

han helps his readers understand both the constraints and the opportunities that the law of war provided the prairie lawyer.

The Papers of Abraham Lincoln

Daniel W. Stowell

**STEALING INDIAN WOMEN:** *Native Slavery in the Illinois Country*. By Carl J. Ekberg. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007. xiv, 236 pp. List of illustrations, preface, acknowledgments, introduction, conclusions, notes, index. Cloth \$38.00, ISBN 0-252-03208-0).

When Theda Perdue, author of the 1979 foundation study *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866*, reviewed Alan Gally's 2002 instant classic *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717*, she balanced praise of Gally's mastery of the historical and political contexts of the Carolina Indian slave trade with an expression of frustration on the intractability of the details of the Indian slave trade itself. "What Gally does not do in this book is tell us much about the Indian slave trade. Certainly, he does not tell us much that we did not already know."

Given the number of ensuing studies leaning heavily on Gally, we can adopt Perdue's comment as only a partial rubric for evaluating subsequent work. Nevertheless, her point expresses quite neatly a central weakness of research on this topic. From the earliest such studies (Lauber 1913) to the many now appearing, supporting documentation follows a predictable pattern. Information on the Indian slave trade typically progresses chronologically from nonexistent to typologically useful case studies and testimonials, but can only with difficulty be assembled into forms that satisfy our desire for the big picture. Gally's study required a focus on origins of the commercial Indian slave trade, but such details are notably difficult to acquire, especially in the "back-country," where the dirty work of the Indian slave trade was carried out.

The same chronological dynamic is, of course, still at play in Carl Ekberg's latest opus from the Mississippi Valley, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country* (2007). The mid-continental slave trade by needs emerges from undocumented roots in the midst of rapidly evolving social practices,

rendering its connections to earlier Indian slavery problematical. For instance, one of the most difficult issues in tracing the development of Indian slavery is the question of commodification—drawing chattel slavery out of a recent prehistoric past when it is assumed the practice did not exist. Ekberg's study treats the early slave trade briefly, but bridges this awkward theoretical gulf no better than most other recent treatments (for a notable exception, see Snyder 2007). In fact, Ekberg largely avoids this issue by dismantling any depiction of an organized supply of the commodity—human beings. Focusing on the regionally extensive, person-to-person supply of the subjects of Indian slavery, and carefully detailing the trade's predilection for consuming women and children, Ekberg moves easily from the general to the specific, artfully setting out his themes and populating his portrayal of the Indian slave trade and the practice of Indian slavery in the Illinois Country with plentiful facts, detailed case studies, documentation of cultural perspectives, and precise population dynamics. Much like Brooks' (2002) treatment of the same subject in the American Southwest in *Captive and Cousins*, Ekberg emphasizes ambiguous and malleable identities and varying cultural interpretations of biological hybridity in order to address meanings.

Having achieved a synthetic overview of Indian slavery in French and Spanish Colonial Illinois in the first part of the study, Ekberg turns to a detailed case study (styled "The Céladon Affair") in which his considerable narrative skills illustrate intimate details of a handful of lives of people of different races and legal status. This is pleasant academic reading indeed, for here are real people negotiating real cultural contexts in real time. The result is a wonderfully nuanced extension of Ekberg's main points about both the surprising ambiguities and harsh realities of race and slavery in this time and place. A short synthesis at the end runs towards putting yet another nail in the coffin of classic frontier theory—in this case following upon John Mack Faragher's thesis that the development of increasingly exclusive and hardened racial and ethnic segregation dates only to the end of the Territorial Period in the Midwest. Ekberg's final illustration of just how recently this hard edge has begun to soften also probably serves as a good-natured jab at the always self-assured political sensibilities of the word police, since during late review Carl himself received pressure to revise his text to the latest politically correct terminology.

Ekberg's overall effort has to no small measure been bolstered by situating his subject within well-detailed contexts. He points out the continuity of this study with his previous three volumes on this time and region (detailed, thematically consistent monographs on a region, a community, and a person). Adding this treatment of a central thread of cultural practice (slavery) to make a quartet has only enhanced the synergy of Ekberg's work, while further expanding the corpus of treatments of lives heretofore poorly documented. *Stealing Indian Women* actually does tell us much about Indian slavery in colonial Illinois. As such, it can be identified in advance as a valuable and enduring contribution to colonial historical research, as well as a significant regional contribution to the growing corpus of specific information on the North American Indian slave trade.

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Duane Esarey

WILLIAM DUNBAR: *Scientific Pioneer of the Old Southwest*. By Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007. x, 269 pp. Acknowledgments, introduction, notes, selected bibliography, index. Cloth \$55.00, ISBN 0-8131-2455-1).

William Dunbar, a Scottish emigrant, thrived under British, Spanish, and American governance in the Old Southwest as a businessman, a scientist, and a leading citizen in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Dunbar navigated political shifts with great skill, developing relationships with key officials from each nation. He parlayed his influence into stable ownership of land, government commissions, political appointments, and membership in the American Philosophical Society.

In *William Dunbar: Scientific Pioneer of the Old Southwest*, the late Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., former president of Rocky Mountain College, focuses on Dunbar's "versatility," writing descriptions of successful business deals, political maneuvers, experiments in agriculture, his Ouachita-hot springs expedition, and his scientific exchanges with Pres. Thomas Jefferson and others. (p. 5) The biography's first seven chapters proceed chronologically, describing everything from the subject's childhood in Scotland to his emergence on the national scene in Spanish-controlled Natchez at