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Book Reviews

Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South. By Alejandra Dubcovsky. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Illustrations, acknowledgements, notes, index. Pp. xi, 304. \$39.95 cloth.)

Over the past fifteen years an explosion of scholarship on the Indian slave trade has revealed a far more complex, diverse, and interconnected colonial world than previously recognized. Alejandra Dubcovsky's debut monograph contributes to this trend, but with a twist: she maps the "different and innovative ways that Indians, Africans, and Europeans stayed informed" and "created lifelines of learning that transcended some of the cultural, political, and linguistic divides of the time" (3). Beginning with the pre-contact chiefdom of Cahokia and ending with the Yamasee War, Dubcovsky uses a wealth of sources—including maps, archaeological and linguistic evidence, and English, French, and Spanish documents—to interrogate the relationship between information and power and reveal "the intricacies and contingencies that constituted the core of both personal experiences and historical processes in the early South" (8). By focusing on the creation, maintenance, and—at times—destruction of information networks, Dubcovsky "destabilize[s] the image of the colonial world as an underinformed or uninformed place" and sheds light on the myriad actors who shaped the region east of the Mississippi and south of the Cumberland rivers (3). As she convincingly shows, Anglo dominance was never preordained; rather, power was contingent on the forging of multifarious relationships that brought both military allies and strategic information.

Dubcovsky divides her chronologically- and thematically-organized narrative into three parts. First, she asks "*what* information

did people in the early South want?" (6-7). In three chapters, she explores how various polities used information to enhance their authority. The leaders of Cahokia, for example, strictly controlled communication and trade pathways to ensure that smaller towns remained bounded to the city. Yet, "Indian information networks, much like the Indian societies that supported and constructed them, were undergoing massive transformations in the early sixteenth century" (13). As powerful chiefdoms collapsed, more localized and dispersed information arrangements emerged. When the Spanish arrived in La Florida, they endeavored to stay informed through these Indian networks. In particular, they wanted to learn about French and English colonial competitors. Their Native informants, however, cared more about "intra- and inter-Indian violence than about European attacks" (45). Drawn into a web of Indian political relations, Europeans "folded imperial rivalries into local dynamics and in turn transplanted local dynamics into imperial arenas" (67). Indigenous acts of resistance, moreover, revealed the limits of colonial knowledge. During the Timucua Rebellion, for example, the Spanish governor, missionaries, and Indians of La Florida fought over who was "best suited to interpret unfolding events" (84). Dubcovsky uses different versions of the uprising to "expose the multiple ways that information was gathered, interpreted, and networked" and to highlight how control of information produced power (96).

Part II focuses on "*who* acquired and spread information" (7). Picking up the story in the 1660s, in two chapters Dubcovsky analyzes the English-backed Indian slave raids that shattered the early American South. Within fifty years, "more than 50,000 Indians had been sold into slavery," most kidnapped from Spanish missions in La Florida (100). The raids devastated information networks as Natives and colonists alike struggled to distinguish friend from enemy. As the Spanish watched their alliances crumble, the English in Charles Town prospered. Trade in slaves and deerskins became a "proxy for communication" that allowed the English to create far-reaching and lucrative networks (104). Natives, meanwhile, endeavored "to understand and manipulate the changing geopolitics," oftentimes by using information as a bargaining chip (108). African slaves, too, bartered knowledge for freedom as they fled English plantations for Spanish Florida. During these chaotic years, new actors carried and moved news, including traders,

sentinels, runaways, Indian agents, soldiers, friars, messengers, diplomats, sailors, and planters. By examining the experiences of these diverse reporters, Dubcovsky illustrates how information was “contingent on people” and illuminates “the fluid ties and diverse nodes” that “render almost tactile the rhythms of power that punctuated that world” (127).

The third part examines “*how* Indians, Europeans, and Africans used networks to move information” (7). Set against the backdrop of the Yamasee War, these final two chapters expose the fragility of English networks as the relationships they forged with Indian slave raiders spun out of control. Dubcovsky analyzes two events in particular—the initial assassination of English traders and the murders of Creek delegates at a Cherokee town—to highlight both the “shifting alliances of the Yamasee War” and how information spread across Indian, European, and African networks (161). As she shows, unregulated English traders in Indian country created a disjointed Indian policy. Fearful that their English allies would enslave them, too, the Yamasees and Lower Creeks attacked the traders, thereby cutting off Charles Town from its most important source of information. Desperate for new alliances, the English reached out to the Cherokees and Catawbias; however, these Indians worked for their own purposes even as they helped the English. In the wake of the conflict, South Carolinians “made slow and uneven progress in Indian country” (185). Rather than reconstructing their previous alliances, the English began “simply taking native lands” depopulated by war (185). They also began to rely on imported African slaves. The Spanish, meanwhile, took advantage of the war to forge stronger Indian alliances, although their insistence on “loyalty” meant that “the type and variety of news they received became increasingly constricted” (205). As English and Spanish rivalry revived in the late 1730s, both groups continued to depend on Indian information networks to maintain power.

