

no signs of resentment surfaced in his writings. His political fortunes ended abruptly with the fall of the emperor. His material fortune however, a by-product of his services, was salvaged, though not without some shrewd maneuvering, as the Bonapartes were prohibited from owning land in Europe. Further maneuvering, involving disguises and false names, put considerable funds in Joseph's hands and enabled him to purchase several properties in the United States. His favorite, Point Breeze in New Jersey, became the place where the former king, who styled himself Count of Survilliers, could indulge his taste for landscaping and collecting art. The estate was developed as an Enlightenment garden modeled upon the Ermenonville park of marquis de Girardin, best known at the time as Rousseau's last friend. The mansion housed several outstanding paintings, most strikingly David's heroic representation of Napoleon crossing the Alps, the first sculptures by Antonio Canova ever seen on American shores, and exquisite pieces of Empire furniture. Awed American guests were either thankful for the opportunity to visit this small museum, or shocked by the daring works they were invited to admire, as was the case with two Quaker ladies unable to avert their eyes from Canova's nude representation of Joseph's sister Pauline. They were probably even more shocked by the count's quasi-open extramarital affairs, which produced several illegitimate children. Artistic tastes and romantic indiscretions were, however, the only areas that could raise eyebrows in his new homeland. As he expressed in letters to his brother Lucien, he liked America and got along well with practically all the Americans he met, who in turn appreciated his warmth, his generous hospitality, and his sincere desire to fit in. On American shores Joseph may have lived the happiest years of his life, the life of a good-natured and learned country squire, free from the obligation to lend a hand to the making of history. Thanks to Patricia Tyson Stroud's extensive research and fluid narrative American readers will be glad to make the acquaintance of Napoleon's older brother.

Central Michigan University

DOINA PASCA HARSANYI

Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society. By ERIC BURIN. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005. xiv, 223p. Tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$59.95.)

Renewed interest in American abolitionism has prompted new questions about one of the most controversial racial reform movements of the antebellum era: the American Colonization Society (ACS). Was it a front for slaveholders or a legitimate antislavery group? Eric Burin's fine new study offers one of the most insightful treatments of colonization in years. His cogent and provocative book makes a substantial case for colonization's centrality to antebellum political and

cultural debate. Though he acknowledges that most contemporary scholars doubt colonizationists' antislavery objectives and that the majority of African Americans opposed ACS strategies through the Civil War era, Burin claims that the American Colonization Society did indeed "undermine slavery" (p. 2).

Burin rests his claim on a massive database of roughly six thousand slaves-turned-ACS-emigrants and their "manumitters," as he calls the 560 masters who liberated them on condition that they move to Africa (free people of color further swelled the ranks of black expatriates). Although not explicitly dedicated to southern abolition, the ACS became enmeshed in local struggles against bondage (primarily but not exclusively in the upper South) that ultimately illustrated blacks' desire for freedom.

Burin's book is especially welcome for its examination of manumitted slaves. As he observes, slaves played an important role in the colonizationist movement. Many of the enslaved people in his database meditated deeply on their limited options in America. "Their choice was not between peril in Africa and monotony in America," he trenchantly observes; rather, it revolved around the potential of attaining freedom. Thus, when guilty masters "allowed their bondpersons to choose between freedom in Liberia and enslavement in America," a sizable number chose Liberia (p. 58).

As Burin shows, slaves made informed choices about African colonization. They quizzed not only ACS representatives but Liberian émigrés themselves. Burin points out that "22 percent of all emigrants quit the colony" between 1820 and 1843, allowing some southern blacks to interview those who had been to African settlements (p. 66). Returnees often told tales that threatened to undermine the Liberian option itself.

But other black expatriates emphasized African opportunity. Many black families decided that colonization offered the best opportunity to stay together. According to Burin, "approximately 25 percent of the time, when a group of emigrants left a Southern county, the party consisted of some combination of free blacks, manumitted, or 'purchased' emigrants." Enslaved families also pushed for "conjunctive emancipation"—simultaneous emancipations of enslaved people by different masters. Well over one-third of the manumitting masters he surveys "participated in conjunctive emancipations." Such actions flowed not from masters' benevolence but enslaved peoples' ingenuity. As Burin concludes, slaves themselves expanded "the realm of ACS operations" (pp. 75–76).

Burin's focus on the Pennsylvania Colonization Society (PCS) as a "facilitator of manumission" similarly attempts to rehabilitate a lesser-known group of colonizationists. Formed in 1825, the PCS "actually listed the emancipation of slaves as one of the group's goals" (p. 82). Over the next forty years, it raised money for the ACS, aided colonizationist expeditions, provided funds for émigrés' travel, and actually purchased enslaved people and dispatched them to Africa. Perhaps as many as five hundred southern slaves were freed as a result of PCS activities.

By the late 1850s, however, many PCS officers “eschewed the antislavery aspects of their enterprise” for fear that they might lead to sectional uproar (p. 99).

Burin’s tightly focused study might have benefited from a broader examination of black internationalism during the nineteenth century, particularly the competing notion of Haitian emigration (which attracted nearly as many black émigrés as colonization). Nevertheless, his book adds considerably to our understanding of colonization’s appeal to black as well as white supporters. Hopefully, it will soon be available in paperback for classroom use.

Rochester Institute of Technology

RICHARD S. NEWMAN

The Boundaries of American Political Culture in the Civil War Era. By MARK E. NEELY JR. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. xiv, 159p. Illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

This slender volume’s brevity belies its ambition. In *The Boundaries of Political Culture in the Civil War Era*, Mark Neely seeks to challenge some of the most influential works of recent historiography; each of its four chapters addresses the thesis of a different work on the political history of the mid-nineteenth century: Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin’s *Rude Republic* (2000); Joel H. Silbey’s *The American Political Nation* (1991); Iver Bernstein’s *The New York City Draft Riots* (1990); and Jean H. Baker’s *Affairs of Party* (1983). Neely’s vision of the nature of politics in the Civil War era is framed by his critique of these works, though he is quick to point out, “only very good books stimulate debate and send us back to the sources to look further into historical questions” (pp. x–xi).

The book is tied together by Neely’s broader reassertion of the importance of politics in the Civil War era. While conceding that historians had overstated the pervasiveness of politics in nineteenth-century America, Neely insists that the revision goes too far. He draws upon the rich material culture of American politics to demonstrate the centrality of politics to nineteenth-century Americans. Neely’s comfort and familiarity with such sources is evident, and he handles them with considerable sophistication, giving attention to medium as well as content. The small size and intricate detail of Currier and Ives’s lithographic political prints, for example, indicate that they were intended for display in the home, breaking down supposedly strict boundaries between home and politics. While some political historians have argued for the relative insignificance of Civil War era elections, Neely instead reads the explosion of visual political material as evidence of an increase in the electorate’s engagement with politics, as indicated by the fact that such material was produced for sale. Political engagement was so high that “people willingly paid for what they got” (p. 65).