

documents, which are often much lengthier than the snippets provided in many survey texts. Instructors who use a separate sourcebook of documents might even find that Middleton has given them enough here to make such a sourcebook unnecessary, something to keep in mind as students increasingly protest over book prices.

Colonial America, in its length and subject matter, invites comparison with another recent one-volume history of colonization in North America, Alan Taylor's brilliant *American Colonies* (2001). While the two works are superficially similar, Middleton's book offers comprehensive coverage of a more narrowly defined area, and so his work, while less conceptually innovative than Taylor's, might be a better choice for classroom use. Some students might find the length and level of detail in *Colonial America* daunting, but it is a solid option worth considering for upper-division courses.

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William Dudley, ed. *American Slavery*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 2000. Pp. 255. Cloth, \$32.45; ISBN 0-7377-0213-3. Paper, \$21.20; ISBN 0-7377-0212-5.

William Dudley brings together a superb collection of articles examining American slavery from the Atlantic slave trade to its demise with the Civil War and Reconstruction. This collection represents some of the best scholarship on slavery, race, and abolitionism. Because of its high quality and clear writing, it can be used effectively in AP, undergraduate, and graduate courses. Moreover, the book contains primary documents, such as the early Virginia slave laws, constitutional debates, abolitionist literature, slave owners' opinions, and portions of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, that complement the articles.

The opening chapter explores the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery. Daniel C. Littlefield puts this trade into an international perspective by examining the economic systems of Brazil, Central America, the West Indies, and southern North America. John Boles looks at the transition from indentured servitude to slavery in Virginia and how it differed from the slave system that took hold immediately in South Carolina. Donald B. Wright's essay focuses on slavery in the northern colonies, a fact that often surprises students who identify slavery as a purely southern institution.

Peter Kolchin and Gary Nash consider slavery during the Revolutionary period. Kolchin explains how slavery contradicted the republican ideas of the American Revolution and led to emancipation in the North. Nash believes that the constitutional debates over slavery could have played out differently if antislavery advocates had pressed the issue.

The next section of the book examines the period from 1820 to 1860, as opinions hardened on the issue of slavery and western expansion. William Freehling describes the abolitionist movement and its paranoid effect on southern perceptions of the North. James Oakes illustrates how fugitive slaves inflamed tensions between the states and

the federal government. John Hope Franklin and Albert Moss make the compelling case that slavery finally divided the nation and brought civil war.

Other well-known scholars consider the Civil War and Reconstruction. Merton L. Dillon argues that slaves running to Union lines forced the North to confront the issue of slavery. James McPherson meditates on the revolutionary meaning and impact of the Emancipation Proclamation. Leon Litwack follows with an exploration of how former slaves adapted to freedom. As the most speculative section, the final portion of the book proves weakest. Jeffery Rogers Hummel asserts that the war caused a waste of lives, and that the North should have allowed the South to secede. He argues that slavery would have ended eventually. Robert Fogel, in a much more thoughtful essay, makes the case that allowing the South to secede would have strengthened slavery internationally and hurt the abolitionist cause.

This important source of articles and documents should find wide use in college classrooms. But like all collections, it has weaknesses. It would have benefitted from some of the newer scholarship on slavery. Although it contains essays on slave runaways, not much appears here about slaves' daily lives, resistance, work, religion, music, or family. Articles dealing with these matters would have given students another side of American slavery. Nevertheless, this edited work provides a perfect starting point for understanding slavery, especially from an economic and political perspective, and it puts some of our most esteemed scholars within easy reach of students.

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H. W. Brands. *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, 2002. Pp. 375. Paper, \$17.00; ISBN 0-226-07116-1.

According to H. W. Brands, Americans in the 1890s, like their descendants a hundred years later, experienced a *fin-de-siècle* debate. On one side were people who expected the new century to bring a gloomy decline; on the other were those who foresaw a bright new future. Brands suggests their debates brought about a fusion of old and new ideas that set the stage for the twentieth century. Divided into eight chapters, Brands's sweeping and rather old-fashioned synthesis of the 1890s zeroes in on national and overseas expansion, economic and racial conflict, and politics.

Brands begins and ends with expansion. His first chapter contrasts one land seeker's opportunistic experience in the Oklahoma Land Rush with Turner's frontier thesis and, more tellingly, Henry and Brooks Adams's bleak forecast of the end of western civilization. Brands returns to the expansion theme in his last chapter, a conventional retelling of the debate over imperialism.

In between, inventors and industrialists battle each other over the shape of American capitalism, only to be trumped by corporate financiers like J. P. Morgan.