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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

My Face is Black is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations. By Mary Frances Berry. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005, Pp.ix, 314. Cloth, \$26.95.)

Mary Francis Berry has written a very engaging topical and chronological study on Callie House, an ex-slave, who spent most of her adult life struggling for reparations for ex-slaves from the United States government. Working with very scarce resources, Berry has done a superb job in reconstructing the life of such an obscure figure in American history.

Born a slave, Callie House came into this world in Rutherford County near Nashville, Tennessee, in 1861, although her actual birthday is unknown. Berry provides the setting in Rutherford County and Middle Tennessee during Callie's youth and although she does not have a lot of specific data, Berry recreates what life was like for House and other Tennessee blacks after slavery, throughout Reconstruction, and during the reign of Jim Crow.

During that time, Callie received a primary school education where she learned useful lessons that would later set the course for her life. In particular, she learned that the United States Constitution "grants to citizens the privilege of peaceably assembling themselves together and petition their grievance[s]" (19). Callie House later married, had children, and worked as a washer-woman like her mother, and as a seamstress. At a relatively young age, she also became a widow, like her mother.

Callie House worked with Isaiah Dickerson to establish the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association in 1898, "the first mass reparations movement led by African Americans" (4). From the very beginning the Association had a dual mission: mutual aid to poor members and the attainment of

federal pension legislation that would benefit ex-slaves. The benefits program would work much like social security does today. Pension Association chapters began to spring up all over the country although blacks already had other relief associations. To House's chagrin, leading (middle-class) African Americans never took up this cause, and they generally ignored or criticized her efforts. Even black newspapers rarely provided coverage of the Association's work.

As the organization grew, leaders of the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C., along with other postal and federal officials around the country, felt that House's pension efforts were threatening "national security" and would eventually turn blacks into unpatriotic "anarchists." Thus "the ex-slave pension movement's exercise of the right to petition the government became a target of the Post Office Department's expanded power. The postmaster's unconstrained power became abusive, and it unnecessarily interfered with civil liberties" (87), Berry asserts. Indeed, the postmaster's power went unchecked until Congress passed the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946.

Callie House wound up fighting a losing battle against the federal government vis-à-vis the post office department, which charged her in 1916 with using the mail to defraud. Specifically, it charged her with collecting dues and fees through the mail for the Association even though she allegedly *knew* the federal government would never pay ex-slaves a pension. Although there was no evidence of fraud on House's part, the postmaster general and his designees became determined to destroy the reparations idea and ruin the Association. Callie House and the Association took steps to neutralize this effort, but their demise was imminent.

Ultimately, an all-white, male jury found her guilty and a sympathetic judge sentenced her to one year (out of a maximum of five) in prison. On November 1917, at the age of fifty-two, House entered the Missouri State Prison at Jefferson City, Missouri. "Essentially the government punished her for exercising her constitutional right to petition the government and teach the other ex-slaves to do so" (190), Berry concludes. By August of the next year she gained early release and returned to Tennessee. Callie House continued to work as a seamstress and washerwoman until she died on June 6, 1928 at the age of sixty-seven.

In the epilogue Berry briefly discusses how African Americans such as Marcus Garvey, Queen Mother (Audrey) Moore, Imari

Obadele, Christopher Alston, and John Conyers, have continued the cause that Callie House championed for so many years before them. Berry notes that although in 1988 Japanese-Americans won reparations from the United States government in the amount of \$20,000 for each family interned during World War II, similar efforts by African Americans have continued without success. The tragic Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 and recent efforts for redress by its survivors provides a case in point.

Mary F. Berry should be commended for the approach she has taken to recreate the life of Callie House and the early reparations movement. She drew upon a wide array of government documents, legal cases, newspapers, and secondary sources to compile this work. Nonetheless, the specialist reader may quibble over a few things. While Berry describes Bishop Henry McNeal Turner as a legislator and proponent of the back-to-Africa movement of the book, she does not mention his early advocacy for reparations (33). As early as 1883 Turner called for the United States to pay blacks forty billion dollars as repayment for slavery. Nothing about this aspect of Turner's life is discussed in the narrative, so one is left wondering if Bishop Turner had influence or dealings with Isaiah Dickerson or House at some point on this matter.

It is also surprising that in her discussion of contemporary black efforts for reparations, Berry does not include any mention of the survivors of the Rosewood Massacre of 1923, who successfully received reparations from the state of Florida for that horrendous act of genocide. Moreover, some historians may be bothered by Berry placing information about her family in the narrative at various places (54, 56, 213, 216, and 217). Nothing would be lost from the study if these references were placed in the notes section.

Nonetheless, this work is a brilliant study that provides a fresh and path-breaking perspective on the reparations movement. It offers a glimpse of a grassroots effort by African Americans, a perspective that is normally difficult for historians to recreate. Working-class blacks seeking redress for past oppression are the focus of this story, not the black middle-class. What is more, Berry crystallizes how white racists have systematically utilized the resources and agencies of the United States government to oppress and subvert African American advancement. (For example, the same specious charge leveled by the postmaster general at Callie House to destroy her organization would later be leveled at

Marcus Garvey to destroy his). As Berry concludes, "No one involved with the Association realized that no matter what they said or did, the government was bent on suppressing the pension movement" (162). African Americans, by contrast, have never been able to use agencies of the federal government to oppress whites or undermine white advancement. This becomes the broader and perhaps even more germane point of her study.

The book is well-written and researched, easy to read, and filled with useful photos. It will prove to be rewarding for those who enjoy biographies, Southern history, African American history, legal history, social history, and general American history. Hopefully, this book will become a model that others will use to produce similar studies on obscure and outstanding subjects such as Callie House.

