

As Thomas Jefferson said, "The moment a person forms a theory, his imagination sees in every object only the traits that favor that idea."

Titian Peale, the youngest son of the renowned Philadelphia painter and naturalist, Charles Willson Peale, was born only a year after the death of his eighteen-year-old half brother and namesake. The first Titian had great promise as an artist-naturalist and was apparently his father's favorite, a fact that hovered over the second Titian and adversely affected his filial relationship; he felt constrained under parental authority, an influence which Haltman deftly uncovers in Peale's art.

There is excellent integration of Haltman's descriptions with the illustrations. In an otherwise fascinating and in-depth look at two important early artists of the American West, two errors stand out. William Bartram, a bachelor, was Say's great uncle, not his grandfather; and in the *Account*, Say, as Haltman incorrectly and surprisingly asserts, did not inspect "one native woman's 'clitoris and labia.'" Instead, in a footnote in the Philadelphia edition, Say quotes a written source concerning ethnographic practices among certain tribes.

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Race to the Polar Sea: The Heroic Adventures of Elisha Kent Kane. By KEN MCGOOGAN. (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2008. 320 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$26.)

It is good to be Kane, at least if historians are to be believed. The eldest son of a well-connected antebellum Philadelphia family, Elisha Kent Kane sought, and attained, national prominence on his own adventurous terms. Today, that fame has been rekindled. Among other recent writers, David Chapin, Mark Sawin, and Matthew Grow have drawn upon the Kanes to probe into Victorian American culture, and with his fast-paced, well-written new book, *Race to the Polar Sea*, Ken McGoogan takes a narrative look at Kane's biography and, particularly, his remarkable arctic career.

This flowering of the Kanes may be one of the most interesting legacies of their lives, a product of their extraordinary efforts to create and control their public image. With the aid of his brothers and their father, Elisha, in particular, might be considered an early exemplar of celebrity in the modern mode, marketing a vision of American manhood to the antebellum nation. McGoogan's Kane is nothing if not a marketer: clever and calculating, living a life of greatness on Victorian terms. Perhaps in compensation for a sickly childhood and an overbearing father, Kane became a driven young man, spending his brief life in exotic travel and public service, roaming from Caleb Cushing's diplomatic mission to China to a daring descent into the active caldera of a Philippine volcano, from a

naval cruise off the West African coast to gallant service in the Mexican War.

Kane's signal fame, however, rests upon his arctic expeditions of 1850–51 and 1853–55, when he traveled north in search of Sir John Franklin's lost crew and, at the same time, the Open Polar Sea, a supposed ice-free passage connecting the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. A prolific author of arctic narratives, McGoogan provides a gripping account of these arduous journeys, doing an admirable job of extracting the drama out of long dark months spent ice bound between frigid decks, warmed only by the heat of conflict among the crew. The real strength of *Race to the Polar Sea* lies here, in the rolling narrative that runs at the pace of Kane's life: brisk, breathless, and always engaging. Navigating the rigors of early arctic exploration, delivering a clear exposition of the complex geography—fictional and real—and the equally complex geography of relations between Americans, English, Inuit, and Greenlanders, McGoogan does credit to Kane's perseverance and resourcefulness in the face of extraordinary odds.

Yet, like Kane's expeditions, there is room for dissent. Many biographers seem either to love their subjects or despise them, and there is little doubt as to where McGoogan stands. Throughout his account of the trouble-filled second arctic expedition, in particular, McGoogan comes across as a partisan, arguing in favor of Kane's interpretation of events. His depiction of Kane's relationship with the Spiritualist medium Margaret Fox comes across as even more one-sided and can be thin and biased when one considers the equally efflorescent literature on the Fox sisters. More problematic, McGoogan does too little to interpret Kane within the rich context of antebellum American culture, an approach pioneered with particular success by Sawin and Chapin and that helps to explain Kane's motivations and attitudes toward everything from his crew to his grand hopes for the ice-bound north.

Cavils aside, the narrative sweep and intrinsic power of McGoogan's Kane saga make it an essential introduction to one of the most arduous antebellum exploring expeditions.

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Abolitionists Remember: Antislavery Autobiographies and the Unfinished Work of Emancipation. By JULIE ROY JEFFREY. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. 352 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95.)

Over the decades, historians have produced a rich literature full of shifting interpretations that have assessed antebellum abolitionists, their activism, and their role in moving the nation toward Civil War and emancipation. Julie Roy Jeffrey takes the study of abolitionists in a new direction by concentrating on