

rural Pennsylvania by the start of the nineteenth century along the networks created by county shopkeepers like Samuel Rex.

DAVID A. LATZKO

Penn State York

Gary B. Nash. *The Liberty Bell*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. Pp. 243, illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$24.00.)

One can hardly imagine Philadelphia without the Liberty Bell: the ringing bell at Citizens Bank Park that celebrates Phillies' home runs, the commemorative bells scattered around the city, or the real thing itself in its pavilion at Sixth & Market streets. But as Gary Nash reminds us in *The Liberty Bell*, this icon had a long and complicated journey toward its present-day ubiquity. Lost in obscurity in the years following the American Revolution, the mute bell found its voice in the antislavery movement, and rocketed to popular fame by the 1876 centennial celebration of American independence.

Nash's book, the newest addition to Yale University Press's *Icons of America* series, is the most complete account of the Liberty Bell published to date, and the most successful at incorporating the methodologies of cultural history. Divided into five chapters, the book begins with a brief account of the Pennsylvania Assembly's decision, in 1751, to order a bell for the State House. The inscription chosen for the new bell, "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10), was a biblical reference to the Year of Jubilee, a reallocation of power and wealth that upended the haves and have-nots of ancient Israel every fifty years. Though Nash explains why the concept of Jubilee would have resonated with Pennsylvanians in 1751—the colony was immersed in a struggle to define the legacy of William Penn's Holy Experiment—a richer account of the nuances of colonial politics would have been useful here.

The growing tension between the Penn family and the increasingly powerful Assembly, the beginnings of Quaker agitation against slavery, and a long debate over the cultural identity of the province made both liberty and universality contested concepts in colonial Pennsylvania. The same year that Isaac Norris, the Speaker of the Assembly, ordered that the new bell include the Jubilee inscription, a more famous Pennsylvanian, Benjamin Franklin,

warned that the growing numbers of German immigrants to Penn's haven for religious dissenters threatened to make Pennsylvania "a Colony of Aliens." In his treatise, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind*, Franklin famously questioned why the "Palatine Boors" should be allowed to "establish their Language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours." Were German immigrants included in the bell's universalist inscription? Did the extensive debate about immigration shape the way colonial Pennsylvanians understood the concept of liberty? One wishes to hear Nash's thoughts on the topic.

The narrative then moves into an account of the bell's role in summoning Philadelphians to the protests that paved the way for revolution, its likely involvement in the events surrounding the Declaration of Independence (it rang on July 8, 1776, for the first public reading of the Declaration, not July 4, the day upon which it was adopted), its removal to Allentown for safekeeping during the war, and its relatively obscure post-Revolutionary life. After a lively section on the competing stories surrounding the famous crack, Nash moves on to the bell's rebirth as a symbol of freedom.

One of the greatest contributions of the book lies in its demonstration that the original use of the term "Liberty Bell" was meant not to celebrate the political liberty enjoyed by many white Americans in the wake of the Revolution, but to indict the nation for denying such liberty to black Americans. As Nash ably demonstrates, in the hands of nineteenth century abolitionists, the bell was more of a critical symbol than a celebratory one, a reminder that the promise of the Revolution remained unrealized in a country that condoned slavery.

This theme of the bell as an indictment of the gap between the ideal of liberty and the reality of repression runs through the book. Yet at the same time that protesters—from suffragists to civil rights activists—claimed the bell as a reminder of work still to be done, millions of others embraced it as a statement of victory already achieved. In its seven trips across the continent, the bell was mobbed by cheering throngs desperate to catch a glimpse of the sacred relic. The bell, as a symbol of the triumph of the American way, dutifully played its part in encouraging sectional reconciliation after the Civil War, prompting citizens to buy war bonds, and firming up resolve to wage war "in defense of freedom."

While commercialization has long been part of the bell's story, Nash's account suggests a growing divide between "patriotic" and "commercial" use. The grand expositions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were certainly heydays of commercialization. As Nash points out, when

organizers of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition requested the bell, some Philadelphians were sure that “for all the talk about the bell’s importance in promoting patriotism, the real motive was to obtain an attraction with proven ability to bring masses of fairgoers to the exposition grounds . . .” (111). But the expositions did have underlying political purposes, ranging from encouraging sectional reconciliation (New Orleans, 1885) to “Americanizing” Asian immigrants (San Francisco, 1915). Many of the more recent commercial uses of the bell—teapots, slot machines and whiskey bottles—seem to have no underlying political purpose. What does this growing separation of patriotic and commercial use suggest about contemporary American society? That we are less political than our forebears, or simply more resistant to attempts to “sell” patriotic emotion?

Despite this growing separation, the political resonance of the bell remains powerful. In his last chapter, Nash describes the recent controversy surrounding the placement of the new Liberty Bell Center on the corner where George Washington’s slaves once toiled in the new republic’s first “President’s House.” What started out as a clash between Independence National Historical Park and a group of historians became, partially through Nash’s own efforts, a sustained public conversation about America’s racial history. The bell continues to inspire people to discuss the obstacles standing in the way of realizing its call for universal liberty.

JILL OGLINE TITUS

Washington College

Robert M. Sandow. *Deserter Country: Civil War Opposition in the Pennsylvania Appalachians*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009. Pp. xii, 234, illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$55.00.)

Civil War historians have hotly contested the nature and characteristics of Copperheads and other war resisters within the Union states for decades, but the debate finds Pennsylvania relegated to secondary status within the accumulation of books, monographs, journal articles, dissertations, and other scholarship, with the lion’s share focusing on the border-states, the butternut counties of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, or New York City. To be sure, some impressive work on anti-war forces in Pennsylvania has been published, with Grace Palladino’s analysis of resistance in mining communities in the