

critical of American society and yet hopeful about the achievement of its democratic ideals. It is this dualism that leads to the characteristic sense of balance in the works of Quarles that emphasizes the centrality of the black experience to the ethos of American history, to the formation of the American identity, and to the nation's self-violated ethical norms. It is this thematic coherence that separates Quarles from an earlier pioneer in the field of black history, Carter G. Woodson, whose valuable works tended to emphasize contributions of outstanding blacks while directing only limited attention to the collective experience of the black masses. Quarles, like John Hope Franklin, emerged in the 1940s to mark a new direction for Afro-America beyond "contributionist" history toward the integration of the curricular and ideological mainstream of history.

Implicit in the works of Benjamin Quarles has been the belief that America's democracy would evolve and become more racially inclusive. It is this idea of progress that led blacks to continue to subscribe to the tenets of the American Revolution in that era and in the antebellum period when the nation had obviously failed to live up to its democratic promise and had excluded men of color from the protections of the natural rights philosophy. If Quarles has been optimistic about the American ideal, he has nonetheless been critical, as indicated in his later works on blacks and the abolitionist movement and his assertion that the younger more militant black historians have viewpoints worthy of attention. It is this characteristic balance that has made his work on race and the American Revolution, the Civil War, Lincoln, and abolition unsurpassed.

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Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, eds. *The Way We Lived: Essays and Documents in American Social History*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1988. Volume I: 1607-1877. Pp. x, 318. Volume II: 1865-Present. Pp. viii, 328. Paper, \$12.00 each.

Recently, a colleague commented to me in an unusually busy time that with the deadline approaching on a book review he had agreed to do, he was afraid he was going to have to write the review, then later, when he had time, read the book. He was kidding--I think. But as the deadline approached for this one, I began to identify with his comment. And we all know that gets done sometime, and even that there are some books with which you can do that and still write a pretty good review. This two-volume work might even be such a book--except that it's too good; once I started reading it, I had trouble stopping.

First, the basics: *The Way We Lived* is a two-volume reader in American social history. Each volume is divided into two parts--Volume I into "Colonial Society, 1607-1783" and "Social Life in a New Nation, 1783-1877," and Volume II into "The Emergence of an Urban, Industrial Society, 1865-1920" and "Modern American Society, 1920-Present." Binder and Reimers provide a very brief introduction to each part, and an almost equally brief (though good) list of "Suggestions for Further Reading" at the end of each part. The parts consist of from seven to nine chapters, each of which features an essay by a historian followed by two to four documents from the time. The documents, say the editors in their preface, serve several purposes: They provide examples of the kinds of sources social historians use; they help to illuminate and expand the subjects of the essays; and they bring the reader into direct contact with the people of the past.

Direct contact with the people of the past may be the key here. All of us know that social history is one of the major things happening in historical writing in the last couple of decades. But some of us may be at least a little slow in incorporating social history into



our (still traditional and traditionally-structured) courses. Perhaps progress in this regard will be facilitated as more and more of us experiment with the material and see students responding to it. Following the textbook we're using in the first half of the American history survey (Richard N. Current, *et. al.*, *American History: A Survey*), I suggest that there are four broad themes for the course: political, diplomatic, economic, and "the way in which the American people have lived," or cultural and social history. Notice the similarity of that fourth theme to the title of the work under review. And what I notice is that it's my halting efforts to deal with *that* material that increasingly elicits the greatest response from students in large required survey courses. Indeed, in my teaching of modern western civilization last spring, using *A History of Western Society* by John P. McKay, *et. al.*, as a text, the material on marriage and family patterns, health and diet, work, etc., was virtually the *only* material students seemed to want to discuss. They seemed clearly to feel that it was, if not more important, at least more relevant to their lives than the traditional diet of kings, queens, presidents, generals, etc.

