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Book Reviews

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Charles Brantley Aycock. By Oliver H. Orr, Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961. x, 394 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$7.50.)

Outside North Carolina, Governor Charles B. Aycock has usually been regarded as one of a galaxy of progressive Southern governors of the years around the turn of the century: Goebel of Kentucky, Tillman of South Carolina, Broward of Florida, Hoke Smith of Georgia, Comer of Alabama, Vardaman of Mississippi, Davis of Arkansas, and Hogg and Culberson of Texas. Actually, as Professor Orr's scholarly book makes clear, Aycock, although he supported some progressive measures, notably in public education, was never a thoroughgoing progressive. Ideologically, Aycock was always somewhat closer to Cleveland than to Bryan. On economic issues, Walter Clark, W. W. Kitchin, Claude Kitchin, and even Josephus Daniels were generally more progressive than Aycock.

Aycock's distinctive contribution was the part he played in developing the unique North Carolina spirit of moderation and balance, in making the Democratic Party of North Carolina a multi-class party, tolerant and "just" even toward the Negro (within the framework of white supremacy), a party capable of responding gradually and rather consistently to change through the years.

The challenge to which Aycock responded was the Fusionist government in North Carolina from 1897 to 1901. During these years, North Carolina in many ways went through a second Reconstruction, with the conservatives on the defensive, public services extended, and around one thousand Negroes holding local and state offices. Negro voters held the balance of power. North Carolina's Fusionist government, a combination of Populists and Republicans, was remarkable in that it represented the only successful indigenous movement in Southern history to advance the Negro politically. There were no national or Northern pressures.

Aycock sincerely believed that the Fusionist government represented the rule of the Negro minority, that the social disorders of the period could not be cured and stable government restored until white supremacy was made secure. To this end, he advocated making the Democratic Party in North Carolina less conservative than it had been during the prior three decades, transforming it into a truly multi-interest party, basing the suffrage on a literacy

test (with illiterate whites temporarily salvaged through the grandfather clause), and honestly preparing the illiterates, both white and black, for responsible citizenship by the establishment of an effective public school system for both races. In 1900, Aycock successfully ran for Governor on this program, and during his term in office carried out most of his promises. Thus out of the Fusionist challenge came the constructive response which was to make North Carolina the most advanced state in the South.

To an extraordinary degree, Aycock won the personal affection of all classes of North Carolinians. There were a number of reasons for this: his oratory, his earnestness combined with humor, his transparent honesty, his ability to enlarge and elevate every issue he touched, his compassion, his evident desire to ennoble mankind. Despite his belief in the superiority of the white race, Aycock had a genuine regard for Negroes, individually and collectively. Even Aycock's conviviality, which forced him to defend his personal drinking habits to a puritan electorate about to embark on prohibition, only added to the attractiveness of the man.

Professor Orr's definitive biography will take over as the Aycock legend recedes; for unfortunately this good and in many ways near-great man did not sufficiently rise above his time and place, did not perform on a wide enough stage, and did not identify himself enough with the future (particularly on the race question) to be the subject of enduring myth.

WILLIAM G. CARLETON

University of Florida

Eugene Clyde Brooks: Educator and Public Servant. By Williard B. Gatewood, Jr., (Durham: Duke University Press, 1960. iii, 272 pp. Tables, plates, index. \$6.00.)

A North Carolinian writing a biography of another North Carolinian must be careful to avoid provincialism. Dr. Gatewood, who teaches history at North Carolina Wesleyan College, has not been careful in this respect. This biographer of Eugene Clyde Brooks (1871-1947) was "assisted" by grants from the Ford Foundation and from E. C. Brooks, Jr. The book seems to bear the Brooks family's imprimatur. Consequently this panegyric clearly fits into the Allan Nevins' tradition of hagiography—"ful-

some in praise, sparing in criticism." Once these facts are recognized this effort can be placed in proper perspective. The book should be most useful to students interested in the history of North Carolina particularly with respect to politics, education, and conservation. To a certain extent this volume may help scholars looking for information on Governor Charles B. Aycock or Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels.

Professor Gatewood's subject may merit the titles of "leader," "journalist," "reformer," "crusader," etc., if the context is intrastate, rather than national. Certainly the term "liberal" should never be applied to Eugene Clyde Brooks, despite his brief and uneventful exposure to Deweyism at Columbia University. Brooks practiced avoidance behavior during the evolution controversy of the 1920's. His book on "Americanism" (1924) was "proper" enough to receive State Board and American Legion sanction for North Carolina's required course on that subject. The "dismissal" of the graduate dean of North Carolina State College in 1931, owing to a personality clash with this "liberal" sociologist, raises doubts about Brooks' respect for academic freedom and tenure. In sum Dr. Gatewood has done a very thorough and scholarly job. His research is as exhaustive as it is impressive. This biography is very readable, despite its subject's unimpressive life, and truly deserves the appellation "definitive."