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Funeral Festivals in America: Rituals for the Living. By Jacqueline S. Thursby. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006. Acknowledgements, notes, references, index. Pp.158. \$35 cloth.)

From the beginning, Jacqueline Thursby's *Funeral Festivals in America* is a quirky little book, as possibly all books on the subject of death are doomed to be. Thursby aspired to demonstrate that American funerary practices evolved from moments of familial separation and sadness to moments of "renewal and reaffirmed connectedness between family and friends" (1); and she intended to do so by showing how contemporary American mourning is more about "*awakening, transmutation, and connectedness*" than sadness (9). The result is a small book with a broad sweep, examining the many ways in which a variety of Americans address death and life in their funeral customs.

Funeral Festivals is more a cultural survey than history. There are some sections dedicated to historical evaluation of funeral practices, but these are very superficial, and readers would be better served reading the sources she cited rather than her "history." For example, in describing the increasing cultural diversity of colonial death ways, Thursby mentioned Native Americans, Puritans, Shakers, Amish, and then made a nod to African Americans—the

typical portrayal of colonial diversity. But given the breadth of her work on contemporary culture, this is disappointing. There is no mention of Spanish Santa Fe, French Huguenot Charleston, or Jewish New York, and Thursby's discussion of Native Americans would have benefited from a reading of Erik Seeman's study on Indian deathbed scenes. Ironically, in her history of the Nineteenth Century, Thursby does just the opposite: highlighting the Jewish minority's deathways while neglecting altogether the rise of Victorian romanticism and the way of death that dominated American culture for over a century.

While the history in *Funeral Festivals* is just not well done, the folklore is. From African American to Chinese to Muslim to Mormon, from Italian to Irish to Asian Indian, Thursby explored a wide variety of Americans and their funeral practices. (Puzzlingly, however, in her effort to address diversity, Thursby made occasional references to Greek and Roman deathways that she never related to the topic of festivals in America.) The strength of this book, however, is the chapter "Funeral Biscuits and Funeral Feasts" in which Thursby successfully integrated history, folklore, and great diversity of topics to prove that "foods affirm identity, strengthen kinship bonds, provide comfortable and familiar emotional support . . ." (79). The chapter best evidences her point of commonality across American cultures.

But there is something unsettling about *Funeral Festivals in America*. Thursby admitted that her study was both objective and subjective, but it certainly appears far more subjective in the long run. She relied heavily, almost exclusively, on secondary sources for her text. The little primary evidence is overwhelmingly anecdotal, and in most cases, she offers little more than personal examples to support important themes: to evince her *awakening*, *transmutation*, and *connectedness* model, Thursby discussed the illness and death of her mother-in-law; the role of humor, comments at her aunt's funeral; the necessity of quick recovery after tragic death, her visit to New York's Soho neighborhood in the wake of 9/11. Indeed, as an American, I found little in Thursby's personal experiences that resonated with my own.

Probably the most telling point to this book, however, is that in making conclusions about life and death, over and over again Thursby wrote "I believe that . . ." For example, her claim that "I believe that Americans are taking death and commemoration more seriously as we become an aging society" (117) is evinced by the

placement of mementos around commemorative monuments. While the evidence is weak, the statement itself is just contrary to some of the best recent work done in historical death studies—Mary Louise Kete, *Sentimental Collaboration: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (2000); appropriate articles in Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein, eds., *Mortal Remains: Death in Early America* (2002); Susan Stabile's *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America* (2004); and Sandra M. Gilbert, *Death's Door: Modern Dying and the Way We Grieve: A Cultural Study* (2006). Of course, scholars can believe as much or as little as they wish, but the academy requires that we *think* as well, something that depends on substantial evidence and even stronger scholarly contextualization. In the end, *Funeral Festivals in America* is creative and inspiring, but historically weak, short of evidence, and just a bit too self-aggrandizing.

Craig Thompson Friend

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Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage through the Rise of the New Right. By Catherine Rymph. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, index. Pp. xi, 338. \$59.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.)

In *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage through the Rise of the New Right*, Catherine Rymph incorporates gender analysis to expand the narrative of the postwar Republican Party. Recent historiography is replete with studies of the rise of modern Conservatism, with many of these works focusing on the racial dimension of the Nixon-era "Southern Strategy" or the color-blind rhetoric used to sway suburban voters to the GOP in the name of law and order. Rymph moves beyond this one-dimensional analysis and examines the leadership of the National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW) and female officers of the Republican National Committee (RNC), and compares the efforts of these two groups to open the GOP to female activists and bolster the party as a whole. Rymph begins her story just after the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment and sketches out a narrative that juxtaposes the political styles of the two organizations and places their actions in the broader framework of women's

political participation, ending with Reagan's 1980 election and the end of Republican support for the Equal Rights Amendment.

Rymph's book draws heavily from the work of Kim Nielsen, Melanie Gustafson, and other historians who have studied gender and political participation. She contends that Republican women faced a choice between working inside the official party or with a Republican club, an autonomous organization that leaned Republican but promoted its own agenda. This strategic dichotomy informs every chapter of Rymph's book and is the overarching focal point of her analysis. She contends the women who joined the NFRW opted to do so because the patriarchic realm of politics had an unsavory, immoral character. As the "virtuous sex," women had the ability to stake out their own territory and engage in political activity in a crusading fashion. This idea drove the suffragists and members of prohibition groups and Rymph argues that it allowed Republican women to maintain autonomy from the male-dominated RNC and promote a distinctly female agenda after 1920.

