

The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850-1860. By Stanley W. Campbell. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970. Pp. viii, 236. Notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$8.00.)

Campbell has written a useful book which demolishes some well worn clichés about the 1850s. A number of historians have repeated the assertion, rooted in the work of James Ford Rhodes, that the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 aroused such disapproval in the North that the law was virtually unenforceable. *The Slave Catchers* effectively challenges this contention.

Before 1854, Campbell contends, northern public opinion was badly divided, with a majority willing to abide by the law. A general fear of disunion, strong pressure from businessmen and the clergy counseling obedience, and acceptance of the Compromise of 1850 by both major parties were important factors in inducing northern acquiescence in the return of escaped slaves. After 1854 northern public opinion increasingly condemned the Fugitive Slave Law. Campbell's discussion of public opinion reveals little that is new, and his assertions about the majority of northerners, "the bulk of the population residing in the free states" (p. 48), and the like are lacking evidence. His evidence of the role of clergymen and businessmen in the North seems thinly grounded. Still, Campbell's point that northern public opinion was neither unanimous nor decisive in its impact on the enforcement of the act seems correct.

The important contribution of this book lies in its discussion of enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. Campbell shows that Presidents Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan vigorously supported the law. He further demonstrates that personal liberty laws, by which, in effect, northern states refused assistance to federal authorities, had little effect on the willingness or ability of the federal courts and marshals to remand slaves. He points out that of 191 slaves claimed in the federal courts under the act, 157 or 82.2 per cent were returned to their owners. There was no slackening of enforcement after 1854, except in New England, Wisconsin, and Michigan, despite the apparent shift in public opinion. Moreover, 141 slaves were returned to the South without due process. Of the 332 cases cited by Campbell only 22 slaves were rescued by abolitionists. In short, the Fugitive Slave Law was strongly enforced.

But was it effective? Campbell says it was useless as a deterrent: thousands escaped in the 1850s, but few returns were made. It provided abolitionists with propaganda so powerful that southerners were convinced that the law was unenforced. One wishes that Campbell had developed the latter theme. His treatment of the signifi-

cance of the Fugitive Slave Law in deepening sectional hatreds and justifying the southern revolt is too brief. This caveat, however, cannot detract from the value of Campbell's findings: this is a good piece of research which must alter our treatment of the Fugitive Slave Law.

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North of Reconstruction: Ohio Politics, 1865-1870. By Felice A. Bonadio. (New York: New York University Press, 1970. Pp. xi, 204. Notes, index. \$8.95.)

Felice Bonadio's carefully documented monograph is an important addition both to Ohio history and to Reconstruction historiography. He finds that the issues which dominated northern political dialogue during the five years following the Civil War were the questions concerning southern reconstruction and Negro rights. By concluding that the direction of national politics and policies are often determined by local circumstances and issues, Bonadio follows the course set recently by Michael F. Holt's *Forging A Majority* (1969) and Paul Kleppner's *The Cross of Culture* (1970). Bonadio maintains that a true understanding of national history depends upon a knowledge of what was taking place at the state and community level.

The major theme developed in *North of Reconstruction* is that Ohio's political leaders were less concerned with a sincere discussion of the issues of southern reconstruction and Negro rights than historians have commonly assumed. As Holt found in Pittsburgh during the 1850s, Bonadio finds in Ohio in the 1860s that ideology had little place in the political struggle of the period. Bonadio questions the validity of the thesis of John and La Wanda Cox' study, *Politics, Principle and Prejudice* (1963). He agrees that the Democrats made political capital by playing on prejudice, but he sees little of idealism and principle in the action and measures of the Republican party, especially in Ohio.

Factional struggles plagued the Republican party in Ohio after the war, and the national issues were used for local advantages by factions within the party as a means of gaining control for selfish purposes or to split the party in order to create a new alignment which would make use of seceders from the Democratic party. Political bartering, jobbery, and plunder were the order of the day, and President Andrew Johnson played a less dominant role in distributing patronage in Ohio than historians have generally assumed.

On the one hand Bonadio challenges the theories of Charles A. Beard and Howard K. Beale, who argued that military reconstruction