father, and where the legal contract was the basic method of arranging to sell one’s labor. On the other hand, Schob seems convinced of the existence of some special sense of community, particularly among the hired hand, farmer, and farm family. He arrives at this view by over-emphasizing, and perhaps misunderstanding, the custom of hired hands eating at the farmer’s table, and by interpreting the contract as a veneer for a farmer-laborer relationship that was personal, governed by notions of fairness and responsibility, and therefore self-regulating. This ambivalence prevents Schob from focusing on, and conceptualizing, what may be the book’s most important contribution: the startlingly impersonal, formal, and contractual nature of early nineteenth-century rural society.

On the timely subject of occupational mobility, the book has much to say. For the most part, Schob argues that sodbusters, teamsters, harvesters, and other farm laborers wanted to become farmers and that a reasonably large percentage of them did (mobility was not always perfectly linear, since some farm owners continued to work for wages). This thesis permeates the book until Schob introduces, and accepts, a contradictory interpretation based on the United States Census. “The vast majority of farm hands,” he concludes, “lacked the means to buy a farm. Few made the successful jump directly from hired farm work to outright farm ownership” (p. 271). The apparent contradiction is a product of the evidence on which the mobility thesis is grounded; the county histories, in particular, present the region’s successes rather than a representative sample.

These reservations aside, this is a significant book. Rich in detail, exhaustively researched, and courageous in scope, *Hired Hands and Plowboys* is a pathbreaking account of a major element of the agricultural working class.

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Anyone with a serious interest in Pennsylvania politics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is obliged to consult the publica-
tions of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Professor John F. Coleman's study of political developments in Pennsylvania between the Mexican and Civil wars is the Commission's most recent offering. This period has been repeatedly surveyed by historians in search of the causes of the war between the states, and therefore it is not surprising that Coleman's study offers few new insights or interpretations. Coleman equates the coming of the Civil War with the decline of the Democratic party and in so doing applies the tenets and even the title of Roy Nichols's *The Disruption of American Democracy* (1947) to Pennsylvania.

Though the political climate is Coleman's primary interest, his study begins with a survey of Pennsylvania's geographic, ethnic, economic, and social makeup, for here are the sources of the era's political questions. As a leader in both agriculture and industry, Pennsylvania had a citizenry with diverse opinions regarding tariffs, temperance, nativism, and the extension of slavery. The majority of these citizens supported the Democratic party in the 1840s though not because of its position on major issues. Effective party leadership, patronage, and the weight of Jacksonian tradition were usually able to influence voters in favor of the Democracy, as the party was then called. Yet in 1848 Pennsylvania chose a Whig for governor and helped make one president. The unity that made this victory possible was disturbed when free-soil, procompromise factions appeared within the state party. In the gubernatorial election of 1851 Pennsylvanians renewed their support for the Democracy.

By 1854 the Whig party had virtually ceased to exist and a new organization, the Know-Nothings, arose based upon hostility toward Catholics and foreigners. Pennsylvanians elected a Know-Nothing legislature in 1854 that was so inept it was unable to select a United States senator. The failure of the Know-Nothings to translate their ideas into public policy and to confront the slavery issue led to their rapid demise. Amidst the political confusion a new party, the Republicans, organized. At their first nominating convention, held in Philadelphia in 1856, the Republicans chose John C. Frémont to run for president on a platform which condemned the introduction of slavery into the territories. The Democrats' choice to oppose Frémont and Millard Fillmore, candidate of the American party, was James Buchanan, a native of Pennsylvania.

Buchanan was Pennsylvania's most famous Democrat and an experienced politician, having served as congressman, senator, ambassador, and secretary of state. Three times prior to 1856 he had sought
the nomination, and at age sixty-five Buchanan faced a difficult election in which his home state played a major role. Buchanan's victory in Pennsylvania was owing to hard campaigning and a strong party treasury as well as support for his pro-Southern views. The Pennsylvania Democrats held high expectations that Buchanan's tenure in office would bring rewards for all, but the distribution of patronage satisfied few and angered many. This problem, growing disenchantment with Buchanan's support of popular sovereignty, and a declining economic situation weakened Democratic party unity and led to the ascendancy of the Republicans in Pennsylvania.

Professor Coleman's study is based upon the traditional records of political history, newspapers, and manuscripts, and relevant secondary sources are also cited. While the research has been diligent the results will have only limited appeal. General readers may find this book hard going, for the events of the period, particularly elections, overshadow the numerous politicians mentioned. Though the book contains portraits of eight of these men, their characters and personalities remain hidden from view. Historians seeking new answers to old questions about the origins of the Civil War will be disappointed with this study as will those looking for the application of quantification methods to Pennsylvania politics of the period. Professor Coleman does show us the elements productive of the decline of the Democratic party in Pennsylvania and explains the issues of interest to the state's voters in the 1850s. His study fills a gap in the Historical and Museum Commission's series and provides a knowledgeable explanation of events for students of the state's political history.

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In 1954 a project that was to be twenty years and 2,934 pages in the making began. The first volume emerged in 1958, the second was published in 1963. In 1974, native Mississippian Shelby Foote, now a resident of Memphis, completed his monumental task: a three-volume work which he entitled "A Narrative" of the Civil War.

This third and final volume follows the pattern established in the