

in empire, making the book an enjoyable read and a reference book for any future historian studying the history of the Six Nations.

WILLIAM S. TRESS  
*University of Baltimore*

POLITICIANS, SLAVES, AND TANGLED ROOTS: A REVIEW ESSAY  
 OF *DUNMORE'S NEW WORLD, THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION OF 1776,*  
 AND INDEPENDENCE

James Corbett David. *Dunmore's New World: The Extraordinary Life of a Royal Governor in Revolutionary America—with Jacobites, Counterfeiters, Land Schemes, Shipwrecks, Scalping, Indian Politics, Runaway Slaves, and Two Illegal Royal Weddings* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013). Pp. 270. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$29.95.

Gerald Horne. *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America* (New York: New York University Press, 2014). Pp. 348. Notes, index. Cloth, \$39.00.

Thomas P. Slaughter. *Independence: The Tangled Roots of the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014). Pp. 487. Maps, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$35.00.

James Corbett David, Gerald Horne, and Thomas Slaughter have produced three different works that offer some insight to major developments within the British empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, anchored by the American Revolution. David approaches the task from a narrower perspective by focusing on the life and times of John Murray, the Earl of Dunmore (1732–1809). Horne and Slaughter examine the subject from larger viewpoints. Horne offers an examination of the role that slave resistance played in the events leading to the American declaration of independence from Great Britain, while Slaughter seeks to explain how the desire for independence among those who settled in Britain's North American colonies finally became so radicalized that it led to a separation.

James Corbett David makes a valuable contribution to British and American historiography by writing this biography of Lord Dunmore; he introduces his reader to a remarkably resilient person as his family became

tainted with treason. Due to influential connections, the family survived the ordeal, allowing Murray to become the 4th Earl of Dunmore and eventually the governor for New York, Virginia, and Barbados through appointment. Among the more significant contributions made by David is highlighting the important role that western lands played in the political situation of the 1760s and 1770s. He demonstrates a level of understanding of the competing interests of different land companies rarely matched by scholars today; he shows that when it came to the Ohio River Valley the situation involved much more than mere land speculation. The battle for the North American West was a fight for control of the heart of empire. Few historians of American revolutionary era comprehend the complexity of the situation as well as David does. However, he rushes through much of the material and misses an opportunity to note other reasons why enmity existed between Dunmore and other Virginians, such as Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, and George Washington. All three strongly disagreed with Dunmore's view of the status of the Ohio Company of Virginia's land grant (David, 71)

Gerald Horne attempts a far more ambitious project. He stresses that "slavery permeated colonial North America, underpinning the pre-1776 economy" in ways that ranged far beyond agriculture extending into insurance, banking, and shipbuilding (Horne, vii). Horne carries his central point further, asserting that slave resistance in Great Britain's Caribbean and North American colonies established the necessary preconditions leading to the decision in 1776 to declare independence and separate from the British empire. He attaches great significance to the 1772 Somerset Decision, which many (notably abolitionists) mistakenly heralded as the death knell for slavery in the British empire, and Lord Dunmore's 1775 proclamation offering freedom to slaves belonging to rebels in exchange for their service in the British army.

However, Horne's effort to establish a connection between slave resistance and the decision to declare American independence is unsupported by the evidence. Additionally, Horne interprets the significance of developments like the Somerset case and Dunmore's proclamation through the lens of those abolitionists who exaggerated the importance of these developments. His excessive reliance on secondary sources represents another frustrating aspect of Horne's book; when presenting a provocative thesis, the argument should be grounded in primary sources. Toward the end Horne's book devolves into a polemical justification for why his thesis must be true rather than a presentation of evidence that proves his thesis. Those who seek to understand the

role that slavery, slave resistance, and racism played in shaping the events leading to and surrounding 1776 would be better served by the works of Paul Finkelman, Sylvia Frey, and Woody Holton.

Thomas Slaughter seeks to explain how “independence became revolutionary in British North America” (Slaughter, xviii). In pursuit of that goal, Slaughter presents a selective history of the growth of British North America. It is difficult to criticize Slaughter for all that he leaves out of his book because he informs the reader at the outset that he did not intend to write a survey of British North America “that pays equal attention to all places, people and institutions” (xviii). Nonetheless, Slaughter follows a familiar pattern by mainly focusing on New England.

Slaughter’s presentation is marred at the outset by his refusal to offer a definition of what he means by “independence.” Consequently, the term becomes a word without meaning, diminishing the significance of the events he relates in his book. Much of his book reads as a rough draft rather than a finished work. Yet throughout, several insightful observations could potentially support his thesis, but he fails to carry them far enough. For example, he notes the need to “distinguish between independence and separation” because “they were not the same in the minds of colonists before the late spring and summer of 1774” (Slaughter, xvii). Later Slaughter notes how “when Americans spoke of independence they meant freedom within the empire; when the British heard or used the word, they understood it to be synonymous with separation” (161); and his summation as to why Crown officials regarded the colonial complaints regarding taxation as “delusional” is well presented (317). At the same time, however, Slaughter’s summation of the Salem witchcraft episode (25) suggests greater familiarity with Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* than Mary Beth Norton’s *In the Devil’s Snare*.

