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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Daniel Murphree, Book Review Editor

The Mosquito Crusades: A History of the American Anti-Mosquito Movement from the Reed Commission to the First Earth Day. By Gordon Patterson. Studies in Modern Science, Technology and the Environment. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009. Acknowledgements, introduction, illustrations, epilogues, notes, index. Pp. 270. \$49.95 cloth.)

Gordon Patterson envisions *The Mosquito Crusades* as a sequel to his well-received work, *The Mosquito Wars: A History of Mosquito Control in Florida* (2004), but it might be better described as a prequel to that work. In *The Mosquito Crusades*, Patterson traces the origins of the mosquito elimination and control movement. Unlike many Hollywood prequels, the effort is mostly successful.

Patterson's book might be more properly titled *The Mosquito Crusad-ERS* because its organizing focus is resolutely on the people who battled mosquitoes from 1900 to 1970. He divides the anti-mosquito movement into two distinct phases: the drainage era from early 1900 to the Second World War and the insecticide era dating from the 1942 discovery of dichlorodiphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT)'s effective killing power. Patterson properly draws upon the Progressive era phrase "crusade" to capture the zeal and moral overtones of the drive to exterminate mosquitoes.

The man responsible for creating the model to eliminate the mosquito pest was an energetic New Jersey entomologist named John B. Smith. Smith, from his position as entomologist at New Jersey's Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers (fittingly

Patterson's book is published by Rutgers University Press), was convinced that the swarms of mosquitoes that plagued New Jersey could be controlled and even eliminated by sustained, systematic effort. Smith's approach was typical of the Progressive Era with its call for careful study of the mosquito by scientific experts and its promise of public benefit and private profit. The key to the success of Smith's program was not only the effectiveness of his plan to eliminate breeding areas through drainage and the judicious use of oiling, but also his tireless advocacy to educate both the public and elected officials as to the benefits that would accrue from effective mosquito control. From Smith's efforts was born the New Jersey Mosquito Extermination Association (NJMEA), a civic and state funded program.

The NJMEA served as a template in mosquito control programs for other states and devoted acolytes came to study the methods and programs Smith devised. New Jersey's mosquito control efforts were primarily focused on the "pest" implications of the insect, while other states—California and Florida were early adopters—sought to eliminate the mosquito because of its role in transmitting deadly diseases. In this capacity of disease control, local and state organizations joined forces with the Rockefeller's International Health Board and the United States Public Health Service on a decades-long effort to break mosquito-borne disease transmission. Mosquito programs strived to tailor control efforts to the individual locations as opposed to a one-size-fits-all strategy combining drainage, larvicides, and the introduction of larvae-eating minnows to eliminate or control the insect. This nuanced approach to mosquito control, admittedly more often aspiration than reality, was soon to be eclipsed by the discovery of the wonder chemical DDT.

The Orlando research laboratory's 1942 discovery of DDT's persistent insecticide properties seemed a godsend to military and public health planners. By the end of the Second World War, the chemical was being widely applied in the United States and around the world and was credited with stopping typhus, malaria, yellow fever, and dengue fever outbreaks in their tracks. In the decades that followed, some even hoped for the eradication of these dread diseases by widespread use of DDT to eliminate the mosquito vectors and permanently break the transmission cycle. In the United States, mosquito control increasingly relied upon the massive use of cheap and effective DDT spraying, a method largely unchallenged until the 1960s.

In 1962 the first of Rachel Carson's essays was published in *The New Yorker* magazine. The essays, collected into a book under the title *Silent Spring*, electrified the nation with the charge that widespread insecticide use, most notably DDT, was having profound environmental effects. *Silent Spring* served as a trumpet call for the creation of the modern environmental movement, galvanized public pressure to limit or eliminate insecticide use and culminated in the first Earth Day.

Patterson's focus on the individuals involved in mosquito control is generally successful, especially in his discussion of the formation of mosquito control organizations in the early twentieth century. He makes excellent use of the papers and proceedings of the mosquito elimination organizations supplemented with personal recollections and interviews from many of the leading figures of the anti-mosquito campaigns. But this focus on the leaders of the movement is necessarily top down, and this top down approach is less satisfying in Patterson's discussion of the insecticide era. In addition, Patterson's narrative approach fails to account for the philosophical gulf between these anti-mosquito crusaders and the new environmentalists. Those mosquito control leaders opposed to widespread use of DDT based their opposition on the practical concerns that the chemical was becoming less effective. Those who followed Rachel Carson's lead objected because of the wide-ranging, and still unclear, effects of these chemicals on the ecosystem. While no one was seriously suggesting a mosquito preservation campaign, there was increasing resistance to the environmental changes necessarily wrought by mosquito elimination. Mosquito eradication requires ditching and draining or the application of poisons which causes environmental damage. In the early 1900s such damage, when even acknowledged, seemed a fair trade-off for the elimination of the insect menace. Beginning in the 1960s, that trade-off was reevaluated and often found wanting.

