Billy G. Smith


There will be few readers of this journal not familiar with the prominent role Gary B. Nash has played in writing of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century history of Philadelphia. In particular, he has been concerned, in a couple of pathbreaking and innovative articles (reprinted in *Race, Class, and Politics* [1986]) and most notably in *Forging Freedom* (1988) to render visible the story of black Philadelphians. Now, in *Freedom by Degrees*, he has combined with Jean Soderlund, author of *Quakers and Slavery* (1985), to write an account of the end of slavery in Pennsylvania.

The authors begin by sketching the early history of the institution in Pennsylvania. Drawing on their impressive knowledge of the historiography of eighteenth-century slavery in colonial America and the West Indies, they emphasize two points of fundamental importance. The first is that there was no dramatic shift to slave labor; to a large extent black and white labor was interchangeable and, in fact, most Pennsylvanians probably preferred to buy white indentured servants. It was this very flexibility that ultimately allowed slavery to end. The second point is that the slave population was not self-sustaining, so that without continued importation of slaves, the institution would wither away.
Traditional explanations of the decline of slavery in the last third of the eighteenth century have highlighted the humanitarianism both of the legislators who passed a gradual abolition act in 1780, and of slaveowners who, although not compelled to do so by law, freed their slaves. Nash and Soderlund convincingly revise this view, arguing that the “reality is much more complicated and redounds considerably less to the benevolence of Pennsylvanians of the Revolutionary generation” (p. 75). The authors draw out the importance of the economic transformation from bound labor to wage labor, the role of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, and the actions of the blacks themselves, and weave them into a finely nuanced account of slavery’s demise. Their important discovery that blacks were heavily involved in securing their freedom, both by negotiating and by running away (in Philadelphia, in the 1780s, there were three quarters as many advertised runaways as there were manumissions), reinforces a finding that has been emerging from studies of other areas.

Much of this book expands and clarifies what both authors have hinted at or touched upon in previous writings. But for this reviewer the most interesting and novel part of this book was Nash and Soderlund’s account of what happened in Pennsylvania after slavery’s end. A substantial number of blacks remained in a “twilight zone” (p. 173) between slavery and freedom. Some were Pennsylvania blacks indentured under the terms of the 1780 law, but many were from the South. Slaveholders in the upper South with moral doubts about the institution had their slaves indentured in Pennsylvania. These slaves became free at the age of 28, allowing the owners not only to salve their consciences, but also to recoup a good deal of their investment. This form of indentured servitude was particularly important in the countryside during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, as it allowed ordinary farmers and artisans to benefit from the breakdown of slavery and secure a cheap and reliable form of labor. Even after the indentured blacks had finally achieved freedom, they often had to cope with the cottager system, an institution very similar to sharecropping. Nash and Soderlund soberly conclude that “in freedom even more than in slavery, blacks were a versatile, efficient labor force suited to the requirements of the urban market and rural economy based on grain and livestock agriculture” (p. 193).

This is not an easy book to read. Admittedly statistical analyses and demography are difficult to deal with attractively, but the repetition of material between chapters (as one minor example, Benjamin Lay places his bare foot in the snow on both p. 26 and p. 49), and the strangely flat prose style make a disappointing contrast to the authors’ previous works. Nevertheless, Freedom by Degrees is an important book, that continually brings to light interesting facets of the process by which slavery ended in
this northern urban center and its rural surrounds, ranging from a particularly insightful analysis of the role artisans played in slavery and its demise through to a mildly revisionist account of the influence exerted by the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. Everyone interested in either eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Pennsylvania or slavery in America should read this book and will do so with much profit.

University of Sydney

SHANE WHITE


At the outset, it should be noted that this is an atlas of the consequences of Indian-United States relations. No account is taken of native North American peoples who reside outside the present boundaries of the United States, and there is little discussion of geographical circumstances prior to the nineteenth century. The numerous tribally based developments in Indian country since 1934 are also ignored.


In each of these categories the author presents material that is based either on secondary sources or taken from primary sources such as U.S. censuses with little or no critical analysis. As the author observes in the notes to the U.S. census material, however, these figures are notoriously unreliable in their raw form. Other sources of information that might have been employed to better understand the census figures, such as agency and tribal reports of native populations, were not used. While an atlas often is necessarily a summary representation of more specific pieces of information, summaries should interpret rather than simply replicate the raw information. This atlas provides very little interpretation.

Some statements in the atlas are simply not reliable. For instance, the author maintains that there is only one reservation in the state of Oklahoma, that of the Osage. As several recent federal court decisions have proven, none of the twenty-five federally established reservations in Oklahoma has ever been legally dissolved, though most of the land in each was opened to homesteaders in the late nineteenth century. In general, the author has taken numbers and statements of fact from secondary sources at face value without
carefully investigating their reliability. For some purposes such practice is understandable, but in a work that presents itself as a reference tool this is not acceptable.

