

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.

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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

that these parameters of place and time provide a unique lens through which to view the impact of race, ethnicity, reform, sectional and regional politics, and commercial leisure upon the construction of patriotism and citizenship on the Fourth.

Criblez examines Independence Day in five Midwest cities—Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, and Chicago—and bookends his study with accounts of the semi-centennial and centennial celebrations. Noting that historians have divided over whether the Fourth has been predominantly a holiday of inclusion and unity or one of contestation and construction, Criblez comes down on the latter side. Drawing on newspaper accounts, which he supplements with diaries and holiday oratory, he argues that urban midwesterners used the Fourth to construct “their own distinct interpretations of this American nation” (p. xx), interpretations that were shaped by the region and its ethnic-racial, political, and cultural tensions. Between 1826 and 1876, he claims, these forces transformed the holiday from a shared community expression of American identity to an arena for battles over patriotism and control of historical memory.

Early celebrations followed the script of the early national Fourth, with military parades, oratory, and toasting. After 1826, however, holiday unity proved hard to come by. Civic boosters promoted unifying celebrations, but conflicts over alcohol, slavery, immigration, religion,

and sectional politics produced more contentious Fourths. Temperance and antislavery activists, nativists and immigrants offered competing visions of American patriotism and citizenship, sometimes leading to bloody holiday clashes. Despite strong Copperhead sentiments in some of these cities, the start of the Civil War inspired a resurrection of the unified commemoration of independence in 1861, but this was short-lived. Even before the end of the war, the Fourth, Criblez suggests, became a day devoted more to “blissful forgetfulness” (p. 99) than to historical memory. This trend intensified after the war, as “Midwesterners reinvented the Fourth of July as a commercialized leisure holiday and reclaimed the day from civic boosters” (p. 101). Even the community celebrations of the centennial shared the spotlight with sporting events, picnics, excursions, and other forms of commercial recreation.

Criblez is not completely persuasive on the singularity of the region’s celebrations of the Fourth. He argues that on the Fourth midwesterners created a regionally distinctive national identity, yet it is never clear just what that identity was. More evidence in the way of oratory or editorials touting the region’s unique American identity would help. Also problematic is Criblez’s assertion of the Civil War’s role in transforming the Fourth into a day of leisure, when midwesterners chose “uncontroversial spectacle” (p. 141) over historical memory. The transformation certainly occurred,

but its roots surely lay more in the juggernaut of commercial recreation and entertainment than in the desire to forget the war. After all, veterans on both sides annually rehearsed the war's meaning on their Memorial Days.

Criblez does contribute much to our understanding of Americans' competing uses of the Fourth to define national identity and citizenship in this period and region so crucial to the nation's agricultural and industrial development. He also sheds light, albeit imperfectly, on the process of constructing regional versions of

nationalism. This book will interest readers curious about the development of the Fourth in the nineteenth century, and will also appeal to those who want to learn more about the history of this region.

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Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America

By François Weil

(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013. Pp. 304. \$27.95.)

Because academic historians regard the subject of genealogy as the province of antiquarians, scholars have paid little attention to its substantial presence in American cultural life—until now. Gracefully and clearly written, François Weil's *Family Trees* provides a comprehensive and authoritative summary of the changing place of American genealogy from revolutionary times to the era of television's *Roots* and the online presence of Ancestry.com. This book is likely to become a key reference point for future studies of any number of specialized genealogical groups and practices.

Weil makes the wise decision to go beyond genealogical practice as such to the wider dynamics of family

history. Commencing with a survey of colonial-era status-seeking genealogy, Weil proceeds with his study of the “Americanization of genealogy” (p. 41). Tracing the ties of the American family as a “moral, social and political unit” in the fledgling republic, Weil shows how genealogy allowed early to mid-nineteenth-century Americans to “deal with tensions” within the changing economy and to compensate for the “physical and affective distance and distress caused by geographic mobility” (p. 43). Although centered on revolutionary traditions and family connections, status seeking remained a definite part of this early republican genealogy. After the Civil War, the fixation with republican families