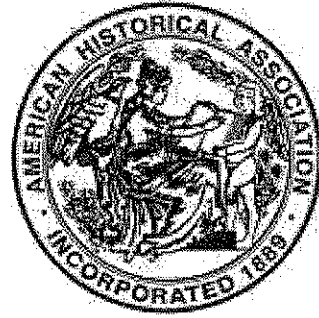




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ing the nineteenth century, but given the Bureau of Indian Affairs's continued reputation for stunning mismanagement regardless of political party or decade, his findings can only lead to queasy conclusions for contemporary Americans.

However compelling Rockwell's central argument is, we should note with caution that his work is almost exclusively a synthesis. A far more airtight argument could be constructed with an extensive primary research campaign. Given the geographical and chronological ground he covers, though, that would take two or three decades. Understandably, much of the narrative is not especially revelatory to scholars of Indians or Indian affairs. That the "Indian question" loomed large in American expansion and governmental concerns, for example, will not shock scholars, though general readers may well learn some important lessons from it.

Nevertheless, this book is a crackling good, well-written synthesis and far more of a think-piece than such works generally tend to be. If a more affordable paperback version is forthcoming, it would be a welcome addition to upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses on American Indians. Even with its current hefty price tag the bibliography alone makes it a sound investment for scholars of Indians and Indian policy.

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TIYA MILES. *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2010. Pp. xv, 315. \$32.50.

In 2002, the Chief Vann House State Historic Site celebrated the opening of a new interpretative center. At the center's dedication, Tiya Miles was shocked that none of the speakers mentioned the presence of slaves at what was one of the largest slaveholding plantations in the region, nor was there any reference to the Cherokee women who were central to the plantation's early years. Miles set out to reclaim these two lost histories in order to challenge the narrative projected by the historic site "that idealized Cherokee history, highlighted Cherokee likeness to whites, undermined black history, and sidelined Cherokee women's lives" (pp. 190–191).

This book evocatively reconstructs life at the northeastern Georgia plantation, centering principally on the lifetime of James Vann (ca. 1768–1809), who was responsible for the development of the plantation at the turn of the nineteenth century but not, it turns out, for the house itself that has so symbolized the anglicization of the Cherokee elite. Focusing on a single plantation community allows Miles to bring to life those left out of the Vann House's historic narrative. A history of violence, resistance, and vexed relationships between slaves and their owners—that is, the story of southern slavery—is punctuated with vivid details about the African-born Patience, who lost her feet to frostbite on the journey to Diamond Hill; Pleasant, who despite being owned by the local Moravian missionaries resolutely rejected Christianity, reputedly calling it "nothing but

hypocrisy" (p. 84); and Katy, a Cherokee-born slave whose death caused her mistress, Peggy Scott Vann, great grief.

In recreating the slave communities of Diamond Hill, despite the plantation's unusually expansive documentary record, Miles still has to cast her net wide, turning, for instance, to Harriet Jacob's slave narrative and Frederick Law Olmsted's observations, both published two decades after the Vanns were forced to leave Georgia for the west. Miles's analysis of the Cherokee women of Diamond Hill is, by contrast, rooted firmly in the lives of its residents, especially Peggy Scott Vann, James's long-suffering wife. With Peggy, the author explores the often fraught question of acculturation among the Cherokee. Agreeing with historians such as Tom Hatley and Theda Perdue that the story of Cherokee cultural change was neither simple nor unidirectional, Miles uses Peggy to demonstrate how Cherokee women simultaneously experienced loss of authority in some areas and increased autonomy in others. She also brings a gendered dimension to the history of Christian conversion, showing how Peggy was instrumental in spreading Christianity among other Cherokee women.

Miles admirably reconstructs the lost histories of Diamond Hill's Cherokee women and its slave population as far as the sources allow; the heart of the book, however, focuses on the troubled and troubling history of James Vann. "Shrewd, selfish, and unpredictable" (p. 30) with a predilection for alcohol and violence toward his wife and his slaves, James embodied the transitional moment faced by Cherokee peoples in the decades before Indian Removal. Inheriting dozens of slaves from his parents, James embraced the plantation system, acquiring more than 100 slaves over his lifetime and expanding the size and profitability of his estate. He was among the first Cherokees to "adopt . . . individualistic entrepreneurialism" that was at the core of the commercialized market economy then emerging in the early republic, and to participate in the "unbounded acts of violence" (p. 23) that were at the heart of southern plantation slavery during the antebellum era. In contrast to his mother, who had frequently socialized with her slaves, James increasingly distanced himself from his, moving toward the kind of racialized and rigid boundary between owners and slaves already evident in the surrounding Anglo-American slave society.