The inclusion of a portfolio of twelve previously published maps depicting Indian-U.S. hostilities 1862-1890 at the end of the atlas is indicative of the implicit focus of the book, which is that relatively brief period in American history, a quarter of a century at most, when Indian people engaged in sporadic attempts at armed resistance to U.S. territorial incursions. This is the basis for much of our current romanticization of Native Americans and it is likely that these last twelve maps were included in the atlas to play to that market. The twenty maps devoted to U.S. military posts and troop distributions in the nineteenth century also conform to that theme. What that theme ignores, and what is missing from this atlas, are maps representing American Indian depopulation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, maps showing the destruction of subsistence resources such as bison and antelope herds in the nineteenth century, and maps illustrating American Indian poverty, unemployment, and malnourishment in the twentieth century. Information on each of these topics is readily available and is certainly relevant to any treatment of American Indian affairs, but it is not included here because it would contribute to a decidedly unromantic image of the native peoples of the United States.

University of Oklahoma

MORRIS W. FOSTER


For John Jacob Astor and his American and Canadian associates, the Astoria venture promised high profits and high adventure. As the first post in a vast, unmarked wilderness belonging officially to no nation, moreover, Astoria loomed as the possible precursor of an American empire. To fulfill his dream of profits and empire, Astor required the cooperation of potential Canadian and Russian rivals in the great Northwest as well as the "approval" of the United States government to add strength and security to the distant venture. Unfortunately for him, his contemporaries in public life that mattered—Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe—did not share his vision. From 1808 until 1810 Astor in New York, with his partners in Montreal and St. Louis—William Price Hunt, Ramsay Crooks, Alexander McKay, Duncan McDougall, and Donald Mackenzie—planned carefully and well. At Lachine, outside Montreal, the partners acquired the necessary supplies, canoes,
and engages. In New York, Astor prepared the *Tonquin* under the overbearing Jonathan Thorn to carry men, supplies, and items for trade to the Columbia River by sea. Unfortunately, outside St. Louis, Montreal, and New York, Astor operated in an environment that he could not control. Indeed, he quickly lost even the power of communication.

From the outset the enterprise was doomed. Whether by land or sea, the journey to the Columbia was hazardous. Having divided the Astorians into seagoing and overland parties, Astor dispatched the overcrowded *Tonquin* in September 1810. After adding men and livestock in Hawaii, the vessel reached the Columbia estuary in March 1811. There, on the southern shore, the seagoing party erected the tiny post of Astoria. Meanwhile, in July 1810, Hunt, Mackenzie, and fourteen engages left Lachine, paddled through the lakes, the Fox-Wisconsin portage to Prairie du Chien, and down the Mississippi to St. Louis. During the spring of 1811 the Hunt party made its way up the Missouri, pursued by the famed trapper, Manuel Lisa, and a party of the rival Missouri Fur Company. At the Ponca village below the mouth of the Niobrara, returning mountain men advised Hunt to follow not the northern Yellowstone route but the more southerly route from the Arikara villages on the Missouri across the plains of South Dakota and Wyoming to the Wind River, across the great divide to the Snake, and then northwestward to the Columbia. The long journey from the Missouri to the Columbia was a harrowing frontier adventure that Ronda describes in dramatic detail. Not until February 1812 did Hunt reach Astoria, then almost a year old. Soon the outbreak of the War of 1812 placed the entire venture at risk, giving the advantage in the region of the Columbia to the rival Canadian North West Company, now backed by a reluctant British government. Surmising correctly that Astor could arrange no adequate defense by sea (although he tried), Astor’s partners, in October 1813, sold Astoria to the North West Company. In December the British warship *Raccoon* entered the Columbia. Captain William Black took possession of the post in the name of king and country, ran up the Union Jack, and renamed it Fort George. Only later, in 1814, did Astor discover that Astoria had passed into other hands. In September he lamented to Ramsay Crooks: “Was there ever an undertaking of more merit, of more hazard and more enterprising, attended with a greater variety of misfortune?” (p. 301).

Despite its ultimate failure, Astor’s Columbia River venture, as Ronda’s impressive analysis of frontier entrepreneurship reveals, was a remarkable enterprise. Ronda’s book renders full justice to Astor’s vision of trade and empire as well as his wide-ranging and daring efforts to achieve it. The volume centers on Astor, but dozens of other adventurers—traders, trappers, explorers, and men of business—cross its pages. If many key Astor and Pacific Fur Company records have disappeared, as the author notes repeat-
edly, what remains permits an astonishingly detailed study. Especially help-
ful to the author were the published accounts of such members of the 
overland expedition as John Bradbury and Henry Breckinridge, as well as 
those of three clerks of the Pacific Fur Company—Gabriel Franchère, 
Alexander Ross, and Ross Cox. If Astor’s venture has been largely overlooked 
in studies of the American frontier, as the author complains, his own praise-
worthy effort should go far to give it the attention it deserves.

