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*Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy.* By Eric Foner.  
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983. Pp. xii+ 1 10.  
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such punishments as the death penalty for theft or the continued use of corruption of the blood. In the end, the colonists created a system that was much more humane than the English system, according to Chapin.

Chapin interprets this pragmatism as being the fulfillment of the seventeenth century desire for reform. Inherent not only in the minds of Englishmen, but also in the colonial perception, the law had a special relationship to the question of discretionary authority on both sides of the Atlantic. Leaving a world of unjustified authority, English settlers set out to fulfill the "liberal traditions" of the common law and Magna Carta (p. 146). In fulfilling these traditions, Chapin concurs that the colonists improvised somewhat by centralizing power in fewer hands.

The thesis becomes less distinct when Chapin examines legal development between 1660 and 1789. Although he admits a certain amount of "Anglicization" within the American colonies, he denies that a distinct American criminal law was created throughout the new nation. This is the period of "reception", according to Chapin. But, Chapin makes these claims without any substantiation, perhaps in the hope of writing an associated volume covering this period.

In conclusion, Professor Chapin and his work provide an important addition to the historiography of American legal development. His thesis combines aspects of the three major interpretations described by Stanley Katz in his contribution to *British Colonial America*, edited by Jack P. Green and J.R. Pole. There are elements of both imitation and the pragmatic reforming of English laws, as well as the "life cycle" model within *Criminal Justice*. Most important, though, is the light that he sheds upon the social history of colonial America in the development of strong law through reason and humanity.

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*Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy.* By ERIC FONER.  
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Notes, index. \$14.95.

In December 1865, former Confederate General Robert V. Richardson remarked that "emancipated slaves own nothing, because nothing but freedom has been given to them." (p. 55) In his latest book, *Nothing But Freedom*, Columbia University Professor Eric Foner focuses on the effects of slave emancipation, not only in the American South, but in Haiti, the

British Caribbean and eastern and southern Africa. Foner states that during Reconstruction the experiences of former Southern slaves were unique when compared with the experiences of former slaves in the Caribbean and Africa. Such a comparison is essential "... to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the problem of emancipation and its aftermath." (p.2)

*Nothing But Freedom* is a compilation of the Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures the author delivered in March 1982, at Louisiana State University. Foner emphasizes W.E.B. DuBois' earlier conclusions that the Reconstruction period of American history was a "radical" experiment in democracy. The United States set itself apart from other emancipated societies when the former slaves were given political rights, some degree of political influence and power. In the Caribbean, the British colonial government made the former slaves a totally dependent, powerless work force, while in Haiti, a system of forced labor was imposed on the former slaves.

Foner's argument is persuasive. The experiences of the freedmen in the United States were unique due to their potential political power. But the real or actual political influence the former slaves possessed varied a great deal throughout the South and the nation as a whole. The political rights granted to the former slaves were, to some degree, thrust upon them, not secured by themselves. If emancipation in the South could have been achieved in a less destructive manner than civil war, perhaps the experiences of freedmen during Reconstruction would not have been very different from those in the Caribbean.

The comparative analysis of emancipated slaves in the United States and other societies, which is designed by Foner to expose the radical nature of Reconstruction democracy, is only valid if the experience of emancipation is constant. If political rights, power, and influence had been granted on the same scale in Haiti as in the United States, what would have been the result? Despite these questions, *Nothing But Freedom* is an interesting contribution to the ongoing debate of continuity between the Old and New South. The historical profession should anxiously await Foner's forthcoming volume on the Reconstruction era in the New American Nation Series.

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