These critiques aside, this reviewer judges *The Mosquito Crusade* a success. Patterson provides a lively account of the people who worked so tirelessly to eradicate the mosquito pest. Readers of Patterson's previous work, *The Mosquito Wars*, will appreciate how he integrates Florida's long-running conflict with the mosquito into the wider movement of mosquito eradication. Those readers interested in the field of public health will appreciate Patterson's account of a health crusade that compliments other twentieth cen-

tury health programs. The casual reader will enjoy the quirky characters and unique movement engagingly illuminated by Patterson. The banners of "elimination" of the mosquito may be furled, but the war continues. Patterson has made great strides in narrating this formative period in the U. S. crusade against the mosquito.

George Dehner

Wichita State University

Maroon Communities in South Carolina: A Documentary Record. By Timothy James Lockley. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009. Preface, introduction, images, maps, further reading, index. Pp. 176. \$19.95 paper).

By the early 1700s, the swampy strip of South Carolina's low-country was fertile ground for maroon communities. Formed by slaves who had run away from rice and, to a lesser extent, cotton plantations, these communities flourished in the densely forested swamps that functioned as safe havens. Though they developed a relatively self-sufficient and stable community life based on family bonds and an agricultural economy, the maroons never completely isolated themselves from South Carolina's slave society, often plundering the plantations around the Santee or the Savannah Rivers. These intrusions, in addition to ongoing economic and social ties with the slaves who remained on the plantations, made the communities a magnet for those still enslaved, and a target for those who enslaved them.

Using a broad array of sources, including reports written by state officials, newspaper reports, Grand Jury proceedings, private correspondence, and trial records, Timothy James Lockley argues that maroon communities were a significant historical phenomenon in South Carolina until the 1830s, and that this fact has been neglected in the historiography of the region. Written with the goal of becoming a resource for those interested in slavery, maronage, and Southern history in general, and in spite of consisting mainly of original documents, the book turns out to be very readable and well-structured thanks to the careful chronological arrangement of documents and introductory information.

The chronology of marronage in the region is actually one of the key contributions of the book. Maroon communities appeared only half a century after the foundation of South

Carolina in 1670, increased in numbers during the late colonial period, and continued to expand during the Revolutionary War and its aftermath. During the first half of the eighteenth century, marronage was shaped by the African origins of the slaves who worked in the rice plantations of the lowcountry. South Carolina had a very high proportion of African-born slaves during this period, more so than other colonies such as Virginia, North Carolina, or Florida. Another prominent feature of the colonial period was the colonists' use of Indian communities (Catawbas, Natchez) as scouts and soldiers to hunt down the maroons, usually in exchange for material rewards. These hunters often successfully tracked the maroons in the swamps, discovering their crops and gardens.

The turmoil of the Revolutionary War provided even more opportunities for absconding from the plantations, particularly for women and children. It was during this period that the influence of the Atlantic World powerfully shaped the life of maroons in South Carolina. Charleston newspapers recorded the achievements of Jamaican and Surinamese maroons who forced the British and the Dutch colonial governments to sign agreements accepting the existence of large maroon groups inside their territories. Local maroons in South Carolina adopted the names of Jamaican rebel leaders. Northern abolitionists defended the maroons as freedom fighters, thus paralleling developments in Great Britain. In the mid-1780s, however, the joint military action carried out by Georgia and South Carolina along the Savannah River seems to have had a deep impact on marronage. The causes remain unclear, but from then until 1813 there is much less evidence about marronage in the area.

The "final flourishing of marronage" took place between 1813 and 1829. In the districts of Clarendon and Sumter the search for runaways generated a rich documentation that shows how information networks built by maroons reached slaves on the plantations. On the other hand, it is also clear that some slaves participated as informers in the counter-marronage tactics of the planters. These tactics included a "shoot-on-sight" policy executed by the militias, a controversial tactic to some cotton and rice planters who deemed it counterproductive. Around 1830, settler expansion, driven by increased demand for new lands, encroached into previously unused territory, probably harming the formation of new maroon communities.

South Carolinian maroons never reached the visibility of their counterparts in Florida. Their communities were small and short-lived in comparison to Gracia Real de Santa María de Mose, a community of runaways located two miles north of St. Augustine that the Spanish used as a defense against England and other Atlantic powers. Nor do Carolinian maroons compare to the Floridian Black Seminoles who traversed borders with the United States throughout the nineteenth century. The comparison to other cases of marronage across the Atlantic World remains underdeveloped in the book, despite the fact that the frequency of plundering and other issues deserve such a comparative analysis. What the book does very well is show how, in the lowcountry swamps of South Carolina as in those other better-studied venues, marronage represented an important opportunity for freedom and community for South Carolinian slaves, as well as a permanent and consistent threat to the planters of the region.

