

achieving their stated purpose they have started to open a veritable Pandora's Box; they need to tell us "so what?" or to close the box again. Reconnecting this detailed analysis of the fall of a French fort in 1710 with the overall historiography of French

might be on the horizon.

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SCHAMA, Simon — *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution*. London: BBC Books, 2005. Pp. 437.

"[H]owever awkward it is for orthodox history of the Founding Fathers and their revolution, the genesis of African-American liberty is, then, inseparable from the British connection" (p. 18), so Simon Schama tells us. If one wants to see the first authentically free African American society, he explains, we must look to Britain, not America. With his characteristically bold flourishes, Schama exposes what numerous American historians have long known: that the British emancipated thousands of runaway slaves who sought their protection during the Revolution and that many were given land grants and the rights of British subjects in the British colony of Nova Scotia. In the new republic of America, by contrast, slave society was further entrenched by the Founding Fathers.

*Rough Crossings* is a big book that intertwines the history of the Black Loyalists with that of the triumph and failures of the British abolition movement. It is written in the vivid prose we have come to expect from Britain's most popular historian and contains some wonderful moments. What disappoints is that Schama has chosen to tell the story of "the slaves" of his title largely through the actions of two white protagonists, Granville Sharp and John Clarkson, both of whom left richly detailed letters and journals for him to quote extensively. Yet, if the story of these runaway slaves is so significant, surely they, not Sharp or Clarkson, should be at the centre of the story, as agents in their own drama.

Schama has given us a splendid account of the long neglected Granville Sharp, a man desperately in need of a good biographer, and his account of the complex decision of Lord Mansfield in the Somerset case is the most cogent I have read. Equally compelling is his portrait of John Clarkson, brother of Thomas, the man employed by the Sierra Leone Company to coordinate the transport of 1,200 black settlers from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone. The passionate, resourceful, highly-strung Clarkson is the heart of the book, described on the book jacket as "the Moses of this, one of the great exoduses in British history". Schama has great material in John Clarkson, who left an incredibly detailed daily journal, recording his weeping fits and hysteria, as well as his less histrionic actions as the exodus coordinator and early governor of Sierra Leone.

Listen to Schama's description of Clarkson addressing a large congregation of

black settlers in Nova Scotia: “No white man had ever spoken to them like this ... this pale young officer in his blue coat, thin as a swaying birch, saying things that opened their eyes their ears their hearts. Clarkson was done and there was a great burst of exultation from the congregation, with shouts of praise and affirmation” (p. 282). By the time the settlers reach Sierra Leone, Schama has created Clarkson to be the settler’s messiah, completely overlooking the fact that they went to Sierra Leone as whole congregations, led by their preachers, rather than by Clarkson. They arrived singing the old Wesleyan Hymn: “The day of jubilee is come/ Return ye, ransomed sinners, home.” These people had their own Moses: a blind and crippled Methodist preacher revered by his large congregation as “Daddy Moses”. This man was illiterate and kept no journals, but it was Daddy Moses who gave Clarkson his legitimacy by inviting him into his church in Nova Scotia in the scene so lovingly described.

When Daddy Moses preached about the delivery out of oppression and over the mighty waters into the land of Canaan, his congregation took this as literal truth in their own lives. Believing themselves to be actors in a divinely ordained project, they were not going to settle for being told what to do by some arrogant youth who assumed authority over them by virtue of having white skin and being able to read, whether it was Clarkson or his authoritarian replacement, Zachary Macaulay. Certainly, the settlers always linked Clarkson to the Exodus story as part of their tactics of cajoling and flattery to bend Clarkson to their will, especially after he left Sierra Leone and they were being bullied and browbeaten by Macaulay. But to read this as Schama does is to misunderstand entirely these people as agents in their own drama and to overlook the pivotal role of ecstatic religion in their resistance to the rule of the Sierra Leone Company.

Schama fails to distinguish different Methodist sects, misidentifying the Lady Huntingdon’s Connexion as the New Light Congregationalists, and he misses the sharp distinction between these sects and the minority Baptists. He reads the black settlers not as people making their own history, but as ultimate victims of the stupid, callous white men, Zachary Macaulay and the Sierra Leone Company. In this way he fails to grasp that settler resistance, which develops into full-blown rebellion by 1800, was a direct extension of religious belief, not simply a reaction to heavy-handedness of the Sierra Leone Company. Collapsing seven of the most crucial years into a couple of pages, he writes, “[P]aradoxically what [the company] had managed to do was create, out of one of the most passionately loyal and patriotic people ever to follow the Union Jack, a contentious little America in West Africa.” Not so: these runaway slaves were always a little America. Having emancipated themselves from enslavement during the revolution, with the rhetoric of liberty ringing about their ears, the black settlers held a radicalism generated out of consistently held views about natural rights of free men. Even though their rebellion was brutally put down, the black settlers never became a defeated and colonized people, as Schama’s narrative would have us believe.

Most problematic, Schama often relies on retrospective clairvoyance, rather than archival research, in his depiction of the slave runaways. He frames his narrative with an interior monologue of the thoughts and motivations of the wonderfully named British Freedom, yet he has next to no evidence about this man’s life experience.

Likewise, he cannot possibly know the ultimate fate of Isaac Anderson and Frank Patrick, who were sentenced to be hanged for their part in the failed rebellion of 1800, yet he confidently writes: “In the usual way, the bodies remained on the gibbets for some days ... being eaten by the hyenas” (p. 382). There was no “usual way” for hangings in Sierra Leone, because no one had ever been executed before, and no evidence is presented that the executions even took place at all. Furthermore, there were no hyenas in Sierra Leone in 1800. Schama is simply making it up.

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SMITH, Jay M. — *Nobility Reimagined: The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth-Century France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005. Pp. 307.

In his rich and stimulating study based on the reading of a variety of eighteenth-century publications, Jay M. Smith argues that “analysis of the meanings of honor, virtue, and patriotism” reveals contemporary attitudes toward the French nobility and thus provides a means of understanding “the initial conflicts and the long-term origins of the French Revolution” (p. 16). Underlying all debate on these concepts was the fascination with the ancient republics of Greece and Rome and the widely shared understanding that these societies had flourished because of the virtuous conduct of their citizens, who placed the well-being of the *patrie* above their own self-interest. Smith demonstrates that increasing concern throughout the century regarding the persistence of monarchical despotism, the character of a nobility debased by luxury and recently ennobled officeholders, and the declining military fortunes of France encouraged publicists to look to the ancient world with its reliance on virtue, and the patriotism associated with it, for models of reform. Convinced that only the nobility could serve as the agent of monarchical reform and moral regeneration in France, these writers insisted that the second estate must possess the same desirable characteristics as those associated with the citizens in those ancient republics.

Beginning with Fénelon, a number of publicists had written that the virtue of the ancients must be developed within the French nobility if monarchical despotism were to be destroyed. As Smith reveals, even the appearance of Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* in 1749, which had insisted that honour, not virtue, was the guiding principle in monarchies and implied that republican values were incompatible with monarchy, did little to dampen the enthusiasm for associating the attributes of classical republicanism with the French nobility. The abbé Coyer claimed that the nobility’s entrance into commerce would, in Smith’s words, result in the merging of “the values of honor and virtue in a patriotic mix” (p. 116). In response, the chevalier d’Arc insisted that commerce, with its penchant for luxury, and virtue were incompatible and that virtuous noble conduct required selfless dedication to military service. The military debacle of the Seven Year’s War focused even more attention on the role of the nobility, now responsible for reversing France’s military fortunes. Authors emphasized the necessity of replacing the nobility’s attraction to luxury,