Others who aligned the RNC and worked within the official party, in Rymph's view, purposely decided to circumscribe their women's agenda and compromise with party leaders to gain recognition for their gender. Men did not readily accept females in politics, and those women who chose to hold RNC offices did so to prove that women were politically able and trustworthy. This required a certain degree of loyalty to the party, its platform, and its candidates, and often put the party in conflict with important programs of the women's rights movement. At times, this caused tension between party women and clubwomen and threatened Republican effectiveness at the polls. Very rarely, such as in the 1970s, the party was in step with feminist concerns, but more often than not women could only mount their moral crusades from outside of the Republican apparatus.

Rymph uses this oppositional model to characterize the continual conflict between clubwomen and party women. At times, this is convincing, but in some places her argument ignores other factors beyond gender. In her section on Phyllis Schlafly, Rymph claims that the activity of the conservative firebrand stemmed from a feminine moral impulse. She notes that Schlafly operated outside of the regular party after 1964 and used rhetoric that defended religion and family values to attract a following and create her own conservative organization. Rymph argues that Schlafly's

actions resembled the organizational efforts of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and other Progressive-Era groups, but fails to take into account the context of the 1960s. Schlafly had been active in Republican clubs since the 1950s, to be sure, but had also run for Congress and had worked with prominent party officials on campaigns and voter mobilization drives. Her resentment of Dwight Eisenhower's "modern Republicanism" and its liberal tendencies drove Schlafly outside of the party more so than any gender issues.

Republican Women is well-researched and its chronological arrangement provides a coherent structure to the story. Her description of NFRW decisions and the interplay between the clubs and the regular party is illuminating and reveals exactly how dependent the GOP was on women for voter mobilization drives, grass-roots organizing, and other types of "political housework." Rymph's one fault is her over-reliance on the binary model of female political participation. In her view, an individual opted to pursue one of the strategies through their organizational affiliation, but her categories are too restrictive and deterministic. Her analysis does not allow for individuals to change from one group to the other, or to affiliate with both. Katherine Kennedy Brown, for example, served as an RNC member from Ohio, as campaign advisor for Senator Robert A. Taft, and as a stalwart in the Ohio Federation of Republican Women. Rymph only identifies Brown as a clubwoman and makes no effort to explain, or even mention, her dual affiliations. While Rymph admits that each career path had its own pitfalls, she fails to take account of women who tried to work in both groups.

Historians of modern conservatism and the Republican Party would be well served to read Rymph's book, as she sheds light on an understudied aspect of the GOP. Historians of Florida will be disappointed, however, because Miami's Florence Garrison, a key player in the NFRW and the Florida Republican Party, is not mentioned among state leaders. Although Rymph deals with some grassroots activists in connection with the NFRW, she does not explore the dynamics of local groups or individual rank and file Republicans. Instead, her book is a highly-readable, worthwhile history of the elite females who carved out a place for women in the GOP at the national level.

The White House Looks South: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson. By William E. Leuchtenburg. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2005. Acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xi, 668. \$45 cloth.)

In this thoroughly researched and richly detailed book, dean of political historians William E. Leuchtenburg examines three twentieth century presidents who both shaped and were shaped by the South. He argues that Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Lyndon B. Johnson, "each had an acute sense of place" and that their "capacity to bridge sections contributed mightily" to their accomplishments because it "sensitized them to the predicaments of the South and because it gave them entrée to southern power brokers that outlanders were denied" (348-49). In the course of what is essentially three extended essays, Leuchtenburg advances several unfashionable, or at least contested, propositions: that historians have given insufficient attention to the importance of place; that political history is of abiding value; that the state is capable of acting autonomously and profoundly shaping people's lives; and that individuals, particularly presidents, are capable of making a difference. In the course of his extensive and entertaining narrative, Leuchtenburg effectively makes his case.

Not surprisingly, given the focus of his previous works, Leuchtenburg devotes most attention to Franklin D. Roosevelt, the adoptive southerner. Beginning in 1924, Roosevelt took to the waters in Warm Springs, Georgia, in the vain hope of restoring the use of his crippled legs. He found the people and countryside so convivial that he soon acquired the spa and also a small farm at the foot of the Appalachians. As he toured the area in his roadster, hunted possum, and wrote a local newspaper column, Roosevelt came to know firsthand the poverty and despair of the rural South. His patrician manner and tragic view of the Reconstruction era, meanwhile, made him an appealing political candidate to the traditional southern elite who saw him as an ally against northeastern business interests. By the 1932 election, many southerners viewed FDR as one of their own. He swept the Florida primary by an 8-1 margin over his nearest rival and secured the nomination at the Democratic Convention with overwhelming southern and western support. In the general election, he restored the Solid South that had wavered during Al Smith's candidacy to the Democratic fold.

He quickly rewarded long suffering southerners with posts in his administration and federal patronage. Significantly, almost every piece of early New Deal legislation had a southern sponsor.

Roosevelt saw the solution to the South's problems of poverty, inadequate schooling, and racial injustice in crop diversification and modernization. While no crusader for civil rights, FDR's New Deal nevertheless helped set in motion forces that would subvert the old order. Relief programs gave jobs and hope to the down-trodden, rural electrification transformed farm life, and aid to tenant farmers and legislation to protect workers' rights raised expectations and antagonized the traditional elite. Tellingly, as FDR built a national Democratic coalition, which included for the first time a majority of African American voters, conservative southerners became a minority within the party. His efforts to cultivate a new generation of liberal, southern progressives to replace the staunch conservatives, however, never quite succeeded. Although he helped Senator Claude Pepper hold off a conservative challenger in the 1938 Florida primary, FDR's interventions elsewhere on behalf of liberal candidates were generally unsuccessful and sometimes counterproductive. By the end of his presidency, the twin forces of the New Deal and mobilization for World War II had integrated the South more fully into the nation than ever, yet traditional southern leaders grew increasingly ambivalent about the shift of power toward the federal government.

