

in 1836. Stockwell misconstrues his fight for independence, and in the epilogue, she shockingly includes Tenskwatawa as “first and foremost” on a list of those most responsible for removal (p. 322). In other instances, her analysis echoes the ethnocentric statements of missionaries and officials, as in her assertion that Christianity helped Indians “overcome the worst parts of the traditional Indian way of life” (p. 119). Stockwell would have benefited from consulting studies by John Bowes, Adam Jortner, Susan Sleeper-Smith, Stephen Warren,

and others and avoiding the older, often outdated scholarship upon which she relies so heavily. These flaws undermine the valuable contributions of *The Other Trail of Tears*, and readers should approach it aware of its shortcomings.

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*Slavery's Borderland: Freedom and Bondage Along the Ohio River*  
By Matthew Salafia

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. Pp. viii, 318. Notes, index. \$55.00.)

Historians of the central United States have begun to probe their region's geographic and cultural boundaries. No matter how they have demarcated its cultural and political identity, however, scholars usually draw the antebellum dividing line between slave and free states. Matthew Salafia's new work on slavery and freedom in the Ohio River valley explicitly blurs those boundaries, both in geographic and methodological terms. The author raises important new scholarly questions: How do historians talk about conflicted borders, particularly when those borders required political and economic accommodation? How do historians describe the experience of unfree labor and human bondage in a region that was legally, if not actu-

ally, closed to slavery? Salafia's study of the Ohio River border—which functioned both as a natural geographic frontier and a political, economic, and cultural boundary—now enriches our understanding of the way a river can function as a conduit for new ideas, and also as a “seam” (to use his metaphor) that ties together sharply opposing communities (p. 7). The Ohio River was the central artery that carried goods, crops, people, ideas, conflicts, and (perhaps most important for Salafia) economic and political conciliation across both sides of the border.

Rivers are notoriously changeable and unreliable boundaries. *Slavery's Borderland* examines the Ohio River borders between Kentucky and the

two northwestern states of Indiana and Ohio, from the 1820s through the Civil War. Salafia explains that the boundaries between the systems of unfree labor (that is, chattel slavery to the south of the Ohio River, and various forms of apprenticeships, indentured servitude, and human bondage to the north) were as variable as the geographic boundary. In Indiana, for example, African American residents, technically classed as free persons under the vague Section XI of the Northwest Ordinance, could be subjected to several forms of bound labor, such as long-term apprenticeships.

Salafia's impressive research brings this borderland to life. To sharpen the distinction between forms of unpaid labor, Salafia presents case studies of people who sought to escape from slavery, either legally (by suing their putative owners for their freedom, when they had been brought into a free state) or by fleeing northward, usually as far as Canada. He draws together many layers of evidence, including memoirs and family histories, that reveal how individuals struggled to make sense of the inescapable fact that skin color rendered every black person's freedom problematic. Economic evidence on land values in the Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio counties on both sides of the Ohio River, as well as voting statistics and excerpts from political

debates, reveal a powerful commitment to national unity and an equally strong aversion to radicalism. In contrast to previous historians who have focused on sectional violence in the border region, Salafia argues that the lack of consensus on the role of free black people and unfree labor supported accommodation. Radical ideas, like secession on the one hand and abolitionism on the other, found little support in the Ohio River valley.

The borderland created immense difficulties for black persons fighting for their personal freedom, while encouraging white people on both sides of the river to struggle for national unity. Salafia suggests, however, that the river boundary also clarified irreconcilable differences between the opposing sides: in the long run, the rendition of fugitive slaves, and, much more troubling, the kidnapping of free black persons proved to be impossible to negotiate. This book is an immensely valuable contribution to the scholarship of race, slavery, and sectional conflict in the Midwest.

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