

The main task of several chapters is to interpret the meaning of rock art. Some authors take care not to extend the meaning of symbols beyond what is readily observable or directly known from ethnographic or historical information. For example, chapter five documents 43 variations in style across geographic regions, patterned relationships between symbols and other archaeological features, and readily observable relationships of rock art symbols and those of late prehistoric people to whom archaeologists refer as Mississippian. Chapter 11 notes the proximity of rock art to bedrock mortars used to grind seed, and correlates this association to ethnographic and archaeological studies on agricultural practices.

Other authors reach much further to interpret the meaning of rock art symbols, some with more success than others. The two chapters by volume editors Diaz-Granados and Duncan, for example, present a mass of ethnographic information to build arguments about the meaning of rock art that some readers will not find adequately supported. Is this a problem? It depends. For the hard empiricist, yes, it is. For those who have less concern with supportable arguments and instead try to understand the minds of people of the past through rock art, the more exploratory interpretive chapters will be of the most interest.

Either way, this book meets the goal of being accessible to non-specialists and useful for professional archaeologists. It provides information on a topic that is poorly known in the region covered. It also emphasizes the need to find and record rock art before it disappears.

Passages to Freedom: The Underground Railroad in History and Memory, edited by David W. Blight. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2004. xii, 337 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Frontline of Freedom: African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley, by Keith P. Griffler. The Ohio River Valley Series. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004. xvi, 169 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, index. \$35.00 cloth.

Reviewer Galin Berrier is adjunct instructor in history at Des Moines Area Community College. He is the author of the chapter, "The Underground Railroad in Iowa," in *Outside In: African American History in Iowa, 1838-2000* (2001).

The two books under consideration appear at a time when both academic and popular interest in the history and legend of the Underground Railroad is perhaps at an all-time high. *Passages to Freedom* is a handsome, lavishly illustrated collection of essays by 15 historians published in conjunction with the opening of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. *Frontline of Freedom* is a slender

academic monograph that focuses on the activities of freedom seekers on both banks of the Ohio River in Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. Both books seek to direct our attention away from the traditional narrative, which emphasizes the heroic actions of white abolitionist "conductors" and "station agents," to the stories of the black freedom seekers themselves, who were not merely the passive beneficiaries of white benevolence, but in fact played a leading role in liberating themselves and other African Americans from enslavement.

Passages to Freedom is divided into three unequal parts. In part one, "Slavery and Abolition," Ira Berlin sketches the story of North American slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a story he tells more fully in *Many Thousands Gone* (1998). Deborah Gray White details the resilience of the black family under the yoke of enslavement in the antebellum South. James Brewer, the biographer of such prominent abolitionists as Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison, explores the arguments over antislavery strategy in the three decades from the founding of the American Antislavery Society in 1833 to the outbreak of the Civil War.

The seven essays in part two, "Stories of the Real Underground Railroad," are the heart of *Passages to Freedom*. John Michael Vlach's essay, "Places of Flight and Refuge," includes a photograph of the John Todd House in Tabor, Iowa (109), one of only three references to Iowa in the book. Jane Landers's essay on "the forgotten route to freedom in Florida" reminds us that freedom seekers did not always follow the North Star to freedom in Canada. R. J. M. Blackett describes resistance by both free blacks and whites to the grossly unfair Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and Lois Horton explores the confrontations that resulted from the kidnappings of free blacks and formerly enslaved persons. James Oliver Horton tells the remarkable story of William Still, a free black abolitionist in Philadelphia who published in 1872 the account of his efforts to assist freedom seekers; and Catherine Clinton offers a concise essay on the subject of her fine recent biography, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (2004). Bruce Levine's essay on the destruction of slavery during the Civil War, while fully crediting the black achievement of "self-emancipation," shows that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was more than simply "a gesture with little practical significance" (220).

