

Indiana, or Harmony, Pennsylvania. I believe it is from Indiana, around 1818-1820, but the other point of view should be given. In any case, it is from the collection of Old Economy and not Historic New Harmony as is the cloth book below it. One map of Posey County made it into the book and is quite useful. A map of Indiana would have been equally useful, as well as one showing the political consequences of the changes in county boundaries during this period. Post office routes and main roads would have been useful on the map of Posey County. All of these things are discussed in great detail in the documents. But these are minor quibbles in a book which is a monument of research.

This first volume of the documentary history is not just a reference work, but is something that interested students can sit down and read for pleasure. It is hoped that the rest of the series will be published shortly, and that it will live up to or exceed the standards in this work.

*Old Economy*  
*Ambridge, Pennsylvania*

DANIEL B REIBEL

*They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861.*

By JANE H. PEASE and WILLIAM H. PEASE. (New York: Atheneum, 1974. Pp. 319. Preface, bibliography, index. \$4.95.)

Segregation in public transportation, housing, and education, Negro pews in churches, generally no voting rights, and where granted restricted by property qualifications, frequent threats on their lives from white mobs, were only some of the myriad problems confronting free blacks in antebellum America. As it became quite apparent by the second decade of the nineteenth century that America had no intention of fulfilling the high-sounding claims of its Declaration of Independence, northern blacks began to harness their own resources for survival. They formed black churches in reaction to the dehumanizing tradition of Negro pews in many white churches, literary societies in the hope of improving educational standards, and mutual aid societies as communal efforts to meet the exigencies of life in the North. These experiences, peculiar to black Americans, informed their reactions to racism in the North and slavery in the South, so that when formal antislavery began to emerge in the early 1830s, blacks were prepared to join its ranks. They brought to the abolition movement their par-

ticular views of American society, which, unlike those of their white coadjutors, did not see the future in the rigid alternatives of slavery or freedom, but more in terms of relative oppression and relative freedom. That is to say, because of the variety of forms racial oppression took, ranging from slavery in the South to the lack of civil rights in the North, their actions had of necessity to be more pragmatic and move beyond the idealism of their white colleagues in the anti-slavery movement.

This central point informs the Peases' study of black Americans' search for freedom in the thirty years before the Civil War. This book is an admirable and most valuable addition to the very limited literature on black abolitionism. Moreover, like Benjamin Quarles's earlier study, *Black Abolitionists*, it puts paid to the erroneous notion that American abolitionism was confined solely to a small group of whites influenced in large measure by the religious revival of the 1820s. Where Quarles tended to concentrate on a description of black activities, the Peases analyze the thinking of the most prominent black leaders, seeing how it influenced their activities, and what influences it had on the larger antislavery movement.

With the consolidation of slavery in the South and a concomitant rise in restrictions on the nominally free black population of the North, groups of free blacks turned upon the resources of their own communities, particularly in Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, and Ohio, to safeguard their interests by demanding and fighting for their rights. This is borne out by their strong and determined opposition to the formation of the American Colonization Society (1817) which, among other things, aimed at the expatriation of the free black population to Africa. The fact that the first meeting called by the black leadership of Philadelphia to oppose the ACS attracted 3,000 persons, is tribute enough to the depth of the black community's awareness and the strength of its organization. Ten years later, this growing awareness among northern blacks resulted in the publication of *Freedom's Journal*, the first newspaper published and edited by blacks, and the publication of the "Ethiopian Manifesto" and David Walker's "Appeal," the latter calling for open rebellion against slavery and discrimination. And all of this three years before the publication of the *Liberator* and five years before the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society is clear proof of black initiative in the fight against racial oppression.

*They Who Would Be Free* is conveniently organized to examine

the areas around which black abolitionists directed their efforts; against Negro pews and segregation in transportation, for the vote where it was not granted, and the elimination of restrictions where it was, generally for the elimination of segregated schools, but where no schooling was available, the establishment of schools staffed and catering to blacks, and the leadership in the numerous vigilance committees which spirited away slaves from their masters while visiting northern cities and which assisted fugitive slaves on their way to Canada, to mention only a few. A useful and careful examination is also made of the development of a more radical strain among black abolitionists as the general movement failed to record any significant gains and as the South continued to expand its authority and power in Washington. In addition, this book, like Quarles's earlier study, recognizes that blacks were also intimately involved and made invaluable contributions to the Anglo-American antislavery effort.

Although this is a fine study, there are some areas which the Peases have failed to cover or avoided tackling. For example, what is immediately apparent on reading this book is the similarity of problems confronting black Americans in antebellum and post-World War II America. The broader and very pertinent question which emerges from all of this is the nature of black American history. That is to say, can one conclude from a general study of the black American experience that its history is repetitive. Some historians have suggested, erroneously I think, that black American history has a tendency to repeat itself, moving in cycles from one era to another. Given the Peases' expertise, one can only feel disappointed that this vital issue is overlooked. It is quite possible that tackling this problem would have opened to question the objectivity of their study, which is a valid concern. But the history of any oppressed people demands of the historian broader interpretations from which their contemporaries could draw some inferences on the past to guide future actions. This shortcoming to some extent may explain why the Peases conclude that "whether assessed by its goals or its organizational efficiency, black abolitionism was a failure." (p. 297) It is easy to conclude, based on stated goals and objectives, that the history of an oppressed people, fighting for their freedom, is littered with "failures." But this assumes, I think, a static view of history, which brings us back to the issue of wider interpretations. For instance, can one see the successful culmination of the activities of blacks in antebellum America in the laws passed during Reconstruction, and even further in the legislative acts

enacted in the 1960s? In other words, were the "successes" of one epoch predicated on or influenced by the "failures" of another, or were they simply divorced historical issues?

In addition, the Peases fail to deal with the very vital issue of "black nationalism," a phenomenon which has occupied the attention of historians of black America, especially since the events of the 1960s. It is quite possible that the authors would disclaim any intention of examining this issue, but with their vast knowledge of and long experience in researching black American history, the reader is somewhat disappointed that this crucial issue is overlooked.

In spite of these qualifications, this book is a most valuable contribution to the history of the black experience in the period before the Civil War. It should be a basic text in any Afro-American history course. As in their other works, the Peases continue their unselfish tradition of mentioning the location of the very valuable and scattered sources from which we must piece together the history of antebellum black America.

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*Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business.* By HAROLD C. LIVESAY. (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1975. Pp. 202. Editor's preface, note on sources, acknowledgment, index. \$3.95.)

This volume is a part of the Library of American Biography Series, edited by Oscar Handlin. As such, it is more a study of the growth of business and the formation of the American industrial machine than it is a biography of Andrew Carnegie. The author contends, rightly so I believe, that aspects of Carnegie's personal life and his fascinating career must be interwoven in the saga of industrial growth. He does this so well that it is difficult to separate the biography from the story of big business in the late 1850s.

The author sets his theme nicely when he writes: "His [Carnegie's] most spectacular achievement — building Carnegie Steel into the world's largest steel producer — rested primarily on his successful transfer of the railroad's [Pennsylvania's] managerial methods to the manufacturing sector of the economy. The first industrialist to effect