

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *1824 – The Arkansas War*
AUTHOR Eric Flint
PUBLISHER Del Ray
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This is the follow-up to *1812 – The Rivers of War* and picks up the story of Sam Houston, Patrick Driscoll and the other characters from the first book a decade or so later. The Confederation of Arkansas is growing and becoming a magnet for freed slaves, displaced Native Americans and others who are not welcomed in the growing Republic of the United States.

This is a pure alternate history novel and while Eric has teamed up with David Weber and others on the *1632* series of alternate history, those have the sci-fi base of the ring of fire which transplanted the characters from 20th century West Virginia to 17th century Europe. This series “turns’ on the fact that Sam Houston was not seriously wounded in the war of 1812 and became a driving force in establishing a nation of freed slaves and native American tribes displaced in the war.

The thrust of this story is the issue of abolition and how it will destroy the Southern way of life. The people who were influential in the politics of the day were also slave owners and the feared that the safe haven of Arkansas would encourage more slaves to seek freedom and bring about the abolishment of slavery very quickly. In this story Henry Clay is most capable of garnering enough support to run for President and then calling for an invasion of Arkansas.

I won’t give away the ending but you will find it interesting. As with all Flint books his characters are well written and likable. A young, just freed slave becomes a pivotal officer in the Arkansas army and finds himself in love with a girl that at first is unapproachable. The other thing about the characters in this book is that only a few are not actual historical characters. Eric knows his history and it is obvious he has become intimate with many of these people from our past.

If you like Harry Turtledove and other alternative fiction you will enjoy this book. I would strongly recommend reading the first one though since it paves the way for this and makes this one much more enjoyable.

I give it 4 rings of Saturn.