

1998

Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society
membership@myfloridahistory.org

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1998) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 77: No. 3, Article 8.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol77/iss3/8>

BOOK REVIEWS

Lumbermen and Log Sawyers: Life, Labor, and Culture in the North Florida Timber Industry, 1830-1930. By Jeffrey A. Drobney. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997. x, 241 pp. Acknowledgments, introduction, appendices, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.)

Awarded the Rembert W. Patrick Memorial Book Award for 1997.

Jeffrey A. Drobney's well-researched and well-written history of the development of North Florida's lumber industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a welcome addition to the state's history. Making use of manuscript collections from the University of West Florida, University of Florida, Florida State University, Florida State Archives, Forest History Society, and other depositories, his descriptions give life to an industry that was so much a part of the North Florida scene. Excellent photographs accompany a readable and organized text. It is more than a history of an industry, moreover, in that he properly ties the lumber industry to the more general question of federal and state land policy. Students of federal land policy are aware that the federal government regularly gave land to public land states of which Florida was one, but few are aware that Florida received the highest percentage of land of all public land states and the highest total acreage of all public land states save Alaska. Much of these state and federal lands encompassed great stands of yellow pine and cypress which became the basis of North Florida's timber industry.

As a part of his description of lumbering operations, Drobney is concerned with the industry's workers, and he analyzes in detail the myriad problems of wages, unions, working conditions, and race. Labor unions were not a factor in this agriculturally related industry comparable to the textile mills of the Carolinas or the Appalachian coal fields; nevertheless, company owners responded to attempts at unionization with politics, economic pressures, and, most effective, the company town. Carbur, Foley, Bagdad, Shamrock, and other company towns are described in detail. Carbur, a part of the Brooks-Scanlon and Burton-Schwartz companies, was a self-contained village with separate housing for black and white workers, a commissary known as the Carbur Mercantile Company,

a hotel, a theater, a doctor's office, segregated schools, and a train station. The magnitude of the company's business was demonstrated by Carbur's machine shop, which employed ninety men to keep the logging machines and other equipment in working order. Making use of oral histories as well as published and archival material, Drobney integrates the specialized company town of the North Florida timber industry into the general urbanization of the South in the twentieth century.

The work is not without weaknesses, but they are minor in contrast with its strengths. It is accepted that the convict-lease system was brutal, but Drobney's objectivity can be questioned by his willingness to accept as accurate sources such as Marc N. Goodnow's exposé in the *1915 International Socialist Review*. All in all, however, this is a good book, and readers will have a thorough understanding of North Florida lumbering from its technical to its human dimension.

Florida State University

EDWARD F. KEUCHEL

An American Beach for African Americans. By Marsha Dean Phelts. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. xi, 188 pp. Preface, photographs, notes, bibliography. \$24.95 cloth.)

An American Beach for African Americans is a dedicated and sentimental account of the rise and decline of the coastal community of African Americans on the southern end of Amelia Island in the northeast corner of Florida. The author, Marsha Dean Phelts, is a librarian and long-time member of the Amelia Island community. Phelts's book is a labor of love intended as much as a plea for the salvation of the community as it is a recounting of the islanders' unique history. As she states, the book is written in the hope of conveying to the reader "the depth of feeling in our hearts and souls, and why we think it so important that an American Beach for African Americans be preserved for generations to come" (178).

The author's basic narrative approach has advantages and limitations. The general reader will find the narrative account easy to follow. It is an interesting story beginning with the early slaves on the island in the eighteenth century. Zephaniah Kingsley, Florida's wealthiest planter and slave owner, continued to make huge profits even after the ban on the slave trade went into effect in 1808. Since Florida did not become a U. S. territory until much later, the region

was perfectly positioned to become, as it did, a major port for the illegal importation of slaves. Amelia Island became a lucrative site for the depositing of slaves from Africa who would later be sold to all parts of the South. Serious historians will want to see the issue placed within the debate on interregional slave trading, but no such analysis is offered. Phelts does tell us that if a slave ship was stopped off the Florida coast its captain was subject to the death penalty. Captains hard pressed by the U. S. Patrol dumped their human cargo overboard. Needed is some sense of the extent of these diabolical actions, but no primary research is done to provide detailed figures.

Ironically, the heyday in the black community's development as an autonomous resort locale was during segregation. Amelia Island became a vacation paradise for African Americans under Jim Crow. Color-line restrictions from the late nineteenth through much of the twentieth century ironically worked to the advantage of the black community's development. With little or no other options available to them, black Floridians flocked to Amelia Island as a vacation heaven. The great educator Mary McLeod Bethune was a frequent visitor. The island could boast hosting such African American luminaries as Joe Louis, Cab Calloway, Ethel Waters, Billy Eckstine, Hank Aaron, and Ray Charles. Motels overflowed with visitors to the island in the 1940s and 1950s. It was an active environment, culturally alive with music and dance, ocean views, and thriving businesses. The Afro-American Life Insurance Company was the largest of the businesses and its founders, the Lewis family, among the community's most prominent residents. Evans's *Rendezvous* offered the best in entertainment. There was some discreet gambling on the island. Blacks played the numbers, the forerunner of today's lotteries. Good food was a hallmark of the resort community, and guests received the best fish, shrimp, crab, and other dishes made with a soulful flare. Phelts provides recipes for the reader to savor and try.

Disaster struck in September 1964 when Hurricane Dora blew into American Beach from the west coast of Africa destroying homes and businesses. The island only partially rebounded from this cataclysmic disaster. In the 1970s and 1980s, A. L. Lewis's grandchildren and great-grandchildren sold their beach homes and property. Surrounding areas have blocked off the beach with chain-link fences topped with barbed wire, built warehouses between them and the black community, planted tall shrubbery, and blocked off streets.

The Amelia Island experience may be unique but it is not atypical. The community has experienced a long history of problems with the law enforcement establishment, outsider pressures to control the community, a dwindling economic base, and a loss of many of its young adults and more affluent members. The community was never a large one. Phelts tells us late in the work that American Beach's permanent residents numbered thirty families. The author's call to arms is a familiar one to black communities nationwide. Phelts admonishes the American Beach residents themselves for the internal strife that threatens the demise of this unique African American island community and for pointing fingers and making petty claims about who cares more or less about preserving the community's cultural inheritance. Meanwhile, the encroachment of the large exclusive resorts continues, signaling the eventual demise of the American Beach's African American community unless the trend is reversed.

This is a useful account that will probably be of greater interest to lay readers than professional historians. The lack of an index also makes the book less useful to scholars. Despite these limitations, Phelts is to be credited for piecing together an important African American story that might otherwise have gone untold.

University of Miami

DONALD SPIVEY

Alligators, Prehistoric Presence in the American Landscape. By Martha A. Strawn with essays by LeRoy Overstreet, Jane Gibson, and J. Whitfield Gibbons. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. xii, 227 pp. Preface, notes, list of plates, suggested readings, recording, and viewing, acknowledgments, index. \$39.95 hardcover.)

Every region has one or more animal species that captures the human imagination as embodying the essence of that place. The species often has biological, economic, social, cultural, and perhaps religious significance, and its existence is interwoven with the history, development, problems, and conflicts of that place. In the Southeast, especially in Florida, one such animal is the alligator. In this book, author Strawn depicts the alligator's relation to the landscape and to humans through a collage of art, science, history, folklore, and local perspectives. The format consists of loosely

structured, generally impressionistic text adjacent to un-captioned photographs of alligators, their habitats, and the human society with whom alligators coexist uneasily. Also within the book are three special essays from the disparate perspectives of alligator hunter, anthropologist, and ecologist. Strawn attempts to "present visual and written materials that are loosely associated but with neither illustrating the other . . . This book is meant to be more than the sum of its parts." Her book is also a serious plea for a stronger land ethic and for more education and awareness of the needs of alligators and their wetland habitats.

The greatest strength of the book is the photography, her specialty, which shows the position and plight of alligators better than the text. The photographs are enlightening without appearing to be overly dramatic or staged. They show alligators in many contexts: as inhabitants of wetlands, on the cleaning table, and as cowboy boots. The photographs alone make the book worthwhile. The essay by alligator hunter LeRoy Overstreet also complements the photographs well and adds greatly to the flavor of the book.

Other aspects of this well-intentioned book, however, fall somewhat short of the photographs. The text is indeed impressionistic, but the result is much geographical chaos, discontinuity, and repetition amid modest information on alligators. Within a few pages, we jump from Florida to South Carolina to Louisiana and back again. It is difficult to get a sense of place when the place keeps changing. Discussion of legalized gator hunts and conservation plans, much like a gator in the glades, resurfaces periodically and unpredictably. The tone of the text also shifts repeatedly from semi-scientific to philosophical to poetic. Perhaps the author could have avoided such confusion and repetitiveness had she concentrated on one place, such as Florida, that wrestles with most of the critical issues between alligators and humans. The text also fails to give much information on the history and social significance of alligators. Readers seeking a more comprehensive treatment should try V. L. Glasgow's *A Social History of American Alligators* (1991).

