

*Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Century.* By JASMINE NICHOLE COBB. (New York: New York University Press, 2015. 288 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$89; paper, \$27.)

In *Picture Freedom*, Jasmine Nichole Cobb examines a series of visual strategies that white and black people undertook to make sense of the idea of black freedom in the early republic. In this incisive volume, the interplay between the concepts of visibility—how one is seen/understood in the eyes of others—and Black visuality—“the entire sum of the visual as experienced by people of African descent”—reveals the highly potent and contested nature of visual culture during this era (9). Cobb marshals a rich variety of sources, including prints collected for parlors, Jim Crow plays, oil portraits, wallpaper, runaway advertisements in newspapers, sentimental literature, black women’s friendship albums, and joke books to underscore the magnitude of the debates surrounding African American freedom. In doing so, her illuminating project appeals to scholars in many disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

The five chapters of *Picture Freedom* interweave theory and analysis of popular cultural artifacts to explain how African Americans staged interventions that disrupted dominant modes of visuality. The first chapter provides the foundation for understanding how practices of slavery established ways of seeing blackness. Cobb argues that slavery practices taught white Americans that blackness *should* be looked at, indeed scrutinized, for the purpose of controlling free and enslaved black people. The freedom suit of Elizabeth Freeman and multiple escapes from slavery, notably the Mende people aboard the *Amistad*, are examples of black efforts to claim their freedom. The second and third chapters focus largely on the domestic space of the parlor. This room was both a site wherein racial caricatures responded to white anxieties of encountering free black people in public spaces and one where black women abolitionists “cultivated critical looking practices and subversively engaged perceptions of free Black womanhood” (22). Cobb’s analysis of the friendship albums that black women circulated among their activist friends and family is especially impressive. Chapters 4 and 5 display African Americans’ growing public claims of freedom in print sources, while a powerful transatlantic visual culture rebuffed these claims. Waves of print culture produced by African Americans collided with increasingly voluminous print and visual cultures that sought to organize, harness, and undercut claims of black freedom domestically and across the Atlantic. In a short epilogue, Cobb examines the election and “sheer *representability*” of President Obama within the long history of debates that separated black freedom from black citizenship (221).

Throughout the book, the analysis of black feminist visual practices and methodologies of cultural analysis allow scholars to understand the debates occurring over the legitimacy of black freedom during the early republic. Cobb’s work

cogently argues that black women “manipulate[d] popular discourses to suit their own lives” by refashioning ideas of blackness, womanhood, and respectability (71). However, her notion that it was impossible to render free black bodies as sentimental needs more evidence. Additionally, framing the debates of black freedom in the British empire by including responses to the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 would greatly add to Cobb’s analysis of white anxieties of black freedom. These fears are present in several of the print series examined in the book. Notwithstanding these suggestions, *Picture Freedom* greatly advances our understanding of the role of print culture in reflecting, and sometimes shaping, individuals’ identities during the early republic.

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*The Long Shadow of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address.* By JARED PEATMAN. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013. 296 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.50.)

*Across the Bloody Chasm: The Culture of Commemoration among Civil War Veterans.* By M. KEITH HARRIS. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014. 232 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$42.50.)

As Confederate armies began to surrender in April 1865 and the nation’s Civil War came to a close, Union and Confederate veterans sought to reconcile their memories of the war and its results. In doing so, Civil War veterans initiated commemorative traditions that heralded the valor of their comrades, mourned those who had fallen, and simultaneously debated the war’s causes and consequences. Civil War historians have since produced an exciting dialogue on commemorative traditions, the nature of reconciliation and reunion, and the divisive and complex ways in which Americans remember the Civil War. Two recent contributions to the historiography include Jared Peatman’s *The Long Shadow of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address* and M. Keith Harris’s *Across the Bloody Chasm: The Culture of Commemoration among Civil War Veterans*. Together, these two works explore the ways in which Americans remembered and appropriated the Gettysburg Address and struggled with the war’s meanings and implications.

Without question, Gettysburg stands as the epicenter of the Civil War and its commemorative events. Four months after the nation’s bloodiest battle, President Abraham Lincoln visited Gettysburg. He was there not only to dedicate the Soldiers’ National Cemetery but also to articulate his vision for a postwar nation. Though the Battle of Gettysburg claims the bulk of battle-related studies, not until recently have historians redirected the conversation from issues of strategies and tactics to exploring the battle’s aftermath, the process of preserving the landscape,