Matthew J. Smith

Liberty, Fraternity, Exile: Haiti and Jamaica After Emancipation. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. xiv + 409 pp. (Paper US\$ 32.95)

This fascinating and original book by a Jamaican historian based at the University of the West Indies examines Haiti and Jamaica, and the many connections between them, in the period beginning with emancipation in the British Caribbean and ending with the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1838–1915). While a rich historiography now exists on movements among and links between the greater Caribbean region during the age of the Haitian Revolution and the Latin American independence wars, there is relatively little scholarship on the Victorian era.

Matthew Smith's focus is on cross-border movements between the independent "black republic" and the British colony, on the individuals and families who moved often and routinely between the two countries, and on the political, economic, and familial connections that bound them together. Like these people ("refugees, exiles, politicians, transients, abolitionists, laborers, merchants, writers, travelers, diplomats" [p. 3]), he moves seamlessly between them in his analysis. The book is organized in four chronological parts, within which are chapters on Haiti, chapters on Jamaica, and chapters that deal with both. Political narrative dominates most chapters; Smith acknowledges that Haiti and Jamaica pursued different political paths during the long nineteenth century, yet makes interesting comparisons. The U.S. occupation of Haiti and the coming of crown-colony government in Jamaica were very different events, separated by half a century, yet Smith sees a fundamental similarity: in both crises, local elites surrendered autonomy to a foreign power, seeing outside intervention as preferable to the feared anarchy of mass uprisings. And while the occupation was clearly a radical break in Haitian political history, World War I at the same conjuncture also proved to be a significant watershed for Jamaica's political development.

A key theme of the book is exile. Jamaica, especially Kingston, was the favored refuge for Haitian politicians and generals escaping the civil wars, revolutions, and plots that characterized most of the period. Jamaica was close, a day or two by sail from most Haitian ports, and British policy up to the early 1900s was liberal toward these political refugees. At virtually any time a few hundred exiles lived in Jamaica (Danish St. Thomas ran second as a refuge), and, needless to say, they were generally busy organizing intrigues and sometimes actual invasions to regain power in their country. As one president was ousted, usually making his way to Kingston, a group of his opponents would leave the city to return home and re-enter the fray. Smith calls this "the ritual

exchange of exiles at Kingston harbor" (p. 212). There was undeniably an almost comic element in this "ritual," but Smith is sensitive to the tragic aspects of exile, for instance when he explores the experiences of Lysius Salomon, in exile between 1859 and 1879 (mostly in Kingston), his country's president between 1879 and 1888, only to be exiled yet again in 1888.

Another important theme is provided by the stories of particular families who moved routinely between Haiti and Jamaica, weaving commercial, familial, and political ties over several generations. This excursion into family history, which is a thread tying the book together, provides a refreshingly human face to Smith's narrative. The Bourke family, Jamaican, descended from a white or colored Saint Domingue female refugee, moved between the two countries, and married into each island's elites, over at least five generations. (Smith's main source is Wellesley Bourke V!)

Of course this kind of history is an "elite" narrative, since in general only well-established and educated families, Haitian or Jamaican, left a paper trail, and most of the refugees in Kingston belonged to Haiti's elites, black and colored. On the other hand, there was also a considerable movement of Jamaicans to Haiti, and they were more socially diverse, including artisans and laborers hoping for a better life than in Jamaica. Some of them left a paper trail when they came into contact with the British consular staff in Haiti, for instance if they petitioned for compensation when their property was damaged in one of the uprisings or civil wars of the era.

Smith provides interesting analysis of some key texts, including the influential and deeply prejudiced books by J.A. Froude and Spenser St. John, which skewed British and American views of Haiti for generations to come, establishing the trope of Haiti as a dreadful "warning" of what might happen to Jamaica without British control. But he also looks at texts by Jamaicans on Haiti, especially the eleven articles by H.G. DeLisser under the title "Land of Revolutions" (published in the Jamaican *Daily Telegraph* in July and August 1911), which provided a far more nuanced view—a view "through colonial eyes" (p. 282) rather than imperial ones.

This is a richly documented, meticulously researched, and well-written study which advances our understanding of Haiti and Jamaica in the Victorian era, and takes a refreshingly original approach to the region's history.

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