In addition, the extensive use of the land ethic ideas of Aldo Leopold, while laudably normative, stays at a philosophical, almost mystical, level inconsistent with the historical and present realities of coexistence between humans and alligators. In Florida, alligators are usually admired from a safe distance, as from elevated nature walkways, or as cute and cuddly stuffed animals, novelty restaurant fare, university team mascots, or from perusal of attractive books like

Strawn's on penthouse coffee tables. Meanwhile, the real alligators suffer as their snake- and mosquito-infested habitats are drained, cleared, and sanitized for housing developments, retirement condominiums, golf courses, and agriculture. The real and important challenge is to educate people that these same forbidding habitats and the alligators inhabiting them deserve protection for their own sakes. That may require more intensive, down-to-earth salesmanship than even the most ardent time-share salesperson could muster. It has often been said that land developers and entrepreneurs like Hamilton Disston, Carl Fisher, and Barron G. Collier promoted Florida as a warm, wonderful, natural human paradise by selling illusion over reality. As it is with Florida, so it is with alligators. This contrast between the fabricated image of alligators and their tenuous existence in imperiled wetlands makes the alligator the animal best embodying the essence of real versus imagined Florida in prehistory, in history, and today. Strawn could have emphasized these points more than she did and perhaps had a stronger, more ironic text.

University of Idaho

DENNIS L. SCARNECCHIA

Jannus, An American Flier. By Thomas Reilly. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. xii, 236 pp. Preface, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.)

The University Press of Florida has recently published two books on the history of early aviation. A biography of pioneer pilot Hugh Robinson written by this reviewer was published in 1995. Thomas Reilly's extraordinary new book tells the story of the early days of aviation through the career of Tony Jannus.

Jannus first flew a homemade airplane on November 11, 1910. In those days almost every airplane was an experimental project. Flights were a mere circus act as nobody had found a practical use for this new invention. Aviation was in its infancy in those days, and many pilots like Jannus learned to fly simply by doing it. A small but elite group of people had a dream of what flying could mean to the world, and Tony Jannus was one of them. They envisioned that their flying machines could be used for transportation, military bombing and spying, airmail, and many other projects, and it was up to them to convince the public of the machine's many applications.

Reilly describes the incredible skill that Tony Jannus had to have in order to stay alive as aviation blossomed. The pioneer had

to be part dreamer, teacher, inventor, test pilot, mechanic, performer, businessman, and writer. Every flight was dangerous; crashes and deaths among fliers were daily occurrences.

The author describes beautifully the events leading to the first parachute jump by Albert Barry in March of 1912 in St. Louis, Missouri, as well as the many flying expositions that were held to help pay the aviators' living expenses and finance their research. Reilly succeeds in conjuring the flavor of how exciting and dangerous these expositions were. Tony Jannus's flight from Omaha, Nebraska, to New Orleans covering 1,973 miles in 1913 shows his daredevil skill and determination.

Reilly does an exceptional job explaining how the world's first commercial airplane was built and how Jannus was the first pilot to carry passengers. This was done in 1914 on a flight from St. Petersburg to Tampa, Florida, in the Benoist flying boar. Soon thereafter Jannus became the first commercial pilot in the United States to be awarded a federal license to operate an airplane. He was truly the father of commercial piloting.

This book makes us realize that Tony Jannus, like all of the members of the small elite cadre of early pilots, was a famous man of his time. Like the astronauts of today, he had a faithful entourage of supporters. The author reminds us that most of the early aviators paid for their fame and fortune with their lives. Tony Jannus unfortunately lost his life in an airplane crash in Russia at the age of twenty-seven.

Thomas Reilly has done a wonderful job documenting and describing the colorful story of Tony Jannus. The book is well organized with many fascinating photographs. The historical events are accurately portrayed, and one gets the feeling of what it was like to be a part of the dangerous and exciting process of man first learning to fly.

Coral Gables, Florida

GEORGE VERGARA

Conquistador in Chains: Cabeza de Vaca and the Indians of the Americas.

By David A. Howard. (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1997. xiii, 260 pp. List of maps, preface, acknowledgments, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper.)

The Spanish conquistador has been the subject of controversy ever since he set foot in the so-called New World. Critics of Spain's

conquest of the Americas portray the Spanish conquistador as a cruel, greedy, malicious, treacherous, and lecherous individual who was ready to cut a defenseless native in half with his sword. Apologists for the Spanish *conquista*, on the other hand, acknowledge the conquistador's excesses and abuses but point out that he, like all Europeans, was a product of his time and environment.

This lucidly written and superbly documented book portrays Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca as a truly noble and humane individual who firmly believed that a just conquest could be best accomplished through an adherence to Christian principles and human rights. While Howard maintains that for the conquered, a "just" conquest is no less a conquest and imperialist conquests are to be avoided, he, on the other hand, convincingly paints Cabeza de Vaca as an individual committed to kindness and compassion even in conquest.

A preface and introduction, twenty-seven short chapters, and a conclusion are the substance of this interesting and useful study. The first five chapters, based on the latest historical research, concentrate on narrating Cabeza de Vaca's journey in North America (1528-1535). This journey amidst hardship and misfortune is one of the most remarkable in the history of the New World. The author indicates that Cabeza de Vaca's experience living as a virtual slave of the indigenous people of North America had a profound impact on his life and led to his personal and spiritual transformation.

The next four chapters provide a detailed examination of Cabeza de Vaca's appointment as governor and *Adelantado* of the Río de la Plata and end with his arrival in Asunción, Paraguay, on March 11, 1542. Cabeza de Vaca's one-thousand-mile march from Santa Catalina to Asunción without losing a single man was remarkable, and the author credits the conquistador's leadership and diplomacy for this success.

The remaining chapters analyze Cabeza de Vaca's tenure as governor and *Adelantado* of the Río de la Plata (1542-1544); his overthrow by disgruntled colonists on grounds of sedition and abuse of royal authority; his return to Spain in chains and the subsequent trial by the Council of the Indies (1545-1551) that resulted in Cabeza de Vaca's banishment from the Río de la Plata. This section of the study is the most interesting because it depicts Cabeza de Vaca's government as progressive and reformist. Upon reaching Asunción he gave orders for the clergy to take the natives under their care and enacted laws compensating natives for their labor.

Furthermore, concubinage between native females and Spaniards became illegal. In addition, he also reduced the taxes on the poor and Crown officials were to pay their share.

Using primary sources from the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville and the *Archivo Nacional* in Asunción, Howard analyzes Cabeza de Vaca's policies and concludes that what he tried to do in the Río de la Plata region was to ensure the natives' protection provided by Spanish law and the Catholic faith. He accurately points out that these policies led to his overthrow because his compatriots regarded them as obstacles to their self-interest and their rights as conquerors.

The conclusion summarizes the figure of Cabeza de Vaca for what he was: a man of noble qualities who, like his compatriots, believed in glory and riches but who, unlike them, tried to practice justice for all. Professor Howard is to be congratulated for producing a fascinating study that is essential to understanding Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Spanish colonial history.

University of Central Florida

JOSÉ B. FERNÁNDEZ

Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs. By Kathleen M. Brown. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996. Acknowledgments, illustrations, tables, abbreviations and notes on the text, introduction, afterword, notes, index. \$49.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paperback.)

Kathleen Brown's book is one of the most important books about colonial American history to appear in the last ten years. Her goals are ambitious: she aims at nothing less than upsetting traditional explanations of slavery's development in Virginia, patriarchal relations in the Chesapeake, and conventional roles and work available to colonial women. Her work challenges dominant interpretations put forth by Winthrop Jordan, Edmund Morgan, Rhys Isaac, Allan Kulikoff, Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh, among others. To accomplish so much, Brown has written more than a social history of Virginia women; she explores masculinity and male roles as well, crafting an all-encompassing study of gender that shows the close connections between gender relations and the rise of slavery and political stability in the Old Dominion before 1750.

Brown's book is among the new Atlantic World histories that root their subjects in a solid understanding of extant cultural norms

and political practices in Europe and Africa to better explain the colonial American scene. Indeed, this book truly is Atlantic history, for Brown draws upon the most recent work in English religious, cultural, and political history to inform her narrative of Virginia. Her first target is the “gender frontier,” the boundary of colonization which was shaped by masculine and feminine terminology. In her first three chapters, Brown elegantly details the transformation of existing gender relations in England, in which English women could either be hardworking, virtuous “good wives” or troublesome, licentious “nasty wenches.” English good wives worked hardest within the home, while nasty wenches found work (and trouble) outside the house, in public spaces. Eventually, good wives and property-holding patriarchs became the norms for English identity as they colonized Ireland and Virginia. “The discourses of gender that infused English discussion of social order and political authority gradually infiltrated the language of colonialism” (15).