By examining the sophisticated communication networks that informed and connected people prior to the creation of a regular mail system, Dubcovsky makes an important contribution to the history of the early American South. In particular, her deft use of Spanish-language sources draws the diverse inhabitants of La Florida from the periphery of North America’s colonial narrative into a central and active role, which in turn helps to explain the choices made by the English at Charles Town and their indigenous

allies. This deeply-researched and insightful monograph will be of interest to colonial and southern historians, as well as to scholars of Native America, slavery, and borderlands history.

Mikaëla M. Adams

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The New Map of Empire: How Britain Imagined America before Independence. By S. Max Edelson. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017. Acknowledgements, maps, notes, abbreviations, map bibliography, index. Pp. xiv, 464. \$35.00 cloth.)

The New Map of Empire is a masterpiece of originality, conceptualization, research, and exposition. It narrates and analyzes how imperial purposes, largely on the part of members and agents of the Board of Trade, motivated massive cartographic projects in British North America from the early 1760s to the mid-1770s. The Board sought to contain and redirect “settler colonialism” (19), a term that Edelson uses without anachronism, since the Board understood the phenomenon in much the same terms as we use today: “a litany of disorders caused by the self-interested pursuit of wealth and power by squatters, speculators, traders, and legislators” (19). According to the Board, settler prosperity depended on smuggling, defrauding indigenous people, scouring the land of natural resources, jeopardizing social stability by reliance on enslaved workforces, and shirking military and fiscal responsibilities. After British military and diplomatic successes in the Seven Years’ War, which made the entire eastern half of North America British territory, colonial expansion in its historical modes threatened to disintegrate Britain’s empire as settler regimes developed toward de facto economic and political independence.

To redirect these tendencies the Board put itself forward to channel and shape settlement in Britain’s vast accessions of North American spaces. Its objective was “a tightly integrated commercial economy” (21); its means to that end was an imperial land policy that directed colonial expansion away from its westward, continental courses and toward its new Atlantic-oriented accessions in Quebec, Nova Scotia, Florida, and the Lesser Antilles. To do so required geographic knowledge on local, regional, and continental scales. Here Stephen Hornsby’s *Surveyors of Empire: Samuel*

Holland, J. F. W. Des Barres, and the Making of The Atlantic Neptune (2011) bears closest comparison both in topic and presentation. Hornsby's richly illustrated and highly authoritative text analyzes a subset of Edelson's maps as dependent variables: how did they come about? Edelson goes far beyond such cartographic history to study maps as independent variables: what do they show us about spatial strategies among imperial officials.

In Quebec, St. John Island (renamed Prince Edward Island in 1798), Île Royale (Cape Breton Island after 1784), and greater Nova Scotia, the priority was to establish military security in conquered lands with hostile French inhabitants. For strategic purposes of occupation, military and naval surveyors in the Maritime Northeast produced the most highly detailed topographic maps and hydrographic charts in the British Empire. From these projects the Board developed plans for a General Survey of all North American British lands. The Survey would map places for immediate settlement by immigrants drawn by cheap land, thereby channeling colonizing self-interests away from the expansion of long-settled regions. Ironically, given imperial reformers' stereotype of New Englanders as the paragons of selfish colonization, the Board of Trade relied on frontier townships in the Floridas, Georgia and South Carolina, New York, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island, and St. John Island to restrain settlers' centrifugal tendencies. To settle these townships the Privy Council made enormous land grants to proprietors who were obliged to encourage settlers whose quitrents would alleviate the need for public funding from provincial assemblies.

The Board sought to establish peaceful relations between First Nations and colonies by having Britain recognize indigenous peoples as nations with rights to control their trade and territories. "Marking the Indian Boundary" shows in exquisite detail how the "Proclamation Line of 1763" became *three* lines, the most extensive of which lay largely south and east of the Appalachians. Here maps are crucial to understanding the story, which narrates the various surveys and shows how they bore on metropolitan geo-politics, definitions of sovereignty, First Nations' spatial diplomacy, and settler colonization.

In the Ceded Islands (i. e., Dominica, Grenada, Tobago, and St. Vincent) the Board plotted land grants so that the expansion of plantation regimes would be tempered by the parallel encouragement of free smallholders whose militias would inexpensively

maintain security and whose agriculture would efficiently provision plantations. To prevent the monopolization of land that had characterized previous colonization in the West Indies, individual purchasers were limited to five hundred acres per island.