Oscar de la Torre

University of Pittsburgh

That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution. By Lars Schoultz. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2009. Introduction, maps, conclusion, notes, index. Pp. 760. \$35.00 cloth.)

The United States has long maintained a dysfunctional relationship with Cuba, especially since the island nation's 1950 revolution. The foremost scholar of U.S.-Latin American relations, Lars Schoultz, examines this affiliation with verve, humor, and expertise in a new comprehensive study. The problem, as Schoultz sees it, lies in Americans' fundamental misunderstanding of the Cuban people's aspirations dating back at least to the Spanish-American War. What American policymakers in 1898 viewed as a U.S. liberation, most Cuban nationalists saw as a betrayal and American conquest. Due to the U.S. imposition of the Platt Amendment, as well as vast American investment and disadvantageous trade treaties, Cuba simply exchanged one colonial master for another. U.S. racist attitudes clearly influenced Washington's high-handed treatment of the Cuban people, whom many Americans viewed as retarded, mixed-race children incapable of self-government (38). Schoultz captures this U.S. contempt for

Cubans in several outrageous and telling quotes by American officials, including one by Theodore Roosevelt that provides the title for this work. U.S. attempts to "uplift" and "instruct" the Cuban people set the pattern for the later catastrophic failures to respond rationally to populist revolution on the island.

American statesmen from TR to Eisenhower also took Cuba for granted as a sunny pleasure island and investment site that only required occasional supervision via pro-U.S. dictators such as Gerardo Machado and Fulgencio Batista. The real and totally unexpected crunch occurred in the late 1950s with the rise of the Cuban Revolution and Fidel Castro. To American leaders, the profundity of this radical political and social transformation proved incomprehensible. The very idea that any Latin American people possessed the temerity to reject U.S. notions of proper political/economic development astounded Washington, as it does to this day. While the Eisenhower administration totally misread the Cuban Revolution in its early stages, the Kennedy White House obsessed over Castro to the point of nuclear showdown with near apocalyptic consequences. Castro's nationalization of U.S. assets on the island certainly hastened a ferocious confrontation. But the 1961 Bay of Pigs debacle revealed a colossal misunderstanding of the genuine popularity of Fidel's revolution as well as a myopic U.S. arrogance related to American ability to control events in Cuba. This CIA fiasco led to the equally distorted Operation Mongoose, a U.S.-state-sponsored terrorist campaign designed to sabotage Cuba's economy and assassinate its leader. Whether or not Fidel planned a Soviet alliance from day one of his revolution, Eisenhower and JFK's animosity certainly helped facilitate his movement in that direction. Pulling back from the abyss of nuclear annihilation after the 1962 Missile Crisis did not dissuade American leaders from their continuing malevolence towards Cuba nor their desire, as Lyndon Johnson put it, "to pinch their nuts" (214). Indeed, a U.S. trade embargo against Cuba would keep Washington and Havana locked in an adversarial stance for the next half-century.

Various attempts to break this straitjacket of hostility failed due to the growing political influence of the Cuban exile community in Florida and Castro's continued interventions in the Third World. In the late 1970s President Jimmy Carter came closest to reconfiguring the Cold War stand-off with Cuba. But Castro's decision to continue his adventures in Africa, combined with the 1980

Maríel boatlift in which Fidel mixed his worst criminals among political refugees, ended any chance for normalizing relations. Carter's successor, Ronald Reagan, prosecuted the Cold War in the Caribbean Basin and Central America with counterinsurgency campaigns and a U.S. invasion of Cuban-allied Grenada. Reagan's Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, actually vowed "to turn Cuba into an f...ing parking lot" at the height of this hard-line policy (369). Schoultz assigns a chapter to each president's approach to Cuba from Truman to George W. Bush. Amazingly, even the fall of the Soviet Union and the growing U.S.-China alliance failed to alter American animus toward socialist Cuba. To the contrary, Castro's perverse refusal to collapse following the Soviet aid cutoff further enraged his Beltway and Miami enemies. Thus, President Bill Clinton found himself enmeshed in the Elián González fiasco and the Helms-Burton Act that extended the U.S. grudge against Cuba into the realm of international extraterritoriality. George W. Bush, ever mindful of his reliance on Florida's electoral votes, hitched his star to the exiles. He even installed a giant streaming electronic ticker at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana that broadcast anti-Castro slogans until Cubans constructed an array of flags to block it (551). Albert Einstein once defined insanity as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." As such, U.S.-post 1959 policy toward Cuba might be construed as insane.

