Helen M. McKee, *Negotiating Freedom in the Circum-Caribbean: The Jamaican Maroons and Creek Nation Compared*. London: Routledge, 2019. ccxiv + 214 pp. (Cloth US\$149.95)

In this dissertation-turned-book, Helen McKee makes a significant contribution to studies of Jamaican Maroons, the burgeoning scholarship on freedom and unfreedom, and comparative research on maroons and other free and semifree communities of color in the Atlantic World. She accurately notes, as have others before her, that a great deal can be learned and understood about the Maroons simply by changing the traditional framework of analysis, viewing them as an autonomous and powerful indigenous community, rather than simply as runaway slaves. This vantage point is particularly important because during the later period covered in her study, many of the people inhabiting Jamaican Maroon communities had never been enslaved.

McKee positions her research within ongoing scholarly conversations through a comparative analysis of eighteenth-century Jamaican Maroons and the contemporaneous Creek Indians of the southeastern United States with whom they had much in common. For instance, both groups were described in similar terms by the European settlers who attempted, unsuccessfully, to subjugate them. Moreover, their kinship-based organization, nonwhite classification, and particular geographic and temporal contexts led to similar social and cultural attributes as well as historical trajectories. At the same time that McKee notes the similarities between the two semi-autonomous groups, she acknowledges that they were different in important ways, most notably in their origins. Jamaican Maroon villages were founded by Africans who rebelled against the Europeans who forcibly transported them to the island for slave labor, whereas the indigenous Creeks were pressed into new settlement patterns by the European settlers who displaced and marginalized them.

The book includes five chapters. The first examines the postwar period when both Maroons and Creeks negotiated with their former oppressors. McKee argues that the similar structure and content of their treaties highlight a European model for negotiating with nonwhite semi-autonomous communities. Chapter 2 follows the worsening relationship between Whites and both the Maroons and the Creeks as a result of the restrictions placed on these communities in the treaties. Here, McKee contributes a thoughtful examination of social and political activity between and within maroon villages. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on internal activities in each of the two communities. Chapter 3 focuses on Maroon and Creek interactions with black rebels, while Chapter 4 explores the relationships Maroons and Creeks had with Blacks settled in their communities. Although there is little new information in Chapters 3

and 4 for people knowledgeable about the complex relationships among racial and ethnic groups in the colonial world and familiar with indigenous forms of slaveholding, McKee's arguments about why Europeans reacted differently to these two nonwhite communities is thought-provoking. Finally, Chapter 5 returns more explicitly to European and nonwhite interactions through a study of land disputes and cross-boundary travel. Here, McKee shifts from emphasizing similarities to laying out the differences between the Jamaican Maroons and the Creek Indians.

McKee's haphazard attention to the all-encompassing impact of racial chattel slavery in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World is problematic. The shortcoming is first evident in her analysis of the treaties. Racial chattel slavery as it evolved in the Americas must be more central to the examination of the impetus for European treaties with Jamaican Maroons and Creek Indians, as well as their content and legacies. The African origins of the Jamaican Maroons marked them as enslave-able in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World context. This, in turn, shaped every aspect of the interactions of Maroons and white colonists. Creek Indians, in contrast, were disadvantaged but did not contend with large-scale systemic enslavement *because* they were Indians. Likewise, Creek success did not threaten to topple the entire social, economic, and political system in the United States the way Maroon successes did in colonial Jamaica.

The limitation also becomes apparent when McKee suggests, in Chapters 3 and 4, why Maroon-Black interactions diverged from those between Creek Indians and Blacks. It is only in the epilogue that she seems to recognize that "the shared background on the plantations of many Maroons and the enslaved population" (p. 212) might have significant bearing on the way Maroons interacted with other Blacks or what they may have expected from those relationships.

McKee's goal "to move beyond the view of Maroons as ex-slaves and relate their experiences to those of other free communities in the Americas" (p. 7) is laudable, and the comparative framework using Creek Indians is provocative. The book is well written and informative, and brings an impressive array of primary and secondary scholarship to bear on a project of vast temporal and geographic scope.

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