

(including failure to mention the extensive illustrated sheet music trade in Cincinnati at the time), O'Brien has laid the groundwork for further investigation by compiling information from multiple sources in an accessible manner and distinct sections.

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Confronting Slavery: Edward Coles and the Rise of Antislavery Politics in Nineteenth-Century America

By Suzanne Cooper Guasco

(DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2013. Pp. xxiv, 293. Notes, illustrations, maps, index. Paperbound, \$28.95.)

Edward Coles, the Illinois governor who famously left his home state of Virginia so that he could emancipate his slaves, deserves a full-length, modern biography. He now has two. Suzanne Cooper Guasco's book arrives very shortly after Kurt E. Leichtle and Bruce G. Carveth's *Crusade Against Slavery: Edward Coles, Pioneer of Freedom* (2011). Where Leichtle and Carveth interpret Coles as a rather common man who, in the right place at the right time, helped to keep Illinois a free state, and where they include substantial discussion of the people Coles emancipated, Guasco uses Coles's story to illuminate the broader workings of nineteenth-century antislavery politics. She explains in considerable detail how, as governor of Illinois during the 1823-24 political

contest over whether to hold a state constitutional convention—which organizers hoped would result in the legalization of slavery—Coles learned that antislavery politics worked best when tied to the interests and fears of non-slaveholding whites. Guasco's account thus usefully draws our attention to the role and significance of anti-black sentiment in the formation of a politically viable antislavery campaign. She states her case a bit too forcefully, however, sometimes making it sound as if Coles himself invented the free-labor, white-over-black, pro-colonization amalgam that later proved so effective for Lincoln's Republican Party.

Coles presents a puzzle to any prospective biographer who must explain why he behaved so differently from his wealthy, well-educated peers and

mentors, who held onto their slaves even if they expressed ideological opposition to slavery. Guasco locates the answer in Coles's conversion, while a student in Bishop James Madison's course on moral philosophy at the College of William and Mary, from ordinary, unthinking slaveholder to conscientious champion of the Enlightenment values of liberty and equality. As a young man in the early 1800s, Coles had reason to feel that other elite Virginians shared his antislavery beliefs and simply needed the opportunity to act on them. He maintained this conviction even as the world changed around him. It was thus especially crushing to Coles when his idol, President James Madison, failed to free his slaves in his will.

Why did Coles's conversion last when President Madison's and others' did not? And why did it lead him to give up his position as a member of the Virginia elite? The book does not answer these questions—partly because his remaining papers allow

a biographer to delve only so deeply into Coles's psyche, partly because Guasco takes care not to go beyond what her evidence allows, and finally because she focuses on politics more than on personality. Coles remains a bit of an enigma, an aristocratic, idealistic, eighteenth-century man who was out of place in a nineteenth-century world of increasingly democratic and partisan politics. The irony is that he was one of those who helped to popularize the racist and self-interested form of antislavery politics that exacerbated partisanship rather than, as he had earlier dreamed, tie the country together as a single, free, multiracial nation.

EVA SHEPPARD WOLF is Professor of History at San Francisco State University. She is the author of *Almost Free: A Story About Family and Race in Antebellum Virginia* (2012) and is currently researching the content and form of free-labor ideas in the early republic.



Parading Patriotism: Independence Day Celebrations in the Urban Midwest, 1826-1876

By Adam Criblez

(DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2013. Pp. xi, 193. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Paperbound, \$28.95.)

Although a great deal of scholarly attention has in the past twenty years been paid to the Fourth of July, Adam Criblez offers a fresh look at the first U.S. national holiday. First, he concentrates on that most

neglected of American regions, the Midwest. Second, while many studies of the Fourth focus on the early republic or the twentieth century, Criblez scrutinizes mid-nineteenth-century celebrations. He contends