

featuring a number of activities essential to the Cherokee religious system, including "going to water," divinatory practices, the use of oral formulas, dietary prohibitions, and dancing (p. 3). Despite the fact that many observers since at least the early nineteenth century have claimed that the importance of the ball game and its accompanying activities was in steep decline, the author makes a compelling case that most, if not all, of the major elements of ball game ritual remain in practice today. In addition, Zogry examines other meanings associated with anetso, including its close association with warfare, its long-term use as a marker or expression of Cherokee cultural identity to Cherokees and non-Cherokees alike, and the various secular activities that have been regularly associated with the game since the early historic period, such as gambling and drinking. In doing so the author confounds accepted dichotomies such as ritual versus game, sacred versus profane, and private versus public, presenting the reader with a rich, complex understanding of what has been called "the Cherokee national pastime" (p. 65).

Zogry's work, undertaken with the permission of the Eastern Band, is the first scholarly, book-length study of the ball game and its place in Cherokee culture, and as such it makes a significant contribution to the field of Cherokee studies, particularly Cherokee religious studies. His examination of the historical record concerning anetso is thorough and insightful. By comparing early historic and nineteenth-century accounts, more recent scholarship, and Cherokee cultural narratives, Zogry has identified a number of similarities across the centuries, including ritual activities, equipment, preparation, and exhibitions of the game presented to outsiders. His diachronic discussion of the connection between the ball game and the Cherokee religious system is compelling and centers on ten enduring practices: conjuring, sacred formulas, going to water, dancing, medicine, divination, scarification, dietary and physical contact prohibitions, fasting, and marching. The author also documents a consistent pattern of representation in the cultural performance of the game for Indian agents and other government officials in the eighteenth century, missionaries in the nineteenth century, and tourists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Of less importance is Zogry's discussion in chapters 2 and 5 of the theoretical implications of his work regarding the game/ritual distinction. His musings on Claude Lévi-Strauss, Clifford Geertz, and others distract from the study's strength—a thorough, intelligent, and respectful examination of a well-known but little understood Cherokee cultural practice. Zogry's analysis of the ball game is deeper and more nuanced than those that have come before.

Arkansas Tech University

ERIC BOWNE

The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story. By Tiya Miles. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c. 2010. Pp. [xviii], 315. \$32.50, ISBN 978-0-8078-3418-3.)

In *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*, Tiya Miles tells a wonderful Cherokee plantation story by, ironically, largely ignoring the house that stands at its center.

The house in question is the Chief Vann House—now a Georgia State Historic Site—and Miles begins her book by asking, "What does this house

stand for?" (p. xv). She writes little about the house itself, though; most of the book focuses on James Vann and the plantation he built in northwest Georgia. The stories of Vann, his family, and his slaves, Miles concludes, show that the Vann House represents "a place of suffering for enslaved African Americans and their Cherokee captors" (p. 197).

James Vann, born in the 1760s into a family of "mixed-race Euro-Cherokees," lived at a time when the Cherokee Nation first came into sustained contact with Euro-American capitalism, Christian missionaries, and the emerging United States (p. 41). Eventually these pressures were too much for the Cherokees to resist, but Miles demonstrates that during Vann's lifetime many elements of traditional Cherokee culture survived. This situation created a boundary zone that aggressive men could exploit for their own benefit, and James Vann was just such a man.

Most of *The House on Diamond Hill* explores the process by which Vann exploited the women of his family, his slaves, and both of his nations in order to build his fortune. The seeds of that fortune came from slaves and other property that Vann stole from his sisters, his mother, and his wives. The subsequent growth of his wealth depended on the labor of more than a hundred slaves. This pattern was hardly rare in the antebellum South, where fortunes were often based on strategic marriages to wealthy widows and were invariably built by the labor of slaves. What makes the story of James Vann different, and what compounded the suffering of those around him, was the fluidity of the boundary zone in which he operated. Vann could be either Cherokee or American, and he regularly employed whichever identity best served his own interests. Thus, he used land that belonged to the Cherokee Nation to raise the crops that generated a personal, and very un-Cherokee, fortune. At the same time, he exploited contacts in the U.S. government to bring a federal turnpike, and the business it generated, to his front door. Vann managed to be both a Cherokee nationalist and an American entrepreneur and to profit from both identities.