"The British pinned their greatest hopes for recolonizing America on Florida" (249), but Florida was *terra incognita*—the Board's cartographic archive was clueless where its rivers flowed. Yet the Board believed that it held prime forest and agricultural resources; all that was needed for their development were charts of the hypothetically navigable rivers and deep-water ports to channel their commerce from East Florida "as the Board wished to see it: a fertile, uninhabited, contiguous body of open land" (254). Rather than perpetuate "the self-aggrandizing behaviors of entrenched provincial elites" (287), the Board deliberately sought to create metropolitan landlords, who were encouraged to develop a workforce of indentured, but eventually freeholding, Europeans who produced such alternatives to sugar as cotton, silk, indigo, and wine, but not rice, which was too dependent on slavery.

To contain and reverse the previous nearly two centuries of "heedless acquisition, fraud, and self-dealing at the expense of the nation's security and prosperity," the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations (a. k. a. the Board of Trade), needed to find reliable agents of empire to apply the land policy necessary for a harmonious empire. In a mordant leitmotif, Edelson details how colonial reformers found among themselves the ideal high-minded patrons—a virtuous kleptocracy—to administer their land policies: figures such as secretaries of the Admiralty and the Board of Trade, official surveyors, the First Lord of Trade, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Edelson tells a succession of stories about the wishful, but doomed, project of a utopian empire that existed almost entirely on paper—i.e. maps produced under the auspices of the Board of Trade: "Judged against the Board of Trade's lofty vision, these disappointing outcomes resulted in part from the outsized ambitions of an overreaching state" (12). St. John Island's manorial regime never produced a gentry, but it had resentful and potentially rebellious tenants. The surveying and negotiation of an "Indian Territory" were undermined by the return to colonial governors of power over trade with First Nations, by the Iroquois' cessions of lands south of the Ohio, and by the machinations of the Grand Ohio Company to create the colony of Vandalia. In the Ceded

Islands, Grenada's "diversification [while French] gave way to intensive sugar monoculture" (217); Dominica's carefully-planned port remained undeveloped; Tobago never realized its planned-for yeomanry; and St. Vincent's land administration precipitated an insurgency among the Black Caribs which brought the whole plantation regime into question. Yet plantations thrived on these islands, whose sugar production soon surpassed Barbados'. In Florida "delusional visions of subtropical fiefdoms collapsed" (269) in an environment that resisted extensive settlement along the coast, and development focused on rice and indigo slave plantations along the St. John River.

Edelman is well aware of the overreach involved: "Beyond a coterie of true believers ... few Britons in power embraced its [the Board's] innovative project or worked to sustain it" (336). British officials involved with the Board of Trade might well have thought in hindsight that the American Revolution overwhelmed their spatial strategies for imperial reform, but their efforts had largely failed before the imperial crisis erupted into the rebellion and secession that they dreaded and had sought to forefend.

The New Map of Empire marries nicely with Justin du Rivage's just-published *Revolution Against Empire: Taxes, Politics, and the Origins of American Independence* (2017), with its focus on authoritarian reformers, among whom most of Edelman's actors can be found. The Board of Trade failed to reshape the empire though authoritarian reformers prevailed, zombie-like, in Cabinet and Parliament. Access to Edelman's book would have critically broadened and challenged du Rivage's story, which focuses on taxation at the expense of spatial issues crucial to imperial regulation. Du Rivage claims a global perspective on the British empire, and he does indeed make India relevant to the imperial crisis in North America, but he neglects the imperial acquisitions which Edelman studies so well. Authoritarian reformers had the worst of both worlds: they could not manage the politics necessary to apply imperial reforms that were not going to work anyway.

Edelman's book is a landmark study both in spatial history and in digital humanities. It can be read effectively as a monograph, but that would be a stunted experience because the text constantly invokes cartographic images which the book itself does not reproduce. Instead they are found on a beautifully designed and immensely informative on-line archive of 257 maps, organized by chapter and easily accessed by archive numbers cited in the text.

Readers may balk at Edelson's directions to use a computer as a parallel source of visual evidence for the text's discussion, but the technical learning curve is not steep, and the rewards in spatial history are great. Even a tablet, with its small footprint, high-resolution screen, and pinchable zoom, works effectively and comfortably for accessing the cartographic archive while reading the physical book. Each chapter has an archive of four dozen-or-so manuscript and printed maps which overlay satellite-based photographs of the same spaces to help readers locate the respective maps in the global spaces we know today. Each map in the archive has a parallel note that contextualizes it with the text's respective discussion. By visually documenting the book this way, colors and inscriptions can be seen more clearly than in typical published images, and as a bonus the notes have hypertext links to particular features which are then zoomed for emphasis. Readers can also zoom in for legends and local details that interest them individually. Edelson's book is just plain fun to read when its full visual resources are used.