University of Virginia

NORMAN A. GRAEBNER

BRUCE KUKLICK. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. x, 
237p. Illustrations, maps, index. $19.95.)

During a program about baseball on public radio not long ago, Jacques 
Barzun’s well-known epigram about the sport was unintentionally reversed. 
Once you really understand America, an interviewee explained, then maybe 
you can understand baseball. Bruce Kuklick, coming to a study of Philadel-
phia’s Shibe Park after penning tomes on The Rise of American Philosophy 
and The Good Ruler: From Herbert Hoover to Richard Nixon, may prove the 
point. Kuklick has written a fascinating study that brings together straightfor-
ward baseball history, the history of baseball as a business, and urban and 
ethnic history. Though he writes that his main interest is “the feelings that 
people had about the park” (pp. 5-6), To Every Thing a Season in fact covers 
a much wider canvas, which accounts for both its considerable strengths and 
its few weaknesses.

The basic structure of the book is chronological, stretching from the 
creation of an American League team in Philadelphia in 1901 and the 
eruction of Shibe Park in North Philadelphia in 1909, to the departure of 
the Athletics in 1954 and the abandonment of the renamed Connie Mack 
Stadium by the Phillies in 1970, followed by its subsequent demolition.
Kuklick skillfully interweaves the unusual history of Mack’s Philadelphia 
Athletics on and off the field with the impact of baseball on the immediate 
neighborhood. As the story reaches the postwar years, the previously hapless 
Phillies (Shibe Park tenants from 1938) become the key players in several 
senses as changes in the neighborhood begin to affect the stadium rather than 
the other way around.

Along the way Kuklick regales the reader with an impressive array of 
separate stories. He tells of the Irish community that surrounded the park 
in the great days of the 1929-1931 World Champion A’s; the impact of 
Prohibition and the Blue Laws; the era of big-time boxing matches at the
park; the self-defeating racism, which prevented the Macks from signing Larry Doby, Minnie Minoso, and Hank Aaron (all for a total of $13,500) even after baseball was integrated; the half-hearted "Save the A's" campaign of Mayor Joseph Clark; and the series of urban renewal programs that failed to halt the economic disinvestment as North Philadelphia became black in the 1950s. *To Every Thing a Season* illuminates the larger importance of such distinctly baseball-related issues as the (suspicious) 1914 World Series upset of the Athletics by the, perhaps, not so miraculous "Miracle Braves," the way the Phillies overtook the Athletics in hometown loyalty in the 1940s, and the spectacular career of Dick Allen. Kuklick concludes his work with some thoughtful meditations on the significance and transitoriness of the kind of powerful collective experiences and shared memories that a vanished ball park can represent.

Several potential difficulties threaten books like this, and two in particular appear here. The first derives from the attempt to place baseball in a larger context. To his credit, Kuklick has thus taken on subjects as diverse as Irish ethnicity, the rise of the mass media, and the development of organized crime in Philadelphia, among many others. None can be discussed at length, and for some, such as ethnic and racial succession in North Philadelphia and the city's postwar redevelopment policies, the treatment, though accurate, is too condensed to be enlightening. The second problem may be called the Barzun fallacy—using baseball to explain too much. When, for example, Kuklick claims that the departure of the Athletics in 1954 "sealed the ascendency of New York over Philadelphia" (p. 126), he succumbs to this temptation. Beyond these comparatively minor problems, the book raises a larger issue, which it touches upon but does not resolve. What is the relationship of a team or a stadium to a city or even a region, as well as to its immediate neighborhood? Kuklick deals mainly with the latter and occasionally—as in the "Save the A's" campaign—with the former. But Shibe Park drew on all of Philadelphia even when it only hosted the Athletics. Unlike New York and Chicago, baseball loyalties in Philadelphia were not divided geographically, and the park was accessible from several directions by mass transit. Team loyalties also helped define a wider regional identity that deserves exploration.

In this book, Bruce Kuklick concentrated on evoking and analyzing Shibe Park's multiple meanings for the people of North Philadelphia and succeeded admirably. In many ways, his is a path-breaking volume for baseball history in general, and raises a host of provocative questions. Future analyses will doubtless build on this major contribution towards a much fuller understanding of the significance of sports in modern American urban life and culture.

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