Christopher Curry, *Freedom and Resistance: A Social History of Black Loyalists in the Bahamas*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017. (Cloth US\$ 74.95)

The American Revolution (1774–83) set in motion a number of unintended migrations or diasporas. The British, in an attempt to erode the material base of the Revolution, offered to manumit the enslaved Africans of the Patriots (but not those of their Loyalist allies) in return for service to “King and Crown.” Absolutes are difficult to ascertain but it has been estimated that upwards of 50,000 “Black Loyalists” abandoned their Patriot-masters, received certificates of freedom for service rendered (aides, guerrillas, etc.), and were transported in an exodus-like migration from Savannah, Charleston, and New York to Canada, England, Africa, and the West Indies (Jamaica and the Bahamas). It needs to be stated that the British never entertained losing, nor did they anticipate the consequences of reinserting emancipated Africans in postrebellion America had the Patriots lost or in the larger Empire had they won.

The Loyalist migrations (black and white) were a diaspora within a diaspora, and we know a great deal more about the plight of white Loyalists than we do about their black counterparts. Documenting the plight of either is a daunting task. It not only mandates reconstructing the trail from New York to Canada, England, and points beyond (such as Africa and Australia), but also working in various repositories (island and mainland) along the way. The task becomes more complicated when we recognize that unlike their white counterparts, black Loyalists were thrust into a kind of “no man’s land” social stratum: few were allowed to vote or participate in civil society, and despite certificates of freedom all negotiated a subservient social, economic, and political position somewhere between the enslaved black majorities and entrenched white minorities in many of their new found homes.

This last situation is the one Christopher Curry explores in *Freedom and Resistance*. The Bahamas were one of several destinations for Loyalists (black and white) in the British West Indies and he showcases the dilemma of individuals who were transported, some with their white counterparts, some without, to the Islands. The text is divided into five chapters plus a conclusion. Space precludes a review chapter by chapter, but each is meticulously researched and documented deploying both secondary and, most importantly, primary resources. Documenting Black Loyalists in the Bahamas is, as Curry notes, challenging, and mandates a degree of “sleuthing” and “reading against the grain.” As an associate professor of history at the University of the Bahamas, he is uniquely positioned to undertake such endeavors; his ongoing access to repositories enables him to forego time, return at will, “sleuth,” and follow a paper trail no matter where it leads. This type of sleuthing is, in my opinion, an important

next phase in Loyalist research. Recent scholarship has assumed two somewhat divergent but interrelated trajectories: a global or macro approach documents multiple destinations throughout the Empire, and a local or micro approach concentrates on specific sites and individuals.

Freedom and Resistance falls into the latter category. It not only moves the scholarship beyond the regurgitation of sources, but expands the focus from the past, from the first, initial, or pioneering generation to the present, the descendants. In Chapter 1 ("Roots and Routes"), for example, Curry discusses the importance of the Great Awakening black evangelicals such as David George, John Marrant, Boston King, and George Liele, as well as fellow sojourners in the Bahamas such as Prince Williams and Joseph Paul. Like Liele and Moses Baker in Jamaica, Williams carried evangelical zeal and republican ideals of freedom to the islands. Circa 1791, he, Sharper Morris, and others established the New Bethel Baptist Church, one of the first "Native" or Afro-Christian congregations in the Bahamas, and fought in local ("Negro") courts for their "right and privileges" as British subjects. Liele and Baker did not live to see Emancipation (1834), but Williams did, and Curry brings his narrative to a close with a summary discussion of the Loyalist contribution to Bahamian society. He notes that despite the bicentennial festivities and memorial gardens (established in 1983) that celebrated their arrival, Black Loyalists remain "hidden," overshadowed by their white counterparts. *Freedom and Resistance* goes a long way to rectifying this disparity.

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