I cannot think of another book in early American history from which I learned more about Anglo-American geopolitics.

John E. Crowley

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Frontiers of Science: Imperialism and Natural Knowledge in the Gulf South Borderlands, 1500-1850. By Cameron B. Strang. (Williamsburg, VA: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. Acknowledgments, epilogue, illustrations, maps, index. Pp vi, 357. Cloth \$39.95, e-book \$29.99.)

Cameron B. Strang's *Frontiers of Science* examines the production of natural knowledge in the Gulf South borderlands between 1500 and 1850. By using the term natural knowledge, rather than scientific knowledge, Strang fully examines the diverse ways that native and enslaved peoples, as well as Europeans and Anglo-Americans, created knowledge about the natural world. This examination of natural knowledge in the Gulf South shows that this region was not just some backwater frontier, but rather a place with a "vibrant and enduring intellectual life." (7)

This book brings together some of the central insights and themes of two fields: the history of science and the study of the

Gulf South borderlands. In a convenient intellectual congruence, the concept of empire lays at the heart of both these fields and Strang wisely places imperialism at the center of this book. Historians of science have shown how the creation and utilization of western science was shaped by imperial desires. Empires sought to understand and control their possessions through the application of natural knowledge. As Strang shows, imperial subjects also used and created natural knowledge for their own purposes. Some sought to curry favor with these empires; others used that knowledge to oppose European powers.

Strang's work proceeds chronologically, but primarily unfolds through a series of case studies. These case studies neatly and sometimes dramatically illustrate the book's themes. Strang begins with an analysis of natural knowledge in the context of Gulf South Native American and European trade networks during the first Spanish invasions of Florida. Conquerors like Juan Ponce de Leon and Hernando de Soto used their military might to gain natural knowledge about Florida and the Gulf South in order to control the region. Their efforts gained Spain a colony, yet geopolitical competition and conflict often meant that European control over the Gulf South was weak and incomplete, a factor that greatly affected the creation and dissemination of natural knowledge in the region. Strang's second chapter examines the Spanish Gulf South in this context, emphasizing how Spain's weakness provided chances for opportunistic Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans to gain power through the circulation and production of natural knowledge. This chapter contains one of the book's more fantastic case studies, that of Yaolaychi, a Creek Indian who in 1790 guided Spanish officials to a cache of valuable minerals guarded by a Monster Lizard. The weakness of the Spanish empire in the Gulf South prevented Spain from extracting these minerals. They feared this monster, but more importantly feared antagonizing nearby Creek Indians. The Spanish ultimately declared the mineral cache off-limits because they believed it lay within the Creek's hunting grounds.

The author's next set of case studies examine the development of astronomical knowledge after 1810 as the United States gained control over the region. Astronomy "bolstered imperialism," as it allowed empires to neatly draw boundaries, and reflected imperial power and prestige. (129) Slave labor was essential to these survey efforts which were in turn often in competition with Spanish efforts

and threatened by Native American groups. The lives of two individuals make up the book's fourth chapter, which shows how American power over the Gulf South after 1810 was shaped by the same weaknesses which characterized Spanish control over the region. Thomas Power, a spy who posed as a naturalist, and William Dunbar, a prominent planter, both operated within a contested Gulf South and curried favor with various powers in the region.

The book's final three chapters show how natural knowledge was used by Anglo-Americans to cement control over the Gulf South. Americans used ethnographic and geological knowledge to justify racist views of slaves and native groups and to bolster American imperialism. Although most of this book focuses on European science, *Frontiers of Science* tries to show how native and enslaved peoples resisted imperialism through the creation and application of natural knowledge. Native Americans used natural knowledge and European goods to bolster their power within tribes. Later, Seminoles used scalps to create a Seminole identity. Enslaved Africans used botanical knowledge to create powerful poisons and they shaped planters' efforts to gain geological and astronomical knowledge.

If Strang is less successful in showing how natural knowledge was used to fight imperialism it is because like all historians, he is limited by existing sources. Most of the sources pertaining to this period and place were produced by Europeans. To write this book, Strang creatively and deeply mined the accounts of imperial officials, Southern planters, and Anglo-America soldiers. The resulting case studies are often incredibly rich and detailed. For example, Strang's chapter on geology provides extensive information on the geological activities and racial ideas of Charles Tait and Rush Nutt.

Tait and Nutt were slave owners who dabbled in natural history. Their efforts to gather geological knowledge, like William Dunbar's astronomical studies, were shaped by the violent application of power. Slavery furthered their efforts to gain geological and astronomical data, just as they used that data to justify slavery. In fact, violence is a major theme in this book. Slavery was inherently violent, as were war, conquest, and control. Violence is inherent to imperialism, and as a consequence, to the pursuit of natural knowledge in the Gulf South. Sprang's work suggest that the "unifying thread" of American history is not "the influence of liberty, but the persistence of imperialism." (344) Strang ends this important

work by arguing for a version of history that focuses more on these uncomfortable truths and less on celebratory narratives about freedom or the nobility of scientific pursuits. This narrative may in turn allow America to draw “on a vision of history that inspires greater inclusivity and humility.