Or is it? Schoultz notes that legitimate issues of national security, economics, and domestic politics have driven the relationship's demons. Added to these motivations is Cuba's refutation of Washington's ideological crusade for global capitalism, hemispheric solidarity, and multi-party democracy, all on U.S. terms. While the United States could accept far worse pro-capitalist dictators, it could never countenance an anti-capitalist one, be he Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, or the latest, Hugo Chavez. Schoultz is not optimistic that the U.S. counterproductive strategy for defeating Cuba will either change or succeed. The author's fine work draws upon a wealth of U.S. archival records, popular Cuban sources, and extensive first-hand interviews with Cuban and U.S. officials. The one weakness of this study, its lack of Cuban archival materials as sources, is not the author's fault as these are still unavailable to American scholars. Schoultz could have concentrated more on Castro's deplorable human rights record and put the U.S. invasion of Grenada in a larger context as political cover for the Marine bar-

racks bombing in Lebanon, but these are small faults in an otherwise outstanding study. While lengthy and detailed, Schoultz's account is highly readable and filled with his characteristic barbed humor and knack for choice quotes. He has produced a classic for students of modern U.S.-Cuban relations and a caution against the ideological obsessions that have driven U.S. policy off the rails in many parts of the world.

Michael Donoghue

Marquette University

Bush v. Gore: Exposing the Hidden Crisis in American Democracy. By Charles L. Zelden. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008. 390 pp. Preface, acknowledgments, afterword, appendices, notes, index. \$34.95 cloth.)

Crises in federal elections are nothing new in this country, but it is unfortunate how quickly most Americans forget them or ignore their threat to the founding fathers' democratic designs. This is the chief assertion and warning from Charles L. Zelden in *Bush v. Gore: Exposing the Hidden Crisis in American Democracy*. These crises are not hidden like classified documents, but are hidden in plain sight—entwined in partisan politics, litigation, and bureaucratic shortfalls.

True to its title, the book focuses on the events and people surrounding one of the most disappointing legal predicaments in the nation's history. Zelden explains that the *Bush v. Gore* case was the dramatic finale of an intense-five week period that saw dozens of lawsuits initiated in relation to Florida's selection of federal electors in the 2000 presidential election. The difference in Electoral College votes between Vice President Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush was so narrow that Florida became a "winner-take-all" state. Exacerbating the tension was a razor-thin margin of a few hundred popular votes between the two candidates. Complaints that Florida election officials wrongfully denied many citizens voting rights, confused voters with poorly designed ballots, and used faulty "punch card" voting machines that invalidated thousands of votes, received extensive national attention.

In response, lawyers and staffers for both candidates quickly descended on the state, determined to manage the vote recounts and discussions with tactics that would benefit their candidate the

most. A dizzying number of legal complaints soon followed. Zelden notes that the law firm of Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris took part in forty suits filed in only thirty-six days (63). Gore's lawyers and supporters deliberately targeted four counties—Volusia, Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade—and sought liberal recount procedures that would include many ballots previously invalidated by election officials and counting machines. Bush's supporters attacked this approach and interpreted the confusing state election statutes and codes much more narrowly. They also held distinct advantages over Gore: a Republican secretary of state willing to certify election results as quickly as possible, a Republican majority in the legislature, and better access to the state's top law firms. The result was an election that left the control of voters and voting officials and landed in the hands of a small number of judges and attorneys. Zelden concludes that: "What developed in Florida before the horrified eyes of the nation and the world was the legalization of politics and the politicization of the law" (86).

Zelden includes several cases that stemmed from the election, including notable ones that were underreported or ignored amidst the highly politicized debates. The Florida Supreme Court played a prominent role, ultimately ordering a statewide recount of votes. But the U.S. Supreme Court surprised many experts by hearing arguments for what became *Bush v. Palm Beach County Canvassing Board* and *Bush v. Gore*. As a federal deadline loomed and public pressure mounted, a tenuous majority opinion reversed the state court, ending the Florida recount and Gore's hopes for the presidency.

Zelden capably culls and explains the most important parts of this complex myriad of legal issues and actions. Thanks to extensive media coverage, court records, and Florida's broad "Sunshine" Law for public records and meetings, Zelden has adequate primary sources to describe the timeline of events. While everyone knows Bush became president, few understand how the political process evolved into a unique legal case. *Bush v. Gore* is an effective education tool in this respect, and will appeal to those who purchase similar books, even ones not printed by university publishers. Several authors seized the opportunity to immediately analyze the *Bush v. Gore* case, including law professors Richard Posner and Alan Dershowitz, and legal scholars have published several articles on its ramifications. Though Zelden admits it is too soon to include insightful documents like the personal papers of

U.S. Supreme Court justices, the timing of the book presents an opportunity for a scathing progress report on federal election reforms. However, many years must pass before the 2000 election will become ripe for an academic, historiographical discussion.