Englishmen viewed the people (and lands) they conquered as feminine, intended for domination and thus eligible for one of two extant designations: good wife or nasty wench. Neither native peoples nor African servants accepted such designations knowingly (or in some cases willingly, as Brown suggests in her re-telling of the Pocahontas story). In the mid-seventeenth century, Virginia Englishmen began reinterpreting women’s work, particularly after many English women ceased to do manual labor in the tobacco fields and were replaced by African servants. Virginia Englishwomen became exclusively “good wives,” and Africans, not surprisingly, became “nasty wenches.” Chapters four through seven persuasively detail this transformation of African racial identity, from servant to slave and from “other” to wench. Brown also describes the changes wrought in the identities of white women, free black men, and white men of upper and lower class, most notably during Bacon’s Rebellion in the 1670s. Challenges to upper class male authority occurred not just in the 1670s but also when those same men sought validation politically and socially in London, causing some “anxious patriarchs” concern about their own colonial (and thus feminine) backgrounds.

Brown’s analysis of race as a socially constructed category is strongest in chapter four, where she presents the legal limitations slowly entangling African women, and subsequently defining all Africans as slaves, between 1640 and 1670. (Brown’s work also confirms main points made in the *William and Mary Quarterly’s* January

1997 issue, which focused on the social construction of race in the colonial world.) Brown is careful to note that English gender attitudes did not create slavery, but they did shape the “legal and intellectual framework within which slavery emerged” (112). Acknowledging the importance of the tobacco economy and the presence of African workers, Brown’s use of gender as an analytical tool is not deterministic but illustrative of the colonizer’s mindset.

Good Wives is remarkably free of theoretical jargon, which some may find surprising, given how well-informed Brown’s analysis is by the work of Jurgen Habermas, Michel Foucault, Gerda Lerner, and Edward Said. If one could fault Brown at any point, it would perhaps be her (over) reliance on the diaries of William Byrd II in her later chapters, a man who could best be described as over-sexed. Although she warns her readers about his shortcomings, Brown depends upon Byrd to make her case about the anxiety felt by patriarchs as they were thwarted at home and abroad. Brown is most successful in her complication of the Carr-Walsh explanation of women’s work in the colonial world, for she proves that the standard narrative of declining women’s power in the seventeenth century must be linked to the feminization of African work and the rise of slavery. *Good Wives* sets a higher standard for new histories of women, slavery, and Virginia; it will become required reading for historians in all these fields.

Florida State University

SALLY E. HADDEN

Spirits of the Passage: The Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Seventeenth Century. By Madeline Burnside and Rosemarie Robotham. Foreword by Cornel West. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. 192 pp. Foreword, introduction, photographs, illustrations, maps, afterword, endnotes, acknowledgments, index. \$35.00 hardcover.)

The *Henrietta Marie* was a seventeenth-century English vessel that carried more than four hundred slaves to the New World on two voyages in 1697 and 1700. After delivering its human cargo to Jamaica in 1700, the *Henrietta Marie* struck a reef during a storm and sunk off of the Florida Keys. The position of the vessel was determined in the 1980s; later, divers excavated most of its artifacts. The *Henrietta Marie* represents the earliest slave ship ever recovered and the only one to be fully examined. Many of its artifacts comprise “A Slave Ship

Speaks: The Wreck of the *Henrietta Marie*," a national touring exhibition that has drawn impressive crowds at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida in Miami as well as other museum venues.

The story of the *Henrietta Marie* and much more are contained in *Spirits of the Passage: The Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Seventeenth Century*. Madeline Burnside, executive director of the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society in Key West, which organized the aforementioned exhibition, and Rosemarie Robotham, an editor at *Essence* magazine, coauthored the text while Cornel West, eminent Harvard academic and director of that institution's Afro-American studies program, has provided an insightful foreword to the work. Other contributors are responsible for fascinating profiles on people, places, and events involved in the insidious slave trade and additional elements of this tragic story. The book's format resembles that of a coffee table book, but its detail is rich and highly factual, while its perspective is broad, taking the reader from the origins of slavery to the presence of enslaved peoples in the western hemisphere in modern times. The *Henrietta Marie* is employed as the point of departure for this captivating study, providing, as its authors maintain, "a window onto a particular moment in slavery's centuries-long multi-layered history."

Although much of the story is familiar, it bears retelling since the legacy of slavery and the racial problems tangentially related to it continue to bedevil this nation. Moreover, while the activity of European slavers in West Africa, the horrors of the Middle Passage, and the brutal exploitation of human laborers on vast plantations in the Caribbean and elsewhere have been heavily documented, other parts of the sordid story are less well known to the general reader. The book succeeds admirably here as it provides impressive commentary on the West African Igbos, their rich culture, and their accomplishments as farmers, which made them highly coveted as plantation laborers. *Spirits of the Passage* also explains graphically the rise of trading forts, the work of European slavers and native collaborators alike, who provided the former with easy access to slave markets in West Africa. One of the most riveting topics addressed in *Spirits of the Passage* treats the "African brain drain," a reference to the "depopulation" that set in along the West African coast as the Portuguese, Spanish, English, and other western slavers relentlessly fed the New World's seemingly insatiable appetite for bondsperson over a period of four centuries, draining the continent of fifteen million people, thereby causing an enormous

loss of talent for a region of the world heretofore proud of its historical record and accomplishments.

The most poignant portion of the study treats the horrific Middle Passage with African captives, en route to enslavement in the New World, packed like sardines in the fetid holds of ships. Those "fortunate" enough to survive eventually reached their final destination, often the highly profitable sugar plantations of the Caribbean. The book is especially strong in this area, detailing the differences between early and later versions of slavery, and placing within the context of early slavery in this hemisphere miscegenation, slave revolts, and communities of runaway slaves, the "maroons."

Spirits of the Passage contains handsome illustrations with highly informative captions, helpful timelines, and fascinating sidebars. The writing is crisp and, in parts, impassioned. This impressive study is a welcome addition to the corpus of works treating one of history's most tragic developments.

Historical Association of Southern Florida

PAUL S. GEORGE

Lighthouses & Keepers: The U. S. Lighthouse Service and Its Legacy. By Dennis L. Noble. (Annapolis: U. S. Naval Institute Press, 1997. xv, 248 pp, Preface, acknowledgments, abbreviations of military ranks, maps, notes, glossary of nautical terms, selected bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.)

Those interested in lighthouses and maritime history will enjoy reading Dennis Noble's *Lighthouses & Keepers* and will want a copy for their libraries. The book discusses the technological changes in aids to navigation and helps the reader understand lighthouses as part of the nation's oldest federal maritime organization. The book covers most aspects of the lighthouse service from 1789 until 1939, when the lighthouse service became part of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Dennis Noble's easy-to-read style is that of a kindly teacher sharing what he knows about a subject he loves. The author received his doctorate in history from Purdue University, served in the U.S. Coast Guard, and has published several books on related subjects.

The first two chapters make *Lighthouses & Keepers* worth its price. Four men, Stephen Pleasonton, Winslow Lewis, Augustin-Jean Fresnel, and George R. Putnam are discussed in detail. Their politics, rivalries, strengths, and weaknesses greatly influenced the develop-

ment of the U. S. Lighthouse Service. One is surprised to learn the degree to which high government officials were involved in the operation of the early lighthouse service. Presidents George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson personally approved lighthouse contracts and appointments to lighthouse positions.

Many readers will start by turning to the maps at the back of the book. Florida fans will find six of the state's lighthouses shown on a map entitled "Principal Lighthouses of the South Atlantic Coast." Unfortunately Jupiter Inlet is misnamed *Juniper* Inlet. The map entitled "Principal Lighthouses of the East Gulf Coast" shows the remaining Florida lighthouses, sweeping from Pensacola to Key Biscayne then to Dry Tortugas, but completely ignores Hillsboro Inlet Lighthouse.

Florida's Sand Key Lighthouse is one of seven chosen by Noble as representative light structures. Rebecca Flaherty assumed duties there after her husband's death. During a storm in 1846, Rebecca and her children took refuge in the lighthouse and died when the brick structure toppled and was swept away. Lieutenant George G. Meade, who later gained fame in the Civil War, supervised the reconstruction of Sand Key lighthouse, using a steel tower with screw-pile design which anchored it to the coral rock. Although Sand Key itself ultimately washed away, the tower remains.

The attack on Cape Florida Lighthouse by Seminole Indians in 1836 is covered in chapter four. Most Florida history buffs are familiar with the story of how the keeper and his African American helper became trapped in the lighthouse when it was set afire by the Indians. Rather than using primary documents, Noble cites an article by Truman R. Strobridge, which contains a most fascinating Florida tidbit. Apparently the direction of the Cape Florida lighthouse was turned over to a black woman. Unfortunately Noble does not investigate this further.

Dennis Noble calls his book "a one-volume synthesis" and indeed it is. By using secondary resources combined with original research, he is able to cover much that will interest and enlighten his reader. Some of the material, like the preceding Strobridge quote, makes us want to know more.