RUSSELL FARNEN

University of Florida

The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics. By Arnold S. Rice, with an introduction by Harry Golden. (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1962. vi, 150 pp. \$3.25.)

Historians, when dealing with broad areas of prejudice and intolerance, have come to acknowledge that dependence upon interdisciplinary tools is essential, yet a reasonable question as to which tools and how extensive such a reliance, can honestly be asked. Those who would place primary emphasis upon continuing and ever-present status rivalries (political, religious, economic, and associational) would in turn deemphasize others' heavy reliance upon irrational outbursts apparently produced by the immediate and unique characteristics of a given period. There remains still

a further group which both sees the possibilities of combining these approaches, yet at the same time worries when such a combination still produces strong exceptions to standard rules. To take the Ku Klux Klan, for example, as Dr. Rice has done, one immediately finds himself confronted with the contradiction that on one hand the tensions upon which the Klan sought to capitalize had been and would continue to be present in American life, while on the other, it is clear that the outburst of Klan vigor in the 1920's was in many ways unique. Further, the problem is raised that the Klan's activities were not always motivated by objective conditions of concrete status rivalry so much as the virulent expression of hysteria over irrational myths and stereotyping of individuals about whom Klansmen had little if any personal or direct knowledge. When they were, however, as Dr. Rice perceptively suggests but never really develops, Klansmen calculat- ingly sought to exploit the paramount prejudice of the immediate region; hence its plank was racism in the South, anti-Semitism in the East, anti-Catholicism in the Mid-West, and anti-Japanese sentiment on the Pacific Coast. Yet the Klan's appeal also had a certain universality which enabled it to capitalize upon areas of basic discontent throughout our entire national life in the 1920's and make the scapegoat an abstract "who," responsible for every- thing from declining national morality to destruction of "the old American way."

In this brief study, focused largely on the 1920's and strongly upon the Klan's political activities, Dr. Rice has presented an in- teresting and lively treatment of that body. It is filled with reveal- ing episodes, analyses of the often highly selfish motivations of in- dividual Klan leaders (whom he considers to be vital in the life of the organization, yet whose influence in shaping local patterns of development he seldom attempts to assess) and often highly amusing descriptions of Klan ritual and symbolism. The study does little in a systematic way with the Klan's growth or its pre- cise local effects outside the five southern states of Alabama, Ar- kansas, Georgia, Kentucky, and Texas. No reference is made, for example, to the famous Klan attempt to drive Judge Ben Lindsey out of public life in Colorado, or William Allen White's strong and successful attack on the organization in Kansas, nor is there any attempt to assess the influence of such an organ as C. Lewis Fowler's widely circulated, New York published, *American Stand-*

ard. Yet Dr. Rice is good where it counts. His story of the 1924 political conventions is well done. His pin-pointing of the sort of groups who joined is careful and accurate, and by using an episodic approach to best advantage he creates a plausible overall picture of the organization's purposes and effects.

We need more studies of the public manifestations of intolerance which have been an all too unfortunate aspect of our national life. A work such as this is an important piece in putting that puzzle together.

PAUL L. MURPHY

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Teapot Dome: Oil and Politics in the 1920's. By Burl Noggle. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962. ix, 234 pp. Preface, illustrations, index. \$6.00.)

In *Teapot Dome*, Professor Noggle has carefully examined the effects of the great scandal of that name on the political currents of the 1920's and, as a secondary theme, its relationship to the American conservation movement. Stereotyped figures of the era must be re-evaluated as a result of Noggle's extensive research in private papers. Harry A. Slattery, veteran conservationist and civil servant, takes on added importance from his tireless efforts to counteract anti-conservationist tendencies in the Harding and Coolidge regimes. Politically, the figure of Senator Tom Walsh as heroic prosecutor in the great oil grab loses considerable luster as his interest waxes and wanes in the face of political expediency and conservationist pressure. Contrarily, many Republicans urged stringent action against their political brethren to clear the party of its "Republican scandal" stigma.

As for the main characters in this oil and politics drama, Professor Noggle has presented them so aseptically and has so rigidly eschewed motivation that Secretary of the Interior Fall and his oily accomplices Doheny and Sinclair seem brought to their respective ends by the fickle finger of fate rather than by their own greedy hands and personal motives.

Greatest political disadvantage, ironically enough, accrued not to the Republican party whose administration figures were adjudged guilty, but to the Democratic opposition. Republican Pres-

ident Calvin Coolidge, having moved just far enough to divorce himself from his predecessor's policies and friends, remained cagily quiet amid the clamor, and was able thereby to reap the benefits of a symbol of public austerity and integrity. The Democrats, vigorously attempting to splash Teapot oil on the party which had underwritten oil reserve exploitation, finally wound up with an embarrassing-although bogus-smudge of blackest oil on the clean shirtfront which William Gibbs McAdoo of California presented to the public as the outstanding Democratic presidential candidate of the decade. Chief victim in the welter of confusing charge and counter-charge and the furiously partisan oil-slinging was, quite simply, party politics itself.

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