

On the other hand, most of those on whose lifespan information is available lived beyond their fortieth year, while at least eleven died in their seventies, five in their eighties, and two in their nineties. Paragraph one of the Directory says it contains "the names of ninety-four clockmakers," while the number of listings seems to be about ninety-eight.

But the most serious fault would appear to have been limited research. Page 11 seems to limit the list to names on clock dials or in "advertisements in the English language newspapers. . . ." Elsewhere there is mention of research in directories, tax records, church records, and some other sources. But there is nothing to indicate that Lancaster County's German-language newspapers were consulted, or of any search made in county histories and similar resources. Worse still, there is no bibliography, and the omission of names found in Wallace Nutting's *The Clock Book* and George H. Eckhardt's *Pennsylvania Clocks and Clockmakers* would seem to show that even those standard works were not consulted.

It is to be hoped that the authors will be able to correct these "sins of omission" in a future edition.

Pittsburgh

GEORGE SWETNAM

George Mifflin Dallas: Jacksonian Patrician. By JOHN M. BELOHLAVEK. (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 233. Acknowledgments, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. \$12.75.)

Across the grand sweep of American history, the figure of George M. Dallas (vice-president 1845-1849) appears as a small speck on an endless horizon. But during four decades of public life, stretching from the "Era of Good Feelings" to the Civil War, Dallas constantly jostled for leadership of the Pennsylvania Democratic party and played a significant role in national politics. John M. Belohlavek, history professor at the University of South Florida, has written the first biography of this elusive politician. The author states in his preface that he does not intend to enlarge Dallas's position on the historical landscape by showing him to have been an overlooked major figure. Instead, Belohlavek believes, rightly, that Dallas's career offers a unique vantage point for the examination of both Pennsylvania and national politics during the years from 1820 through 1860.

Dallas's family heritage shaped his career. Born in 1792, he was

the son of Alexander Dallas, one of the most powerful leaders of the Jeffersonian Republicans in Pennsylvania. The Dallases were an aristocratic and thoroughly patrician family, and anyone who ever met George Dallas was impressed with his gentlemanly nature. Unfortunately, the author could not locate sufficient primary material relating to Dallas's youthful years to reconstruct the early, formative period of his development. Nevertheless, the author seems safe in concluding that young George's future was shaped by his father's example. After graduating from Princeton in 1810, George began a clerkship in his father's Philadelphia law office. He soon displayed a penchant for rhetoric and oratory, and a political career naturally followed, with his father's network of political connections smoothing the son's way.

The realignment of the Democratic party in the 1820s caught Dallas in a quandary between the politics of opportunity and his patrician nature. Eventually, Dallas decided that political expediency demanded that he enlist as a Jacksonian Democrat. In 1824, after a tidal wave of sentiment for the Tennessean had flooded Pennsylvania, Dallas abandoned his favorite candidate, John C. Calhoun, and joined the Jackson bandwagon. It was a marriage of convenience for Dallas, and he may well have repented his choice in later years. The sophisticated Philadelphian could never fit the stereotype of the Jacksonian Democrat; consequently, he would always remain suspect. During the 1820s, Dallas held a number of important posts: deputy attorney general of Philadelphia, mayor of Philadelphia, and United States district attorney.

In the early 1830s, Dallas was forced to make a choice between his base of political support and the national Democratic party. Dallas's career had earlier been advanced by the Second Bank of the United States and the prominent Biddle family. In the well-known Bank War, United States Senator Dallas sided with the bank against the wishes of the president. For a lesser man, it might have ended his career; for Dallas, it impeded his advancement. He began to lose his grip of Pennsylvania politics, and other men, such as James Buchanan, came to the forefront.

But Dallas was not finished. From 1835 through 1839, he was a successful minister to Russia. Upon returning to Pennsylvania, he began a bitter struggle with Buchanan for political control of the state. In 1844, Polk wisely picked Dallas as his vice-president, hoping to gain support from conservative Democrats (and possibly some Whigs), and thereby place Pennsylvania in the Democratic column. Dallas dutifully supported Polk's expansionist plans and even took a "soft" posi-

tion on the tariff, which probably alienated some of his longtime backers. After the election, Dallas was miffed, perhaps justifiably, when Polk named Buchanan as secretary of state and awarded Pennsylvania patronage to Wheatland's sage. Buchanan had finally won the power struggle.

After serving as vice-president (a position Dallas occupied with traditional invisibility), he did not return to public service again until 1856. In that year he accepted an appointment as minister to England. His aristocratic nature was appreciated, and he made a perfect diplomat. In May 1861, Dallas returned to the United States, dying in Philadelphia in December 1864.

In many ways, the career of George M. Dallas typified the American public servant of the nineteenth century. He regarded politics as a game. Only when an issue arose, affecting his personal political base, did Dallas find himself on the losing side of a national argument. He was an aristocrat first, and a politician second — a distant second. In sum, one finds it hard to disagree with the author, who writes, "no amount of effort could convert Dallas into an authentic Jacksonian."

George M. Dallas was not an exciting or colorful individual, and in accurately portraying his subject, the author has produced a competent but unexciting book. Dallas may have regarded politics a patrician obligation, and the author admits he encountered a lack of personal papers dealing with the things in life that really mattered to Dallas — family, wealth, station, and culture. The publisher deserves a word of criticism for not providing illustrative material for this book. In spite of these minor criticisms, *George Mifflin Dallas: Jacksonian Patrician* stands as a valuable, scholarly contribution to national history.

Arizona and the West
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

GERALD THOMPSON

Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery. By PAUL A. DAVID, HERBERT G. GUTMAN, RICHARD SUTCH, PETER TEMIN, and GAVIN WRIGHT. With an Introduction by Kenneth M. Stampp. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976. Pp. 398. Authors' preface, introduction, appendixes, bibliographical references, index. \$4.50.)

It is not often that a history written by university professors and