For Truman, according to Leuchtenburg, "place was destiny" (2). His ambiguous identity as a border state Democrat secured his elevation to the vice presidency and, ultimately, the presidency. While Truman never quite overcame his family's Confederate background (his strong minded mother never let her son forget her childhood trauma of forcible relocation at the hands of Union forces) and racial outlook, his deep seated commitment to the Union, the Constitution, and fair play eventually led to his advocacy of civil rights measures. Truman became the first sitting president to address the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, where he memorably outlined his intention for the federal government to become the "vigilant defender of the rights and equalities of all Americans" (171). He initiated desegregation of the armed forces by executive order and established civil rights as a core plank of the national Democratic Party platform. Leuchtenburg acknowledges that Truman's actions undoubtedly derived in part from his recognition of the

growing importance of the black vote to the Democratic coalition, but he also reminds us that Truman was visibly moved and affronted by the accounts of the brutalization of southern African American veterans and their families who attempted to exercise their constitutional rights upon their return from World War II. Like Roosevelt, Truman sought to bring the South into the twentieth century by breaking the oppressive bonds of its history. His bold stance on racial issues, of course, accelerated the defection of white southerners from the Democratic Party. By the end of Truman's presidency, eight former Confederate states had abandoned the Democratic column. This transfer of political allegiance, Leuchtenburg contends, "is best explained not by socioeconomic forces but by disaffection from Roosevelt and Truman" (369).

Johnson completed the process initiated by his Democratic predecessors. A native of the Texas hill country, LBJ early understood that his identification as a southerner handicapped his national political ambitions and so by the late 1950s he began to reinvent himself as a westerner. He declined to sign the Southern Manifesto denouncing the *Brown* decision and pushed modest civil rights bills in 1957 and 1960 in part to demonstrate his national, rather than regional, perspective. While his "southernness" still hobbled his 1960 presidential bid, it also secured him the vice presidential spot. Following John F. Kennedy's assassination, Johnson repeatedly stressed his desire to overcome sectional divisions and bind the nation's wounds, particularly with regard to race. "Only by abandoning Jim Crow, Johnson deduced, could the South merge with the rest of the nation to address its economic necessities" (377). Rather than adopting the tone of an antagonist, moreover, LBJ tried to persuade white southerners to embrace his vision for the South and the nation. His spectacular legislative achievements in Civil Rights, Voting Rights, and Fair Housing won over formerly skeptical white liberals black leaders, but his native region was less impressed. Since 1964, no Democratic presidential candidate has won a majority of the white southern vote. Leuchtenburg notes that "Johnson's civil rights stance was the tipping point" in delivering white southern ballots to the Republican party (396).

The breadth and depth of Leuchtenburg's research is impressive. Drawing on research in over four hundred manuscript collections, over two hundred oral histories, and more than a hundred unpublished theses, dissertations, and conference

papers, Leuchtenburg's endnotes alone consume over a hundred pages. His extensive bibliography is sure to become an essential starting point for the next generation of students of the twentieth century South and its politics. Specialists familiar with the work of such scholars as David Goldfield, Bruce Schulman, Dewey Grantham, Roger Biles, Steven Lawson, Robert Dallek and Gavin Wright, among others, are unlikely to be surprised by the author's findings. Leuchtenburg, however, is a master storyteller with a keen eye for detail and the telling anecdote. This work demands a place alongside such classics as V. O. Key's *Southern Politics* for its expert synthesis of southern political history.

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Lethal Punishment: Lynchings and Legal Executions in the South. By Margart Vandiver. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006. xii, 284 pgs. Appendix A: Sources and Methods, Appendix B: Inventory of Confirmed Lynchings, Notes, Bibliography, Index, Figures, Tables, paperback \$27.95, cloth \$65.)

Lynchings, extra-legal violence and executions are topics that lend themselves to cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary examinations. The best works on these subjects are those that use a variety of means to document, analyze and interpret these phenomena. The author, Margaret Vandiver, comes to this subject as a criminal justice scholar interested in the tools both social scientists and historians use to explain lynchings and executions in the South. Instead of building a database of southern lynchings and executions, she chooses two communities—Marion County, Florida, and Shelby County Tennessee—as the focus of her analysis. From those two communities Vandiver hopes to explain the complexities and impact of lynching and their relation to legal executions in the South.

In the introduction the author confesses that she evaluated these cases to come to some specific conclusions about the nature of lynching and executions, but could not develop any broad generalizations. Additionally in the introduction she admits that in the selection of these two communities, "I do not consider these areas to be broadly representative of the South; they are chosen precise-

ly because they are “local, individual, and...particular.”(3) They also are communities that one would have to assume she lived near for some time since she earned her Ph. D. at Florida State University and is a faculty member at the University of Memphis. To any reader familiar with these geographic considerations, it seems these communities were selected, not because they represented a fitting sample of lynchings/executions but because they were both her back yard for some time.

Florida does provide an appropriate test case for lynching, since it was the state of highest per capita lynching record during this time. However the selection of Marion County over say Polk or Alachua that also had a high number of lynchings, or even Duval with a huge black population and relatively infrequent lynchings compared to the rest of the state, seems puzzling. Also her list of lynchings appears to be an undercount from other databases I have seen for Marion County. I am not sure why some lynchings were omitted. I believe the author needs a more convincing justification for why these two communities make an appropriate test case.

