

The profile of the typical runaway was a young man in his teens or twenties, the ratio of male to female fugitives running as high as 3:1; mostly black in appearance, although mulattoes were strongly represented; mostly tall and strong, although a small minority were significantly scarred; possessing a variety of clothing, and rarely meriting much description of hairstyle; self-possessed and articulate, although occasionally speaking slowly and having a downcast look; setting out alone, although sometimes in small groups; leaving at almost any point in the year, although less frequently in the fall, particularly during harvest time. The authors detect few changes in runaway slaves over time. "It would probably be difficult," they note, "to find any group in the United States that changed less over a period of seventy years" (p. 233).

The extent of slave flight and its significance is somewhat murky, despite the wide-ranging research effort. The authors speak of a constant stream of fugitives, of an "enormous" outflow (p. 128), and of some slaveholders' struggles to control "a plague of runaways" (p. 282). Yet they also acknowledge that runaways were a small minority of all slaves, perhaps totaling fifty thousand or 1 percent of the South's slave population in 1860. Yet this figure counts all escapees, when the most common form of absconding was not running away but temporary absenteeism. The authors might have probed this distinction more deeply and questioned whether absentees were truly rebels. Slaveowners generally ignored truancy; they offered only modest if any rewards for the recovery of their fugitives, so confident were they of their return; capital losses were minimal. From the slaveholders' perspective, the problem of slave flight posed no serious threat.

Whatever the dimensions of the practice, Franklin and Schweninger insist that runaways were a constant thorn in slaveholders' sides. Runaways were an ever-present reminder that slaves were restive, far from content in their bondage, defiant. Slaveholders could never fathom why slaves would run away and labeled them "ungrateful." Most fugitives, the authors claim, could count on the support of their fellow slaves. Runaways challenged slavery, although, it must be concluded, without ever seriously damaging the institution.

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*Migrants Against Slavery: Virginians and the Nation.* By Philip J. Schwarz. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001. Pp. xii, 250. Tables, illustrations, map, notes, appendix, index. \$38.50.)

To appreciate the dogged research and hard work invested in this book, the attentive reader will start with the endnotes. There

one finds that Philip J. Schwarz has not only ransacked the archives, but also unearthed midwestern county records, walked the terrain to which his transplanted Virginians moved, and sought to interview their descendants. *Migrants Against Slavery* more than meets the first test for a serious book: the author has plainly done his homework.

Schwarz notes that fully half the free Virginians who left their state of origin lived outside the South in 1860. Among the whites were many who “migrated away from slavery—without being expressly opposed to it” (p. 3), a large but hard to define group that remains peripheral to this study. The focus here is black migrants, along with those few whites “who consciously migrated against slavery” (p. 3).

Four particular cases stand at the center of this book. Dangerfield Newby was freed by his white father, who moved his mixed-race family to Ohio in 1858. Left behind were Newby’s enslaved wife and children. Three rare and moving letters from the “affectionate wife” survive: she pleaded with her husband to raise money to buy her freedom. He accumulated \$742, insufficient to meet the owner’s asking price. At this juncture the frustrated husband decided to join up with John Brown, who had a different plan for freeing enslaved Virginians. Newby was one of the first casualties at Harpers Ferry in October 1859.

Less dramatic but equally interesting are three other tales. George T. Gilliam also had a white father who married a black woman. The light-skinned George enjoyed a comfortable inheritance. He married a light-skinned free woman with comparably advantaged antecedents. Together, they moved North, where he became a well-to-do doctor and land speculator. The family’s mixed-race ancestry ceased to be acknowledged, and they passed for white. After his wife’s death, Gilliam married a white woman and raised a second family.

The prosperous Samuel Gist died in England in 1815, a half century after leaving Virginia. His will emancipated fully three hundred Virginia slaves and specified that they be resettled out of state. Unfortunately, these freedmen and freedwomen were placed on inferior lands in Ohio and remained dependent on the Virginia managers of the Gist estate, notably William Fanning Wickham, who refused to allow individual ownership. An undertaking that had the potential to enable a significant group of African Americans to participate in the American dream was stunted by the executors, who believed that former slaves could never fend for themselves.

Hamilton County, Indiana, is not today a locale that harbors many troublemakers, but for several decades before the Civil War it was home for George Boxley, a white Virginian who had conspired with slaves in 1816 to organize an escape or an insurrection. Soon after his arrest, he broke out of prison and spent a number of years thereafter more or less on the run. In 1828, he arrived in Hamilton County and became a schoolteacher. Although always an outspoken

abolitionist, he gained stature as one of the pioneering citizens in the region. His name still designates the small town where he settled. Boxley lived to see the end of American slavery.

Those interested in the history of the Old Northwest may visualize the widely-reproduced mural depicting Edward Coles, the young Virginian and future Illinois governor, standing on a raft in the Ohio River with slaves whom he was carrying to freedom. By breathing life into a fascinating cast of heretofore obscure characters, Schwarz adds dimension to the romanticized Coles mural. This book demonstrates that one must address issues of race and slavery to understand the early history of the region.

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*Blood on the Moon: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln.* By Edward Steers, Jr. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001. Pp. xv, 360. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

Edward Steers, Jr., has written an account of Lincoln's assassination that is compelling, fascinating, and well documented. He notes, "I have relied principally on primary sources and sought independent corroboration of the recollections of those persons who figured prominently in the story" (p. xi). Though threats had been made on Lincoln's life even before he assumed the presidency, the level of danger rose after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. By the end of 1863, "black flag warfare" was apparently officially adopted by each of the belligerents, so that both "Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln were viewed as legitimate military targets" (p. 42).

John Wilkes Booth, though the key player in the plans to kidnap Lincoln and then to assassinate him, did not act alone. Steers makes a convincing argument that a much larger conspiracy was involved, beginning with Booth's immediate cohorts and going all the way up to at least the Confederate secret service. Dr. Samuel Mudd was not just a doctor who unknowingly treated an assassin's broken leg, but a Confederate sympathizer who knew Booth from previous encounters and was much more involved in the great tragedy than he ever admitted. Mudd escaped hanging by only one vote of the military tribunal. Mary Surratt was not an innocent bystander and thus was hung justly. She was a coconspirator in the plot. Steers has a wonderful ability to make the principal figures in Lincoln's assassination become real people, to sense their driven personalities, to feel their fanatical commitment to a lost cause.

Steers gives a carefully detailed and well-paced account of Booth's attempt to escape pursuing federal authorities. One can feel