

In 1918, the great-grandson of John and Abigail Adams, Henry Adams, wrote in his *Education of Henry Adams* that the “study of history is useful to the historian by teaching him his ignorance of women and the mass of this ignorance crushes one who is familiar enough with what are called historical sources to realize how few women have ever been known” (353). The volume under review constitutes a corrective to the problem Henry observed. In volume twelve, there are 276 letters; nearly three-quarters of those letters (74 percent) are written by Abigail Adams. A significant portion of Abigail’s writing is directed to family members beyond her husband. In her informative and beautifully written introduction to the volume, editor Sara Martin explains to readers that the “correspondence allowed Abigail to maintain her connections to family and community, while at the same time it afforded a reliable means of transmitting information from the seat of national government” (xx).

For those interested in the political culture of the United States during the 1790s, Abigail’s trenchant descriptions are invaluable. Consider her depiction of the pro-French Republicans in Congress in a letter to her sister dated April 4, 1798, the day after the XYZ Affair became public: “The Jacobins in senate & House were struck dumb, and opened not their mouths, not having their cue, not having received their lessons from those emissaries which Talleyrand made no secret of telling our Envoys are Spread all over our Country; and from whence they drew their information” (485). This sentence, which vividly conveys the distrust that permeated the polarized politics of the 1790s, is representative of the descriptive chronicle of a family and a nation that is richly captured in the pages of this worthwhile volume.

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*Pennsylvania Hall: A “Legal Lynching” in the Shadow of the Liberty Bell.* By BEVERLY C. TOMEK. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 206 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$14.95.)

On May 17, 1838, the Liberty Bell rang out, summoning help as anti-abolitionist mobs attacked and destroyed the newly constructed Pennsylvania Hall. Christened a “Temple of Liberty,” the hall had come into existence in a rare moment of cooperation between groups of abolitionists with divergent interests. The abolitionists who supported the construction of the hall wanted to awaken American citizens to the cause of slavery, while their opponents wanted to stop abolitionists from discussing the issue. *Liberator* editor William Lloyd Garrison, who barely escaped the melee, described the destruction of the hall as a “legal lynching.”

In her study of Pennsylvania Hall, Beverly C. Tomek uses the story of the hall to examine the larger narrative of the American antislavery movement. Indeed, as

Tomek notes, the story of the hall is the story of that movement “in microcosm,” shedding light on the competing agendas of gradualist and immediatist abolitionists (xiii). Moreover, the story of the hall reveals much about the racism that permeated the North as states abolished slavery and blacks gained their freedom.

The book opens with an overview of the history of the antislavery movement, tracing the efforts of Quakers, the founding of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, the beginnings of the free produce movement, the arguments for colonization, and the rise of immediatism. With this basic background in place, Tomek then turns her attention to the story of the hall. Highlighting the diversity and the complexity of the board of managers that oversaw fundraising and construction, she emphasizes the complexity of the antislavery movement. Although the money for the construction of the hall was raised primarily by women, the project was supervised by the men of the Pennsylvania Hall Association. As Tomek narrates the construction of the hall, she contextualizes the story within the broader history of the antislavery movement, recounting, for example, the murder of abolitionist editor Elijah P. Lovejoy and the “amalgamation wedding” of Theodore Dwight Weld and Angelina Grimké. In the months and years after the destruction of the Hall, the building became a martyr for the antislavery cause, much as Lovejoy had after his death. The “lynching” of the hall was an important shift in the antislavery movement and in American society.

*Pennsylvania Hall* is part of the Critical Historical Encounters Series published by Oxford University Press. Books in this series focus on major critical moments in American history. In this short but thorough biography of Pennsylvania Hall, Tomek gives us a well-researched and well-written narrative of the hall and the antislavery movement. Significantly, she persuasively argues that the hall’s destruction marked not only a key moment in the antislavery movement but also revealed the tensions of the past and hinted at the challenges to come as Americans wrestled with the challenge of establishing a more equal society. The “lynching” of Pennsylvania Hall ultimately backfired, as abolitionists used its destruction to argue that fundamental American values, such as free speech, were at stake.

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*Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln.* By JONATHAN W. WHITE. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2014. 275 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.)

Over three million men fought in the American Civil War, two million of whom donned the Union blue. In recent decades, historians have provided a proliferation of scholarship on soldiers from the North and South, considering their motivations for enlistment, wartime experiences, and the aftermath of their ser-