

nations--the Ben Ishmaelites appeared in Indiana in the early nineteenth century. They survived there as a migratory, noncapitalistic people (they refused to work for wages) with their own distinctive religion and social structure for a hundred years. As the society around them became urbanized and industrialized, the Ben Ishmaelites were stereotyped as immoral, lazy, and degenerate, and efforts were made to take their children away from them. In 1907, the first compulsory sterilization law in the world was passed in Indiana, its object the Ben Ishmaelites, and it was this law that led to the final dispersion of the tribe and its probable assimilation into urban black communities. Leaming uses the records of charitable societies, literary sources, interviews, place and family names, and architectural evidence to reconstruct the story of the Ben Ishmaelites. In addition to raising important questions about ethnic amalgamation and cultural conflict, his article is a model of careful and creative social history.

The originality, diversity, and richness of detail of this collection is marred by its failure to provide substantive treatment of women. There are two exceptions: Leaming's article deals with the important leadership role of women among the Ben Ishmaelites, and Arnold Hirsch's essay describes women's participation in anti-black housing riots. Most of the essays, however, deal with ethnic America as essentially a male universe. As scholars sensitive to diversity and skilled in dealing with complexities, ethnic historians must deal with gender as well as with class, ideology, and ethnicity in gathering, analyzing, and interpreting their material.

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JOHN ANTHONY SCOTT. *HARD TRIALS ON MY WAY: SLAVERY AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IT, 1800-1860*. New York: Mentor Books, New American Library, 1974, 293 pp., \$1.95 paper.

In the beginning the history of slavery was written in political and institutional terms, and very little attention was paid to what the day-to-day participants in this odious adventure had to say. With time, historians realized they had to take into account personal views, feelings, and reminiscences of the participants, but this realization brought about predominantly the recollections and opinions of white people. This was so because it was generally accepted that most black people were illiterate and had little to say for themselves. It was understood also that when they said anything, it would be exaggerated and self-serving and, consequently, would be of little historical value. Exceptions, of course, were made for people like Frederick Douglass,

William Wells Brown, and Solomon Northrup because, clearly, they were extraordinary.

Beginning in the 1950's and coinciding with the Civil Rights Movement, an increasing number of historians came to realize that the slaves and free persons of color did, indeed, have something to say and were conscious of political and social changes taking place around them. Blacks were sufficiently astute to have geared their protests toward these changes and consequently did much to liberate themselves and their fellows. In so doing, they contributed significantly to the end of slavery and to the history of the relationship between blacks and whites. This story is one aspect of the book *Hard Trials on My Way* by John Anthony Scott which makes it a useful work for the student who wishes to have a swift but well-grounded insight into the role black people played in their own emancipation.

But if this were all, *Hard Trials* would be no different from a number of books already on the market. What Scott has done is to place the activities of various personalities, slave and free, black and white, in an historical progression between 1800 and 1860, coupled with the necessary history of pertinent developments that insure an exquisite sense of continuity to the whole endeavor. He develops the personalities of his actors in such a way that one knows what motivated their lives and presents their involvement in *Hard Trials* as a continuing personal drama. A case in point is the manner in which Scott deals with the coming of the Dred Scott case. Although the chapter dealing with this matter is entitled "Dred Scott vs. Sanford 1857," what Scott does is to go as far back as the Louisiana purchase to show, in a marvelously compressed way covering twenty-one pages, the whole development of the legal progression that led ultimately to Dred Scott. In these few pages, Scott is able to deal not only with the problems that arose immediately between free and slave-holding states because of this purchase, but takes into account all the laws and compromises made subsequently which sought to stem the inevitable moral confrontation between North and South. Treated here are not only legal problems, but the relationships between the law and politics and the identifiable but diffuse role of citizen outrage. Even the attack by Preston Brooks on Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts a year before the Dred Scott decision is noted here as part of the developing personal drama that influenced the case.

*Hard Trials* deals not only with the experiences of black people, but meets very well the author's concern with the role of whites. Thus, with careful regard for chronology, the activities of whites such as William Lloyd Garrison, Elijah P. Lovejoy, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and John Brown are adroitly woven into the fabric of this work. It is refreshing, too, to find that these whites are not presented as paragons of virtue, but as mortals striving to insure a better world. Nor were they all agreed on what should be done about the slaves. They were united in one issue, however, and that was slavery was evil and had to go. As a

result, one gets from this book a brief but very thorough history of the times between 1800 and 1860, which includes not only the views and experiences of blacks and whites involved in the anti-slavery movement, but also the responses, philosophies, and ideologies of the leading spokesmen and ordinary people on the slavery issue. One gets, too, a thorough insight into the political and legal machinations that worked for and against the institution of slavery.

The author, in his introduction, noted that the purpose of the book was to "probe the meaning of slavery as defined by the actual experiences of black people and by the very words with which they described that experience." It would be very difficult then to fault this book, because Scott has more than met his intended purpose and certainly has gone beyond that in presenting, in a very brief but masterfully concentrated way, that segment of the domestic history of America which, by its very complexity, has confused and defeated many less gifted scholars. One might quibble about the absence of footnotes, but this book clearly is not for the scholar of this subject, particularly with respect to the personalities that were involved. Nevertheless, the absence of footnotes is made up by a brief, but excellent, bibliographic essay.

This book would serve as an excellent supplementary reader for beginning courses in Afro-American and American history. It would be certain to attract and hold the attention of its readers simply because of the skilled and polished manner in which it is written, as well as the sense of personal immediacy that Scott conveys in his approach. More of these books with a personal touch are appearing now, and it is to be hoped that John Scott will continue to lead the way, as this reviewer views this book a marvel of its genre.

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RAYMOND L. HALL. *BLACK SEPARATISM IN THE UNITED STATES*. Hanover, NH: The University Press of New England, 1978, 306 pp., \$15.00.

A startling look at black separatist movements of the past reveals interesting facts that parallel the rise and fall of the contemporary organizations with separatist ideologies. The author focuses on the period from 1960 to 1972, analyzing five black social movement organizations: The Nation of Islam/Black Muslims, The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Non-Violent (later National) Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party, and the Republic of New Africa (RNA). Though the