As a work of criminal justice and pure social science this book has a great deal to offer. Vandiver takes extraordinary care and offers rich detail to synthesize and define terms, and explain language and procedures that disparate scholars have used over the years to study lynchings and executions. For most readers lynchings and executions would be material for two separate books or studies; Vandiver demonstrates how and why they are related. Anyone interested in mob violence, legal and extra-legal killings would find this book useful to assist in deciphering the terms and categories of these different group events.

The author looks to the methods of both social scientists and historians to help evaluate her findings. Representing the social science side, she depended on the previous work of E. M. Beck and Stewart Tolnay; W. Fitzhugh Brundage served as a model for the historical methods. The result is a better social science then historical study. Similar to Beck and Tolnay the author examines numerous cases and “crunches the numbers” to claim that the two communities offer no effective link between lynching and legal executions. The social scientist might be pleased, even though there is no correlation. The author asked a question and used the data to answer that question. However the historian would not have been satisfied with that question alone. Vandiver wrote that, “A disadvantage of the method of research I have chosen for this

book is that it does not provide a solid basis for generalization. There is an inevitable trade-off between depth and breadth...I have chosengreater depth at the expense of broadly applicable findings.”(3) Here is the real problem with her approach. A historian would have found the broad picture not only from a large metropolis like Shelby County (Memphis) but also from a small rural community like Marion County. In part this was due to lack of models, Brundage’s book was the only historian referenced in the text. Other works by historians, and they are numerous, that take a specific lynching, a series of lynchings or even a community where lynchings occurred tease out the larger questions. For example Vandiver uses one entire chapter on the lynching of Ell Persons. That same lynching is at the core of the famous journal article by Kenneth W. Goings and Gerald L. Smith in the *Journal of Urban History* (1995). They used it to argue that specific lynching and mob action represented a transition in black working class relations in the Urban New South. Although Brundage’s book is exceptional and certainly the standard in southern lynching studies, the author would have been better served to have read and incorporated more historical works on the topic.

Lacking a forceful and convincing thesis, this book will not alter the historiographic paradigm on lynching. However, it will be useful as a reference for future historians interested in lynching and legal executions.

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South of the South, Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960. By Raymond A. Mohl with Matilda “Bobbi” Graff and Shirley M. Zoloff. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004. Acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xi-263. \$39.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.)

This review must begin with a caveat. I first met Professor Mohl and heard the germ of this book (his first paper about Jewish activism in Miami) at the 1992 Southern Historical Association Meeting in Atlanta. Now at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, until 1996 Raymond Mohl was a member of the history faculty at Florida Atlantic University—now my employer. I have mined earlier versions of this book for my own work, and am deeply indebted to him for his careful

scholarship and insightful interpretation. Had an earlier reviewer not been unable to complete the job, I might have refused this assignment, claiming bias. But an *FHQ* review of in *South of the South* is long overdue; it is an important Florida book. Earlier reviewers (for instance, in the *Journal of American History* and on the H-Florida Discussion Network) have already agreed with that assessment.

The book is ingeniously constructed, including first an extended essay by Ray Mohl, followed by sections written by the two women who personify the Jewish activists who, at very real personal risk, helped to create Miami's civil rights movement. Matilda's Graff's essay, written to explain the early years of the civil rights struggle to fellow students after she returned to college in the 1960s, has the spirit of the old left. Praising the progressivism of an earlier time, she laments the persecution (in Miami and elsewhere) that eliminated the socialist left from American politics. Shirley Zolof's pages, primarily her correspondence with the national office of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and others, might be dry and bureaucratic were it not for the fascinating way her details weave the story about integration of public accommodations, and about Miamians, black and white, involved in this struggle. Historians will find these primary sources invaluable, and all readers will be struck by the dedication and work ethic they portray. Graff and Zolof were young mothers who volunteered, working tenaciously for the common good in a very hostile environment. Such stories reinforce the validity of recent emphasis on women's contributions as well as on the significance of local organizing in the civil rights movement.

By the mid-1950s Miami had the South's largest Jewish community, but most Jews in southeast Florida were post-World War II newcomers. Often unlike conservative Jewish settlers who had come to Atlanta, Birmingham and other southern cities since the mid-19th century, among these recent arrivals a sizable minority, "with leftist leanings and activist backgrounds, rejected the acquiescent racial attitudes of their southern brethren." (6) Graff and Zolof both migrated to South Florida during its post-war boom and energetically allied themselves with local black leadership against Miami's white majority and even against most "respectable" Florida Jews. Mohl says this story is about "cooperation among *some* blacks and *some* Jews on the left, but it was not an alliance that had wide support or appeal in Cold War Florida." (61- emphasis in original).

The introductory essay analyses the work of Graff and Zolof and the national organizations they joined. These women never

met, primarily because Graff left Miami in 1954, the year Zoloff arrived, but they certainly had “leftist leanings and activist backgrounds” in common. Both came from working class Jewish families (New York and Philadelphia) and were by training and habit involved in community organizing and social justice causes. As Miami’s population exploded, the city lurched forward and backward, pulled on the one hand by new businesses, tourism, and northern settlers and on the other by varieties of rightist extremism typified by a recalcitrant city government and its racist police force, an agency comprised of many Klan sympathizers in the 1950s.

During Graff’s time in Miami the campaigns of civil rights activists protested police violence, held then illegal bi-racial meetings, cooperated with CIO union organizers, and joined others who fought for justice in well known Florida cases. Zoloff came to Miami the year of the *Brown* decision, which, though hated and resisted, nevertheless inspired a slightly more defensive attitude on the part of the Miami power structure as the fifties progressed. Police might still shadow suspected activists, but they were less likely to crack heads at an interracial meeting in 1959 than in 1949, and grand juries were less likely to be called or newspapers to publicly label civil rights advocates communist subversives (though they were still suspected “outside agitators”).

