

Murphy investigated the Poles' relationships with the Germans through religion, education, marriages and residential patterns.

The political question hardly arose in Bottrop, and soon Poles ran for and sat on town councils, again at first representing an ethnic group, but soon dropping this cultural exclusivity. Even the creation of an independent Poland after World War I did little to shake the new Polish-German relationship in Bottrop. The heated debates on the Upper Silesian plebiscites did not have any real echo in Bottrop. As Murphy concludes, "If so powerful an attraction as the revived Polish national state could not tempt them from the city *en masse* they must certainly have been well established in Bottrop" (p. 201).

Robert H. Keyserlingk  
University of Ottawa

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Ian M.G. Quimby — *Apprenticeship in Colonial Philadelphia*. Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1985. Pp. 10, xvi, 215.

Ian M. G. Quimby's *Apprenticeship in Colonial Philadelphia* is one of the vintage theses Garland Publishing is issuing in photographic reproductions through its "Outstanding Dissertations" series. Originally submitted for the Master's Degree at the University of Delaware in 1963, the work is conceptually dated. Nonetheless, it contains substantial legal and economic information on eighteenth-century American apprenticeship, an institution the author defines as "a contractual relationship between a master craftsman and a child for the purpose of preparing the child for the competent exercise of the master's craft, in return for which the child agreed to serve the master for a specific term of years" (p. 3).

The study rests largely upon records of Philadelphia indentures for 1745-46 and 1771-73, which are mined to produce a portrait of changes within the apprenticeship system during the late colonial period. For Quimby, the story in Philadelphia is of how "a medieval European institution was adapted to an open society with increasingly democratic tendencies. The result was a peculiar mixture of tradition and innovation — a kind of typically American pragmatic solution" to the economic and social problems of the New World (p. vii). The traditional English system of apprenticeship was shaped by conditions in which labor was abundant, competition was discouraged, and powerful guilds controlled entry into skilled crafts. By the eighteenth century, as the system was being transplanted to Pennsylvania, the early stages of the Industrial Revolution were undermining these English conditions and thus apprenticeship itself. In the preindustrial economy of colonial Philadelphia, however, the traditional method of learning a trade retained the relevance it was losing in the imperial centre. Indeed, apprenticeship grew in economic significance between the 1740s and the 1770s, as a generally thriving colonial economy created a demand for skilled craftsmen that outstripped the supply of skilled free and indentured immigrants. The chronic labor shortage, says Quimby, interacted with a lack of strong guilds or other craft organizations to shape a flexible system of apprenticeship characterized by relatively short indentures and a virtual absence of fees paid to the master.

Also modified to suit American conditions was the English tradition of binding out the poor as servants or apprentices. By 1771, such "parish apprenticeships" had become Philadelphia's sole means of providing for the support of orphans and other indigent children. Authorities sent nearly a quarter of all parish apprentices to farm in the city's hinterland (p. 106). Cheap labor for farmers and only minimal training for the children, Quimby argues, were the fruits of this policy, for rural apprentices learned few useful skills and were likely to remain landless agricultural laborers throughout their lives.

After the 1770s the entire system of apprenticeship — both for craft training and poor relief — went into decline, a decline Quimby attributes only partly to the impact of the American Revolution and the advent of industrialism. At the root of the system's decay, argues a final chapter that relies heavily on Bernard Bailyn's *Education in the Forming of American Society* (New York: Vintage, 1962), was "a general movement in American society toward the institutionalizing of the educational process" (p. 150). As schools and other formal institutions assumed the educational functions formerly centered on the family, apprenticeship as a means of job training, like other aspects of the household economy, gradually disappeared.

*Apprenticeship in Colonial Philadelphia* is aptly named; it is more a study of apprenticeship than of apprentices, more an institutional than a social history. One learns much about the formal terms and conditions of indentures, similarities and differences among practices in various crafts, and the roles of law and government in regulating the institution and settling disputes between masters and servants. One learns far less, however, about apprentices' everyday lives, their interactions with masters, and their role in the culture at large. Here, as elsewhere, the book shows its age; the approach is far closer to that of Richard B. Morris in *Government and Labor in Early America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940) than to that of most social historians who have written in the past two decades — including Quimby himself, as editor of *The Craftsman in Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1984).

In the interval between the thesis and the latter volume, little specifically has been written about colonial apprenticeship, but the conceptual framework within which historians place the institution has been fundamentally reshaped. "To recite all the important work that has been done in the intervening years," Quimby notes in a new introduction to the thesis, "would require a lengthy bibliographical essay that would overshadow the work at hand" (p. 1). Contributions to that essay would have to include studies in "the new labor history" as exemplified in the works of E.P. Thompson and Herbert Gutman; social histories of women, the family, and the life course; and efforts to reconstruct the lives and viewpoints of the historically "inarticulate." One can hardly imagine writing a scholarly study of apprenticeship today without drawing upon this literature, and as a result *Apprenticeship in Colonial Philadelphia* inevitably appears conceptually weak — unfair as such a criticism may seem for a thesis written by a graduate student in 1963.

The discussion of female apprentices exemplifies the volume's analytical shortcomings when measured by contemporary expectations. Quaint references to "the fair sex" (pp. 13, 87) are easily overlooked, but throughout the discussion women's economic contributions to the household economy — and thus female apprenticeships — receive short shrift. Quimby finds virtually inexplicable the large number of young women who voluntarily contracted for apprenticeships in housewifery: "A girl who stayed at home," he concludes, "could as easily have learned sewing and cooking" (p. 39). Yet a few pages later, an apparent throw-away sentence observes that, as part of their freedom dues, many "girls bound to housewifery received spinning wheels which provided them with one of the most essential tools in the eighteenth century household" (p. 52). For poor young women training in spinning and the acquisition of a basic and relatively expensive machine would have been a significant benefit and perhaps the key to a respectable marriage.

To call a work dated is not necessarily to condemn it; on its own terms *Apprenticeship in Colonial Philadelphia* remains a fine Master's thesis, and specialists will thank Garland for making this work widely available. But most social historians in the 1980s will find far more satisfaction in a work such as W.J. Rorabaugh's *The Craft Apprentice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), which incorporates and builds upon many of Quimby's findings.

Daniel K. Richter  
Dickinson College