

Collected Works of James Wilson, 2 vols. Edited by KERMIT L. HALL and MARK DAVID HALL. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, Inc., 2007. xxvii, 1,262 pp. Bibliographical glossary, index. Cloth, \$40; paper, \$20.)

Kermit Hall, in his introduction to the new edition of James Wilson's works, indicates that these volumes are "the most comprehensive collection of materials ever assembled by and about James Wilson" (xxvi). The books also include a bibliographical essay—really a history of Wilson's law lectures—by political scientist Mark David Hall (no relation to Kermit Hall), who published *The Political and Legal Philosophy of James Wilson* (1997).

This edition, however, does not contain many of the charges Wilson made to the grand juries when he was associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Rather, the editors included the two that "merit serious consideration" (xxvi). Similarly, only two of his Supreme Court opinions, *Chisholm v. Georgia* (1793) and *Ware v. Hilton* (1796), appear in the volume. Among other items found in the collection are the speeches that Wilson gave at the Federal Convention of 1787, the widely reprinted and controversial speech of October 6, 1787, which he gave at the Pennsylvania State House in defense of the Constitution, and the speeches he delivered during the Pennsylvania ratifying convention.

All of the texts in these volumes seem to be transcribed accurately, which is the editors' most important responsibility. The law lectures are based on the 1804 edition, published by Wilson's son, Bird. However, it is often not clear what copy text was used for other items in the edition. For instance, no source is given for Madison's notes of the debates in the Federal Convention. Hall and Hall cite Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* as "the most complete record of the convention's proceedings" (80), but they did not rely on him for the transcription or annotation. Similarly, they provide no source for the October 6, 1787, speech, though it appears to be taken from volume 13 of Merrill Jensen et al., eds., *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*. The debates in the Pennsylvania Convention derive from Jonathan Elliot, *Debates in the Several State Conventions*, rather than from Jensen, *Documentary History*, volume 2, which the editors consider as the "most complete account" (178). Unfortunately, because this edition relies on Elliot, not all versions of Wilson's speeches are included, particularly those printed by Alexander J. Dallas in the *Pennsylvania Herald*. Also absent are the notes of his speeches that other convention delegates, and Wilson himself, took during the sessions. The great speech of November 24 is misdated November 26, as it is in Elliot (and in Thomas Lloyd's 1788 edition).

Other editorial problems occur in the annotations. Wilson's own annotations are retained, and they appear as a kind of shorthand legal citation common in the eighteenth century and are not readily understood today. These are elucidated in footnotes and at the end of the second volume in a "Bibliographical Glossary."

Though awkward to use, these references place citations to obscure but valuable sources all in one place. Most of the biographical entries are far too brief or describe careers well after their relevant time.

More seriously, the editors leave historical references unexplained. In Wilson's "Speech Delivered in the Convention of the Province of Pennsylvania . . . in January 1775" (not sourced), opaque references to the Townshend Duties (33), the Association (34), the Declaratory Act (34), the Tea Act (34), and the Boston Massacre trial (35) are not explained and will not be understood by the lay reader. They also do not appear in the index (which is frequently the case), though the Tea Act is indexed as "Tea, duty on." I fear that many readers will not appreciate the allusions.

Kermit Hall argues that Wilson's lectures are a "genuinely systematic view of the law" (xiv) and a "serious contribution to the literature of the law that no student of its early national origins can ignore" (xv). He is certainly right. The added material makes the volumes even more valuable. But, their utility would have been enhanced had it been better edited.

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Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers. By RICHARD NEWMAN. (New York: New York University Press, 2008). xiii, 359 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

In the preface to his book, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers*, Richard Newman recounts a conversation with his editor in which she asked, "why can't biographers just let go of their subjects?!" (ix). It is very clear that Newman struggled with this dilemma. His refusal to "let go" has produced a monumental contribution to the discipline of early American history and, perhaps, one of the very best biographies concerned with that era.

As Newman suggests, biography is still one of the most interesting forms of historical writing, and this new and fastidiously researched biography of Richard Allen is one of the very few books dedicated to exploring the lives of eighteenth-century people of African descent. *Freedom's Prophet* not only explores Allen's importance in shaping postrevolutionary African American life, but it also examines the complex shift from slavery to freedom among African Americans in the North. Newman borrows from David Levering Lewis's important work on W. E. B. Du Bois by stating that Allen's life story provides "a biography of his race" during the early republic (4). Through the lens of Allen's life, Newman helps to define important issues such as race relations, the advent of the black church, the rise of black leadership, abolitionism, and the African American struggle to cap-