This points to a difference between these two activists not explored in much detail in the book. Graff’s primary alliance was with the leftist Civil Rights Congress (CRC), an organization whose chairman, William Patterson, was a known Communist Party member. Graff herself had a “loose” party affiliation until 1957 (66). The CRC offered legal aid and conducted very public campaigns against southern justice in many infamous rape cases; it died in 1956 amid accusations of subversion, two years after Graff left Miami for Canada to avoid testifying before a grand jury. Zoloff might have been a likely recruit, but Miami’s CRC was defunct by the time she arrived. Despite her brief investigation by Florida’s Johns Committee in 1960, her affiliations in Miami ranged from left to liberal center—she worked to promote integration of schools and public accommodations, joined the ACLU and the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, and cultivated relationships with national Jewish women’s organizations. CORE grew out of the peace movement and, in the years of Zoloff’s participation, remained devoted to non-violent change accomplished through diplomatic, incremental campaigns.

The ground-breaking sit-ins in Miami restaurants in 1959 were not immediately successful, but they did not result in a great public uproar or violent behavior. Zoloff later became deeply involved in local political battles (for Jack Orr, who lost, and Jack Gordon, a long-time winner), and in the mid-sixties joined the Miami staff of the Economic Opportunity Program, Inc. Locals perceived that both Graff and Zoloff brought “radical” groups to Miami in the 1950s, and both women devoted themselves to civil rights causes; but affiliation with the CRC in a repressive time (and at the height of its surveillance by the FBI and others) made Graff and her friends especially vulnerable. Graff is right when she says that activists of the 1940s and early 1950s “were eliminated by a society afraid of change.” (71)

Mohl concludes that “in Miami the most persistent and the most forceful black-Jewish alliance involving interracial activities was the one on the political left” (35), and that local, state, and national repression of the left set back civil rights change in Florida for at least a decade. I would simply suggest that despite the terrible pressures under which Zoloff and her friends operated and the racial and anti-Semitic violence of the late 1950s, Zoloff and CORE were not eliminated—they were agents of change in Miami. Anti-communist opponents drummed Graff and the CRC out of town; Zoloff and her allies stayed and continued to have influence, even after the demise of CORE.

South of the South’s methodology should inspire imitation, and its substance encourage expansion of the literature on both the Miami civil rights movement and the relationships between local groups of blacks and Jews in the South. This is a very accessible book, and teachers of Florida History, the Civil Rights Movement, and historical methods courses will find it useful.

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Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida.

By Gary R. Mormino. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 2006. Pp.xvii. 457. Introduction, photographs, maps, epilogue, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.)

For years, anyone desiring a one-volume history of the state of Florida inevitably turned to Charlton W. Tebeau’s *A History of Florida*, published in 1971. Beginning with prehistory and con-

cluding with a brief discussion of the anticipated opening of Walt Disney World, Tebeau's impressive work reflects the dominant historical trends of its time with its strong narrative and emphasis on political and economic affairs. In the Preface, Tebeau acknowledged the book's focus and urged other scholars to pursue studies of the state's rich social and cultural history. Scholars complied, and the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a rich outpouring of monographs and syntheses documenting the state's eclectic past. In 1996, a quarter century after the original publication of Tebeau's book, historian Michael Gannon marshaled an impressive list of scholars to contribute essays that eventually comprised *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville, 1996). With a strong social history emphasis, these essays greatly enrich and complicate the story originally laid out by Tebeau, particularly in their treatment of African American history and the history of Florida's original inhabitants. For all its strengths and virtues, though, *The New Florida History* exhibits the limitations of the edited volume. The question remained: Would anyone be able to take over where Tebeau had left off?

The wait is over. Gary R. Mormino's much anticipated *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* is destined to become the definitive work on the history of post-World War II Florida. Fittingly awarded the Charlton W. Tebeau Book Award for 2006 by the Florida Historical Society, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams* is an ambitious, and at times idiosyncratic, examination of the social, cultural and economic forces (among them migration, immigration, the explosion of tourism, technological innovation, and unparalleled urban and suburban development) that have dramatically reconfigured the state over the past fifty years. Engagingly written with equal parts humor, wit, hope, and cynicism, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams* will appeal to the general reader, and its boldly original assertions will keep scholars talking for years to come.

Once finished with the book, the reader is convinced that there is very little that Mormino, Frank E. Duckwall Professor of Florida Studies at the University of South Florida, does not know about his adopted state. Impressively researched and richly illustrated with a generous accompaniment of fine maps, charts, tables, and photographs, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams* is almost encyclopedic in its breadth, engulfing the reader in a sometimes dizzying array of data. But Mormino, skillful historian and master

storyteller, brings a sense of clarity and depth to the frenzied chaos of postwar Florida.

Mormino organizes his book in nine topical chapters that are unapologetically dedicated to the social, cultural, and economic (as opposed to the political) themes. Florida, Mormino argues, is an American dreamstate, a place of second chances, where anyone – veterans, immigrants, retirees, the middle class – might live the fantasy. Residing within the pages of this book is a colorful cast of characters who sought their fortunes in the Sunshine State, among them Dick Pope, the indefatigable creator of Cypress Gardens; and Brownie Wise, a single mom who almost single-handedly made Tupperware a household name.