Scholars and history buffs currently trying to document Underground Railroad sites and stories will be most interested in part three of *Passages to Freedom*, "The Story Endures in History and Legend." In one of the most thought-provoking essays in the book, editor David Blight seeks to understand the current resurgence of interest in the

Underground Railroad in both history and memory. Jane Williamson, director of Rokeby Museum in Vermont, details how research in local sources both documented and transformed the interpretation of that Underground Railroad site. Milton C. Sernett's account of recent efforts to uncover the story of the Underground Railroad in New York State warns against the uncritical acceptance of legends by overly enthusiastic amateur researchers. Diane Miller's essay on the National Park Service's Network to Freedom program refers briefly to "sites in Iowa, such as the Hitchcock House [in Lewis] and the Todd House [in Tabor]" (284). The Jordan House in West Des Moines, the Lewelling House in Salem, the former J. H. B. Armstrong House near Cincinnati, the Ira Blanchard Home Site and Cemetery near Percival, and the Denmark Congregational Church have all become a recognized part of that network in Iowa as well. Part three concludes with a meditation by Eddie S. Glaude Jr. on the Exodus story and its religious and metaphysical significance in the African American experience.

Keith Griffler's *Frontline of Freedom* emphasizes "the inclusion of African American voices and viewpoints" (xiv), while at the same time acknowledging that the Underground Railroad was "America's first successful interracial liberation movement" (xi). In a chapter titled "Band of Angels," Griffler generously recognizes the contributions of both John Rankin and Levi Coffin, although elsewhere he faults the latter for being too eager to embrace the title of "President of the Underground Railroad" (8).

Griffler is critical of the way the legend of the Underground Railroad has led to overuse of the "railroad" metaphor—with its stations, station agents, conductors, passengers, and the mapping of lines—to suggest a smoothly running operation of clock-like efficiency (4). He prefers instead to emphasize the term *underground*, but in the modern sense of an underground resistance movement. He offers an explanatory framework that distinguishes the "*frontline struggles* from the *support operations* in the rear" (xii). He believes that the real significance of the Underground Railroad lies not in spiriting away thousands of freedom seekers to Canada, but with those who settled in Ohio River ports such as Cincinnati and formed the front line in the struggle against slavery (30–31).

Griffler observes that "the Underground Railroad was, in part, a victim of its own success" (106), which led to the passage of a stricter Fugitive Slave Act in 1850. One result was that, in the Ohio Valley, "the Underground Railroad became increasingly public in its operation in the 1850s" (120). The same could be said of Iowa as well. Griffler notes the large number of Ohioans on the front lines of the underground

struggle against slavery. He might have included among them a number of Ohioans who migrated to Iowa in the early 1850s to continue the struggle here: J. H. B. Armstrong at Cincinnati; Richard Sherer and the other "Free Presbyterians" who founded the Wittenberg Church and Manual Arts College north of Newton; and Rev. John Todd and his followers, antislavery Congregationalists from Oberlin who sought to establish an "Oberlin of the West" at Tabor in southwest Iowa.

Iowa readers may be surprised to read that the brothers Edwin and Barclay Coppoc of the Quaker settlement at Springdale in Cedar County, Iowa, "hailed from the underground stronghold of Salem, Ohio" (124). Actually, they *were* born in Salem, Ohio, and later relocated to Springdale. After Edwin's execution for his part in John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry, his body was returned to Salem, Ohio, for burial.

Both Griffler and Blight pay tribute to pioneer historian Wilbur Siebert's classic study, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (1898; reprint, 1968). Blight reminds us that "all students of the Underground Railroad are forever in Siebert's debt" for his vast collection of reminiscences assembled in 38 scrapbook volumes, including three from Iowa (238), but he charges that Siebert used that material uncritically. Blight notes that one of Siebert's Iowa correspondents called the Underground Railroad the new source of romance, sure to "thrill the heart and quicken the pulse" (239). Griffler chides Siebert for romanticizing the heroics of white abolitionists, but notes that no one has done more to shape our historical memory of the Underground Railroad and ensure that these heroic deeds were remembered. Perhaps Iowa historians should take a fresh look to see how late nineteenth-century Iowans selectively remembered their role.

The Union Divided: Party Conflict in the Civil War North, by Mark E. Neely Jr. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002. xi, 257 pp. Notes, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper.

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For well over a generation now, Civil War historians have accepted as an article of faith the argument that one reason the North won was its political system. This thesis, articulated most prominently by Eric McKittrick, holds that the political parties of the Union were able to channel sentiment, especially dissent. Because the Confederacy did not have political parties, attacks on Jefferson Davis and his government came from all sides. No coalition had to propose an alternative for how to do things, and a lack of patronage (one of the real prerequisites

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