Each of the book's nine chapters has extensive endnotes with many primary sources cited, but citations like "clipping file" and "Sand Key File, Historian," disappoint the reader who wants to check sources.

Stuart, Florida

SANDRA HENDERSON THURLOW

Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840. By Daniel S. Dupre. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. xiii, 269 pp. Acknowledgments, abbreviations, introduction, bibliography, index. \$40.00 cloth.)

Madison County, Alabama, with its good farm land, modern industrial and space programs, and beautiful hills and valleys, is the heartland of North Alabama. The same was true in the early 1800s. Settlers began moving into the Great Bend of the Tennessee River Valley in the early nineteenth century. As a part of the Mississippi Territory, Madison County was organized in 1808, the second county in Alabama. Huntsville, organized in 1810, became the county capital. Despite transportation problems and the panic of 1819, growth and progress came rapidly. By the 1830s, Madison County had five towns and a population of about 28,000, of which forty-eight percent were slaves. The county had numerous small farms, large cotton plantations, industries, commercial establishments, roads and a canal, churches, schools, stable governments, and other qualities that clearly indicate that Madison County had progressed from Indian territory to a stable, orderly, civilized society.

But this is not Dupre's story. He does not offer the reader a general local history of the early years of Madison County, Alabama. He aims at a more significant target. Dupre sees Madison County, Alabama, as "an excellent lens through which to view America's transformative revolutions: the unraveling of old ties and the knitting of new ones" (3), i.e., the transformation from republicanism to liberalism. To tell the story his way, he examines selected areas of Madison County history in roughly chronological order. Included are settlement patterns, the impact of the panic of 1819 and land relief acts that followed, internal improvements (Muscle Shoals and Fearn Canals), banking, crime, religion, factional and party politics, the threat of slave disorders, and other subjects. Little emphasis is placed on progress, and topics such as Huntsville as the state capital and the growth of industry are barely mentioned.

Dupre finds early Madison County a divided, polarized "community" wherein the people were filled with tensions and fears as they struggled to reconcile clashes resulting from their desire for subsistence and commerce, representation and democracy, and liberty and the restraints necessary for order and stability. It is not surprising that this work reveals far more controversy and conflict

than consensus on the "Cotton Frontier." Yet, according to Dupre, in the late 1830s the forces of nationalism "bound together the diverse segments of the community."

Since the 1970s several scholarly works have been published treating various aspects of America's transformation from a rural subsistence way of life to a market economy. Dupre relies heavily on this branch of historiography. Unfortunately, one is forced to conclude that this work started with too many preconceived conclusions drawn from sources unrelated to Madison County, Alabama. Also, while the use of an extensive collection of primary and secondary sources relating to Madison County is a definite plus in evaluating this work, the heavy reliance on newspapers, especially editorials and letters to the editors, does weaken the readers' confidence.

Nevertheless, this work has much to commend it. While not a general local history, it contains much information that is not readily available elsewhere. It is interesting and well written with a valuable introduction and epilogue. This work is not for the general reader, but scholars will find it stimulating and thought provoking. It should find a place in academic libraries.

University of North Alabama

KENNETH R. JOHNSON

Plain Folk of the South Revisited. Edited by Samuel C. Hyde Jr. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. xix, 288 pp. Acknowledgments, foreword, introduction, contributors, index. \$55.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)

Since the 1970s much of the writing of the South's and indeed the nation's history has been the product of the history profession's continuing fixation on race, class, and gender. The second element of this august trinity is the subject of the ten essays in this collection, which emanated from a symposium held in the spring of 1996 at Southeastern Louisiana University. Ever since Professor Frank L. Owsley published *Plain Folk of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, 1949), historians have debated the meaning of the term. Owsley's plain folk were neither large-scale planters nor poor whites, but an independent people constituting an uncelebrated— and until then unstudied— middle class, a group that made up the bulk of the Old South's voters, and eventually its Civil War soldiers.

Depictions of plain folk have fluctuated variously between two false images: the happy carefree yeoman living in a kind of idyllic dream world without debts or other worries of any kind; and the other equally stereotypical characterization of a barbarous, uncivilized, lazy, indolent, slothful, and of course, a uniformly depraved, degenerate, and racist people. Though such images provide convenient vehicles for both southern romantics and Hollywood script writers, such one-dimensional portraits offer little in the way of any real understanding. Both John Boles and the collection's editor, Samuel Hyde, are determined to, in Boles's words, "complexify the term, to show that the plain folk were more varied, more complex, than the popular usage suggests" (x).

An excellent overview of the best current scholarship precedes these ten essays, which offer a number of interesting, surprising, and often contradictory perspectives on plain folk in the nineteenth-century South. Jerah Johnson probes the origins of plain folk architecture. Bradley Bond sheds new light on livestock herding, farming, and lumbering in the Mississippi piney woods. Sally McMillen explores southern women and the Sunday School Movement, finding that the movement gave women's lives a new sense of power and meaning. Their work in this arena, she contends, proved a major vehicle for improving, uplifting, and saving the next generation. Lacy Ford examines the constitutional conventions in Virginia, Mississippi, and Tennessee, discovering that plain folk in those states insisted on a definition of political citizenship based on race and gender rather than class. Grady McWhiney explores the ethics of honor and courage among southern Civil War soldiers, finding both ethics commonly shared between Crackers and Cavaliers. Samuel Hyde offers interesting insights on plain folk violence in Louisiana's Florida parishes. While laying bare the roots of New South demagoguery, Michael Kurtz asserts that the vile art spoke to the real, unaddressed needs and aspirations of plain folk voters.

Three of these essays reach beyond the traditional boundaries of scholarship to explore African American influences on plain folk, indeed one essay even goes so far as to suggest that the culture of both groups was in many respects virtually indistinguishable. Gary Mills, using the same kind of research methodology as Owsley, sketches out the lives of free blacks in antebellum Alabama. He discovered that "almost 50 percent of Anglo Alabama's free Negroes were either *illegally manumitted* or *illegally residing* within the state.

They lived as free because society allowed them to exercise privileges beyond the law. Community recognition became a defacto right" (165). Bill Malone contends that plain folk music was not Celtic and Anglo-Saxon alone but borrowed liberally from all traditions including African American. J. William Harris challenges long held assumptions of the New South's African Americans as mere victims of peonage. From careful study of mobility patterns among black sharecroppers, Harris found that "moving on" was "perhaps the single most important weapon they had in their struggle" (125). The ease with which they could find new situations placed implicit limits on planters' power to coerce them.

Not since the publication of Grady McWhiney's provocative yet controversial *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa, 1986) has there been anything calculated to stimulate as much debate as what appears here. Finally, while there is much in this fine collective study that will be of interest to cultural and social historians, this work virtually ignores Florida sources and contributions to the plain folk experience. But this continuing professional and institutional bias that discounts Florida's relevance to southern history is less a slight than an opportunity. For scholars willing to explore the varied lives of this elusive group in Florida, the potential harvest is even richer.

Florida Southern College

JAMES M. DENHAM

Shades of Blue and Gray: An Introductory Military History of the Civil War. By Herman Hattaway. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997. xii, 281 pp. Preface, acknowledgments, glossary, index. \$29.95 cloth.)

Shades of Blue and Gray is a marvelous distillation of Herman Hattaway's years of research and thought on the Civil War. In less than three hundred pages, he treats the important battles and campaigns, identifies their significance, and offers insights into the major characters involved in the decision-making process. Accomplishing this with such brevity is a remarkable feat. Hattaway eschews meticulous details, guiding the reader along with an engaging writing style that is both sweeping and authoritative. A prominent theme throughout is the influence of technology on Civil War strategy. In some ways, this book serves as an abridgement

graduate and graduate students, and is written in a style that will appeal to the casual reader. Hattaway offers numerous titles as "Suggested Readings" at the end of each major division and a glossary of military terms in the back of the book for beginners. The University of Missouri Press has produced a handsome volume that will, no doubt, find a place on the shelf of many Civil War scholars and enthusiasts.

Lipscomb University

TIMOTHY D. JOHNSON

Pickett's Charge in History & Memory. By Carol Reardon. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. x, 285 pp. Acknowledgments, prologue, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.)

With a plethora of books on the American Civil War, and Gettysburg in particular, one might wonder, why another? There are, however, a few works that are valuable for readers who truly want to understand the nation's great conflict. This book falls into that category, for Professor Reardon's treatment of Pickett's charge is more than just a history of that famous event. She has endeavored to tell us why we remember this brief episode with near religious reverence. Although any serious scholar recognizes the relationship between myth and reality, the author has taken one easily recognized wartime scene and has analyzed how memory and history mesh to create perceptions that do not always have a basis in historical fact.