Zelden's analysis of judicial opinions and constitutional law is strong enough to render some of his speculations unnecessary and out of place. In particular, hypothetical scenarios in chapter nine propose how Congress might have handled the election crisis, even though the lawmakers were sidelined by the U.S. Supreme Court. The problem is, "what-ifs" serve no purpose in discussions of what happened. But this does not cloud Zelden's point that if Americans are going to have fair and efficient elections, they must demand a lot from not only their government, but from themselves.

Russell Moore

University of Central Florida

Lowcountry Hurricanes: Three Centuries of Storms at Sea and Ashore.

By Walter J. Fraser, Jr. (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2006. Map, illustrations, appendix, notes, index. Pp. xiii, 319. \$19.95 paper.)

In his book *Lowcountry Hurricanes: Three Centuries of Storms at Sea and Ashore*, Walter Fraser, professor emeritus at Georgia Southern University, has recounted what seems like every gale that so much as brushed the coast of South Carolina and Georgia from 1786 to 2004. Readers confront dark clouds, torrential rains, raging winds, surging tides, and crashing waves on page after page. Again and again, the storms wreck ships, drown sailors, uproot trees, ruin crops, and collapse houses. Indeed, Fraser examines in full detail the destructive power of nature along the Lowcountry coast. Unfortunately, he barely touches the more important issues of how storms changed the culture of the Lowcountry over time and, in turn, how the residents of the area responded to the certainty that storms would blow, seas would rage, and people would die.

The best environmental histories weave together the dynamic affect that human culture and nature have on one another over time. Fraser tells us a great deal about the few days that each storm blew; and he relates some very broad economic and historic changes in the region. However, in this book, details of the weather and general contours of Lowcountry history are listed side-by-

side but seldom integrated. And the historical changes that are most relevant for the topic and those that might have offered special insight into the particulars of customs, race, class, and demographics in the area have not been included. For example, we read multiple stories of heroic rescues at sea but nothing of local marine rescue organizations, the evolution of life-saving techniques at sea, or the role and impact of the United States Coast Guard. We learn that after the storm of 1911 white officials rejected assistance from the Red Cross because they feared it might undermine black initiative to work. However, there is little information provided on intermediate or long-term responses to the storms, social services or public or private welfare agencies for blacks and whites between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. With so many storms and so much destruction, surely preparations were made, and plans executed, for what has come to be called relief and recovery from hurricanes. Even his account of hurricane Hugo, "the most costly storm ever to strike the lowcountry and state" (247), begins and ends on September 21-22, 1989, the days that the storm hit. Likewise, the course and consequences of massive coastal development in the post-World War II era is mentioned briefly in the conclusion, but not examined in the body of the book. And Fraser refers only in passing, toward the end of the book, to the all-important effort to more accurately predict the path and power of storms; although weather forecasting, particularly storm forecasting, was a constant pre-occupation for mariners, farmers, and a host of other coastal residents throughout the time span of the book. The Weather Service, the U.S. Weather Bureau, and the National Hurricane Center do appear, but a fuller discussion of their histories and mission would be helpful. In a similar regard, a brief discussion of the evolution of communication equipment and technology seems essential to the story of how humans responded over time to this particular threat of nature, but is absent from the book.

Fraser's emphasis on narrative over analysis suggests that this book will find a better reception among the general public than scholars. His research in secondary sources, manuscripts, and a long list of newspapers has uncovered gripping eyewitness descriptions of the devastating power of wind and water. An abundance of photos confirms the tales of destruction told in the text. Fraser also includes rich descriptions of the flora and fauna of the Lowcountry, and augments clear explanations of Carolina and

Georgia geography with an excellent map of the coast. The appendix consists of a well-designed chart of all the major storms in chronological order and includes columns on wind speed, storm surge, damage, and death.

For some readers, these storms stories will make striking human drama, but others may question how much detail is too much. For example, do readers need or want to know that on October 19, 1950, "World War II veteran, Q. E. Hooks, who had recently been acquitted in a fatal shooting, was hunting marsh hens in a creek near Brunswick when high winds (from a tropical storm) capsized his boat and he drowned" (230). And titles of chapters and subheadings such as "The First Storms of the New Century," "Last Storms of the Cycle," "Another Cycle of Tropical Storms," "Tropical Storms and a Hurricane," "Storms, Hurricanes, and a Tornado," and "Hurricanes, 1960s and 1970s" insinuate that, in this book, it is same old wind and water; just different trees, houses, and beach towns that are destroyed.

