

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

famous southern regions. Berlin uses a similar strategy to introduce each of the "generations."

While invigorating reading of new scholarship and Berlin's mastery of his method ensure the power of chapters on plantation and revolutionary generations, the book's most innovative chapters are its last. Berlin's configuration of the first half of the nineteenth century as the "migration generations" fuses together the saga of western development, the internal slave trade, the Underground Railroad, and the transformation of northern states from societies with slaves to freedom grounds. Berlin identifies the internal slave trade that peopled the southwestern territories as a "Second Middle Passage." He reviews its horrors while insisting on the primary contribution of enslaved peoples to the building of Mississippi, Louisiana, and points west. The movement west cost black people heavily when the ameliorative qualities of coastal plantation life devolved into the sunup to sundown workday of cotton and sugar production. In response, blacks centered their hopes on family life and a selective African American religion. The chapter recounts well how the internal slave trade affected the older southern coastal societies. Most evocative is the discussion of the construction of free black society amid harsh racism and historic amnesia about slavery in the North. Here, Berlin contends that "the continued influx of black "southern fugitives, refugees, and deportees to the North constantly renewed the memory of slavery" (p. 235). Anxiety over recapture or kidnapping united northern blacks with those who remained enslaved and ignited the political activism of the antebellum period. This black civic culture was based upon memory and hatred of slavery, deep understanding of the republican messages of the American Revolution, and the never-ending hopes for the jubilee of freedom. A brief but cogent epilogue unpacks how African Americans shaped the Civil War experience. Mine is but a partial recounting of the complexity and thoroughness of Berlin's superb scholarly reach. This is the best synthesis and predominant interpretation of the ensnared histories of African American life and slavery.

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*Jane Grey Swisshelm: An Unconventional Life, 1815–1884.* By SYLVIA D. HOFFERT. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. 255p. Illustrations, notes, note on primary sources, index. \$39.95.)

In her new biography of Jane Grey Swisshelm, historian Sylvia D. Hoffert has matched her subject's unusual life with an unconventional biography. Despite Swisshelm's reputation as one of the most influential and controversial women of the mid-nineteenth century, few historians have attempted to unravel the apparent contradictions in the behavior of this caustic, and to some observers, unlikable