

Spanish hospitality. Throughout, Pike struggled to keep maps and journals, managing to smuggle out most of the documents, some of which were stuffed into gun barrels.

Upon his return, Pike was caught up in the treason trial of former Vice President Aaron Burr; however, the author found no evidence that Pike knew anything about or participated in any of Burr's activities. A congressional committee subsequently exonerated Pike. Congress considered bills to compensate Pike and his men with land and double army pay, but it never approved that legislation. In 1810 Pike published *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi and through the Western Parts of Louisiana*. Aimed primarily at Congress, the volume described both expeditions as Pike wanted the world to view them.

This is an extremely well-written biography, fully documented with abundant primary and appropriate secondary sources. Orsi goes beyond a traditional biography to drive home an unmistakable theme: Pike "found solace in a nationalist idea—the republic's promise to reward citizens' virtue" (5). An excellent map, absolutely essential to follow the narrative, precedes each chapter. The text is enhanced by contemporary illustrations and portraits as well as landscape photographs, most taken by the author. *Citizen Explorer* is a must read for anyone interested in the early nineteenth-century American West and in an individual who deserves notoriety for expanding what would later be termed Manifest Destiny.

The Lost History of the New Madrid Earthquakes, by Conevery Bolton Valencius. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. ix, 460 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliographical essays, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Robyn Lily Davis is assistant professor of history at Millersville University of Pennsylvania. Her Ph.D. dissertation (University of Oklahoma, 2009), was "Science in the American Style, 1700–1800."

In her engagingly written *Lost History of the New Madrid Earthquakes*, Conevery Bolton Valencius explores the most powerful seismic upheavals ever experienced in the contiguous United States. Making the broadest possible claims for the interpretive importance of the devastating yet nearly forgotten New Madrid earthquakes of 1811 and 1812, Valencius explains how that cataclysm—three massive earthquakes and many subsequent tremors centered in the bootheel of southeastern Missouri but felt from Iowa Territory to Natchez, Mississippi, and from the upper Missouri River to the Atlantic seaboard—was lost to popular memory, downplayed by politicians and land promoters, and ultimately denied by scientists.

Valencius offers a vivid report of the environmental and social upheaval wreaked by the New Madrid earthquakes, neutralizing claims that they had limited impact. Looking for the toll among an as-yet sparse white population ignores the devastation wrought on the Native communities that had for centuries made the region a hub of trade, diplomacy, and cultural exchange. For Native Americans seeking refuge from white encroachment in the New Madrid hinterland, the earthquakes altered the region's topography for the worse, permanently destroying the environment on which their cultures had been built.

Thus, while many white and black Americans reacted to the earthquakes by turning inward, stimulating the Christian revivalism of the Second Great Awakening, many Indians saw the earthquakes as a sign that they were to leave white ways behind. The disaster therefore contributed to cultural, spiritual, and military resurgences among the Shawnee, Cherokee, and Creek. Valencius uses the ultimately failed prophetic movements of the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa to illuminate the irreversible losses that the region's indigenous inhabitants suffered—losses of political power, cultural autonomy, traditional ways, and, ultimately, of the land itself.

At the same time, Valencius suggests that the region's upheaval and subsequent remaking were only partly a result of natural disaster and the displacement of the Natives. As she explains it, modern technology had a hand as well: the *New Orleans*, the first steamboat to ply the Mississippi, was by coincidence on its inaugural voyage in December 1811. Steam's revolutionary powers to transform communications, commerce, and travel spurred the development that rebuilt the region. The *New Orleans* was a product of the "vital world of scientific imagination" (176) in which many nineteenth-century Americans lived, pursuing vast questions about the workings of the earth—and doing so collaboratively, across institutions and communities alike. For Valencius, the technological, engineered, industrialized America that emerged in the decades between the Civil War and World War I was built on the engaged thinking and scientific investigations rife in early American culture, visible to us in the widespread reportage of the New Madrid earthquakes and worthy of our attention. There was then no bright line between amateurs and experts, making American science commonplace and demotic: ordinary people at the threshold between knowing science and *knowing scientifically* made sense of the catastrophe.

Yet despite the initial widespread interest in the earthquakes, by the end of the century they had been almost entirely lost to scientific study. That shrinking acceptance emerged from a growing rift between expert and lay communication. As seismology professionalized, it

relied more heavily on technology, rejecting the sensible, local, non-instrumental “vernacular” science of everyday people. In detailing how these events were forgotten to such an extent that the very occurrences came to be denied, Valencius provides an enriched understanding of the state and purpose of early American science, its production of knowledge, its networks and boundaries. She offers as well a cautionary tale about the seductive yet constricting lure of quantified data.

Questioning what we think we know about the earthquakes, Valencius makes a case for why such knowledge matters, detailing the ways contemporary earth sciences have evolved to retrieve and reanimate not only those forgotten memories but also their meaning. Hers is a vast story spanning the two centuries since the earthquakes and connecting environmental history to community building; to the cultural, political, and social history of the nation; to histories of Native American spirituality, cultural resurgence, and military insurgency; to frontier revivalist religion; and to the very practices of scientific inquiry. As such, Valencius has written a text for scholars and lay readers alike.

Although the history of seismology itself may be of interest primarily to specialists, her larger argument about how science is packaged bears important lessons for more than midcontinent seismicity. At the outermost edge of the New Madrid seismic zone, closer to the more limited seismic activity of the Nemaha Uplift, Iowans remain safe from potential earthquake damage. Yet Valencius’s story of the willful denial of science serves as a warning to us all that we ignore uncomfortable science and its attendant public policy debates at our peril.

Free Black Communities and the Underground Railroad: The Geography of Resistance, by Cheryl Janifer LaRoche. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2014. xviii, 232 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, notes, index. \$85.00 hardcover, \$25.00 paperback, \$22.50 e-book.

Reviewer Rebecca Conard is professor of history and director of the graduate program in public history at Middle Tennessee State University. She is the author of *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (2002) and *Places of Quiet Beauty: Parks, Preserves, and Environmentalism* (1997).

Cheryl LaRoche examines the long road to freedom literally at ground level. By carefully researching documentary sources along with archaeological evidence and oral tradition, and by observing historic and contemporary landscapes, LaRoche pieces together the histories of four free black communities in southern Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio to construct a compelling picture of the Underground Railroad in operation. Geography is the main focus, but she also gives voice to the unsung black