Stephen O'Neill

Furman University

Education for Liberation: The American Missionary Association and African Americans, 1890 to the Present. By Joe E. Richardson and Maxine D. Jones. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009. Preface, Acknowledgements, Afterword, Notes on Sources, Notes, Images, Index. Pp.368. \$49.50 cloth)

The American Missionary Association (hereinafter referred to as the AMA) played a critical role in African-American education in the South. Its role during the Reconstruction era has perhaps been most closely studied. Yet, the group's efforts during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era and beyond have proven to be equally important. In the formative years of the Civil Rights Movement, the AMA was an important resource, giving support to education facilities, helping to develop African-American universities, and creating a generation of civil rights leaders. Often, authors will attempt to attract attention by declaring their story is a forgotten one that deserves to be told; in the case of the AMA, such a claim happens to be true.

Richardson and Jones have written an important volume that documents the role of the AMA from the 1890s to the early Civil

Rights Movement. The AMA was but part of a range of private efforts to support both education and integration of African-Americans into the mainstream of American life. However, what made the AMA unique was that it remained engaged with the issues of African-American education over many decades. Moreover, unlike the deeply racist General Education Board, its principal focus was on improving the lives of southern African-Americans. Indeed, the national leadership of the AMA was deeply committed to the ideal of racial equality. This was demonstrated not only by the way its members expressed opposition to lynching, disfranchisement, and segregation, but also in the organization's striving for an integrated teaching environment at universities.

As Richardson and Jones demonstrate, the approach of the AMA also revealed shifts in education philosophies across time. In the earlier period, the AMA often provided support for the lower grades, but as state support for education increased, it gradually scaled back its efforts. This willingness of the AMA to cede control to southern state governments was at times resented by black parents, something that is not surprising considering how frequently southern politicians denounced African-American education in shrill tones. Outside of urban areas, the quality of state support was often quite minimal. Nevertheless, with limited resources AMA officials preferred to invest in the higher levels of schooling.

This monograph also serves as a way of charting the progress of southern education at the local level. In many ways, it is stunning to see the inadequacy of educational facilities for African-Americans well into the twentieth-century. The authors' document the incredible consequences of decades of neglect of African-American children. One has to wonder how much worse it would have been but for the active assistance of private supporters of African-American education.

Of course, besides simply encouraging African-American education in a formal sense, the AMA also sought to use education as a way to benefit the larger black community. Historians have at times become overly involved in a lengthy rhetorical struggle between the supporters and detractors of African-American educator and race leader, Booker T. Washington. When discussed in the wider literature, vocational education thus often becomes less about the purpose this form of education served and more about what it represents in a symbolic sense. However, that was not the way that rural African-American southerners thought about voca-

tional education. Instead, all forms of education were valued, although they certainly recognized the limitations imposed during the segregationist era. Richardson and Jones' fourth chapter, which discusses vocational education and how it merged with the creation of community centers, is one of the more interesting discussions. These efforts at practical education were also ways to connect with the concerns of a rural, adult community that often remained deeply interested in using education as a way to improve their families' livelihood. Vocational education thus resonated with the larger African-American community, garnering focus and attention.

The authors also address some of the difficulties that the AMA faced throughout the twentieth century. Contrary to a widely held belief among the African-American community that the AMA was awash with money, it often had very limited resources. While the AMA was fortunate to have a number of wealthy benefactors, the amount of money it had to work with was limited. Moreover, the support of the Congregational Church for the AMA's educational mission gradually lessened over time. Eventually, the Home Missions Board absorbed the AMA and the latter lost its separate identity. Of course by then, several other groups had begun to provide institutional support for African-American education.

After World War II the AMA played a less critical role in African-American education, but it remained engaged in the issues of the larger Civil Rights Movement. Especially interesting is the chapter on the Race Relations Department. The Race Relations Department engaged in a range of activities that sought to support a civil rights agenda. It conducted institutes, trained future leaders of the movement, and administered a series of self-surveys for requesting cities. The fact that places as diverse as Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Baltimore, and San Francisco were beginning to pay close attention to the issue of racial discrimination suggests how times had changed. Naturally, the AMA became a target of segregationists when it organized an institute in Nashville. That could hardly have been considered a new experience for the AMA because it had faced white southern hostility since the early days of Reconstruction.

This is an important work that deserves a wide audience. The authors present a wealth of evidence on the way that African-Americans and their supporters remained engaged in important issues throughout the segregationist era. This book clearly debunks

the myth of African-American withdrawal after disfranchisement. It also demonstrates that civil rights activism took place over many decades before the final dramatic breakthroughs in the 1950s and 1960s.

Lewie Reece

Anderson University

Tabloid Valley: Supermarket News and American Culture. By Paula E. Morton. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. Prologue, acknowledgments, images, bibliographic essay, bibliography, index. Pp. 224 \$24.95 cloth.)

