

Between Sovereignty and Anarchy: The Politics of Violence in the American Revolutionary Era. Edited by PATRICK GRIFFIN, ROBERT G. INGRAM, PETER S. ONUF, and BRIAN SCHOEN. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015. 313 pp. Notes, index. \$45.)

The field of the American Revolution is garnering more scholarly attention than in years past, with the publication of some high-profile texts (Claudio Saunt's *West of the Revolution* in 2014 and Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost* in 2015) and a substantial conference in 2013 on the topic at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. We have yet to see where this attention will lead. It has been decades since such scholars as Bernard Bailyn, Gordon S. Wood, and Alfred Young set the parameters of a debate that pitted an exceptional, ideologically driven, radical revolution (often called the neo-Whig argument by its critics) against an unfinished, materially driven, conservative revolution that left many peoples outside of its consideration (often called the neo-Progressive argument). Many scholars hope that the recent attention to the field will lead to narratives that transcend this seemingly intractable binary. This volume, which comes out of a 2010 Ohio University conference on violence and sovereignty during the American Revolution, highlights both the possibilities and the limitations of the new thinking in the field.

In his introduction, Peter Griffin writes optimistically about the potential implications that these essays, written by an array of scholars at different stages of their careers, have for reinterpretation of the revolution. Each can be taken singly with profit, and none of the works attempts a sweeping reconsideration of the period. Griffin suggests that these disparate pieces indicate a broader narrative that reflects new interpretations of the revolutionary period. Weaving together their different arguments on the important connections between violence and authority, state legislatures, religion, slavery, and the political imagination, he argues that the authors employ three approaches: an emphasis on "Atlantic state formation," the importance of negotiation, and "state-centered outcomes," each of which is "starting to reshape the field" (8). In his own piece, Griffin argues that the violence of the Paxton Boys in 1763 was a gruesome riff on state formation practices seen in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Great Britain and that the revolutionary period should be understood with these Atlantic structures of state transformation in mind. Readers may be skeptical of his argument, as these analyses seem to harken back to the Imperial School interpretation of the 1930s—an interpretation often critiqued in the field of Atlantic history. It is questionable whether a slight reinterpretation of such scholars as Charles McLean Andrews is the solution to a moribund historiographical field.

Taken individually, all of the essays are worth contemplating, and many of them will interest students of Pennsylvania history. Jessica Choppin Roney's

explanation of how secondary, non-state institutions informed the creation of Pennsylvania's 1775 Militia Bill is an ingenious explication of a thorny historical problem. Peter Thompson provocatively argues that chattel slavery influenced Patriot methods of persecuting Loyalists. Jeffrey L. Pasley claims that the frontier violence of the Whiskey Rebellion, with its traditional aims of correcting authority, was confronted and overwhelmed by a modern state that used violence with the full imprimatur of democratic revolution behind it. Peter Onuf sums up the volume, insisting that the legitimacy of a sovereign state rests on both a viable form and its capacity to rule. All of the works indicate energy flowing into the study of the American Revolution, yet they remain within a paradigm of neo-Whig and neo-Progressive, in which the field has been for quite some time.

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Upon the Ruins of Liberty: Slavery, the President's House at Independence National Historic Park, and Public Memory. By ROGER C. ADEN. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015. 243 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$27.50.)

In his new book, Roger C. Aden recounts the saga of Philadelphia's President's House monument and its problematic commemoration from 2002 through 2011. *Upon the Ruins of Liberty* recalls the chronicle of George Washington, in a presidential mansion located within spitting distance of the Liberty Bell, bending laws to accommodate his own personal dependence on slavery. It is such an egregious episode that, throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the National Park Service (NPS) buried its memory—along with the building's foundations—beneath, of all things, a public restroom. The site remained unrecognized until a coalition of historians, preservationists, and activists demanded that the site be commemorated, or perhaps even reconstructed. What they they got was a bit of both, a mélange of confusing interpretive contrivances wedged into one of Philadelphia's busiest street corners, leaving visitors with an unclear impression of what any of it means.

Upon the Ruins of Liberty is Roger C. Aden's attempt to untangle this convoluted narrative, in part by sifting through the layers of conflict that make the story of the President's House so compelling. Aden, a professor of communication studies, is not a natural raconteur. He is primarily concerned with making the lessons of public history and memory relevant to his field and laying bare the challenges of confronting difficult pasts at heritage sites, which he terms "public memory places." Though not everyone will appreciate the book's frequent forays into the theoretical contexts that undergird Aden's analysis, its prose shifts often enough between narrative and exegesis to keep readers interested. These