

my strength will hold me out to speak a few minutes" (p. 268). For over an hour the sick man held the floor in "a display of oratory which remained unsurpassed in his generation" (p. 268). Some in the audience wept, and all were moved. It is possible that some votes changed as a result—it is known that the House Republicans were soon defeated—although all Bernhard can say is that "it is reasonable to assume that Ames's speech had a strong influence on the final outcome" (p. 272).

Bernhard is not one to go off the deep end, which is easy to do with a man like Ames. Die-hard Federalists—of whom there have been few—have admired Ames. Jeffersonians have scorned him. Jeffersonian liberals, like Parrington, have portrayed him as a hysterical reactionary. (To Ames, Parrington would have been a mere "democratick babbler.") After Ames retired from Congress in 1797 he turned to writing, trying to turn the tide of "Jacobinical" Republicanism. The country, he warned, was "sliding down into the mire of a democracy" (p. 337).

For most twentieth-century readers, Ames is a man who needs explanation. The mockery of Parrington is of little help. And this biography, objective as it is, offers little by way of explanation or analysis. What it does present is a comprehensive account of what Ames did and said, and particularly what part he took in each congressional issue of the time.

Since it is the first, and will probably be the last, full-length biography of Ames, it will be read and cited. But granting that a full-length biography of a notable American of the past is a meritorious project, it is hard to think of this one as a prize winner. (It won the 1963 Manuscript Award of the Institute of Early American History and Culture.) The book has good qualities: it is objective, comprehensive, and is based on scholarly examination of the sources. These are all to its credit, but why a prize? The book does not substantially change our understanding of Ames (assuming one has read more than Parrington), nor is the presentation distinctive. If it is representative of the kind of work that informed historical opinion generally considers worthy of a prize, historians may be sliding down into a mire of their own making. It may be that they, like the Federalists, have become men alienated from all save their own brethren.

Trinity University

Philip F. Detweiler

A History of Negro Slavery in New York. By Edgar J. McManus. (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1966. Pp. xi, 219. Notes, appendix, bibliographical note, index. \$5.95.)

Until recently most historians confined their accounts of the Negro and slavery to the southern colonies and states, leaving the impression that slavery in the North was an insignificant, relatively mild institution. Scholars are now taking a closer look at involuntary servitude in the North and are finding that it possessed many of the harsh, repressive characteristics heretofore regarded as peculiarly southern. In this work McManus places special emphasis on the urban slave, tracing the development of slavery from its introduction in early New

Netherland to its final abolition by the New York state legislature in 1841. Under Dutch rule slavery had been essentially a private institution, with slaves permitted considerable personal freedom. But when the English obtained the colony, they imposed rigid slave controls, creating a separate legal code and judicial system for slaves.

The author emphasizes the diversity of slave labor in colonial New York, where a shortage of free labor quickly created a demand for slave artisans. These talented, ambitious Negroes played a significant role in the struggle for emancipation, with many bondsmen eventually negotiating their own freedom. Paradoxically, the nature of the work performed by slave craftsmen placed them in direct competition with white workers, a condition leading to bitterness, hostility, and periodic violence on a scale unmatched in other colonies.

Of particular interest is the account of the New York City slave conspiracies of 1712 and 1741, the latter paralleling in many respects the infamous Salem witch trials. The outrageous accusations of Mary Burton, an indentured servant, threw the city's inhabitants into panic; and before the hysteria subsided fourteen slaves had been burned at the stake, eighteen hanged, and seventy-two deported from the province. In the author's opinion these conspiracy trials were "judicial murders" (p. 138).

In discussing the movement to abolish slavery in New York, McManus contends that although some of those leading the fight against slavery were motivated by idealistic considerations, the institution was outlawed only after it had ceased to be profitable. It was not until 1799 that the state legislature passed a law providing for gradual emancipation, and slavery continued to exist in the state for nearly a half century thereafter. Unfortunately emancipation did not bring equality; for while many New Yorkers opposed slavery, few were willing to grant the freed Negro political freedom or equal economic opportunity.

McManus has done little to fit slavery in New York into the context of northern slavery as a whole. When he does employ analogy or comparison, it is usually to show that a particularly harsh slave practice in New York compared favorably with similar practices in the South (p. 93). More meaningful—though less flattering—would be comparison with the neighboring state of Pennsylvania, where the lot of the slave was generally better. Too, the student of American history would be interested in learning more about the antislavery activities of such nationally prominent New Yorkers as Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and Aaron Burr. The author mentions these figures but does not dwell on their contributions in detail.

Although McManus adequately explores the concept of slavery, he has little to say about slaves as individuals. Aware of this shortcoming, the author states in his preface that such information is simply not available (p. x). While the slaves themselves may not have left personal records, enough is known about certain prominent New York slaves to merit their inclusion. Consideration of the activities of these individuals would not only add to the reader's interest, it would also help document the author's assertion that Negroes in New York generally were more intelligent, ambitious, and independent than their southern counterparts.