Most in the academy who study the press have avoided the supermarket tabloids, much as they do while standing at the grocery check-out counter. Page-one stories about an actress's massive weight gain (or anorexia) are too removed from the "serious" concerns of mainstream journalism. A few scholars have broken ranks, notably S. Elizabeth Bird in *For Inquiring Minds* (1992), a cultural study of the tabloid. Although not a formal history, Bird's book took the "tabs" and their readers seriously. Paula E. Morton's *Tabloid Valley*, though published by a university press, is far less scholarly than Bird's book, and will be less satisfying to historians of American journalism and mass culture.

The supermarket tabloids deserve better. Theirs is a fascinating history. Moreover, to the horror of innumerable journalism teachers, including this reviewer, the tabs became much more central to American journalism. In the 1980s, the leading tab, *The National Enquirer*, figured prominently in the reporting of the death of the actor John Belushi, the sexual assault trial of a member of the Kennedy family, and the marital infidelities of presidential aspirant Gary Hart. The established news media—prestige dailies and network TV news programs—felt compelled to take such reporting seriously.

The guardians of prestige journalism found no relief in the 1990s. The tabs feasted on that decade's peculiarly dysfunctional celebrity culture, Bill Clinton's affairs, Tonya Harding's thuggery, and the murder trial of O. J. Simpson. The tabs' rise can be largely attributed to Generoso Pope, Jr. In 1952, Pope purchased the struggling *New York Enquirer*. Rather than compete with New York's other tabs, Pope made the *Enquirer* a national weekly; he moved

the paper's headquarters to Lantana, Florida, in 1971. Pope honored the tabloid's traditional emphasis on a story's entertainment—as opposed to news—value. Features might be uplifting, items on a drug to cure swearing and tips on waking up alert. Headlines were provocative. Finally, the *Enquirer* offered visual explicitness. Most famously, when the singer Elvis Presley died, the *Enquirer* arranged to have a distant relative take a picture of the King's open coffin. "The Last Picture" appeared on the first page. (p. 82)

Getting the image—and the story—became much more important to the *Enquirer* than ethical convention. Unlike most news organizations, the *Enquirer* practiced "checkbook journalism," paying for photographs, and for stories. There were deceptions. An *Enquirer* reporter and photographer, disguised as priests, covered the funeral of the singer Bing Crosby. Most notoriously, an *Enquirer* correspondent sifted through the garbage of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

The Kissinger controversy conveyed a larger truth, that the *Enquirer* reporters were more aggressive than many of those working for more prestigious outlets. This was especially true of veterans of London's tabloids, hired by Pope. "The Fleet Streeters understood news-gathering," Morton writes (p. 63). The *Enquirer* also spent lavishly, with generous salaries and expense accounts. Reporters looking for the Abominable Snowman did so in relative comfort.

Equally critical to the *Enquirer's* ascendancy was Pope's distribution strategy. In the 1960s, Pope chose to concentrate sales on the nation's supermarkets. He persuaded most store owners to sell the *Enquirer* on special racks located near the cash registers. With a more feminine market in mind, Pope toned down or simply dropped the crime coverage that had characterized the *Enquirer*. Instead of graphic stories about mutilated female skiers, *Enquirer* reporters searched for the Abominable Snowman. The approach worked. Between 1964 and 1970, weekly sales increased from 700,000 to just under two million. The *Enquirer's* success encouraged imitators, all of whom eventually based their operations in the Sunshine State.

As Morton notes, the tabs' position faltered in the 1990s and the early 2000s. The *Enquirer's* average circulation slipped steadily. Consumers, tiring of the investigative pieces the *Enquirer* staff had done so well, much preferred news about celebrities. This appar-

ent shift in consumer interest posed a threat to the tabs. They could certainly do celebrity news, but so could television programs like "Entertainment Tonight." The new century saw an explosion in internet web sites like *TMZ* and *Gawker* focusing on celebrity deeds—and misdeeds. The tabs, like much of the older print media, failed to find a way to prosper from the web.

Tabloid Valley makes few demands on the reader. Morton plainly admires many of the tabloid reporters. Yet one wishes for more analysis. More could have been said about who reads the tabs. (Bird, in contrast, discusses market research on readers.) Morton refrains from speculating on the impact of *People* and other, higher-end gossip magazines, on the tabs.

Despite their struggles in the new century, the tabs may have won the war over the American news agenda. When Presley died in 1977, the established news media failed to recognize how profoundly his passing affected many Americans. Perhaps Elvis had grown too old and too fat to be taken seriously by newspaper editors and network TV news producers. The tabs, by comparison, got it. They realized Elvis still had millions of fans, mainly lower class whites. The tabs, in a sense, never let Elvis die. Stories continued to be run about him and the possibility he was not, in fact, dead. Some three decades later, the tabs' competitors did not make the same mistake. When Michael Jackson died suddenly in June 2009, the major media treated Jackson's passing as a major story.

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The History of the North Carolina Communist Party. By Gregory S. Taylor. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009. Acknowledgements, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. 248. \$39.95 cloth.)

