

5-1-1971

Letter to the Editor

Edward O. Schriver

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schriver, Edward O.. "Letter to the Editor." *Maine History* 10, 4 (1971): 127-128.
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol10/iss4/3>

This Reports, News, Announcements is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

CORRESPONDENCE

Orono, Maine
April 13, 1971

Re: Maine Historical Society Newsletter
Vol. 10 No. 3 February 1971

Many valid questions were posed concerning *Go Free* in the February, 1971, *Newsletter* (pages 84-87): queries directed toward uncovering the exact nature of Maine antislavery, toward opening up the larger issues of racism, reform, and the role of women (to note but a few of them), and toward relating Maine antislavery to current problems. There was, nonetheless, confusion in the review over what *Go Free* purported to be.

The aim of the monograph was stated in the preface: "This study focuses on the intellectual foundations and the activities of the Maine abolition organizations." Its purpose was not to "approach a definitive analysis," to offer "a detailed assessment," or to present "a thoroughly satisfactory treatment" of the whole spectrum of Maine antislavery thought, policy, and behavior.

The modest scope of the study resulted from the meager number and the uneven quality of primary and secondary materials available at the time. This situation was reported several times in the bibliographical essay (pages 113-116): i.e., "The primary sources available for the study of the antislavery movement are meager....Biographical material on the leaders of the movement is limited (etc.)...."

Indeed, the criticism made by the reviewer--in several instances--point up the difficulties with much of the extant material. He writes: "In point of fact [underlining mine], the Bowdoin professor's [William Smyth's] assistance to fugitive slaves earned for him animosity from Brunswick shipowners and merchants trading with the South. Ultimately a devious effort to force his removal from the Bowdoin faculty inspired unusual student collaboration to save the position of the popular abolitionist professor." Professor Blithe, as he is called in the legend (see Louis C. Hatch's *The History of Bowdoin College*, page 57, and Minot and Snow, *Tales of Bowdoin*, pages 275-278), probably was hated by the shipowners and merchants of Brunswick and may well have been saved by his students; but there is hardly sufficient evidence about Professor Smyth to assess his character and part in the Maine antislavery movement in "detail."

Another reviewer of *Go Free* has correctly reflected that

"Go Free is intended as descriptive history and, hence, contains a minimum of analysis. This is perhaps unfortunate, for a number of nagging questions occur which the book doesn't answer." This comment is accurate. I regret the scarcity and unevenness of the materials which I had to work with; I therefore await with anticipation the finding of additional primary and secondary sources which will allow answers to these "nagging questions" to be attempted.

Edward O. Schriver

WRITINGS IN MAINE HISTORY
Periodicals and Newspapers

ABBREVIATIONS: *AG* The American Genealogist. *AM* Antiques Magazine. *CLQ* Colby Library Quarterly. *DEM* Down East Magazine. *FM* Fortune Magazine. *HPM* Historic Preservation Magazine. *IH* The Indian Historian. *JAAA* Journal of the Archives of American Art. *LJM* Lewiston Journal Magazine. *MLR* Maine Law Review. *MT* Maine Times. *NEHGR* New England Historical & Genealogical Register. *NEQ* New England Quarterly. *NYHM* New York History Magazine. *PM* Pennsylvania Magazine. *RIH* Rhode Island History. *SQ* The Shaker Quarterly. *VH* Vermont History. All dates are 1971, unless otherwise noted.

APOLLONIO, SPENCER. Winter harvest - northern shrimp. *DEM* April.

AUCOIN, STEVE. We will not leave these homes. [Spring-Pleasant Street block demolition plans.] *MT* March 12.

BARKER, SISTER R. MILDRED. "I will walk more closely with thee" [Eldress Harriett Newell Coolbroth, b. 1864 in Scarborough]. *SQ* Spring 1970.

BREITENBACH, EDGAR and WILLIAMS, HERMANN W. JR. American graphics and painting in the late 19th century. *JAAA* Vol. 9 No. 3.

BROWN, SAM, JR. Maine's first environmentalists [The "Red Paint" people and "Ceramic" people]. *MT* March 19.

CAVANAH, FRANCES. Jenny Lind Fever. *HPM* October-December 1970.

CODDINGTON, JOHN INSLEY. Donald Lines Jacobus 1887-1970. *NEHGR* January.

COHN, JAN. The Negro Character in Northern magazine fiction of the 1860's. *NEQ* December 1970.

COX, PETER W. Preservation-girding for legislative battle. *MT* February 19.

----- . A startling little building [Casco Bank's new Commercial St. building]. *MT* March 5.