

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.

Dickinson College

CHRISTOPHER J. BILODEAU

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

shifts model Aden's method, which he refers to as "re-collection." The point, he explains, is not necessarily to focus on a singular location, but rather to understand how "persons and places interact within the complex process of meaning-making at memory sites" (14).

PMHB readers will appreciate the sources that Aden brings into play. He scours newspapers, scholarly books and journals, travel blogs, visitor studies, NPS reports, and his own interviews with various stakeholders for any and all indication of how people have responded to the President's House project since its inception. He even explores proposed monument designs that were not built, as well as the 780 evaluation cards filled out by people who reviewed them. This is important work that hedges against the tendency to study people who build monuments rather than those for whom they are built. Aden discovers that the monument's historical treatment of slavery—the burning core of the President's House controversy—did not occasion a predictable bifurcation of audiences by race. In fact, visitors sustained a remarkably dynamic conversation about race and power during the site's excavation.

It is this facet of Aden's book, in fact, that leaves me wanting more. The President's House episode was just one of several in Philadelphia during those years wherein high-stakes conversations about the history of slavery figured prominently in heritage settings. Understanding why that was seems vital to plumbing the particularities of the President's House story. Aden sees the national context, and he gestures at the complex relationship between race and urban development in postwar Philadelphia, but there is a deeper regional story here that gets lost in the mix. That the mix is so thick, though, is a credit to Aden's vision, and good reason to engage this first stab at one of the weightiest public history controversies of our time.

Temple University

SETH C. BRUGGEMAN

Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad. By ERIC FONER. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015. 301 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$26.95.)

Gateway to Freedom is a generously illustrated book based on Sidney Howard Gay's recently discovered "Record of Fugitives." It situates New York City as both the hub of an extensive Underground Railroad (UGRR) network and a treacherous place for freedom seekers. Referring to William Still's *The Underground Railroad* and Gay's journal among other sources, Eric Foner explains New York City's pivotal role and provides context for famous escapes, kidnappings, and rescues.