Chris Wilhelm

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Single, White, Slaveholding Women in the Nineteenth-Century South.

By Marie S. Molloy. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018. Acknowledgments, introduction, conclusion, images, notes, bibliography, index. Pp ix, 228. Cloth \$39.99, ebook, \$39.99.)

In *Single, White, Slaveholding Women in the Nineteenth-Century South*, Marie S. Molloy argues that remaining single afforded greater female autonomy before, during, and after the Civil War. Molloy, a lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University and an honorary research fellow at Keele University, studied the letters and diaries of 300 southern women, most of whom were born between 1810-1860, and concluded that this autonomy came with a caveat, specifically a genuine or feigned adherence to gender expectations of the Cult of True Womanhood—piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness. In other words, as long as single women projected these traits, they were more likely to be accepted in society. Whether never married, widowed, divorced, or separated, man-less women became less stigmatized. While it might be tempting to assume the Civil War served as a catalyst for greater acceptance of singleness, Molloy provides solid evidence that the stigma had begun to lessen long before the first shots. The war did, however, provide a convenient justification for women to further deviate from their respective sphere.

Molloy quickly establishes where her work fits into greater historiography. She frequently references Lee Chambers-Schiller’s *Liberty a Better Husband: Single Women in America; The Generation of 1780-1840*, Christine Carter’s *Southern Single Blessedness: Unmarried Women in the Urban South, 1800-1865*, and two of Jennifer Lynn Gross’s book chapters on southern widows. Whereas Chambers-Schiller focuses on northern women who sought autonomy for fiscal purposes, Molloy insists that southern slaveholding women,

already solvent, were instead motivated by self-fulfillment. She grants that during and after the Civil War, when many of these women became genteel poor, money may well have been a driving force behind their quest for employment. While Carter examines urban southern women, Molloy concentrates on their rural counterparts. Whereas Gross's chapters, "And for the Widow and Orphan": Confederate Widows, Poverty, and Public Assistance" and "Good Angels: Confederate Widowhood in Virginia," center on Civil War widows, Molloy investigates widows throughout the nineteenth century.

In this book, Molloy compares the Cult of True Womanhood with the Cult of Single Blessedness and shows that the two were surprisingly compatible. The latter held that single women could still contribute by making themselves useful as an aunt, caregiver, nurse, and/or teacher. While negative slurs like spinster remained, single women found they could reject marriage and still garner respect as long as they proved helpful in some way. Molloy stresses that women, by the time of the Civil War, appeared to be less irked by their single status and in fact, many chose not to marry because doing so allowed them to maintain economic and legal independence. They had concluded that no marriage was better than a bad one. The war fueled the refashioning of femininity by making non-traditional behavior more acceptable. From managing plantations to nursing soldiers, single women were given a pass because they were seen to be doing their duty to family, community, state, and/or nation.

Molloy's book consists of an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. Chapter 1, *The Construction of Femininity in the Antebellum South*, explores the Cult of True Womanhood, explaining that even if a woman did not embrace its tenets or aspire to marriage, she had to pretend to in order to attain social acceptance. Southern women, Molloy argues, accepted their social subordination because patriarchy gave them higher status than blacks and poor whites. Throughout the nineteenth century, however, the number of companion or love marriages rose as did the number of voluntarily single women. In Chapter 2, *Single Women and the Southern Family*, Molloy explains how single women found acceptance by serving a purpose in positions ranging from aunt and daughter to surrogate mother and caregiver. Chapter 3, *Work*, discusses how nursing and teaching became acceptable for women because these occupations did not challenge traditional gender roles. Women were seen as

nurturing so nursing seemed a natural calling. Then, too, women often taught younger siblings lessons and slaves scripture so segueing into the teaching profession made sense.

In Chapter 4, *Female Friendship*, Molloy traces the perception of female friendships in the 1800s. Before the Civil War, women were seen as asexual while friendships between females were thought of as fleeting and insignificant. After the war, women were seen as sexual while female friendships, whether platonic or physical, were seen as potentially permanent and a challenge to patriarchy. Chapter 5, *Law, Property, and the Single Woman*, explores the Married Women's Property Acts, the liberalization of divorce laws, and the legal aspects of widowhood. Molloy states that when they married, "women exchanged legal autonomy for social respect" (136). Whether never married, divorced, or widowed, women remained at the mercy of patriarchy and had to adhere to gender expectations in order to achieve or maintain autonomy. When seeking a divorce, for example, a woman, if she had any hope of winning her case, had to project the attributes of the Cult of True Womanhood. If pursuing a separate estate, a woman needed to be seen as working in the best interest of her family and/or children.