Even readers with only a casual interest in the Civil War recognize Pickett's Charge. But how much of what we know about the event is actually true and how much is postwar construction? As the author notes, "The two forces [memory and history] have blended together so seamlessly over the years that we cannot separate them now" (3). This is not the fault of modern historians, for the mythology surrounding Pickett's charge began as soon as the battle ended. The two sides left the battlefield with conflicting memories: northerners had been victorious, the South had failed. Newspapers, of course, reflected these different points of view. While the northern press gloried in the great victory, the southern, primarily in Richmond, played up the sacrifice of the Confederate soldier. These initial images made a lasting impression. Once the war was over these recollections could be transferred to the emerging Lost Cause. Pickett's men became heroes. If they did not remember the charge exactly as it happened, they certainly remembered it as they "considered it ought to have been" (63).

Following the war, Gettysburg slowly changed from “a” turning point to “the” decisive turning point in the conflict. If the North saw it as a great triumph, then the South needed to find something redeeming in defeat. One of the goals of the Southern Historical Society, founded by unreconstructed Virginians after Robert E. Lee’s death, was to absolve Lee of any responsibility for the loss at Gettysburg. As a result of the postwar campaign of Virginians, Lee became a southern hero. Although he had lost the battle in 1863, Lee won the literary war in the history books.

The three days of fighting in Pennsylvania became a focus of contradictions. Not all northerners acknowledged the battle’s significance. Union veterans from the western armies never understood how Gettysburg took on such monumental proportions. Gettysburg, it was argued, was “merely a sample of what came before and followed after” (127). Nonetheless, it was impossible not to recognize that it did take on an almost mythical magnitude even though participants could not always agree on the story. In the South arguments arose over which units participated in the charge and how many were actually from Virginia. Even the name Pickett’s Charge outraged those who claimed that the troops from Tennessee, Mississippi, and North Carolina deserved equal recognition.

To try and counter the influence of Virginians, the *Confederate Veteran*, first published in Nashville in 1893, emphasized the western theater. But in popular memory, the charge at Franklin, Tennessee, although exacting a heavy cost, never equalled the one at the Gettysburg. Pickett’s men, not those in the West, became the heroes of the Lost Cause, and early on the Pennsylvania battle eclipsed all others and won a special place in memory. American history texts, even those written by northerners, seemed to accept the Virginian version of the event. This often worked to the advantage of northerners who could then inflate the number of attackers thus making it a more spectacular victory. In the 1870s and 1880s that figure ran as high as 25,000. When “history and popular memory clashed, history rarely won” (183). Pickett may have lost in 1863, but after the turn of the century, he and his men decisively won the war for popular memory.

Professor Reardon has taken one event and analyzed the tension between memory and history. As a study in the understanding of how we look at the events of the past, this book is invaluable.

Under the Guardianship of the Nation: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Construction of Georgia, 1865-1870. By Paul A. Cimbala. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997. xxiii, 395 pp. Acknowledgments, introduction, list of abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 hardcover.)

Almost fifty years have passed since George Bentley provided an overview of the Freedmen's Bureau and its operations during Reconstruction. Several studies of various southern states have been completed since then, but Paul Cimbala has set a new standard with this monograph. Diligent primary source research, keen analysis, and a fine narrative style are blended here to produce the definitive work on the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in Georgia.

The Freedmen's Bureau served various functions in the post-war South. None was as important as overseeing labor contracts between white landowners and former slaves. In an economically devastated region, the Bureau also made invaluable philanthropic and educational contributions. The agency distributed much needed food and clothing during the war's immediate aftermath. The men representing the organization headed by General Oliver O. Howard also were instrumental in providing freedmen educational opportunities. How these and other developments played out in Georgia is the subject of the aptly entitled *Under the Guardianship of the Nation*.

In Georgia, as elsewhere, the promise of the Freedmen's Bureau exceeded the results. The admirable vision of uplifting a race was met by harsh reality. If whites accepted emancipation, they did not concur with any arrangement that fully incorporated the ex-slaves into society. Overcoming a racist mindset, as Cimbala points out, was difficult, dangerous, and ultimately impossible. Despite the efforts of Bureau officials, blacks did not receive economic justice at the hands of their landlords.

Field officials in Bainbridge, Albany, Rome, and elsewhere across the rural hinterland that was Reconstruction Georgia often encountered an angry and intransigent white population. A wide spectrum of conscientiousness existed among Freedmen Bureau officials. All were hardly selfless ideologues driven by missionary impulses. Whatever the degree of their commitment, agents labored in "a hostile environment" (77). With the advent of congressional, or radical, Reconstruction in 1867-1868, Bureau officials

made Republican converts of the freedmen. Cimbala rightly points to the critical political role Bureau agents played in this conversion. Their success alienated a white Democratic population in fundamental philosophical disagreement with the Fourteenth Amendment and the premise of congressional Reconstruction. Efforts by the Bureau to educate the black population were similarly met with suspicion and sometimes open hostility. In this even-handed treatment, Cimbala also establishes that the freedmen sometimes proved difficult to help. Ex-slaves frequently renege on labor contracts and abrogated new responsibilities.

The strengths of this work are numerous. The time Cimbala spent examining the vast collection of Freedmen's Bureau Papers is obvious. Writing with flair, the author provides a welcome change from the academic and stilted prose sometimes found in scholarly works. For instance, Cimbala relates the importance of labor contracts and typically offers insight. In his presentation, the labor contract becomes "a piece of paper well known to ante-bellum Yankee farmers . . . but heretofore unnecessary in the economic relationships between the South's ex-masters and ex-slaves" (131). The author may be commended for providing vignettes of officials of greater and lesser importance. The reader learns that Athens-based officer John J. Knox suffered complications from a Civil War neck wound and that local white attitudes exacerbated his discomfort. The effective use of quotations provides a true appreciation of Bureau activities. With good reason agent James Davison in Greensboro allowed, "I am tired out and broke down" and compared his work load to that of a "pack horse" (64-65).

It is difficult to find fault with this study. Out of necessity, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation* is written from the top down, that is, from the perspective of Bureau officials. It would be interesting to know how blacks perceived the agency. Cimbala and others can only speculate because freedmen left so few written records.

The University of Georgia Press complements the book with an exceptionally attractive dust jacket and set of illustrations. Paul Cimbala's research is exhaustive; he resurrects the Bureau on a grassroots level, fleshes out the organization with people and names, and succeeds brilliantly. Unfortunately, the Freedmen's Bureau was not that successful. As the author concludes, the organization represented "an imperfect, short-lived institution, its functions severely limited by nineteenth century attitudes[, and that] explains much of its failure to alter the economic, legal, and political

landscapes of Georgia." In Florida, the Freedmen's Bureau awaits a historian. The merits of this work are such that the Georgia story does not need to be retold.

Gainesville College

WILLIAM WARREN ROGERS JR.

Cullen Montgomery Baker, Reconstruction Desperado. By Barry A. Crouch and Donald E. Brice. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. xvi, 190 pp. Acknowledgments, abbreviations used in notes, introduction, essay on sources, index. \$34.95 hardcover.)

For most people in the American South, the decade following the Civil War was a difficult time. The turmoil of the war and the ragged efforts to "reconstruct" the defeated region left emotions exposed and loyalties uncertain. In these troubled times numerous "outlaws" took advantage of the unsettled conditions to loot, plunder, and kill individuals while using the war or its aftermath as an excuse.

Most of these desperados haunted an area approximately one hundred miles either side of the ninety-fifth meridian from Natchitoches, Texas, in the South to St. Joseph, Missouri, in the North. The northern region, especially with the work of the James, Younger, Dalton, and Doolin gangs, has been well known and documented. However, less known, and not as well publicized, is that band of outlaws who operated from the tri-state region of Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana during and immediately following the war. This book by two authors, Barry A. Crouch and Donald E. Brice, with deep ties to Texas, does much to draw attention to the Ark-La-Tex area.

The central character in Crouch and Brice's monograph has few redeeming social qualities. Born Cullen Montgomery Baker in Weakley County, Tennessee, the future desperado's family moved to Red River County, Texas, in 1839 when he was only four. Using federal census data, fragmentary newspaper and folk tradition accounts, the authors reconstruct Baker's formative years before the Civil War. While documentation is limited, available evidence indicates that the Baker family did not own slaves and were on the lower end of the economic scale in a region that was still largely wilderness. The family's economic and social standing apparently worsened in the decade prior to the war as an increasing number of slave holding families moved into the central Red River Valley.

Beyond correcting the historical record about Cullen Baker's life, the authors are also concerned with what motivated his crime-filled career. The first objective is no easy task. The nature of Baker's activities, the lack of a written tradition in frontier regions, and the abnormal times of war and reconstruction combined to obscure the subject. To the authors' great credit, they have cut through much of the legend, myth, and rumor surrounding Baker and his gang of outlaws to provide readers with a historically credible account. They are to be commended for engaging in this most difficult research.

