

a year he was running what Sutcliffe calls the world's first commercially successful steamboat.

Sutcliffe's story of America's early steamboat inventors is well documented. She has diligently searched and used the relevant archival material in writing her history. That said, this is not a book for the historian of technology who seeks to place the steamboat in its technical, cultural, and social setting. Rather, this work is intended for the serious general reader who is interested in the many political and legal entanglements of early steamboat history.

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Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815. Written and edited by KERBY A. MILLER, ARNOLD SCHRIER, BRUCE D. BOLING, and DAVID DOYLE. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. xxvii, 788p. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendix, sources, index. Cloth, \$99; paper, \$49.95.)

At first glance, *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan* appears to be a rather standard, albeit lengthy, primary-source collection of mostly personal letters, along with journal excerpts and a handful of public documents, that have been gathered together to reveal the tremendous variation in the life experiences of sixty-eight Irish immigrants to early America. Indeed, as the authors' choice of subjects reveals, early Irish immigrants were a diverse lot, consisting of Presbyterians, Anglicans, Quakers, as well as a substantial minority of Catholics. These immigrants came from a variety of social classes (from the wealthy to the humble), occupations (they included merchants, clergymen, craftsmen, and laborers), and regions in Ireland (many were urban dwellers from Ulster, or Dublin, but many others were rural dwellers from the north and south). In short, unlike later waves of mostly poor, uneducated, and rural dwelling Irish Catholic immigrants, there was no one "type" of early Irish immigrant.

While this information is significant, as one reads more deeply in this collection, it is evident that the authors intend this book to be much more than a standard documentary reader. Rather, this work sets out to convey a more comprehensive history of early Irish immigrants' social, economic, religious, and political experiences in Ireland and America before 1815. And it is this more ambitious goal that distinguishes this work from so many other documentary collections. Each document, for example, is prefaced with a lengthy introduction that meticulously details each immigrant's life in Ireland and America. Such documentation offers powerful testimony to continuities and changes that marked the transition between Old and New Worlds. The authors also choose to present the documents as they were written, using extensive notations to explain

irregular spellings or usage, define terms, and identify regional dialects. Finally, and most importantly, they take great pains to knit these separate stories into a coherent interpretation of early Irish American identity. Although the Irish, the authors explain, were often separated by rigid ethnoreligious boundaries in their home country, immigration to America provided a common experience that often (though not always) collapsed many of these barriers and encouraged the construction of a common Irish identity. And this sense of "Irishness" persisted until events in Ireland—and not the arrival of the Catholic famine immigrants in the 1840s—fragmented it in the 1820s.

All in all, this collection is an immensely important and intellectually rich work in Irish, American, and Atlantic history. Despite some annoying repetition between chapters and several minor factual errors, this book delivers what it sets out to do; it offers its readers, especially readers with some background in Irish history, a complex, nuanced, and incredibly well-documented portrait of the four hundred thousand Irish immigrants that came to America before 1815. And in doing so, it not only fills gaps in the literature, it also demonstrates in significant ways how these Irish immigrants shaped history on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves. By IRA BERLIN
(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003. 374p. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. Cloth, \$29.95; paper, \$16.95.)

This reprise and expansion of Ira Berlin's paradigmatic study, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (1998), uses much of the theoretical structure of the latter, but with important revisions. Present again are the divisions of the history of early black life by time and place and through study of generations. In addition to Berlin's famous configurations of charter, plantation, and revolutionary generations, the reader learns of a divided migration cohort and has a brief look into the freedom generations of the Civil War period. The prologue reminds readers of Berlin's division of early America into "societies with slaves," in which servitude was one of several labor options, and "slave societies," in which chattel bondage was the primary and often only organization of work. This new study allows Berlin to make a close reading of the explosive scholarship about black life and slavery in the past five or so years.

Discernible differences from his earlier work can be found within its framework. After an excellent synthesis of scholarship about African and European origins, Berlin begins his study of Creoles in New Netherland, as "the character of the charter generations was most fully evident" (p. 7) in the Dutch colony. This choice elevates the profile of Afro-Dutch history to equality with the more