Another area of concern regarding both Gerald Horne’s and Thomas Slaughter’s work relates to their citations. Horne uses a unique format for his endnotes that makes it difficult for the reader to follow up on his arguments or check his facts. Horne alters or misquotes sources, and far too often relies on primary sources cited in secondary works rather than referring to original documents. In his introduction, Horne focuses on tensions between the English and the Irish in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Horne, 9–10). As the War for American Independence begins, he quotes Arthur Lee: “Irish troops go with infinite resistance . . . strong guards are obliged to be kept upon the transports to keep them from deserting as a whole” (10). Lee actually wrote: “The English and Irish troops go with infinite reluctance,

and strong guards are obliged to be kept upon the transports to keep them from deserting by wholesale.” By leaving out Lee’s reference to the “English,” Horne changed the meaning of Lee’s quote, tailoring it to support his point. In another part of his book, Horne misquotes from Woody Holton’s *Forced Founders*. Horne writes: “In Virginia, Founding Father George Mason echoed this viewpoint, reminding that the ‘primary cause’ of the decline of Rome was ‘introduction of great numbers of slaves’” (200). He cites page 69 of *Forced Founders*, but the quote is not found on that page or any page of Holton’s book. Holton actually quotes Arthur Lee, *not* George Mason. Holton writes: “Furthermore, the ancient Romans had been ‘brought to the very brink of ruin by the insurrections of their Slaves,’ even though ‘the proportion of slaves among the antients was not so great as with us’” (Holton, p. 69). These are not the only citations that raised questions found in Horne’s book, and this kind of recklessness undermines the credibility of his entire work.

Slaughter’s book suffers from the complete absence of citations (although he does include a long bibliography). At the end of *Independence* he writes: “As we know, the footnote is a beleaguered genre in our Internet world, one in which you can google keywords from a quotation to identify the source” (Slaughter, 437). Slaughter’s observation regarding footnotes is simply not true, and a scholar of his stature should know better than to make such a comment. At one point Slaughter quotes General Charles Lee: “reconciliation and reunion with Great Britain is now as much as a chimera as incorporation with the people of Tibet” (431). Googling the quote provided a link to page 88 in volume 3 of John Barry’s multivolume *History of Massachusetts* first published in 1857. Barry (unlike Slaughter) provides a footnote that directs the reader to William Bradford Reed’s 1847 biography of Joseph Reed. At no point does an Internet search for this quote actually reveal the original source containing Charles Lee’s quote. It must be a recent development that led Slaughter to embrace this view toward citations because he certainly provided ample documentation in his previous work.

The careless and/or nonexistent citations in *The Counter-Revolution of 1776* and *Independence* have a direct effect on determining the appropriate target audiences for both of these books. Horne seems to suggest in his conclusion that he hopes his book will lead to further study of this subject. If Horne wants to be a trailblazer, then he needs to leave a trail that others can follow—which represents the role citations are meant to play. Unfortunately, his poorly constructed and inaccurate citations make it difficult for anyone to follow up on his conclusions. As noted, Slaughter’s book contains a number

of insightful observations based on both primary and secondary sources that could represent multiple foundations for additional studies on the subjects he raises in his book, but the absence of citations negates that prospect and renders his book of little use to the specialist. For different reasons, the incompleteness of Slaughter's *Independence* leaves it a book without an audience.

The common ground shared by *Dunmore's New World*, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776*, and *Independence* is that all three represent an attempt to provide a synthesis of key developments in Great Britain's Atlantic empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. James Corbett David concludes his book with a brief essay, "A Note on Method: Biography and Empire," which addresses the need for a synthesis but at the same time highlights the central problem with such efforts. David begins by observing that "the exploration of eighteenth-century empires seems to require a wide-angle lens" (David, 185). He identifies that the difficulty with many syntheses lies with topic definition, and he advocates a microhistorical approach that also allows for the author to develop the larger panorama of the time period. David successfully accomplishes this goal with his biography of Lord Dunmore. Gerald Horne and Thomas Slaughter should be commended for their attempts to develop an interpretive syntheses; the lack of clarity in defining their topics represents the underlying problem for their respective works and limits their usefulness to readers. Thomas Slaughter's book is well written, and Horne offers a semblance of scholarship by making an effort to cite (albeit incorrectly) his sources. James Corbett David's book avoids these errors and missteps and deserves recognition for his contribution.

J. KENT MCGAUGHY

*Houston Community College, Northwest*

Mark L. Thompson. *The Contest for the Delaware Valley: Allegiance, Identity, and Empire in the Seventeenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013). Pp. 265. Notes, map, index. Cloth, \$48.00.

*Contest for the Delaware Valley* was recently named the 2014 winner of the Philip S. Klein prize for the best book on Pennsylvania history. It is well deserved. Making excellent use of Dutch and Swedish archives to study an often-neglected region, Thompson has crafted a compelling framework for understanding the intersection of nationalism and cosmopolitanism