unwanted British military posts, and imperial representatives who rejected long-established diplomatic and trade practices in favor of treating the tribes as subject peoples. The result was the armed conflict that Americans used to call “Pontiac’s Rebellion,” which Calloway refers to here as America’s “First War of Independence.” While his treatment of the conflict lacks the interpretive depth of Gregory Evans Dowd’s recent War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire (2002), his placement of Pontiac’s War in continental context has considerable value. The Native American struggle for autonomy becomes one part of a larger picture of change and adjustment, inviting comparisons of the decisions made by a wide variety of North American actors, Native and European, famous and lesser-known.

The Scratch of a Pen belongs to Oxford University Press’s series on Pivotal Moments in American History, and Calloway certainly demonstrates that 1763 represents a turning point every bit as important as the election of 1800 or the Crash of 1929. His work promises to deepen both academic and popular interest in the Seven Years War and eighteenth-century America.

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Stealing Indian Women
Native Slavery in the Illinois Country
By Carl J. Ekberg
(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007. Pp. xvi, 236. Illustrations, notes, index. $38.00.)

In the eighteenth century, boosters of one or another part of colonial North America often claimed that theirs was a “good poor man’s country,” assertions that historians have sometimes accepted but often contested. In his previous three books on the Illinois Country in the eighteenth century, Carl J. Ekberg has made a strong case that his region was truly North America’s best poor man’s country. As Ekberg has detailed, the Illinois Country (or what both French and Spanish authorities designated as Upper Louisiana) afforded colonists the opportunity to escape the burdens that imperial rule imposed in other parts of North America. Inhabitants also took advantage of available land and excellent soil, producing crops for home consumption and for sale to markets in Lower Louisiana. Adding to these agricultural attractions were the possibilities for prof-
itable trade with Indians, with whom the local colonists got along quite peacefully. Even more remarkable was how peaceable their relations were with one another; Ekberg’s extensive archival excavations uncovered no evidence of interpersonal violence among them.

*Stealing Indian Women*, which completes Ekberg’s quartet of studies on the Illinois Country, reprises some evidence and arguments advanced in his earlier books, but also modifies his previous proposition about Upper Louisiana’s standing as the continent’s best poor man’s country. With Indian slavery as his topic and the experiences of enslaved Indian women given special attention, Ekberg suggests that while the Illinois Country was a very good country for poor men, the same could not so easily be said for poor women, especially those who found themselves the property of others.

The issue of Indian slavery—or more specifically the enslavement of Indians by Europeans—has, as Ekberg notes in the first paragraph of his preface, recently (and belatedly) drawn the attention of historians. Here, Ekberg cites influential work by Allan Gallay and Brett Rushforth, whose studies “tackle Indian slavery, respectively, from the very different English and French perspectives” (p. xi). Surprisingly, Ekberg omits James Brooks from this list, though his work on the trading and raiding networks that stretched across the southern Plains would seem particularly important for understanding how and why captured Indian women came into Spanish and French orbits. The omission is telling. In general, Ekberg is less concerned with the original theft from places distant from the Illinois Country than he is with the conditions that enslaved Indian women faced once there.

Indeed, the title refers not to the captures that brought Indian women into the Illinois Country, but to an incident in which two enslaved Indian women were stolen away from the Illinois Country. With a mastery of local archives, Ekberg recreates the episode that left one of these women dead and the other freed, albeit separated from her children. If Ekberg’s narrative lacks the dramatic punch of Natalie Zemon Davis’s *The Return of Martin Guerre* (from which he drew inspiration), it is nonetheless a revealing work of historical reconstruction. Like his other books on the region, this book tells us a great deal about the worlds that ordinary men and women made together in the middle of North America in the eighteenth century. And with its close examination of how women in particular coped with the trials of enslavement, *Stealing Indian Women* acknowledges that what made for a good poor man’s country did not necessarily make good life for a poor woman.

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