Extant records show Baker growing to adulthood on his father's hardscrabble farm in Northeast Texas. He had little formal schooling, his mother died before he was a teenager, and he was painfully aware of his "lower-class" standing. He enlisted in the Confederate Army in the summer of 1861 but deserted his unit after only a few months of service. Within the year he re-enlisted in a new unit but received a "disability discharge" again with only a few months of service. Returning to East Texas, he became involved in a crime spree that lasted for the balance of the 1860s and at times involved a gang of up to one hundred members. Initially targeting former slaves, agents of the Freedmen's Bureau, and local units of the U. S. Army, Baker increasingly attacked anyone who resisted his criminal acts. The authors believe that by the time of his death at the hands of a vigilante group in January 1869, Baker had killed at least fifteen men— but not the seventy-six that legend has attributed to him.

Why Baker turned to a life of crime is more difficult for the authors to sort out: The image of Baker depicted in this account is that of a "loner" whose lower-class upbringing left a permanent scar on his psyche. The first sign of trouble came at age sixteen when a group of youths taunted and jeered the future desperado for his "homemade clothes" and uncouth manner. Baker attacked the group's leader and "would have stomped him to death" had not adults present intervened. Following the incident, Baker began to drink alcohol excessively. Two years later a saloon fight resulted in Baker receiving a blow to the head with a hatchet that "may have disturbed a mind that already leaned toward instability" (33). Whatever the reason, the balance of his life was marked with increasingly pathological, sadistic behavior.

The picture of the post-Civil War South presented in this book stands in sharp contrast to the image of a "New South" built around

industrialization, urbanization, and middle-class political values. The raw edge of the frontier provides a discordant note to those leaders bent on fashioning a new society for the defeated South. Not a pretty picture but essential to the historical record.

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

C. FRED WILLIAMS

The Trial of Democracy: Black Suffrage & Northern Republicans, 1860-1910. By Xi Wang. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997. xxv, 411 pp. List of tables, preface, introduction, appendices, abbreviations, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$58.00 hardcover.)

When, in December 1863, Representative James M. Ashley, an Ohio Republican, proposed that black males be allowed to vote in southern states when they were restored, a majority of Republicans disagreed. They were united on emancipation but were reluctant to connect black freedom with black enfranchisement. Yet by March 1865 they concurred with Senator Charles Sumner that blacks' votes were as essential as their muskets and mandated black suffrage in the congressional plan to reconstruct the South. Determined to make black voting a permanent right, the party engineered the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, which authorized the federal government to prohibit states from denying suffrage to blacks on account of color, race, or previous condition. Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century every Republican administration shared the notion that the government must safeguard the political rights of black citizens, although all did not sincerely strive to enforce it.

Republicans quickly learned that passing the Fifteenth Amendment was easier than enforcing it. Two themes are evident in this study. Democrats almost unanimously opposed black suffrage, and Republican opinion was variable. A majority of Republicans favored enforcement of the Fifteenth Amendment, but a few, Wang says, were uncertain of the value of racial equality, and some had reservations about the proper sharing of power between the state and federal governments. This became clear between 1870 and 1872 when the Republicans, in response to the Ku Klux Klan, fraud, and intimidation of black voters, attempted to create federal machinery for implementing the Fifteenth Amendment. These

“Enforcement Acts” provoked fierce debate among Republicans, not so much over the correctness of black suffrage but over constitutional issues. Some Republicans, believing that suffrage remained a state matter except for color and race qualifications, were reluctant to support legislation that extended federal power to regulate suffrage and elections. Despite the constitutional scruples of some members, the party passed five laws designed to protect black voters.

Enforcement never fully protected blacks’ right to vote, and after the Democrats gained a majority in the House in 1875, the Republicans seldom controlled all three branches of government, so any new attempts to protect blacks were stymied. When Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew the few remaining U. S. troops from the South in 1877 the Enforcement Acts were totally ignored. Wang claims, however, that Hayes did not completely abandon blacks. The president naively “hoped to achieve a united country on the basis of the Reconstruction principle of equal rights,” (149) and he prevented Democrats from gutting the Enforcement Acts after they won control of both houses in 1878. Four times he vetoed bills to repeal the Enforcement Acts. Not a single Republican voted with the Democrats to override Hayes’s vetoes.

The Republicans continued to call for fair and free elections but made no effort to pass new legislation until 1890 when Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts proposed a bill to provide for effective enforcement. The Lodge Federal Elections Bill passed the House by a vote of 155 to 149, with two Republicans and 147 Democrats voting no. A few silver Republicans joined Democrats in the Senate to prevent the bill from being brought to a vote. This ended the Republican fight to ensure black suffrage. In 1892 the Democrats won both houses of Congress and the presidency, and they remained determined to nullify federal enforcement, even though most southern blacks were disfranchised. Although Republicans united against it, President Grover Cleveland signed an act on February 8, 1894, repealing all previous Enforcement Acts. Fortunately, the Democrats were unable to repeal the Fifteenth Amendment, which provided the vehicle for black reenfranchisement in the twentieth century.

The Trial of Democracy is a comprehensive analysis of the effort and ultimate failure to implement and protect black suffrage. Professor Wang carefully traces Republican factionalism and the intense debates over the constitutional and political issues of black

suffrage, racial equality, and the sharing of power between state and federal governments. The book is balanced, thoughtful, well researched and written, and is a worthy addition to Reconstruction literature.

Florida State University

JOE M. RICHARDSON

The Papers of Andrew Johnson, Volume 14, April-August 1868. Edited by Paul H. Bergeron. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997. xxxi, 590 pp. Introduction, acknowledgments, editorial method, symbols and abbreviations, short titles, chronology, appendices, index. \$49.50 hardcover.)

During the five months from April through August 1868 – the period covered by the fourteenth of a projected sixteen volumes of his papers – Andrew Johnson continued to experience a frustrating presidency. True, when impeached, he escaped removal from office, but only by the margin of a single vote in the Senate. He remained powerless to halt the Reconstruction program of his Republican enemies in Congress who, over his veto, readmitted a batch of six southern states reorganized under the congressional plan, with suffrage for black men. And he failed to get the Democratic nomination for a reelection that would have vindicated him in his long losing struggle with Congress.

Nevertheless, Johnson could get a sense of vindication from many of the letters that came to him from admiring citizens– or flattering job-seekers. Such correspondence predominates in this volume as in previous volumes of the series, letters *from* Johnson being relatively scarce. “To lessen that problem,” the editors notes, “we have searched for and included newspaper interviews, speeches, proclamations, and official messages.”

Among the job-seekers was only one of the seven Republicans who voted for acquittal at the impeachment trial– Senator Edmund G. Ross of Kansas– who sought a place for one of his friends. But Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, who presided at the trial, afterwards recommended two men for government positions, neither of whom received an appointment. Chase waited until after the Democratic nominating convention, at which he was considered a possible contender himself. “So long as letters from me could be construed as prompted in any degree by political wishes,” he ex-

plained, "I refused all requests to write you in behalf of any one recommended for office."

Johnson's chances for the nomination seemed, according to some of his correspondents, to improve steadily from April onward. The "feeling throughout the country" was growing in his favor, a Democratic newspaperman in Indiana assured him. His "triumphant vindication before the Court of Impeachment" seemed to improve his prospects, and his popularity, he was told, made them excellent by the time the Democratic convention met.

When New York City Democrats asked permission to nominate him, Johnson replied: "the approval of the people is all that is requisite to make me feel that the efforts I have made to restore the Union on the basis of justice and conciliation have not been altogether vain." He was encouraged to believe that Horatio Seymour, if nominated, would not accept but would decline in his favor (Seymour, of course, did no such thing when nominated).

Having no sympathy with the reconstructed state governments, Johnson did not respond when Henry C. Warmoth, the carpetbag governor of Louisiana, asked him for U. S. troops to preserve order and protect "Union men" who were victims of "horrible outrages" perpetrated by the Democrats. Warmoth estimated that 150 had been murdered in a month and a half. Johnson, however, also heard from several Louisianans who reported that the "so-called" governor was grossly exaggerating.

One appreciative southerner praised Johnson in terms that he might well have applied to himself. "If Daniel Webster was entitled to the Soubriquet of being the Great Expounder of, I think Andrew Johnson deserves the title of being the Great defender of the Constitution," a Georgian wrote. "In after years when the impartial historian writes a truthful history of the country the acts of your administration will stand out in bold relief challenginging [*sic*] the admiration of the world especially those who favor constitutional Liberty."

As these samples suggest, this collection adds richness to the context of the Johnson presidency, though it does not provide the "impartial historian" with reasons to revise the prevailing account or rehabilitate his reputation. The editing continues to be excellent, with careful identification of even the most obscure persons and explication of even the most obscure allusions.

South Natick, Massachusetts

RICHARD N. CURRENT

Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction. By Laura F. Edwards. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997. xvi, 378 pp. Preface, acknowledgments, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.)