Vann's wives and slaves, however, suffered from the liminal world in which he operated. Peggy Scott Vann, who became one of the wives of this American entrepreneur around 1797 and who was "the sole spouse of note" by 1805, was removed from the matrilineal Cherokee world of her youth (p. 54). Then the trauma surrounding her husband's death (he was murdered in 1809 by one of his many enemies) pushed her closer to the Moravian missionaries who had established, at James Vann's invitation, Springplace Mission on his grounds. Ultimately, she became the Moravians' first Cherokee convert, which added to her estrangement from other Cherokees. James Vann's slaves also suffered. While other Cherokees in Vann's day owned slaves, these were generally small holdings that often demonstrated the "flexible features" experienced by traditional Cherokee captives or by slaves in seventeenth-century Anglo-America (p. 81). Vann, however, became a "southern planter," and like many of his white peers he bought and sold slaves frequently and put them to work under professional overseers (p. 79). As a result, Vann's slaves had, perhaps, greater opportunities to establish their own community, but they were also exposed to the full force of the market, and some were sold after Vann's death.

Miles's research is solid; her writing is clear; and the story she tells is both important and compelling. *The House on Diamond Hill* is an exemplary book.

Virginia Tech University

DANIEL B. THORP

The Struggles of John Brown Russwurm: The Life and Writings of a Pan-Africanist Pioneer, 1799–1851. By Winston James. (New York and London: New York University Press, c. 2010. Pp. xiv, 305. Paper, \$22.00, ISBN 978-0-8147-4290-7; cloth, \$75.00, ISBN 978-0-8147-4289-1.)

Winston James argues that John Brown Russwurm's omission from the history of Pan-Africanism stems largely from "distortions" of his life story, "misunderstandings about the colonization project[,] and controversy over the status of Liberia in the Pan-Africanist enterprise" (p. 108). In an effort to "dispel the ignorance of Russwurm and provide the basis for a better appreciation of his exertions and contributions," James presents a combined biography and anthology of Russwurm's writings to explain his early beginnings, his role as editor of the New York-based *Freedom's Journal*, and his support for colonization (p. xi).

A native of Jamaica, Russwurm received his education in Montreal and in Maine, which, James argues, defined the young man's understandings of race. After graduating from Bowdoin College, Russwurm moved to New York and, with Samuel Cornish, used *Freedom's Journal* to craft "impassioned and inflammatory" rebuttals to the American Colonization Society (ACS) (p. 41). Though initially a far more radical anticolonizationist than Cornish was, Russwurm later embraced colonization, which led contemporaries and modern historians alike to depict him as a Pan-African "Benedict Arnold" (p. 51).

The most powerful contribution of James's work is his contention that, far from being a turncoat, Russwurm carefully considered his choice to emigrate, citing that he "chafed under the daily humiliation of black life in the United States" and "simply found the degradation unendurable" (p. 45). James claims that Russwurm's time as editor of *Freedom's Journal* imbued him with a new appreciation of the dilemma facing African Americans in the 1820s, something he had not fully understood growing up. Through an examination of Russwurm's decision to move to Liberia, James successfully overturns the long-standing idea that the ACS bribed or coerced him. However, James's intention to show that "there is no reason to regard emigration as less noble than remaining" in the United States means that he often portrays Russwurm in the same celebratory light that others have used for colonization's opponents (p. 112).

Russwurm, as governor of Maryland in Liberia, effectively ended the negative treatment of educated blacks, reformed poor medical and educational facilities, and repaired the tenuous relationship with native Africans that had plagued the ACS's colony. However, the intense focus on Russwurm in this study frequently leaves him divorced from his fellow colonists. Since Russwurm served as a focal point for colonial issues, James could have presented a more sustained engagement with both the character of Russwurm's opposition and the class-based tensions present within the colony in order to reinforce Russwurm's strength and importance as governor.