But, Mormino illustrates, one person's subtropical utopia can quickly become another's sweaty dystopia. For example, the fashioning of Florida as a retirement haven has had unfortunate economic and generational consequences, as the needs of the elderly clash with the needs of school-age children. Florida's hospitable climate as the land of the franchise and its booming tourist industry relies on the low-wage jobs that keep a significant portion of the population mired in poverty. Mormino notes that in Orlando, home of Walt Disney World, forty percent of the area's workers hold low-paying amusement park and hotel jobs, and struggle to cover their housing, health, and transportation costs. Florida's viability depends on its ability to "instill and inspire magic and passion while maintaining a sense of moderation and balance[.]" (10)

Readers searching for familiar historical narratives will find themselves challenged to contemplate old paradigms in new ways. A case in point is Mormino's treatment of the civil rights movement in Florida. Absent is any mention of notable Florida figures like Rutledge Pearson and Harry T. Moore; rather Mormino treats civil rights within his chapter entitled "The Beach." He examines how, in their attempts to desegregate the state's primary tourist attractions, African Americans – mired in the stereotype of worker and producer – struggled to assume the status of consumer in the nation's consumer's paradise.

This is a passionate book that deserves to be read. And then read again. Mormino writes from a strong moral compass, and he is not afraid to make judgments. This is particularly true when discussing the calamitous environmental impact of the state's hyper growth, as well as the enduring and expanding poverty of those Floridians mired in the economy's service sector. Ultimately,

Mormino states, "the Florida of today is the America of tomorrow." (9) Any social, economic, or cultural change that swept the nation over the past fifty years has happened earlier, more quickly and with more intensity in Florida. From the expansion of consumer culture, to immigration, to suburban development, Florida's ability or inability to deal with massive change serves as an object lesson to the rest of the nation.

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The Floridas. Photographs by Ian Adams; text by Clay Henderson. (San Francisco: BrownTrout Publishers, 2006. 280 Photographs. Pp. 204. \$39.95 Hardcover.)

This large format text on Florida explores the diverse elements which make up the State known for its tourist attractions and beaches. The two contributors to *The Floridas* combine lush photographs with a broad overview of the events which culminated in the multiplicity of the appearance of the current landscape of the peninsula. Ian Adams's photography, honed by other forays into photographic monographs on nature, along with in-depth captions allows the reader to experience the many Floridas through the eyes of a keen observer. From the Everglades and its inhabitants to the architectural achievements of the State's builders, the over two hundred photographs fascinate the viewer due to their juxtaposition of the natural and manmade environments which constitute Florida. Clay Henderson, with his background as an environmental lawyer, considers the impact of change on the environment since the first incursions of humans into the region. *The Floridas* encourages aficionados of the beauty of the natural world and those interested in historical change to look at the State with a broader conception of the many elements which comprise the true Florida.

The nature of the fragile ecosystems found in Florida has accorded this region a fair amount of attention from amateur and professional photographers beginning early in its history as a travel destination. In the early nineteen hundreds, compilations such as *Photograph Album of Florida Scenes* (1904) piqued the interests of those unfamiliar with the strange flora and fauna of the State. Tales of alligators and large flocks of migrating birds drew natu-

ralists to Florida. The acceleration of the use of photography in the twentieth century saw the genre explode as a tool for the serious scientific recording of species as well as a venue for the aesthetic expressions of the wonders of nature. The black and white prints of Clyde Butcher in his text *Florida Landscape* (2001) imbue Florida scenes with a luminous atmosphere whereby art and nature coincide much as in the works of Ansel Adams. The authors of the *The Floridas*, while not ignoring the art form of nature photography, attempt to make this work a combination of aesthetic, scholarly and environmental inquiries. For example, the far reaching impact of over development on Florida's coasts and the resulting depletion of sand have combined to destroy many beaches. Clay Henderson points out that the beaches left in their natural state survive the ravages of coastal erosion due to their stabilizing vegetation (20). The environmental concerns which Henderson explains using his background knowledge are reinforced by Adams's photographs which demonstrate the intrinsic value and beauty of allowing nature to do its work.

Amateur photographers and professional photographers will appreciate the quality of the prints reproduced in this text. With startling clarity and richly saturated color the glory of Florida's vistas seem to jump off of the pages of this text. The peeks into small, intimate spaces often ignored by the casual observer, such as lichen on a sabal palm (53), enrich the appreciation for the variety of life forms found in unexpected places. Ian Adams also includes a technical section (11) about his photography which allows photographers insight into all of the various processes used for these prints. The photography in this text satisfies the most ardent student of the genre. The prints depicting nature showcase this photographer's strengths in this art form. The photographs of architecture found in the latter sections of the text enhance the idea that the manmade environments of the State differ greatly from the natural ones. The inclusion of vernacular "cracker" structures gives another dimension to the many ways the environment was utilized by the settlers of the region. The addition of the resort style architecture of places such as Boca Raton and Palm Beach show the extreme of the Florida experience. This portion of the text has been dealt with in such detail by scholars such as Donald Curl (*Mizner's Florida*, 1984) that it seemed anticlimactic to end with the great places of those who had so few ties to the natural world of the State.

The text by Clay Henderson reads in a pleasant flow which encourages the lay person to continue on throughout the narrative. Henderson gives just enough detail to entice readers to perhaps further explore the history of the State in more specific historical monographs. For the scientific reader, Henderson uses the genus and species, in addition to more common names, for many of the plants and animals discussed. He also analyzes various aspects of the evolution of the Florida landmass. This narrative does not overburden the reader with too much technical jargon and thus would be recommended for those interested in an introduction to many aspects, both historical and environmental, of Florida. For those looking for a critical and scholarly work, the text of *The Floridas* seems to rely on the extant historiography of the State. The lack of citation and bibliography makes this an assumption in this review.