Molloy's argument is compelling in that in order to gain autonomy, nineteenth-century southern women expressed the "outward veneer of acceptance" of the status quo (13). The various chapters could actually be stand-alone articles so the occasional repetitiveness does not detract from the whole. Anyone interested in southern women, the rural South, gender spheres, class, slavery, and/or law will appreciate this work. Molloy has written a much-needed contribution to the historiography of women in the antebellum, Civil-War-era, and Reconstruction South.

Whitney Snow

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Rice to Ruin: The Jonathan Lucas Family in South Carolina, 1783-1929.

By Roy Williams III and Alexander Lucas Lofton. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018. Acknowledgments, Abbreviations, illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. 452 pp. cloth \$59.99, ebook \$59.99.)

Roy Williams III and Alexander Lucas Lofton's *Rice to Ruin* offers a unique social history of the Lucas family and their cultivation of

a rice empire over the course of nearly a century and a half. This text is notable for the depth of primary sources accessed by Williams and Lofton, which allowed them to approach and center this work on the rich and compelling history of Jonathan Lucas and his family through multiple generations and in different places. This text is enriched by personal letters, notes, payments/transactions notices, church records, government records, maps, diagrams and photos as a way to link readers with this expansive family that was responsible for revolutionizing rice cultivation.

The foundation of the work begins with Jonathan Lucas as he stumbled upon the swamp lands of the Santee Delta in South Carolina after his ship was wrecked. Jonathan Lucas came from a family of English mill owners and builders back. What Lucas stumbled into was acres of swamp and land dedicated to rice cultivation. Similar to cotton, rice was a labor intensive crop and rice owners were struggling to keep up with the high demand for rice and cultivate the crop in an efficient manner. Lucas addressed the issue of efficiency with his design for a water-pounding rice mill that increased the speed for processing rice for export. Lucas' design revolutionized rice cultivation and, as a result, he created a rice mill empire across four different continents: North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The design did for rice what Eli Whitney's cotton gin did for the cotton. Williams and Lofton opt to not elaborate on that comparison in their text choosing instead to keep their narrative focused on Jonathan Lucas and how he would come to expand his business with his family.

One of the things readers must grapple with in this text is trying to work out and keep up with a sprawling Lucas family tree that grows significantly throughout the book. Individual family members have varying degrees of significance with respect to working and managing the business, but the number of people introduced is daunting as the reader also negotiates the scope of the business, in addition to understanding the personal connections forged with affluent members of society via friendship or marriage that played critical roles in the continued expansion of the business. Something that Williams and Lofton do well is finding a balance in deploying the array of personal letters to highlight the often intricate connection between business and pleasure during this time. It is an aspect of society during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that was of particular importance in both

English society and Southern society, and the letters from both men and women showcase that relationship.

The text is primarily reliant on primary sources to carry the narrative and throughout the book there is very little authorial intervention by Williams and Lofton. The lack of a steady voice to interpret the primary sources meant that at times it was hard to contextualize the material and understand the significance of a particular letter, or why church contributions mattered, or why some of the Lucas children seemingly had more freedom in pursuing careers than others. The lack of all but the most general historiography on South Carolina, rice plantations, or the expansion of rice mills in other parts of the world made it difficult to understand how succeeding generations of the Lucas family were able to grow and expand their empire. There were a few consistent characters throughout the book but not enough broader context was provided to understand their lives within the critical transformations of the period.

The most compelling part of the book is found in the lives and livelihoods of the Lucas family in the Civil War era as details emerged from the perspectives emerge from varying members of the Lucas family on the impact of the Civil War and impending aftermath of Confederacy defeat. It is in these chapters that the reader finds details about the number of enslaved people owned by the Lucas family members, the process of buying slaves, the cost of slaves, ownership of enslaved people by both men and women, and the importance of slavery to the elite status of the Lucas family. In the aftermath of the war, the tone of letters and documents drastically shifts in two distinct ways. First was the disbelief that accompanied emancipation and the change in attitude by freedmen towards the Lucas family. The second transformation was the desperation the family experienced once they could no longer rely on slave labor to cultivate their rice and the rapid depletion of their wealth. The letters and documents show frenzied activity of the family as they tried to salvage their crumbling wealth and survive in the aftermath of the war. It was during these low moments that the abundance of primary documents proved essential in unearthing the family's perspective as their rice empire slowly collapsed upon itself.