Historian Gregory Taylor traces the development of the North Carolina Communist Party (NCCP) from its origin in 1929 when the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) first attempted to organize the South by taking advantage of the class unrest brought on by the Gastonia textile mill strike of that year, to its demise in 1960 caused by FBI infiltration, the arrest of its leader Junius Scales, and mass defections. Taylor has two pri-

mary objectives: to tell the story of the NCCP on its own terms, instead of through the lens of better known events like the Gastonia strike or McCarthyism, and to cast North Carolina communists as loyal Americans within the reform traditions of the Populists and Progressives. He succeeds on the first count but is only partially successful on the second.

Taylor spends over half the book detailing the ebb and flow of the NCCP's fortunes in Gastonia to 1939. During this time, the NCCP focused on organizing mill workers regardless of race, agitating at trade union strikes, protesting "creeping fascism," and calling for an end to Jim Crow. Although the NCCP never had more than a few hundred members, it had some success at attracting new members and organizing workers. The party continually struggled, however, due to internal bickering, arrogance, focusing on ideology over the needs of the workers, and race issues trumping class consciousness among the mill workers. It is here that Taylor is at his best, showing the NCCP on its own terms. He effectively shows how the NCCP had some successes despite the bungling at CPUSA headquarters, where national leaders understood little about Southern race relations, sent incompetent organizers, provided little funding, and were willing to sell-out defendants as martyrs at the Gastonia trial in order to score propaganda points (a move that stymied their efforts to organize white workers for the next twenty years). Local leaders, too, had their problems as they quarreled among themselves, sought personal glory, and failed to take advantage of the Great Depression. Taylor effectively shows a decentralized Party apparatus as the NCCP routinely ignored CPUSA instructions. He is also evenhanded in his assessment of the NCCP, demonstrating both their attributes and flaws.

Taylor allows for less space to cover the years between World War II and the NCCP's demise in 1960. During this period, the NCCP continued to fight Jim Crow and warn against "creeping Fascism," but it focused more on international affairs and academic freedom as young dynamic leaders emerged at the University of North Carolina (UNC). A mix of undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty at UNC spearheaded the propaganda effort, especially in relation to Jim Crow and legal lynchings. This mix of communism and civil rights advocacy created a political firestorm. Mainstream politicians, such as a young Jesse Helms who dubbed UNC the "University of Negroes and

Communists" (187), the press, and anti-communist activists overestimated the amount of communist infiltration at UNC and demanded the University take action, which for the most part, it ignored. The NCCP received much free publicity, but some graduate student leaders lost their funding as a result. As the anti-communist hysteria of the postwar years intensified during the 1950s, the NCCP unraveled. Key leaders like Ralph Long left the Party after hard line lessons learned at CPUSA training schools caused disillusionment, and he later testified against the NCCP. Other leaders left the state and Junius Scales was eventually arrested, robbing the NCCP of its most effective agitator. This loss of leadership, along with infiltration by the FBI, marked the end of the NCCP by 1960.

Because the NCCP opposed the status quo, called for world peace, and created a social justice platform demanding civil rights, labor rights, and individual liberty, Taylor places the NCCP in the reform tradition of Populists and Progressives. This is true on the surface as these earlier American reformers also challenged the existing political economy. The comparison breaks down, however, when one considers the rampant racism among earlier reformers (something Taylor acknowledges), their acceptance of capitalism and hostility toward socialism, and their skeptical view of unions even as they advocated specific labor reforms. Curiously, Taylor says little about the NCCP view of New Deal reforms, other than that they criticized the Agricultural Adjustment Act for helping landowners at the expense of sharecroppers. The NCCP view of the Wagner Act, Tennessee Valley Authority, and Social Security, for instance, would give us a better understanding of just how reform-minded these communists were. Instead of putting the NCCP in the reform tradition, Taylor would have been better served to show them as a bridge between the Old Left and New Left. Member after member of the NCCP left the Party as experience in the segregated South caused them to see race as important as class and Marxist dogma came to be seen as lacking in explaining and rectifying the plight of the downtrodden. The labor organizers who ran the NCCP during the 1930s gave way to young, academic, social egalitarians who sounded more like SDS than "Big Bill" Haywood as they called for an end to imperialism and Jim Crow.

This criticism over the historical tradition of the NCCP should not detract from this well researched and immensely readable

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book. In fact, one of the greatest strengths of this book is it forces readers to reconsider their preconceived ideas of mid-twentieth century communists, whether one is a fellow traveler or a McCarthyite. Taylor makes a significant contribution to the expanding historical literature on American communism that destroys the old stereotype of violent revolutionary ideologues taking orders from Moscow, replacing them with home-grown radicals concerned with race, free speech, and class struggle.

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