The Floridas uses visual expressions along with words to explore the diverse nature of Florida's environments. Adams and Henderson produced a text which showcases the beauty and uniqueness of the State along with an appeal for readers to pay attention to what has happened in the region due to development. The appeal for conservation and preservation in the final two chapters of the text appear as a worthy closing to this work. Through the eyes of an admittedly pro-Florida photographer and the words of an environmental lawyer the importance of the State's survival shines through.

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The American South in the Twentieth Century. Edited by Craig S. Pascoe, Karen Trahan Leathem and Andy Ambrose. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005. Preface, illustrations, index. Pp. xiv, 320. \$54.95, cloth, \$22.95 paper.)

To travel through the South today is to wonder when, if ever, you are going to get there. So much of it looks and feels the same as everywhere else in America. Thanks to air-conditioning, the automobile, immigration, the mall, television, and all the other usual suspects of modern mobility and commercial relentlessness, the most quaint-sounding southern town is no longer so easy to

distinguish from any nameless overbuilt crossroads in the BosWash corridor. But it's too simplistic to therefore conclude that the metastasizing corporate clutter strewn across the former agricultural lands and the ever-accelerating cultural borrowing it all represents must mean that in recent decades the South's distinctive regionalism has steadily gone the way of the "damnyankee" epithet. The story of southern history – *American* history, really – is not so linear and black-and-white, so to speak.

But yet, in an era that privileges the fast pace and the packaged sound bite, many of us cling to the notion that all change might be summarized and boiled down into digestible narratives, that the American South in the 20th century, for example, might be fully captured in a mere 300 or so pages. To their credit, most historians – like those of the caliber writing in this volume – particularly resist playing along with this conceit. They are rarely comfortable shoe-horning their diffuse and contingent arguments into tidy periodization bracketed by rounded-off dates. In this case, the 100-year span would seem to proffer a logical and readable coherence, in part because the South's central issue of the time – racial segregation – arguably followed a "rise and fall" dramatic storyline from century's beginning to end. The culture of segregation put in place in the pre-World War I years was dismantled, at least in terms of the law, by the century's latter decades, was it not? Each of the 1900s' major episodes – the New Deal, World War II, the Great Migration, the Cold War, the civil rights movement, etc. – seemed in their way to advance the rising action, isn't that right? Alas, it's not that simple, as several of the authors remind us. Grace Elizabeth Hale, for example, writes that any such heroic version of the race story "starts too late and ends too soon." (65)

The message that our racial history remains in contest is just one of the many unsettling complexities (and relevancies) conveyed to readers of this volume, a collection of 17 essays from scholars of Southern history and politics. For every discernible progression since 1900, so it seems, there is a countervailing and complicating argument poised for retort. Sometimes the contradictions appear within the same essay. For example, Hale's excellent piece on southern race relations posits two fundamental 20th century narratives: integration is possible, and integration is impossible. Alexander P. Lamis, meanwhile, charts the rise of the post-World War II Republican Party in the South while also stressing its converse: the ideologically diverse black-white coalition

within the Democratic Party that brought to power such “moderate” southern figures as Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. Elsewhere, conflict is evident between scholars. For instance, Gavin Wright insists that a strictly regional “southern economy” did in fact once exist, whereas David L. Carlton emphasizes that the South has had substantial commercial and financial ties to the “outside world” dating to the antebellum period. In his piece that serves as the book’s introduction, James C. Cobb, examining one among many areas of apparent contention, sees thematic unity in scholarly cacophony: “all the essays present change and continuity not so much in conflict as in an exceedingly complex and uneven process of mutual adaptation.” (10)

The book is an expanded and updated version of a 2001 special issue of *Atlanta History: A Journal of Georgia and the South*, a periodical associated with the Atlanta History Center. And in fact, an Atlanta-centric and Georgia-centric tilt is evident in several places in the book. For example, Tom Wolfe’s Atlanta-based novel *A Man in Full* is discussed at length and its fictional hero, Georgia Tech gridiron star Charlie Croker, we are told, might serve “as the biography of the region.” (128) Georgia’s own Scarlett O’Hara, meanwhile, makes her entrance on Page 3 as the quintessence of the “underside of the New South’s so-called rise from the ashes.” Later, John Shelton Reed, searching for the one state to represent the entire South, offers an extensive argument for, yes, Georgia and adds that “the Southeast that Atlanta serves is the South of the future.” (145) The rare mention of Florida, as on Page 198, in the context of a discussion of race in baseball spring training, serves as a reminder that certain states and important figures (Huey P. Long?) receive comparatively scant attention. Mississippi appears occasionally, but often its characterization veers toward straw-man or cliché. Reed, for example, cites sociologist Charles S. Johnson’s view that the Magnolia State is where, “the shadow of the plantation fell darkest and lingered longest.” (144)

The focus on Atlanta partly is a consequence of the volume’s repeated emphasis on the South’s economic and industrial development, especially post-World War II; Georgia’s capital is an obvious and conspicuous example of dynamic Sun Belt growth. Relatedly, some of the discussions of business-craving white southern moderates and their (albeit reluctant) acceptance of some race change as the price of development – as in Gavin Wright’s essay “Persisting Dixie,” for example – are among

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the most compelling parts of the book. After years of assiduous “smokestack chasing” and “selling of the South” to attract what seems to have resulted, namely feverish development, it is an interesting and probably endless debate as to what extent meaningful racial transformation has also been achieved. What is beyond dispute, however, is the most fitting word in the title of this book, ostensibly about 100 years of southern history, is *American*.

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