Williams and Lofton used extensive documentary evidence to present a complete family narrative on the man that changed how

rice was cultivated. They interwove personal documents from generations of the Lucas family to show the sustained effort required to keep an international rice mill empire afloat. *Rice to Ruin* is less effective for those seeking to understand the greater historical implications of Jonathan Lucas's rice mill design and its impact on South Carolina and rice across the world because it functions as a presentation of the Lucas family collection to create a chronological depiction of that rice empire. Its greatest contribution is that it allows access and to a family's thoughts and discussions at a critical time in American social, economic, and political history, and such access invites new questions and interpretations.

Jennifer Davis

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American Sectionalism in the British Mind 1832-1863. By Peter O'Connor. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017. Acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. x, 280. \$47.95 cloth.)

The first thing to strike the reader about British historian Peter O'Connor's study is its periodization. Beginning in Jackson's presidency, it ends with Lincoln's emancipation proclamation. The author's purpose in offering this unfamiliar prospectus is to highlight a major scholarly failing: the lack of understanding about the influence of pre-war ideas on British reactions to America's great crisis. He also wishes to bridge the gaps between diplomatic, political and cultural history that have inhibited efforts to unravel the strands of sympathy and self-interest linking the two countries. O'Connor has trawled assiduously through a wide range of printed sources including novels, newspapers and periodicals, political speeches and tracts, and, not least, travel accounts. Many of the writers discussed are household names: Dickens, Carlyle, Trollope (mother and son), Marryat, Martineau; others—the prolific James Silk Buckingham is an example – are less well known but influential in shaping popular ideas about the United States in the antebellum decades. Continuing his investigation into the post-secession years, O'Connor offers new evaluations of such important observers of the war as the journalist William Howard Russell (although he is mistaken in stating that the majority of Russell's time in America was spent in the South), the rather less famous James Spence, the

British businessman whose *The American Union*, published in 1861, provided an important counterblast to pro-Union propaganda, and the Irish economist John Elliot Cairnes, author of *The Slave Power* (1862), the most comprehensive wartime indictment of southern society and ambition. Overall, it is an impressive cast of characters.

Through this literature O'Connor is able to identify the main components of British opinion regarding a nation that captivated and infuriated in equal measure. He begins with race and slavery where he finds a distinction in British views between slavery in the abstract and the "mitigated form" (47) that many commentators encountered below the Mason-Dixon Line. Adding to this complexity of viewpoint was the widespread perception that northern abolitionism "lacked sincerity" (50), a conclusion given credence by the region's treatment of free blacks. In the following chapter O'Connor enters more unfamiliar terrain, at least so far as discussions of British responses to the sectional conflict are concerned. In reading antebellum accounts of American society, he discovers a growing awareness of ethno-cultural division which would have a "profound impact on Anglo-American relations during the Civil War" (56). Emphasizing the important role played by America's Irish community, he links this and other cultural identities to patterns of Anglophobia and maturing explanations about the relative Britishness of the northern and southern states. With these results in mind, he is able to approach American sectional politics, the subject of his third chapter, with a fresh eye. By the end of the 1850s, he argues, the conviction that the United States "lacked a coherent national political culture permeated all levels of British society" (119). The slave states' commitment to free trade was particularly influential; at the very least it muddied the moral waters and would provide Confederate propagandists with a ready-made argument as to why Britain and other European countries should support their independence bid. Two more chapters chart British responses to the war's opening years. Throughout 1861 the dilemmas of sectionalism tended to work against the Union cause, but Lincoln's shift to an emancipation policy in 1862 heralded a watershed in attitudes. The prevailing complex understanding of American sectionalism was replaced by "a simple moral division based on slavery" (183), thus effectively ending any hope of intervention on the South's behalf.

So much of what Peter O'Connor has written in this thought-provoking study makes sense, and the result is a valuable addition to

the growing literature on the war's transatlantic impact. Inevitably, some of the thoughts it provokes are critical ones. His argument at times seems over-schematic, too locked into the pre-war influence model, and there is a danger that he undervalues the capricious and contingent nature of the transatlantic connection. He properly highlights, for example, the role of the Morrill Tariff of February 1861 in fostering Anglo-Northern enmity, but fails to convey that Britain's anger was not just about free trade but about what was perceived as Republicans' disregard for the accepted rules of international behaviour at a time when the United States needed all the friends it could muster. He also ignores the repercussions of British neutrality, oddly claiming that prior to the *Trent* incident of late 1861, "Britain had little diplomatic or direct political involvement in the war" (150). His lack of attention to class is also surprising; his repeated use of the "British populace" and "British public" raising as many questions as it answers. Yet, for all these caveats, this is an important contribution to a subject that shows no sign of fatigue. One hundred and fifty years after its conclusion, the Civil War continues to fascinate historians not just within the United States but elsewhere in the Atlantic world and beyond, evidence, if any more is needed, of the sectional conflict's global significance.

