the rest of the world. Blackett presents this argument with clarity and force, though with results that are less than completely satisfying.

A dominant theme in *Building an Antislavery Wall* is the existence of a well-defined black organization whose members, working together, sought common goals. Yet Blackett never demonstrates that cooperation and unity characterized their efforts. Indeed, he describes a leaderless group that, while sharing some ideas and basic goals, failed to achieve a uniform outlook or establish a firm agenda. Only, it appears, on the question of colonization did blacks speak with a single voice; and even that position was forged in the absence of organizational direction. Blacks in Britain represented many points of view and functioned as discrete individuals.

Blackett's argument is weakest at its center, where the view is advanced that blacks made significant and unique contributions to transatlantic abolitionism. Assertions are substituted for the required analyses and documented conclusions. We are told that the slave narratives helped to shape antislavery sentiment in Britain, but convincing evidence in support of this is not provided. The antislavery lectures of blacks are given extended treatment, though we learn little about the size, composition, or involvement of the audiences. In the end, while Blackett informs us about blacks in Britain, he fails to offer specifics about the weight of their influence or the special quality of their activities.

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Friends of the late Clare Swisher helped make this publication possible. Swisher was the dean of Erie's local historians during his lifetime. The tradition of studying local history is pursued in England and other European countries almost as intensely as competitive gardening. In the United States local history has generally been neglected. Sometimes in the past American historians have been influenced by the fear of being provincial rather than professional, of
being amateurs rather than the anointed of the historical establishment. Paradoxically, like the Roman proconsul departing from Greece, who advised the sailors: "Do not drop any statues, because you do not know how to make new ones," American teachers of history have often deprived their students of opportunities that would be of value to them and would help the American citizenry become more aware of the value of the study of history in understanding past and present problems within the nation and the world.

Schoenfeld's biography of Charles Vernon Gridley helps to remind us of our failings in this area. His study demonstrates that American naval history in the second part of the nineteenth century is wider and richer than the more examined textbook figures like Farragut and Dewey, as well as policymakers like Luce and Mahan.

The author begins the public naval life of Charles Gridley with his arrival at Annapolis during the troubled times of the Civil War. He focuses on Gridley's participation in the battle for the control of Mobile Bay from his post on the Oneida, his long years of "cruising" after the Civil War, and his role in the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War. Gridley died prematurely on June 5, 1898. During the Battle of Manila Bay, Dewey is alleged to have said to Gridley: "You may fire when you are ready" (p. 96). In the author's attempt to answer his own question, "Who was this Gridley?" (Introduction), he had to rely upon public papers of the United States government, and particularly the Departments of the Navy and War, as well as many secondary sources.

From these sources, Schoenfeld has produced a sympathetic biography: "Gridley's conduct early in his naval career thus demonstrated two traits that would run through it to the end: a quiet, dependable attention to duty and a certain decency and consideration in his dealings with others, regardless of their position or status in life" (p. 9). Gridley's "dependable attention to duty" depends upon definition. In the second part of his career he enjoyed more of the shores of Lake Erie than its waters and the outer waters of the American naval compass (pp. 45, 50, 52). The "happy arrangement" of August 15, 1894, in which he became Inspector of the Tenth Light-house District out of Buffalo is described by the author as unusual (p. 66). Schoenfeld explains the role of politics in the Department of the Navy and the appropriate congressional committees but he does not pursue Gridley's personal use of politics. This may be due to the methodological problem posed by the absence of Gridley's personal papers, but Schoenfeld should have pursued his father-in-law connec-
tion and his relationship to his classmate, Commander Robley Evans, in available public documents and secondary sources.

The book also suffers from a lack of national and geopolitical insights concerning the growth of imperialism among industrialized nations at the end of the nineteenth century.

Despite its limitations, I recommend Schoenfeld's work because it demonstrates how the biography of an Erie County historical hero can be woven into the fabric of the larger tapestries of the nation. Secondly, the book gives a brief history of the modernization of the American navy and the political, technological, and many other problems involved in this process. Thirdly, even though this is a partial portrait of Charles Vernon Gridley, it reminds us that our American experience is a product of forgotten persons, as well as those remembered in most of our books of history.

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In his book The Electrical Workers, Ronald Schatz investigates the rise and decline of militant unionism among workers employed by Westinghouse and General Electric between 1923 and 1960. In the process he develops an explanation for management's liberal and comprehensive "corporatist" policies that is grounded in both the industry and the market. Preunion labor policies reflected this more sophisticated view of the economy and were geared to provide a measure of economic security for male, semiskilled operatives. Indeed, throughout the 1920s, managers sought to control costly labor turnover by hiring "employment managers" and offering "works councils," welfare programs, a seniority system, and incentive pay. From management's point of view, a harmony of interests between labor and management could be maintained by meeting the needs of employees as individuals and appealing "to every man's desire for a larger income" (p. 24).

Schatz counterposes this analysis of corporatism with an equally complex analysis of the sources of mutualism among electrical workers and in so doing delineates the structure and function of these com-