

chapters of the book emphasize West African forms of collective transport, the three subsequent chapters focus on the use of private vehicles. Green-Simms devotes one chapter to an African francophone cinematic tradition exemplified by Ousmane Sembène's classic *Xala* and Jean-Pierre Bekolo's *Quartier Mozart*. In another, she shifts the discourse to the dramatically different production model of the popular straight-to-video Nollywood industry, devoting attention to how cars 'clear space for dreams of upward mobility and fantasies of the good life' in occult melodramas and 419 films (melodramas that focus on advance-fee scams and frauds) (140). In a final chapter, she reads Ama Ata Aidoo's novel, *Changes*, and Sembène's *Faat Kiné* as feminist texts. Noting that the 'subaltern may not speak, but she can drive', Green-Simms identifies how financially independent West African women articulate identity and power (173). Above all else, Green-Simms illuminates how cultural texts 'have often registered and recorded the ways cars mediate African subjects' relation to both modernity and mobility' (6).

There is much for historians of Africa to like about *Postcolonial Automobility*. Green-Simms's refreshing interpretations of cultural texts offer new insights into emerging discourses on a more recent, postcolonial West African past. Perhaps most importantly, she raises intriguing questions about how Africans have negotiated and navigated a post-colonial era. Her emphasis on how West Africans have developed affective relationships with cars and infrastructure illuminates collective ambivalences and excitement about post-colonial challenges and possibilities that historians are only now starting to explore in considerable depth. Of particular utility is Green-Simms's willingness to engage in cross-disciplinary debates to lend a better sense of how African authors and filmmakers have not only created a uniquely African form of social theory through their crafts, but also demonstrate how African audiences engage with the theoretical components of these cultural texts on the ground. This book is a compelling one that will no doubt encourage scholars from different fields of study to rethink the nature of change and exchange in postcolonial Africa.

MARCUS FILIPPELLO  
*University of Wisconsin Milwaukee*

## NEW DIRECTIONS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN RECOLONIZATION

*New Directions in the Study of African American Recolonization.*

Edited by Beverly C. Tomek and Matthew J. Hetrick.

Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2017. Pp.vii + 356. \$89.95, hardback (ISBN: 9780813054247).

doi:10.1017/S0021853719000276

**Key Words:** colonialism, migration, religion, politics, comparative, Liberia.

This volume reflects a resurgence of interest in the African American colonization movement and its importance in American history. It reexamines colonization in light of other historical developments and considers its relationship to the antislavery movement. Contributors to this book recast the American Colonization Society (ACS), vindicating it

from charges of racism and pro-slavery leanings, while highlighting the many complexities of a project that was integrally connected to slavery in the United States. Early historiography of the ACS generated debates and discussion about its motives, attitude towards African Americans, and the role that the United States government played in it. This volume tackles these themes to varying degrees. The three parts of the book, 'Reconsidering the missionary dimensions of colonization', 'Reconsidering the political and diplomatic dimensions of colonization', and 'Redirecting the field and offering new answers to old questions', explore well-worn territory, as well as newer, less familiar realms of inquiry.

In her chapter, Gayle Kenny examines the ACS project through the eyes of its New England proponents who used sentimental language to frame colonization as missionary work. Adherents of this view positioned African American settlers as agents of 'civilization' and missionaries to 'savage' Africans. Ben Wright makes the case for religious conversion as a motive for settlement. He shows the connection between the colonization movement and efforts to proselytize Christianity among Africans. In one of the few chapters focused on Liberia, Andrew Wegmann pays overdue attention to Lott Cary, an African American Baptist minister and founding member of the colony, to illuminate the growth of the Liberian church. Debra Newman Ham furthers our understanding of women's contributions to Liberia's development.

But most contributors to the volume address the views and perspectives of individuals in the United States, making clear that proponents of colonization were largely concerned with events and issues in that country. Thus, we learn how 'colonizationists' (the term that is used to refer to supporters of the ACS) engaged the state and understood their role in the movement. David Ericson reveals that the American government was deeply enmeshed in the colonial enterprise, providing funding, military support, and agents for Liberia. Daniel Preston considers colonization and slavery through the eyes of ACS member and United States President James Monroe, while Nicholas Wood examines the relationship of the ACS to the government during the debates about the Missouri Compromise. He shows that as Southern constituents withdrew from ACS, the organization adopted a stronger stance against slavery. In fact, we learn much about colonizationists' responses to the antislavery movement and the close connections between these two movements. Many chapters stress this link, which redefines typical scholarly interpretations of the ACS. Some members and allies championed antislavery and supported the ACS, but they later condemned the organization for promoting slavery. At the same time, some black Americans expressed strong and consistent opposition to colonization. Such views are reflected in the statements that prominent leaders such as James Forten made to Frederick Douglass; Forten argued that colonization schemes would only further entrench the institution of slavery in the United States.

Some chapters in the volume situate the ACS colonization movement within the wider Atlantic world. Bronwen Everill's comparative lens illuminates the similarities and differences between Liberia and Sierra Leone in terms of citizenship, subjecthood, and race. Brandon Mills places colonization within the history of expansion and nation-building in the United States; he notes that the Liberian colony was an attempt 'to engineer democracy abroad' (166). Sebastian Page shows how the ACS competed with other colonization schemes in the Western Hemisphere.

The final part of the book is worthy of the title ‘Redirecting the field’, as it takes a fresh look at old questions and attempts to ask new ones. Eric Burin reinterprets the initial settlement of Liberia by highlighting the role of the ACS in obtaining and contracting for land, while Andrew Diemer brings a powerfully fresh perspective to this history by exploring the role that European immigration to the United States played in the conversation about African colonization. Robert Murray assesses black attempts to recreate America in Liberia, and investigates the tension produced by the rhetoric of white colonizationists who were unwilling to accept blacks as equals, yet who touted them as agents of civilization in Africa. The adoption by black settlers of superior civilizationalist views was to have consequences in the subsequent history of the country. Matthew Hetrick reveals how various people appropriated the black emigrationist Paul Cuffe after his death in 1817 to champion both colonization and black integration. Likewise, Phillip Magness explores how historians have variously cast Abraham Lincoln’s relationship to emigration: some saw his support of colonization as a way to rid the country of blacks, and others argue that Lincoln viewed colonization as a way to garner support for emancipation.

Nicholas Guyatt concludes the volume with an examination of sentiments and ideas about colonization that predated the founding of the ACS, which enables him to fully consider the meaning and impact of this organization and its emergence. This question is a central one, and a steadier focus on what the ACS represented for individual emigrants might have strengthened the volume. In 1830 George Erskine declared: ‘I am going to a new country to settle myself and family as agriculturalists; to a country where we shall at least be on a level with any of our fellow citizens; where the complexion will be no barrier to our filling the most exalted station.’<sup>1</sup> More consideration of voices like Erskine’s would provide new insight on the importance and significance of the colonization project for its many participants.

NEMATA BLYDEN

*George Washington University*

## HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA

*The Long Struggle: Discourses on Human and Civil Rights in Africa and the African Diaspora.*

Edited by Adebayo Oyeboade and Gashawbeza Bekele.

Austin, TX: Pan-African University Press, 2017. Pp. xvii + 225. \$35.00, paperback (ISBN: 978-1-943533-23-7).

doi:10.1017/S0021853719000288

**Key Words:** human rights, comparative, identity, diaspora, transnational.

This edited volume joins a growing list of books that examine contemporary human rights struggles and discourses in Africa from multidisciplinary perspectives. The book

1 *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, vol. 6. (Washington DC, 1825–1850), 142. Available online through Hathi Trust Digital Library, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/004565311>.