Laura F. Edwards' *Gendered Strife and Confusion*, an in-depth analysis of Reconstruction-era Granville County, North Carolina, begins with an accusation of rape. Late in 1864, Susan Daniel, in Edwards' phrasing a "common white," accused two slaves, William and Henderson Cooper, of attacking her. The case, entangled first in Confederate and later in Reconstruction politics, illustrates Edwards' claim that historians' categories—public and private, freedom and slavery, and even black and white—fail to capture the experiences of particular southerners politicizing and contesting these very concepts. The crime of rape, Edwards argues, linked the private household to the public sphere, highlighting the ways that familial and labor relationships in one sphere legitimated legal and political rights in another. Since gender grounded the private authority that in turn founded public authority, Edward reasons, gender was as important as race and class in shaping the political terrain across the Reconstruction South.

In this new narrative, marriage rights, apprenticeship laws, and contested conceptions of labor, manhood, and womanhood are as important as party politics. Reconstruction begins in households, in whites' efforts to recreate their homes and African Americans' attempts to create their first autonomous families. Whites advocated legal marriage for the freedpeople, for example, as a way to impress upon black men their duties and obligations to care for black women and children. African Americans, on the other hand, embraced legal marriage as an important tool as well as a symbol of their freedom, and as a way to force whites to acknowledge black parental rights and household independence within the polity. In much the same way, Edwards explores the shifting and contested meanings of labor and employment as elite whites, African Americans, and common whites struggled to recast economic relationships in a world without slaves.

For Edwards, the reconstruction of gender relations is crucial to the politics of Reconstruction. She contrasts elite whites' conceptions of manhood and womanhood with those of African Americans and common whites. Elite southerners, Edwards argues, shifted from explicit endorsements of racial and class hierarchies

to a “rhetoric of individual achievement” (125) in which the reward for “character” was the wealth that in turn legitimated privilege and authority. In a shift that paralleled the development of middle-class cultural hegemony in the North, elite whites universalized their particular normative gender roles as “best men” and “cheerful wives,” obscuring but not erasing racial and class inequalities. Poor whites and freedpeople struggled to articulate conflicting conceptions of manhood and womanhood. Yet like elites they relied on gender difference to ground both the larger social order and their claims for greater rights within it. This strategy, in effect a kind of working within the system, had its cost: “the patriarchal framework African Americans and common whites had so skillfully used to push their interests into public space could just as easily work against them” (217). Using the uncontested inequality of men and women in the household to legitimate inequality between different types of men in public, by the mid-1880s elite whites within the Democratic Party “argued that ‘the best’ men represented everyone’s interests” (219). In this narrative, Reconstruction ends not with the withdrawal of federal troops but with the disenfranchisement of African American and some common white men.

By narrowing her focus to one county, Laura Edwards is able to describe in great detail a broadly defined political culture that includes men and women of both races and all classes. Her work adds to the complicated picture of the post-Civil War South that has emerged as historians attempt to unite the methodologies of African American history and women’s history with more traditional approaches to the study of the region.

University of Virginia

GRACE ELIZABETH HALE

A Devil and a Good Woman, Too: The Lives of Julia Peterkin. By Susan Millar Williams. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997. xx, 343 pp. Preface, a note on the language, afterword, key to abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.)

The 1929 Pulitzer Prize for literature was awarded to a forty-nine-year-old South Carolina tidewater plantation mistress for her second book, *Scarlet Sister Mary*, written about her black servant, Mary Weeks. Though it was a novel of African American life on

Lang Syne Plantation in the early twentieth century, it contained enough truth about the real Mary that the Weeks family took offense at the book's depiction and made her leave the plantation. The author and her white employer, Julia Peterkin, achieved literary fame in her time for this work, a previous collection of short stories, and the 1927 fictional account of a male employee on her land, *Black April*. Yet, despite acclaim from the publishing world for her unique ability to write about rural southern blacks with such sensitivity, and criticism from the white supremacist South for having portrayed blacks as fully human, Julia Peterkin's writings, extraordinary for her time and place, were forgotten.

Susan Millar Williams, in *A Devil and a Good Woman, Too: The Lives of Julia Peterkin*, provides historians of the South, women, and literature with a well-researched, fine study of a paradoxical woman who, until she began writing at the age of forty, lived a fairly conventional life as a wealthy South Carolina matron on her husband's plantation. At that point, her years of experience observing, befriending, and working with the community of African Americans who labored on the coastal lands of Lang Syne led her to write about their lives in such a way that, at first, no one could discern Peterkin's race. No one before had conveyed the rich, textured lives of rural southern black people, nor had any writer successfully rendered their Gullah language into print. And certainly no white southerner of either sex had ever appreciated and written about black culture as equally valuable and complex as the dominant white race.

Peterkin's stories and novels made her a celebrity, brought her into the glitzy New York publishing circles, and led to friendships with such eminences as H. L. Mencken, whom she considered the "father" of her books. Her connections in the greater world beyond South Carolina also changed her life in other ways. She met a younger man, Irving Fineman, who fascinated her. Several years later, they embarked upon a long term, long distance love affair. However, Peterkin kept this intense relationship hidden from her family and refused to divorce her husband despite Irving's pleas. Williams discovered their intimate relationship in letters written over the course of many years.

After the astonishing success of *Scarlet Sister Mary*, Julia Peterkin wrote *Bright Skin*, published in 1932, her final novel about blacks. Williams described another manuscript that Peterkin labored over, wrote and rewrote about whites and their lives, but, the author asserts, Peterkin failed miserably in her efforts to write com-

pellingly of the planters because she could not bring herself to confront her own complicity in white supremacy. She could never stretch that far. Only in the Gullah voice of her black servants could Julia Peterkin find her own voice, Williams argues. However, Peterkin's literary racial progressivism did not last. She returned to her conservative southern elite roots, her radical renditions of African American life ended, and, according to her biographer, Julia Peterkin faded into obscurity and was lost to history. Williams argues that her decline from prominence resulted when the racially progressive circles she moved in eventually rejected her for her conservatism, and South Carolina, ashamed of her because of her early books' serious, humane depiction of blacks, gladly forgot this particular native daughter. Now, in this volume, Julia Peterkin, is brought to life and to the attention of scholars and the public. She is well worth meeting.

Jacksonville State University

SUZANNE MARSHALL

Southern Odyssey: Selected Writing by Sherwood Anderson. Edited by Welford Dunaway Taylor and Charles E. Modlin. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997. xxv, 251 pp. Preface, acknowledgments, introduction, chronology, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.)

Sherwood Anderson was one of those American writers most often associated with a very particular time and place – in his case with the Midwest in the early years of this century. First gaining renown as a short story writer, Anderson found some commercial success as a novelist in the 1920s. When another midwestern writer, Ernest Hemingway, praised Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson came to be seen as a major figure in American letters. The subsequent decline in his literary fortunes (including a vicious parody by Hemingway) seemed for some to call into question the significance of his contribution. This volume by two of the most important Anderson scholars, Welford Dunaway Taylor, Bostwick Professor of English at the University of Richmond, and Charles E. Modlin of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, presents a collection of Anderson's later work, much of which was written in or about the South. While not claiming Anderson as a "southern writer," the authors do manage to alter the narrow context in which Anderson has often been lodged.

There are some pieces here that are small, unpretentious, and astonishingly good and some which are just the opposite.

Anderson had a sentimental attachment to the South from his childhood. His father claimed to be connected to an old *southern* family – a claim made by characters in several Anderson novels. While his father's claim may have been more wished for than real, Anderson never forgot it, and when he set out to change his life in 1924, he moved to the South and lived first in New Orleans for a brief time, and then in Virginia where he bought a farm and eventually purchased both newspapers in the small town of Marion.

The book makes clear Anderson's talent as a journalist; in fact, the most effective pieces in this book are non-fiction. A series on southern labor issues, like "Lumber Camp," "O Ye Poets," and "Night," are clear, compelling, and concrete. He keeps the focus on the real and refrains from generalizing. His style works best in this kind of work— indeed Orwell would have found this prose as "clear as a windowpane." His sympathies are manifest without becoming maudlin, and he allows the reader to confront the world he presents without the interference of a omniscient and intrusive interpreter. For the historian or the general reader these pieces are useful in reflecting upon the individual impact of real events.

Unfortunately, the excerpts from his fiction— even the short fictional pieces that were published in newspapers— do not fare as well. There is a portion of a chapter from *Dark Laughter*, the first of his novels with significant southern content, which now seems sadly dated in style and content as well as overtly racist. Anderson tries to create a textured southern landscape and instead sounds like one of those travel pieces from the turn of the century in which tourists are invited to hear the gentle darkies singing down by Ole Man River.

Taylor and Modlin make clear in their excellent introduction that they do not claim that Anderson was a "southern writer." Indeed, this book may be most useful in illustrating the difference between literature that happens to be set in a particular location and work in which language, character, landscape, and texture create a very particular world. The closest Anderson comes to doing this is in the Midwest of *Winesburg, Ohio*. His southern pieces, except for an embarrassingly florid piece on New Orleans, could be located anywhere.

