book for American glass. The literary style is lucid and entertaining as well as informative; unlike other handbooks of antique glass, it is very readable. It is also a pleasure as an example of the bookmaker's art. The more than 500 illustrations are from excellent photographs — in every case sharp, with good contrast, texture, and with artistic lighting — reproduced with good fidelity by offset lithography. The dozen full-color illustrations are wisely grouped together in one section except for the frontispiece, and they are reproduced from excellent color transparencies with great fidelity. The format of the book is pleasing and adapts well to the exigencies of illustrations of many shapes and sizes. The Times Roman type, set in a double column, is legible and the placement of the folios together with the title of the book at the bottom of each verso with the name of the chapter on the facing recto aid the reader in the use of the book.

Pittsburgh

Thomas C. Pears III


It is refreshing to review a serious and thorough guidebook on such an area as Western Pennsylvania. Although there are two earlier works of this type, this book updates and enhances the heritage of the twenty-six counties of the region. The authors have increased the value of the book by recognizing the limitations of the printed page and being selective. The general message presented to the reader is direct: Every site described has "*something to be seen...*" (p. xii); the authors give a part of the site's story and provide information on how to get there. Thus, sites of important events where no physical remains exist are omitted. Since the guidebook is selective and not exhaustive, variety was given a high priority so that the book would have a broad appeal.

The twenty-six counties are presented in alphabetical order with succinct capsule histories for each. In addition, Swetnam and Smith include a listing of significant landmarks, as well as markers of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission within each county. And there are detailed descriptions on how to get to markers. The bibliography lists printed sources on the general history of Western Pennsylvania and each county. The indexes provide the traveler with
lists of proper names, site locations, as well as an analysis of places
by such categories as Barns, Libraries, and Museums. Although the
guidebook makes no claim to be definitive, it is one of the most
usable books of its genre.

Perhaps the only problem with this work is the failure to in-
clude a brief overview of the historical development of Western
Pennsylvania. While the reader is presented with good capsule his-
tories of each county, the authors do not offer any unifying themes
that will unite the fragments of a person's experience as one journeys
through Western Pennsylvania. Aside from this criticism, the book
is lucid and well organized. It is well worth the investment for any
weekend traveler interested in the history of Western Pennsylvania.

Department of History
State University College at Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

Donald A. Grinde, Jr.

Robert L. Vann of the Pittsburgh Courier: Politics and Black Journal-
ism. By Andrew Buni. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh
$12.95.)

This is a classical Horatio Alger story, one Samuel Smiles would
be proud of. Born in Ahoskie, Hertford County, North Carolina,
Robert Lee Vann spent his early childhood in the idyllic surroundings
of Southern rural aristocracy. But these carefree days, as the son of a
favored house servant, were shattered when his mother married a
poor black dirt farmer. His new family had to struggle to make ends
meet, and young Vann, determined to succeed, worked and saved to
attend school. His gifts of perseverance, which would serve him in
good stead in his later life, led him first to Virginia Union University,
and subsequently as an Avery scholar to the Western University of
Pennsylvania at Pittsburgh, where he graduated in 1906. Foregoing
his wish to attend a school of journalism, Vann enrolled at the
Western University's Law School and became the school's first black
graduate in 1910.

His graduation coincided with the founding of the Pittsburgh
Courier, the first black newspaper in the city since Martin R. Delany's
prestigious Mystery, published between 1843 and 1848. Between 1910
and his death in 1940, Vann took the Courier from local obscurity to
the position of the most prestigious national black newspaper with a