Despite these apparent moves toward Anglo-American economic and cultural models—moves that also entailed rejecting certain Cherokee practices such as a communal over an individualistic orientation and a respect for women's authority—Miles argues that James "gravitated towards negotiation and change as a means of self-protection" (p. 49) as a Cherokee. James maintained fluency in the Cherokee language, had polygynous marriages, and rejected Christianity despite his central role in the establishment of the Moravian mission on his lands. He was quick to defend Cherokee interests in his interactions with U.S. government officials and Euro-American settlers. The Cherokee Council itself, however, identified at least one instance

in which James went too far in rejecting Cherokee practices in favor of Anglo-American ones when it invalidated his will, which had left almost his entire estate to just one of his several children, and ordered the distribution of his estate among his widow and all his children.

Bridging several historical subfields, this book is a welcome addition to the histories of Native America, slavery, African America, gender, the early republic, and, perhaps most significantly, public history. Due to Miles's collaboration with the Vann House staff, in 2008 the site introduced a brand new exhibition on "The Lives of Black Slaves and Free Blacks on the Vann Plantation," and there are plans for an expanded investigation into the life of Peggy Scott Vann.

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JAMES M. CAMPBELL. *Slavery on Trial: Race, Class, and Criminal Justice in Antebellum Richmond, Virginia.* (New Perspectives on the History of the South.) Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 2007. Pp. xiii, 264. \$59.95.

James M. Campbell's thoroughly researched book is a valuable account of the interrelationships among race, class, and gender in the criminal justice system in Richmond, Virginia, during the antebellum period. Campbell shows how Richmond's criminal courts served both to reinforce a hierarchical society with slavery as its central institution and to contain real anxieties about social stability, especially within the city's white population.

Through its analysis of the city's criminal justice system, Campbell's study offers a complex portrait of antebellum Richmond. As he shows, that system had, as a key purpose, maintaining the racial divide at the heart of the slave society. It comes as little surprise that, in general, African Americans, slave and free, suffered severe discrimination in legal proceedings throughout the era. Antebellum Richmond maintained a system of separate courts to try slave criminal defendants—courts which offered minimal legal protections and in which the burden of proof tended to rest with the defendant rather than the prosecution, contrary to dominant American legal practice.

Free African Americans also faced significant limitations on their legal rights in Richmond courtrooms. Those convicted, both slave and free, could be sentenced to public whippings long after that form of punishment was no longer employed for whites, symbolizing, as Campbell argues, an approach to criminal justice intended to manifest and to dramatize the racial subordination upon which Richmond's social hierarchy rested.

But what makes Campbell's book stand out is the degree to which he illuminates the anomalies, inconsistencies, even the contradictions characterizing criminal justice in antebellum Richmond. Some of these, as he demonstrates, were more apparent than real. Slaveowners whose bondpeople ran afoul of the law were

often quick to encourage leniency where it might be necessary to protect valuable "property." More critically, slaveowners were also quick to act where institutional laws might appear to interfere with an owner's apparent authority over a slave's actions. Reinforcing "mastery," Campbell's analysis helps to confirm, was high on the list of slaveholding Richmond priorities, and legality had to bend, where necessary, to make sure that mastery remained in force.

Other anomalies tended to be more problematic. As Campbell stresses, urban slavery, as in Richmond, could never fit the plantation mold. Living in an urban environment, Richmond's slaves had a degree of independence unavailable to plantation slaves, participating in what Campbell describes as a vital, lower-class community life that occasionally crossed racial lines. In consequence there was a far greater reliance on institutional forms of social control—the police and the courts—than was characteristic of plantation regions and a series of uneasy adjustments to the often conflicting demands of maintaining slavery and its ethos, legality, and the preservation of social order.

The effort was further complicated by the existence of a white social order more diverse than that of plantation regions, as well. Richmond had a significant and restive white working class—some of whose members worked side by side with slaves—that demanded a fair amount of policing as well, and trying to punish white miscreants while maintaining racial distinctions could be difficult. Sometimes the lines were clear, as in the exemption of whites from the slave-like punishment of whipping. Sometimes they were not, as when Richmond instituted the use of chain gangs for white and black convicts alike.

But the real complications began when the system seemed, in many ways, to work against itself. Campbell does an excellent job of showing the difficulties that emerged surrounding the exclusion of African American testimony from cases involving whites accused of crime. Essential to demonstrating African American legal inferiority and subordination, that exclusion often rendered impossible the prosecution of whites charged with a variety of offenses, even of providing assistance to fugitives. Particularly striking is a discussion of the efforts Richmond courts often had to make to decide whether defendants and potential witnesses were white or African American and the advantage defendants and others took of the complexities and difficulties of making such determinations in a society whose history embraced, by then, over two centuries of interracial contact.

Significantly, Campbell also demonstrates that African Americans were far from passive victims of Richmond's racially based criminal justice system. In addition to challenging racial categories, they fought, throughout the era, to obtain and exercise their legal rights. Free and slave alike sought to sidestep the legal system by resorting to community-based social control, especially under the auspices of the influential African

