

entirely persuaded by Lyons' interpretation, she has made a contribution to gender history and to Revolutionary-era U.S. history that cannot be ignored.

PATRICIA KELLEHER

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania

Todd A. Estes. *The Jay Treaty Debate, Public Opinion, and the Evolution of Early American Political Culture*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006. Pp. xii, 267, notes, index. Cloth \$34.95).

Todd Estes's book is the first monograph on the Jay Treaty, one of the central political conflicts of the 1790s, to appear in thirty-five years. The history of the treaty and its American reception are well known: sent to London in 1794 to settle issues unresolved since the Revolutionary War and keep the United States out of the then ongoing European wars, John Jay returned with a treaty most Americans considered unfavorable to the trade and national interests of the republic. Events in Europe had shaped American domestic politics over the previous three years and the terms of the treaty appeared as a surrender to Britain and betrayal of France. In July and August of 1795, after the Senate had ratified the treaty strictly along partisan lines, the public response was mostly negative. Nevertheless, over the course of the fall, as Estes shows in unprecedented detail, Federalists in and out of Congress slowly but decisively rallied to shape the public debate concerning the treaty. They ultimately triumphed the next April when, following a vigorously orchestrated Federalist campaign to create the impression of overwhelming public support of the treaty, a divided House of Representatives narrowly voted for appropriations to carry the treaty regulations into effect.

Estes concentrates on the public response to the treaty and the partisan efforts to mold public opinion and put pressure on Congress. Two opening chapters which includes the contrasting Federalist and Republican views of the United States' place in the world, as well as partisan attempts to control public opinion and popular politics in the early 1790s, address the international context of the treaty. The book then devotes four chapters to a chronological and topical analysis of the treaty debate, while a concluding chapter describes how the controversy's participants retrospectively interpreted the course and outcome of the public debate and partisan efforts. Estes stresses that as early as 1793 Federalists used letters, newspaper editorials, and town

meetings to define the terms of debate concerning the Neutrality Proclamation and create the impression of widespread acclamation of Federalist policies. This set the pattern for their management of the public response to the Whiskey Rebellion, the rise of the Democratic societies and, eventually, the Jay Treaty. By the time debate over the treaty was accelerating, Federalists as well as Republicans recognized that its outcome depended decisively on the mobilization of public opinion. This careful description of earlier attempts to shape public perceptions of partisan issues qualifies Estes's own assertion that the treaty debate was a "turning point" (3) in the highly fluid political landscape of the 1790s, a "landmark" (5) that helped to create a political culture more open to public opinion and democratic forces. Rather, from his account of events between 1793 and 1796 it appears that the treaty debate constituted another, if highly significant step in an ongoing development that had been under way for several years.

Though Estes provides evidence for town meetings and petitions supporting and opposing the treaty, the book is weighed heavily toward the description of the letters, speeches, and anonymous newspaper pieces of elite Federalists and Republicans and their allied editors. Consequently, it deals more with the top-down construction of public opinion than the development of a political culture that represented the actions of common men and local partisan leaders who gathered around dinner tables and in parades and voluntary associations. Estes acknowledges that "the ways in which many partisans viewed the country's relations generally, and the Jay Treaty specifically, largely echoed the views expressed by the leaders of the emerging parties" (18). He most significantly and convincingly argues that the Federalists were as good, in fact better, than the Republicans at constructing public opinion, though they, more so than their Republican antagonists, subscribed to traditional views of politics and asserted that their constituents' role was limited to a public endorsement of policies and representatives. The book demonstrates that the pressure to promote the treaty forced Federalists to overcome their reluctance to appeal directly to their constituents to turn out in its support. Some Federalists, such as Noah Webster, later regretted that the party had engaged in popular politics since such behavior effectively suggested that representatives should seek popular acclamation rather than rely on their own judgment.

Public opinion is a notoriously slippery category. Though Estes recognizes James Madison's warning that it was a partisan tool and could be "counterfeited" (7), in the course of the book the distinction between public opinion as constructed and potentially misrepresented and as the genuine and reason-

ably accurate expression of popular views becomes blurred. Estes traces the efforts of leading Federalists to organize pro-treaty meetings and petition drives, then concludes that they indeed won over the public to support the treaty, when it is perhaps more accurate to say that Federalists were more successful in projecting an image of widespread popular support. Despite these reservations, the book is an important contribution to our understanding of the development of early republican politics, since Estes succeeds in demonstrating how the treaty debates forced reluctant elites to ponder such vital issues as the right to petition, the legitimacy of popular politics, and the relationship between representatives and their constituents.

ALBRECHT KOSCHNIK

Florida State University

Anne Farrow, Joel Lang, and Jenifer Frank. *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery*. Forward by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005. Pp. xxix, 269, chronology, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth \$25.95).

In the fall of 2002, the *Hartford Courant's* Sunday magazine, *Northeast*, published the first in a series of articles dealing with Connecticut's involvement with the institution of slavery. Anne Farrow and Joel Lang, the lead writers of the original articles, joined up with the series editor, Jenifer Frank, to expand their story to include the rest of New England and the other northern states. *Complicity*, as the original series and the book-length study are titled, is a generally well-written account of the North's role in the development and perpetuation of New World African slavery. With a Forward by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham and research guidance from Robert P. Forbes, two well-respected scholars of slavery and African-American history, the authors of *Complicity* have succeeded in popularizing much of the best recent scholarship in these fields. While not written with scholars as the primary audience in mind, there is much material here that could help enliven many professors' yellowed lecture notes. Nevertheless, the general thrust of the book and its conclusions will no doubt be familiar to many well-read history buffs and academics.

From the primary role of New York City in the international cotton trade to New Haven's sale of carriages to southern planters to the trade of fish and