

threw their slaves off the land in the middle of winter—after crops were in. As one ex-slave said, “it was poor freedom to starve” (p. 214). With whites controlling most employment options, most ex-slaves decided they and their families would find it “easier to deal with those with whom they had past ties” (p. 225).

Some may disagree with Dunaway’s blunt characterization of “the ‘accepted wisdom’ about the African American slave family” (pp. 284–85), and the insistent focus on treatment tends to crowd other themes of slavery historiography—resistance, community networks, negotiations with masters—off the page. Others will wish for more sustained analysis of Appalachian free black families. But this deeply researched, clearly argued book provides a welcome new look at an institution we thought we knew well.

Dylan C. Penningroth  
Northwestern University  
Evanston, Illinois

*Amerika “Chinichihā” no Kigen* (Origins of a “pro-Japanese group” in the United States). By Satoshi Shiozaki. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001. 262 pp. ¥2,500, ISBN 4-582-84211-9.) In Japanese.

At the end of the shogunate and the beginning of the Meiji period, many young Japanese left for universities located in Boston to study modern Western civilization. At this same time, certain “sophisticated” Europeans and Americans, especially those living in the Boston area, had an infatuation with Japan and Japanese culture. The young Japanese students who came to Boston demonstrated their exceptional academic talents. They not only achieved quick progress in their studies but also provided Bostonians with direct insights into Japanese society and culture. These students contributed greatly to forming grassroots connections between the United States and Japan, but the history of their actions and the relationships they formed has received little attention from later scholars. One study that has appeared, however, Satoshi Shiozaki’s *Amerika “Chinichihā” no Kigen*, uses contemporary newspapers, journal articles, personal

letters, and diaries as well as extensive secondary materials in both English and Japanese to present a vivid picture of many aspects of the dawn of the U.S.-Japan relationship from both Japanese and American perspectives. Shiozaki takes a close look at some prominent Americans who had pro-Japanese leanings, such as Gilbert Attwood, Edward Morse, and Ernest Fenollosa, and at certain distinguished Japanese individuals who were important figures at that time, such as Arinori Mori, the first Japanese chargé d’affaires to the United States. In presenting these people, Shiozaki shows how Boston became a breeding ground for pro-Japanese sentiment in the United States; the interactions of these people eventually resulted in the establishment of the first Japan Society of the United States in Boston. Harvard University later played an important role in making strong and close connections between Boston and Japan.

When we think about the U.S.-Japan relationship, we tend to focus on “high diplomacy,” such as U.S.-Japan security and trading relationships. Shiozaki’s book, however, is quite helpful for understanding how diplomacy conducted at a personal level also played an important role in fostering bilateral connections between the two countries. Shiozaki emphasizes the roles of those Japanese students who provided rich introductions to the language, art, history, customs, literature, daily manners, and other aspects of Japanese life. Their many efforts put the early U.S.-Japan relationship on a firm foundation.

Shiozaki’s book, however, precipitates a minor analytical problem. Shiozaki is successful at presenting how the private interactions between the Japanese students and people in Boston contributed to deepening the U.S.-Japan friendship. Unfortunately, Shiozaki fails to situate this privately orchestrated “low diplomacy” in the context of government-level “high diplomacy.” The book offers an overview of the Boston gathering of Japanese students and Americans who had pro-Japanese outlooks, but it does not explain how the members of this group may have affected the official state-to-state relationship between the two countries. Thus, in reading this book one

is left with the impression that "low diplomacy" and "high diplomacy" are unconnected; in reality, however, they are mutually interactive and should be analyzed as two sides of the same coin.

Yoneyuki Sugita  
*Osaka University of Foreign Studies*  
*Osaka, Japan*

*Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age.* By Eric Homberger. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. xiv, 330 pp. \$29.95, ISBN 0-300-09501-5.)

It is somewhat surprising that one of the best observers of the New York scene is a professor at the University of East Anglia in England. In fact, Eric Homberger, author of *Mrs. Astor's New York*, has produced *The Historical Atlas of New York City* (1994), an illustrated history that considers Benevolent Culture, Fifth Avenue, Abstract Expressionists, skyscrapers, and mass transit all part of the kaleidoscope; *New York City: A Cultural and Literary Companion* (2003), a survey of places in the city—Parks, Harlem, Broadway, etc.—that includes the voices of Stephen Crane, Allen Ginsberg, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani; and *Scenes from the Life of a City: Corruption and Conscience in Old New York* (1994), which focuses on the underside of the urban scene (the hardened underworld, the abortionist Madame Restell, "Slippery Dick" Connolly) and the triumph of Conscience in the building of Central Park. Such free-ranging and eclectic thinking is part of Homberger's charm. One can only marvel at Homberger's expertise: he also writes on the radical tradition (John Reed and the like), espionage (spy fiction and John le Carré), Jewish culture, and photography, not to mention dabbling in Ezra Pound, Anglo-American poetry, and biography. Thus we might assume that *Mrs. Astor's New York* is not the usual social dalliance one might have expected from the title.

We are, in fact, in the hands of a cultural archaeologist. Homberger pursued available memoirs, period literature, and multitudes of newspapers and journals. In short, his data is impeccable and original. Homberger roots his city and his age in specific locales, watching

how the meaning of social spaces changes. We are treated to the spectacle of proto-neighborhoods that dissolve and reform according to elitist dictates (and to the need to distance the wealthy from the poor). In Homberger's hand, Gilded Age New York is a movable tableau, an examination of material culture (houses, hotels, churches—even fashions and ballroom spaces) that constantly shifts. In front of this complex backdrop, a tale of the city's aristocracy unfolds, "America's first celebrity martyrs" (p. 12).

"Society" at this time was more a process than an institution, notes Homberger (p. 27). It was Ward McAllister, the arbiter of fashion, who eventually solidified social discrimination and exclusivity. *Mrs. Astor's New York* is the saga of McAllister's tactics (the Patriarchs, the Four Hundred), the pull between new wealth and social power, and the finale of Mrs. William Astor's ascendancy as professional hostess by 1897. It is also a saga of the currents that shattered this remarkable society. The last chapter deals with "Being Mrs. Astor" and cleverly begins with her end, a nervous breakdown in 1906. A confused Mrs. Astor, planning nonexistent balls, seemed the symbolic icon of Homberger's final vision.

Suffice it to say, I recommend this book to historians as one example of cultural history that is sophisticated, great reading, and brilliantly conceived.

Mary W. Blanchard  
*Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis*  
*New Brunswick, New Jersey*

*The Gilded Age Press, 1865–1900.* By Ted Curtis Smythe. (Westport: Praeger, 2003. xii, 240 pp. \$79.95, ISBN 0-313-30080-1.)

The late nineteenth century was pivotal for journalism in the United States. It was a time of experimentation, innovation, and the commercialization of the mainstream American press. Ted Curtis Smythe reviews the sweep and significance of those years in *The Gilded Age Press, 1865–1900*, the research for which, he says, was "conducted over twenty years" (p. xi).

Such commitment often shows. Smythe demonstrates thorough familiarity with the

Copyright of Journal of American History is the property of Organization of American Historians and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.