

White supremacy, Indian exclusion, and chattel slavery triumphed in the Bluegrass and, more broadly, the United States. After the Indian Removal Act of 1830 led to the forcible relocation of American Indians to Indian Territory west of the Mississippi, the Choctaws and other removed Indians “embarked on a separate project of nation building” by establishing their own schools

there (p. 286). For those interested in education, Native Americans, and race relations in U.S. history, then, *Great Crossings* is a must-read.

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Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of Economic Development

Edited by Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. Pp. viii, 406. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95.)

For nineteenth-century Americans, it was clear that slavery was a key component of the nation’s capitalist economy. Until recently, however, scholars have not been as quick to recognize the interconnections between national economic development and slavery. The essays in this volume, which originated in a 2011 conference on “Slavery’s Capitalism” at Brown University, go a long way toward correcting this oversight. They complement a growing literature that shows how central slavery was to the economic growth of the entire United States, and provide perhaps the most wide-ranging assessment yet of the complex relationship between slavery and capitalism.

The volume is organized thematically; essays are tied together by an introduction that outlines recent trends in scholarship. An initial

section details how plantations acted as “literally the nation’s first ‘big businesses’”: managers maximized profits by using violence to speed up slaves’ harvesting of crops; developing cutting-edge accounting techniques; and, in Virginia, inventing reaper technology that quickened the pace of wheat production (p. 14). The second group of essays discusses why slaves were important financial commodities. They provided planters with collateral for mortgages and loans, facilitated a wave of speculation in Mississippi land, linked Southern cotton to global markets, and sometimes even provided planters with cash payouts, when slaves chose to take their own lives. Many of these early essays are rooted in the South, but other essays clarify that slavery was central to the economic growth of the entire nation.

The volume's third section considers the ways that slavery's capitalism shaped the Northern states, from trading ties between New England and Caribbean colonies to the development of a shipping industry devoted to the coastal transport of slaves to American investment in Cuba. The final section considers how slavery molded the nation's most prominent institutions: higher education, the law, and politics. All combined, the essays make a convincing case that slavery's capitalism had dramatic effects on national institutions, markets, and the place of the United States in the world. The volume offers not just a study in political economy, however, and contributors are keenly aware of how capitalism shaped the social dimensions of slavery as well.

Despite its strengths, *Slavery's Capitalism* is not comprehensive. Although several contributors touch on environmental factors, the volume misses an opportunity to directly consider how slavery's capitalism affected American and global environments. Given the long engagement that

environmental historians have had with the history of capitalism—even predating recent interest in the concept—this is a significant oversight, and it would help to make an even stronger case for just how slavery fit into American capitalist development.

Nevertheless, *Slavery's Capitalism* promises to be a “new history of American economic development,” and it largely succeeds in nationalizing and internationalizing the story of slavery and providing new dimensions on the dynamics of the institution. Although the essays cover a range of topics, they mesh together well—largely thanks to the introductory essay and organization—and the volume stakes out important new directions for the scholarship on slavery. The book will be of interest to all scholars of nineteenth-century America, not just to historians of slavery or the South.

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Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era

By Mark A. Lause

(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016. Pp. viii, 223. Illustrations, notes, index. \$95.00.)

In *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era*, Mark Lause argues that

the rise of spiritualism influenced the rise of the Republican Party in the 1850s and affected the Radical