

the nation. The succeeding two chapters firmly locate the Dream speech within two schools of thought: the abolitionist tradition of Lincoln and integrationism, which ultimately espouses the inclusion of African Americans in the nation. Sundquist shows how "Lincoln's promise has been revived by everyone who has stood and spoken in his shadow" (145). King's reference to "My Country 'Tis of Thee" situates him within the company of those who embraced Samuel F. Smith's "America" as their own.

The book ends with a fairly balanced account of what has become the speech's most laudable yet controversial phrase: "they will not be judged by the content of their skin, but by the content of their character." Sundquist astutely captures the complexities of how this phrase has been appropriated by different groups. King's allusion to colorblind justice has become the benchmark for anti-affirmative action policies, but Sundquist concludes that King was a moral pragmatist who "did not let devotion to the ideal of colorblindness prevent him from advocating race-based strategies to address historical inequalities" (203). He also juxtaposes King's demand for "something special" to assist all disadvantaged groups with his emphasis on the importance of moral character. In light of King's extensive works, reducing the core of his philosophy to one speech is quite a lofty endeavor. Nonetheless, this book is an essential read for anyone seeking to understand the multilayered roots of the Dream speech.

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Hammond, John Craig
Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West

Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press

256 pp., \$39.50, ISBN 978-0-8138-2669-8
Publication Date: December 2007

In the twenty-first-century culture wars in the United States, perhaps no issue has led to more spilled ink and invective than the debate over the founding fathers' opinions regarding the institution of slavery in the "land of the free." In a subtle work targeting fellow scholars in the field, John Craig Hammond, assistant professor of history at Purdue University, Calumet, deftly shifts

the terms of debate by arguing that the key to understanding the extension of the peculiar institution in the crucial three decades between Washington's assumption of office and the Missouri Compromise is to focus less on the debates of great men in the East and more on the agency of settlers and politicians in the "overextended republic" (6) in the West. *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* thus sidesteps the usual polemics about Thomas Jefferson's (and, to a lesser extent, James Madison's) opinions and attitudes concerning the expansion of slavery, which have been explored by Roger G. Kennedy (particularly in *Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause: Land, Farmers, Slavery, and the Louisiana Purchase* [Oxford University Press, 2003]) and other historians.

Similarly, Hammond moves beyond the work of Dan Fehrenbacher, who argues in *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (Oxford University Press, 2001) that, although the Constitution itself was not a proslavery document, the federal government soon transformed the young republic into an empire of bondage. Hammond suggests that it was the fragility of the new nation, fears of western disunion, concerns over geopolitical realities with European nations, and the power of slaveholders in southwestern territories that ultimately weakened the ability of antislavery politicians in the East to pursue their visions of freedom. The strength of Hammond's argument is that he refuses to take at face value the notion of a grand conspiracy of the slave South during this period and instead highlights the collection of allied territorial and local interests that worked to ensure the continuation and expansion of a highly profitable, albeit inhumane, system of labor mobilization on the frontier. Conversely, in the Northwest Territory, where slavery was disallowed by the federal government's articulation of Article VI of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Hammond makes the claim that it was less the weight of the statute than the presence and actions of "large free populations in Ohio and Indiana [that] vindicated the Northwest Ordinance's prohibition on slavery" (43) and ultimately made it effective.

One might quibble with Hammond's choice to discuss the politics of slavery in the Mississippi and Louisiana territories before engaging in a discussion of the impact of the Northwest Ordinance

of the 1780s. One might also ask for a fuller justification of the use of the term "weak federal government," given the fact that the power and influence of European nations in the Western Hemisphere were in steep decline during this period. Despite this, Hammond has proven himself to be an important figure in an emerging new wave of scholarship on the critical early years of slavery and its expansion in the United States that includes provocative studies by Adam Rothman (*Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* [Harvard University Press, 2007]) and Matthew Mason (*Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic* [University of North Carolina Press, 2006]). Hammond's discussion is sure to add to the ongoing debate about how to understand the legacy of slavery in the United States.

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Freehling, William H.

The Road to Disunion, Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant

New York: Oxford University Press
605 pp., \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-19-505815-4
Publication Date: April 2007

With this masterful political narrative, William Freehling concludes his two-volume history of the southern road to disunion. The first volume, published in 1990, showed the maturation and frustration of southern secessionists from the revolution to 1854. This much-anticipated second volume covers the remaining tumultuous years of the 1850s and tells the story of the secessionists' victory in 1861. Freehling's shorter wartime study, *The South vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (Oxford University Press, 2001), provides an epilogue that carries the themes of the main volumes through the Civil War. Collectively, these works represent one of the finest political histories of the Old South. Individually, *The Road to Disunion, Volume II* is also a dramatic story of major events, key actors, and important contingencies that will entertain professional historians and the reading public.

Although Freehling's subject is far from original, he contributes fresh insights and arguments to the ongoing debate about the causes of the Civil War. As David Potter did in *The Impending*

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