It is a truism that each generation of historians interprets the past in the light of its own values and problems. And so it is that in the present era of conflict over civil rights generated by the Negro Revolution of the Nineteen-Sixties, historians are subjecting to fresh analysis the well known events of the Civil War and Reconstruction period and are in the process of evolving a revisionist interpretation of the role of the Republican Party and its allies among reform groups during these years. Of genuine importance in developing this revisionist interpretation along lines already drawn by Professors Kenneth Stampp and Eric McKitrick is the volume under review, a work of truly impressive scholarship. Making use of the manuscript collections of no less than forty prominent abolitionists, of a substantial number of newspaper files both abolitionist and non-abolitionist, of government documents, pamphlets, broadsides, autobiographies and memoirs, and other pertinent literature, Dr. McPherson, an assistant professor of history at Princeton University, has based his conclusions about his subject on a solid foundation.

Previous books on the abolitionist movement have devoted relatively little attention to the history of the movement after 1860. Indeed it has generally been assumed that the abolitionist movement merged itself with the Republican Party during the war, thereby losing its separate identity, and that the abolitionists for the most part believed that there was no further need for an organized effort in behalf of the Negro after the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution in 1865. Dr. McPherson regards such a viewpoint as highly misleading. It is his thesis in this book that during the war the abolitionists marched far in advance of the Republican Party, that after the war the American Anti-Slavery Society and its auxiliaries remained in existence to work for the full civil and political equality of the Negro, and that by 1870 most of the measures they had originally advocated had been adopted. He admits, however, that the next decade demonstrated that many of the equalitarian reforms of the Sixties were "built upon a foundation of sand" and that in the final analysis the nation, both North and South, refused to follow their leadership. If such a refusal constituted a failure on the part of the
abolitionists, it was, Professor McPherson believes, in a larger sense the failure of the American people. Also he contends that whatever success the civil rights movement of today has had has in part been made possible by the foundations, laid down more than a century ago, by the abolitionists.

The war program of William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips — a broad program of emancipation, the employment of Negro soldiers in the Union Army, the creation of the Freedmen's Bureau, government assistance of the education of freedmen, the effort to bring about civil and political equality for all black men, and grants of confiscated land to freed slaves — is the piece de résistance of the greater part of this book. McPherson shows how all of these objectives except the wholesale confiscation of Southern plantations were adopted by the Republicans and converted into the law of the land. The sections of his volume having to do with abolitionist efforts to enfranchise the Negro and to provide him with equal educational opportunities are of especial interest because of their relationship to efforts of this kind now being made in connection with the New Reconstruction. For many readers the facts he brings to light about the widespread disfranchisement of the Northern Negro before the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment and the extent to which segregated schools formed the educational pattern in the North at that time, both within and outside of New England, will probably be surprising.

To what extent does Pennsylvania figure in the abolitionist struggle for equality during those years? McPherson makes clear that Philadelphia was an important center of abolitionist activity, that the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, and Philadelphia abolitionists generally, labored effectively to end streetcar segregation in Philadelphia and to promote Negro education and the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment. Prominent Pennsylvanians who worked for these and related goals included J. Miller McKim, the corresponding secretary of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, James and Lucretia Mott, the wealthy Negro abolitionist, Robert Purvis, the gifted orator and lecturer, Anna Dickinson, Congressmen Thaddeus Stevens and William D. Kelley, and State Senator Morrow B. Lowery of northwestern Pennsylvania, who in March 1867 piloted a bill through both houses of the Pennsylvania Legislature which prohibited discrimination in every form of public transportation in the entire State.

Perhaps the only disappointing feature of the book is that it makes no reference whatever to the existence of any abolitionist sentiment or
effort in Pittsburgh at this time. It is possible that by 1860 abolitionist activity in the Pittsburgh area had largely died out, but there is reason to believe that an abolitionist convention was held in Allegheny County in the spring of 1862, and since the Philadelphia Press is the only non-abolitionist newspaper in Pennsylvania that McPherson appears to have consulted, it seems likely that the abolitionist movement in western Pennsylvania is a subject to which he might appropriately have devoted some attention.

Chatham College


All art emerges from history, not vice versa. So elemental a statement is a platitude, a premise so necessary that the repetition here would be totally redundant, were it not for the fact that all too often nowadays, art history has become an end in itself. Many of those who cultivate so assiduously the far branches of the art historical tree should consider that if they neglect the soil in which the trunk is rooted, they labor in vain. The author of this book needs no such advice; he has placed his buildings and his furniture firmly in their historical background.

"American architecture and furniture," Dr. Gowans states in his preface, "may be read as a living and tangible record of the course of American civilization." In searching for the patterns peculiar to the development of form and style in both architecture and furniture, he feels that the record of such patterns leads to the knowledge of history and that to know history is to know humanity. That he begins with history and ends with it, recommends his book with singular propriety to review in these pages.

There were no full-dress histories of American architecture to review before Lewis Mumford published his Sticks and Stones in 1924, although various phases of the subject had been chronicled, notably in such studies as Fiske Kimball's Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic (1922). But thoughtful and observant as was Mumford's slender book (a revised edition was issued in 1955), a large comprehensive view of American architecture was