

historical understanding of why voters chose Lincoln over his three opponents remains decidedly murky.

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Slavery in the Cherokee Nation: The Keetowah Society and the Defining of a People, 1855–1867. By Patrick N. Mingos. Studies in African American History and Culture. (New York and London: Routledge, 2003. Pp. xiv, 302. \$90.00, ISBN 0-415-94586-0.)

Following in the footsteps of the late William G. McLoughlin's extensive scholarship on the conflicts and changes in the Cherokee Nation precipitated by debates over slavery, the work of Christian missionaries, and intermarriage with white Americans, Patrick N. Mingos's book explores the ways in which the Cherokee Nation divided over the issue of slavery in the years after their forced removal from the South to the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). He states at the outset that Cherokees' clashes over chattel slavery were symptomatic of larger contests for power between those Cherokees who advocated the adoption of white Americans' social and economic patterns and those who sought to preserve what Mingos terms the "old ways" of Cherokee life—solidarity, patriotism, and traditional Cherokee customs (p. 13).

Mingos is most interested in charting the antislavery activity of Cherokee men in the church run by northern Baptist missionary Evan Jones, who made inroads among Cherokees committed to the "old ways." In the late 1850s, Jones's Cherokee converts organized the Keetowah Society, which hoped to gain political power in the nation and then restore older definitions of Cherokee identity that emphasized national unity and perpetuation of traditional practices. The book follows the Keetowah movement, specifically its leaders, from its inception through the end of the Civil War.

To the extent that it was rooted in the Baptist Church, the Keetowah movement, Mingos suggests, looked favorably upon enslaved black converts and congregants and envisioned a future for free blacks in the Cherokee Nation. Here, Mingos touches on an important issue in the study of slavery in Native American nations—the three-way relationships among Native Americans, white missionaries, and enslaved black people.

Throughout the book, however, Mingos insists but never adequately demonstrates that the movement's broader political aim to curtail Cherokee acculturation and restore the "old ways" led to a recognition of black humanity. In their struggle for political ascendancy, Keetowah men enthusiastically endorsed the leadership of John Ross because of his commitment to preserving the unity and sovereignty of the Cherokee Nation. John Ross, however, owned slaves, presided over the 1839 national council meeting that passed stringent slave codes, and was reluctant to extend citizenship to ex-slaves. Mingos's depiction of Ross's prominence in the Keetowah movement does not account for such tensions, and the book never fully captures the complexities of slavery in the Cherokee Nation in terms of its place in Cherokees' contests for political power and the relationships between enslaved blacks and Keetowah men in the Baptist church.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this book is Mingos's argument that

the Keetowah movement was informed in large measure by freemasonry, which, he writes, spread throughout the Native American nations in the Indian Territory during the 1840s. Readers interested in freemasonry will be tantalized by Minges's assertion that many blacks, Native Americans (Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, and Choctaw), and white military and federal personnel in the Indian Territory belonged to Masonic lodges; he identifies many people by their lodge affiliation. On this subject, Minges offers an intriguing insight that awaits further analysis. This book touches on many issues, some more developed than others, and it offers detailed descriptions of individuals and events in the Cherokee Nation that will prompt interested readers and researchers to pursue the subject further.

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Fanatics and Fire-eaters: Newspapers and the Coming of the Civil War. By Lorman A. Ratner and Dwight L. Teeter Jr. *The History of Communication.* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, c. 2003. Pp. xvi, 138. Paper, \$19.95, ISBN 0-252-07221-9; cloth, \$34.95, ISBN 0-252-02787-6.)

Why did the American genius for compromise fail to save the Union in 1861? For Lorman A. Ratner and Dwight L. Teeter Jr., the key to this familiar historiographical problem lies in the emergence and dynamics of a democratic press in the decade before the Civil War. During the period from Jackson's inauguration to Lincoln's, technological innovations transformed subscription-driven, "relatively expensive, small-output products of printing shops" into a genuine mass media (p. 8). Telegraph lines conveyed news instantaneously, steam-driven presses facilitated reproduction, and railroads distributed newspapers to an ever-growing market. This increasingly capitalized trade fostered furious competition for readers and profits, and with it, a tendency toward sensational reporting.

Ratner and Teeter document press coverage of six landmark events that sharpened sectional animosities in the course of the 1850s: the Sumner-Brooks confrontation in Congress; the Dred Scott decision; the furor over Kansas's Lecompton Constitution; John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry; Lincoln's election in 1860; and the firing on Fort Sumter. The authors argue that in each case, sectional partisans in the media served as "both messenger and participant," polarizing public opinion beyond repair (p. 117). On the one hand, Republican sympathizers portrayed southerners collectively as violent, lawless "bullies" intent on subverting the Constitution to secure their economic interests (p. 118). Pro-southern editors, on the other hand, identified the party of Lincoln with abolitionist "fanatics" committed to upholding black equality at the expense of southerners' constitutional right to their slave property. Each side saw the other as nothing less than a threat to the future of the American Republic and itself as the true guardian of revolutionary principles. The parties became stand-ins for entire peoples who perceived each other as the "enemy" rather than as a "legitimate political" opposition, making it impossible to forge intersectional compromises (p. 118).

The authors "wonder what might have happened had the press been fairer,

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