

"We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less"

The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction



Hugh Davis

Proclamation and the enlistment of black troops into the Civil War, but also concern that Lincoln could lose as the Republican Party candidate for a second term. A victory for Democrat George McClellan would signal the upholding of the Dred Scott decision, and the revocation of the Emancipation Proclamation. The anxiety over McClellan's support of slavery made for urgent politicking among these conventioners.

This tenuous circumstance captures the context and spirit of Hugh Davis's *"We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less": The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction*. Davis sets the stage of his Reconstruction discussion by reviewing the previous works on the subject that relied almost exclusively on Reconstruction issues in the South. However, Davis points out that Reconstruction was planned and executed by Northern blacks well before the Civil War began, and the activism in areas of equal rights, education, voting rights, civil rights, and the ultimate Republican retreat with the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876 is presented in five well-researched and contextualized chapters.


In "Launching of the Equal Rights Movement," Davis recounts the 1864 meeting that began the National Equal Rights League, the forerunner of the modern NAACP. He reminds the reader of the debate about the structure of the new organization and the activist spirit carried on by former abolitionists as they fought against slavery and developed a political strategy to gain the ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments in the northern states. Davis clearly lets the reader know and understand that African Americans were not spectators

to the movement to ratify the rights to citizenship and voting privileges for African American men. He introduces the fragile relationship between African Americans and the Republican Party. He notes that not all Republican office holders championed the 14th and 15th Amendments, fearing that their constituents' backlash would signal an end to their political careers, which they were not willing to risk for African Americans.

Democrats in the North continued to be a thorn in the side of African Americans. Chapter three discusses the activism around public education and the private and public attempts to obtain equality for the black masses. At each turn in northern states, Democratic policy makers would strengthen their support for exclusionary or segregated and sub-standard public education for African Americans. In chapter four Davis recalls the efforts to ratify the 15th Amendment and the attack against Black Codes in the North. Not until the election of African American state assemblymen did a threat to the Black Codes arise. Likewise the debate around the 15th Amendment strategized the position of those who were once African American allies: white women such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton broke with the Republican Party over the petition for black male suffrage and not white female suffrage. Davis argues that this issue revealed the racism harbored by these women and their allies in the white women's movement. They even turned on their longtime ally Frederick Douglass.

Davis's work demonstrates that African Americans, even after the Civil War, had a fragile free existence. American political whims were always a threat to that freedom.

African American activists had to challenge Lincoln's reconstruction plan to send them to the Caribbean; Andrew Johnson's disrespect and acquiescence to Southern sympathies and the overall reality that whether Republican or Democrat, Northerner or Southerner, in many cases of equality whiteness was the determining factor.

Davis's study is a top-down look at the activism of Africans Americans during the Reconstruction period. His study often overlooks the argument he mentions by Henry Highland Garnett that the Equal Rights League was devising an organization that financially restricted poorer blacks. Davis's study to a degree follows that pattern. However the overall message is clear: *We Will be Satisfied With Nothing Less* is a study of determination for equality. 

Glasshouses & Glass Manufacturers of the Pittsburgh Region, 1795-1910

By Jay W. Hawkins

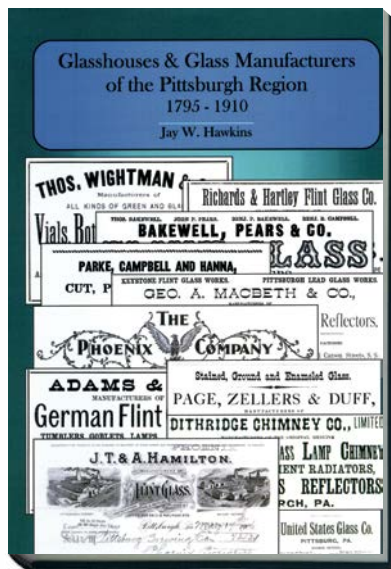
New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2009

584 pp., softcover \$49.95; hardcover \$59.00

Reviewed by Royce E. Walters, Department of History, retired, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Jay Hawkins' monumental study covers all of southwest Pennsylvania, extending from the West Virginia-Ohio borders north to Indiana County. Hawkins lists all the glass works that he could locate, including those manufacturing outside this area but having offices in Pittsburgh. He lists over 600 firms, cross-referenced when the firm's name changed. Organized alphabetically, listings provide a thumbnail sketch of each firm, followed by advertisements, contemporary published references, marks when known, patterns made, and the type of glass produced. Hawkins also includes photographs of marks, advertisements, site maps, ephemera, and parts of catalogues.

Book Reviews




Introductory essays explain the author's methodology, give an overview of the glass industry in the region, examine "The Pittsburgh Style," and describe the region's mold makers. The great growth of the industry is shown in a graph charting the number of glass factories from 1797 to 1876. By the end of the Civil War, the glass industry had expanded rapidly and continued to do so into the fourth quarter of the 19th century.

Of note is the author's statement that, by the end of the 19th century, "the Pittsburgh region was producing more than half of all domestic window glass and the lion's share of all other forms of glass in the United States." A chart of glass production values from 1803 to 1902 relates production to economic conditions, as well as showing its great growth over that time. The discussion of the causes for success or failures in the glass patch is very revealing. His

description of "The Pittsburgh Style" is useful for collectors and local historians.

Hawkins' essay on the mold makers explains a frequently misunderstood or missing component of glass production. That component is the contribution of skilled workers to the making of the patterns. Without these skilled workers the glass industry would not have flourished in the region. The author identifies several of the most important ones and provides brief sketches of them.

Glasshouses & Glass Manufacturers provides an excellent source for the study of one of the region's most important industries. The amount of information included is testimony to a decade of diligent and thorough research. Many may not realize that the Pittsburgh region was a primary center for the manufacture of glass in the United States for most of the 19th and 20th centuries. It also paved the way for Pittsburgh to become the Steel City.

Hawkins' work joins Arlene Palmer Schwind's Bakewell exhibition catalogue as one of the most significant works on glassmaking in the region since the publication of Innes' *Pittsburgh Glass* in 1976. This volume provides a wealth of easily accessible material. It is useful for collectors (novice and advanced), regional historians, economic historians, and those interested in Pittsburgh's industrial development. Hawkins has provided us with an excellent resource. 

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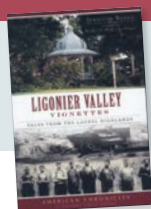
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