It is somewhat dangerous to comment on the racial attitudes of writers from the past. The editors here make the best case one can for Anderson – that he was sympathetic to African Americans even while stereotyping them as noble savages deeply in touch with the "natural life." Certainly Anderson lacks any real knowledge of the external or internal lives of African Americans in the South during this period.

Southern Odyssey is a well-edited and thoughtful book that should be very useful to Anderson scholars and to those interested in defining what southern writing is and is not in the twentieth century.

University of South Carolina

Thorne Compton

"We Ain't What We Was": *Civil Rights in the New South*. By Frederick M. Wirt. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. xix, 286 pp. Table of contents, list of figures and tables, foreword by Gary Orfield, acknowledgments, appendices, notes, index. \$49.94 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)

"We Ain't What We Was" attempts to accomplish two separate tasks. First, it is an in-depth examination of Panola County, Mississippi, and the changes in its citizens and institutions over a quarter of a century as the result of implementation of federal civil rights laws. Second, it treats Panola County as a metaphor for change throughout the South. The first task is very well accomplished. The attempt to link change in Panola County to regional change is only partially successful.

In the late 1960s Frederick Wirth began a series of field trips to the Black Belt county. His interviews with blacks and whites and his observations of that period were the basis of his work, *The Politics of Southern Equality*. They form the benchmark material against which change in the county is evaluated.

Wirt's second foray into the county began in 1989. He conducted almost one hundred interviews with blacks and whites from a wide variety of educational and occupational backgrounds. In addition, a sample of 1,200 students in the county's three public school districts completed questionnaires about their racial and political attitudes, and a content analysis was conducted on the weekly newspapers going back to 1960. Local histories were also examined.

The assessment of change within the South is based on statistical analyses and on a review of recent literature focusing on political, social, and economic changes in the region. The literature cited is rather limited in scope, and the author too selective in its use and too far reaching in his conclusions. For example, he argues that private school attendance is not as great as many authors suggest, but his evidence for this statement is one study; alternative in-

terpretations are not footnoted. Most of the studies he examines focus on separate aspects of southern politics in broad overview. Few are state-specific examinations of recent history and politics.

Despite the author's failure to adequately document southern-wide interpretations, the examination of Panola County is fascinating and makes the book worthwhile reading. Wirt documents the fact that the civil rights laws of the sixties resulted in an evolutionary change in basic attitudes in Panola County. These attitude changes extend across age cohorts and affect the operation of political, economic, and educational institutions. They represent more positive views of other racial groups, acceptance of change as both inevitable and in many ways desirable, and a turning away from confrontational decision making to coalition building.

An important aspect of change has been the shift in political power from whites to blacks made possible by the federal legislation extending voting rights. As black voters grew in number, white candidates began to court their votes. Initially, black leaders endorsed those white candidates who approached them for support and promised to represent the interests of black constituents. As blacks gained political confidence and voting numbers, they began to run for office, and finally, to win office.

Change was aided by another set of federal legislation as well – the anti-poverty programs of the Great Society and various inter-governmental grant-in-aid programs supportive of economic development. The anti-poverty programs improved economic conditions of the poor, white and black, while the economic development monies benefitted communities willing to accept color-blind decision making by local government officials supported by the business community. Legislation outlawing racial discrimination in hiring and promotion practices, affirmative action programs, and desegregated educational institutions further improved the everyday life of Panola County's citizens.

Wirt is able to document change throughout Panola County even though the county has had two separate cultural traditions (one more agricultural, the other more urban and industrial). Change has been faster in the more urban-industrial area, but the agricultural society has changed as well.

The book is suitable for a general readership as well as specialists in southern history and politics.

Auburn University, Montgomery

ANNE PERMALOFF

BOOK NOTES

New Titles

Civil War Stories. By Catherine Clinton. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998. Pp. 144. \$14.95 paper.)

The significance of the Civil War in American history stretches far beyond the period's various sieges and campaigns. Catherine Clinton's slender but rich new work is composed of three essays which explore the social repercussions of America's greatest conflict. The essays, which were originally prepared for the 1996 Averitt Lecture Series at Georgia Southern University, examine the wartime divisions between two sisters, the postwar fate of southern orphans, and the means by which South Carolina women (black and white) came to understand the war in its aftermath.

Georgia Odyssey. By James C. Cobb. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998. Pp. 168. \$12.00 paper.)

Cobb's book proves that state histories do not have to be the stuff of graduate student nightmares. Clear, fast-paced, and thoroughly engaging, it is the sort of work that reminds readers of the narrative power of well-written history. In chronicling Georgia's development from its days under the Union Jack to its recent raising of the Olympic flag, Cobb intentionally uses broad strokes. The result is an expansive mural that allows readers to see the connections between such historically distant figures as George Whitefield and Martin Luther King Jr.

Chained to the Rock of Adversity: To Be Free, Black, & Female in the Old South. Edited by Virginia Meacham Gould. Southern Voices From the Past: Women's Letters, Diaries, and Writings Series. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998. Pp.168. \$17.50 paper.)

"I write you these few lines to let you know that we are all just tolerable, for I can't say well, for we are not, for Ossy, he has got the mumps." It is the sort of opening that many a nineteenth-century southern woman might have penned to a friend or family member. And, indeed, Emma Hoggatt— the letter's author— was a southern

[397]

wife and mother, but she was also a free black woman, and, as such, not at all typical in the antebellum South. *Chained to the Rock of Adversity* is a collection of letters and diary entries chronicling the lives of two free black families in pre- and post-Civil War Natchez, Mississippi.

Theodore O'Hara: Poet-Soldier of the Old South. By Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes Jr. and Thomas Clayton Ware. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998. Pp. 224. \$32.00 cloth.)

Ever since Homer poets have immortalized warfare in verse. Few poets, however, have themselves chosen to take up the martial spear. Theodore O'Hara was both a composer of Mars-inspired poetry and a Confederate Army volunteer. Born in Kentucky in 1820 to first-generation Irish immigrant parents, O'Hara's restless spirit led him through a number of careers including teacher, lawyer, and newspaper editor. His success as a poet was, like all his undertakings, uneven. "The Bivouac of the Dead" published in 1850 and later used to memorialize soldiers slain in the Civil War remains his signature work.

Reprints

Letters of a Civil War Nurse: Cornelia Hancock, 1863-1865. Edited by Henrietta Stratton Jaquette. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. Pp. 184. \$9.95 paper.)

The American image of the benevolent field nurse is largely a product of the Civil War efforts of Clara Barton and other "angels of the battlefield." Cornelia Hancock, who served as a Union nurse from Gettysburg until the end of the war, compiled an exemplary service record, but more than that, she brought a genuine compassion to the bloody field hospitals. Her letters reveal much about the life conditions (or semblance thereof) on the front lines. Hancock's Quaker background inspired an abhorrence of war (she referred to it as "the business of maiming men") which is evident throughout her correspondence.

Turned Inside Out: Recollections of a Private Soldier in the Army of the Potomac. By Frank Wilkeson. (1886; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. Pp. 255. \$11.95 paper.)

In his introduction to Frank Wilkeson's 1886 Civil War memoir, historian James McPherson explains that the book's modern title refers to what was done to the pockets of dead soldiers by "battlefield ghouls." It is an eerie visual that reflects the author's macabre landscape. Wilkeson joined the Army of the Potomac near the war's end, but still managed to see combat in both the Wilderness Campaign and the Battle of Petersburg. His descriptions of battlefield carnage— like those in Remarque's *All Quiet On the Western Front*— remain among the most terrifying ever written.

New in Paperback

The Citizen Soldier: The Memoirs of a Civil War Volunteer. By John Beatty. (1879; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. Pp. 393. \$16.00 paper.)

Bankers, by and large, are not given to snap decisions. However, when John Beatty learned of President Lincoln's post-Fort Sumter call for military volunteers, he placed his brother in charge of the family bank, raised a company of men, bid farewell to his wife, and arrived at Fort Jackson in Columbus, Ohio— all within a week. Soon after he was mustered out, Beatty began keeping a private diary. His keen observations on everything from troop movements to mosquitoes make his memoir a worthwhile read, but it is his reflections on the war itself (he called it "a blind and uncertain game at best") that lend the work a special significance.

The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman: Nathan Bedford Forrest. By Brian Steel Wills. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998. Pp. 480. \$19.95 paper.)

In Brian Steel Wills's thoroughgoing biography, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest is described as an "enormously complicated individual." And, indeed, Forrest's mighty oak-like rise from the Tennessee backwoods to the height of Memphis society suggests a certain complexity of character. But, overall, Forrest wore his emotions— and his prejudices— on his sleeve. On the battlefield, Forrest's men feared his wrath more than the enemy and their sworn obedience to him resulted in both inspired combat (Battle of Brice's Cross Roads) and ignominious slaughter (Ft. Pillow Massacre).