

“five-stage cycle” and a “two-stage sequence” (summarized in a useful chart on p. 184).

Such an immense effort in such a thin book cannot help but to fail. Walker's preference for modes rather than chronology is ultimately ahistorical. Temperance is included in Mode II because the “victims of alcohol . . . can be considered a special group” (p. 109). He compares the American Anti-Slavery Society with the NAACP, “which followed in its footsteps virtually every step of the way” (p. 73). *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is compared to John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley*, and Theodore Dwight Weld to Daniel Patrick Moynihan (pp. 75-77)!

These alternately obvious and stretched points are all the more distressing because Walker celebrates “the rising spirit” of the early Reagan years when poverty, he asserts, is being reduced, when new groups are being integrated into the mainstream, and when “social change is alive and well” (p. 196). The underlying point of his book, that “all eras are reform eras” (p. 180), is a particularly inappropriate claim to make for the 1980s.

Walker's work is flawed but challenging. Any book that is at once everywhere and nowhere inevitably contains innovative insights that jolt one's comfortable categorization of time-tested truths. Moreover, his synthesis is interspersed with six “encounters,” little human vignettes intended to illustrate his themes. Some do and some do not, but all are sensitive and well written, especially a delightful account of the failed attempt of a group of exceptional local women to get credit for auditing courses at all-male Wabash College in the 1860s. The six encounters are a highlight, and one wishes that Walker had lessened his analysis and filled the book with more of these stories. He tells them well.

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The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future. Edited by Darlene Clark Hine, with an introduction by Thomas C. Holt. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986. Pp. xiv, 301. Notes, index. \$27.50.)

This valuable new volume grew out of a conference held at Purdue University in 1983 to assess the current state of the study and teaching of Afro-American history. It was jointly sponsored by the American Historical Association, the Lilly Endowment, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The fourteen papers included in this book, some accompanied by critical and expansive commentary, address issues related to the slave experience, to the impact of emancipation, to the urbanization of blacks, to the evolution of professional scholarship in Afro-American history, and to

the relationship of that scholarship and that history to a more complete understanding and presentation of American history.

The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future is one of two important new books published during 1986 that seek to examine Afro-American history as an increasingly important field of study during the twentieth century. The other is *Black History and the Historical Profession: 1915-1980* by August Meier and the late Elliot Rudwick. These two volumes should be read together. The former is more topical and less systematic, and the latter focuses more upon the historians who have worked in the field than upon the scholarship itself. Both of these books address the internal and external issues pertinent to the evolution of the study of Afro-American history. They demonstrate clearly, as John Hope Franklin explained in his keynote address at the Purdue conference, that this subject has always been charged with political and social implications. Furthermore, these works provide powerful evidence that the writing and interpreting of this subject, as well as the Afro-American experience, itself, have a very significant history.

The essays from the Purdue conference vary considerably in their depth and focus. Perhaps the most useful ones for historians are Armstead Robinson's "The Difference Freedom Made: The Emancipation of Afro-Americans" and Kenneth Kusmer's revision of a previously published piece, "The Black Urban Experience in American History." The analyses in these articles are tight and their bibliographies are extensive. Conversely, the contributions of Leslie Owens and Nathan Huggins are more suggestive and free-wheeling. Huggins is especially convincing in his demonstration of the importance of seriously and completely "Integrating Afro-American History Into American History." The collective scholarship of these essays not only *testifies* to the state of Afro-American history but also makes clear the ongoing need to maintain the scholarly search for a new and more openly inclusive and synthetic American history.

The State of Afro-American History, for all its generally careful scholarship and editing, also reveals (if more implicitly than explicitly) the presence of two subjective issues, internal to the field, that have been and still are a part of the "state of Afro-American history." They also happen to be issues given considerable attention in *Black History and the Historical Profession*. First, the political implications and emotional nature of race in the United States have made it impossible or undesirable for historians to avoid drawing conclusions and making evaluations regarding the basic "goodness," "fairness," or "progress" of American society as it has defined the opportunities open to black Americans. The sense of either optimism or pessimism expressed in these evaluations (in-

cluding those under review) has been and continues to be a part of the writing, preserving, and presenting of Afro-American history.

The second of the subjective issues is the internal one of ownership, which, while less volatile and open than it was during the late 1960s and early 1970s, still may be found within the historical profession. *The State of Afro-American History* never addresses the controversy head on, but the insider (black historians)-outsider (white historians) question can be found beneath the surface in some of its essays. The fact that such issues continue to exist is not inherently "bad"; their presence, however, does demonstrate something fundamental and, at the same time, less than fully mature about the "state of Afro-American history" in the 1980s. The Purdue conference and the volume that it produced were and are timely and important.

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