To put a little flesh on these generalizations, I have chosen to discuss three chapters, reflective admittedly of some interests of my own, but also spread out rather well chronologically. Chapter 9 of Volume I is "The Cherokee Removal: An American Tragedy." After the editors' brief introduction, the feature essay is "The Trail of Tears" by Dee Brown (*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*). It appeared as an article in the "popular" *American History Illustrated* in 1972, but is on solid ground in scholarship as well, and pulls no punches. The stockaded forts that served as gathering places for the Cherokees before their transportation to the west are jarringly referred to as "concentration camps." The reader is reminded that more than three-fourths of the Cherokees opposed the removal treaty signed by an unrepresentative splinter group, that one out of four members of the tribe died in this ugly tragedy, and that the few white opponents of removal included President Andrew Jackson's fellow Tennessean Davy Crockett. The first document is the 1830 "Memorial of the Cherokee Nation." ("We are aware," it began, "that some persons suppose it will be for our advantage to remove beyond the Mississippi. We think otherwise.") The second document is Jackson's 1830 attempted defense of his removal policy. ("Toward the aborigines of the country no one can indulge a more friendly feeling than myself," he claimed.) And the third and most interesting document to me is an eloquent 1838 letter to President Martin Van Buren protesting the removal of the Cherokees penned by none other than Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Binder and Reimers follow the common practice of reproducing the last chapter of Volume I as the first of Volume II; it is "Reconstruction and Free Plantation Labor." The essay is an excerpt from Peter Kolchin's *First Freedom: The Responses of Alabama Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction*. I have known ever since John S. Ezell's Southern history courses at the University of Oklahoma in the 1960s that the basic failure of Reconstruction was an economic one--the failure to get land and labor back together again into a productive economic system. Kolchin's work, and the documents that follow, flesh out that concept very well. The first document was an amazing one to me--a letter from a former slave to his former owner responding to an offer of work in which he suggests he might consider it if the former owner would forward some \$11,000.00 in back wages owed to him and his wife for their years of slavery. The former slave also says "The great desire of my life now is to give my children an education." Another document consists of excerpts from letters of two northern school teachers who went south after the war that testify to this desire of newly-freed blacks for education. The other document is "The Black Code of St. Landry's Parish [Louisiana], 1865." True confession: I have taught for almost twenty years, and said many times that the Black Codes at their worst



were efforts to reinstitute slavery in all but name. I had said that without ever actually reading a black code. Now I can say it with more confidence, and give an example.

I must be brief on my third and final example, "The Revival of Feminism." The essay is from William Chafe's highly-respected 1972 work, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic and Political Role, 1920-1970*. The documents are the Equal Rights Amendment itself, Gloria Steinem's 1971 testimony in support of it before a Senate committee, an anti-ERA speech by Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina, and, to bring the issue even more up to date, a 1982 statement on "Women and Poverty" from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

But enough. Obviously, I like this reader. It is thorough, thought-provoking, interesting--to me, and I think potentially to students. Binder and Reimers are to be commended for these volumes, for their thoughtful introductions to each chapter helping students focus on important issues, and for their generally judicious selection of both essays and documents. (Is one morally obligated to make at least one negative comment in a review? I don't really think the introductions to the four parts are very good.) Probably the most common way to use a set like this is as supplementary material to a standard textbook. But it occurs to me that this is so good, such important stuff, that it might just be used as the textbook, with the professor providing any other necessary framework in lectures. Is anybody out there already doing it that way, and I'm just out of touch? I'm thinking about it.

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**Leonard Dinnerstein and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds. *American Vistas*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. Fifth edition. Volume I: 1607-1877. Pp. 319. Paper \$10.95; Volume II: 1877 to the Present. Pp. 354. Paper, \$10.95.**

History teachers are forever seeking appropriate student readings beyond the text. Dinnerstein and Jackson originally compiled a two-volume set of such readings in 1971. This fifth edition contains new readings, and continues to be a useful set of expanded readings for college and even advanced high school students.

The authors made efforts to modernize their work with new sections, producing a diversity of articles certain to please disparate interests among contending historical groups. Each entry offers a point of view that can easily be tied into text readings to flesh out the work in progress. One strength of these volumes is that they represent a wide ranging span of points of view, time of writing, and styles from the 1940s into the 1980s.

In Volume I, selections deal with the views of Benjamin Franklin's sister, upheavals of the Confederation period, educational implications of the *Dartmouth College* case, expansion into Oregon Territory, Abe Lincoln on equality, and experiences of blacks after the Civil War. While the editors' selections in this volume reflect newer views of historical happenings, they also include Edmund Morgan's views on "Puritans and Sex," regarded as a bit of a shocker in its own time (1942). The only unhappy choice in Volume I deals with the underground railroad, drawn from Charles Blockson's piece in *National Geographic* (July 1984), that simply adds to and expands glorification of the guilt ridden mythology of the noble whites helping slaves to escape, a modern day extension of abolitionist propaganda.

Other selections in Volume I are useful for instructors, as they allow non-history majors to do some small postholing for themselves. Each offers possibilities for in-class discussion, and certainly for student understanding.