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Voices from Mariel: Oral Histories of the 1980s Cuban Boatlift. By José Manuel García. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018. Appendix, Chronology, Photographs, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Pp. xv, 177. \$24.95, hardcover.)

In Havana on April 1, 1980, a group of Cubans desperate to leave the country crashed through the gates of the Peruvian embassy in a bus. Nearly ten thousand other asylum-seeking Cubans rushed into the embassy compound soon after. These events, along with the unstable political and economic circumstances that characterized Cuba in the spring of 1980, precipitated the Mariel boatlift, which began in late April and lasted to the end of September.

On April 20th, after recognizing the potential of emigration in alleviating problems of dissent, the Cuban government issued a statement that anyone who wished to leave Cuba was free to do so, as long as the exiles would go directly to the country where they

intended to settle. Castro urged refugees to call their relatives in the United States (especially those in Florida) to come pick them up at the Cuban port of Mariel, which would act as an emigration center. Responding immediately to Castro's challenge, Cuban émigrés in Miami sailed off to Mariel Harbor. Small boats began arriving from Florida to pick up the Mariel exiles, setting into motion the movement of approximately 125,000 Cubans to the U.S. in a period of six months.

It is a story I tell every semester in my courses. Most students, far removed from this moment of U.S. history, widen their eyes in amazement as I share images and outline how the events unfolded. They ask many questions and together, we navigate one of the most unusual immigration episodes in American history. They learn about the complicated geopolitics of the era, the people's discontent with Castro's government, and the negative publicity surrounding the boatlift, especially when the Cuban and American press began labeling the émigrés, *Los Gusanos* (worms). They realize the wariness of the U.S. government in establishing an unwarranted precedent of accepting undocumented persons, the recognition that in granting refugee status to the Cubans, the same would have to be done for Haitian rafters entering the U.S., along with the general anti-immigrant atmosphere prevalent during this time.

What is missing from my account are the personal experiences of the *marielitos* who made the journey, since their stories remained largely unwritten until now. *Voices from Mariel: Oral Histories of the 1980 Cuban Boatlift*, fills that gap in the literature and adds depth to our understanding of the Mariel Boatlift. Relying on his own personal memories, along with oral histories provided by eleven other *marielitos* (as well as four additional oral histories from other individuals intimately involved in the boatlift), José Manuel Garcia embarks on an exploration of the days and months surrounding the Mariel Boatlift. Garcia provides a rich, detailed description of the *marielito* journey and peppers enough historical content into the introduction to make the book an important compendium for those interested in U.S.-Cuba relations specifically, and migration studies more broadly. Because of the intimate nature of the work, *Voices from Mariel* will be appealing both to a general audience and to migration scholars and students in particular.

The book's chapters flow organically from one experience to the next, and explain the trials and tribulations of the migrants,

whether they began their journeys in the Peruvian Embassy Compound, or if they found their way to the boat dock at Mariel some other way. The central theme in the book deals with the tensions and difficulties that come for individuals and families as they decide to flee their homeland owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted largely for reasons of membership in a particular social group or political opinion. Though the author does not make this connection, the book has much relevance in the context of today's global refugee crisis, as more than 68 million forcibly displaced persons around the world deal with similar sufferings and emotions as they become separated from their homes.

The stories in the book conjure up vivid images and painful moments that few others have documented. Several individuals depict the harrowing days of entering and living within the Peruvian Embassy compound, gathering with thousands of other dissidents in less-than-ideal, and often dreadful circumstances. Other individuals describe the various "acts of repudiation" they endured even as they were granted safe passage vouchers from the Cuban Government; these are especially powerful recollections that illustrate how difficult it was for individuals and families to leave. Individuals endured mobs chanting profanities, egg bombings, intimidation from neighbors, and harassment from local "Committees for the Defense of the Revolution" (47). Additional oral histories speak of the ways in which the Cuban government used various propaganda stunts to portray *marielitos* in the worst possible light. The idea, as César Hildebrandt explains, "was to stain and discredit the Cuban exile community" (137). Techniques included the release of so-called criminals (*La Escoria*) onto boats, constantly delaying boats at port, loading boats far above capacity, and capturing it all on film, to be used in Cuba and many other socialist countries to portray "these scum" (42). The U.S. press performed its own tragedy as the mainstream press flooded Americans "with unattractive images...and the chaos of the boatlift" (148). This kind of detail, accompanied by dozens of compelling photographs dispersed in various chapters and an appendix, is gripping in its portrayal of the struggles and triumphs that *marielitos* withstood in their journeys to the United States.

Readers can feel the pain that comes to *marielitos* even to this day when sharing their experiences. Not surprisingly, this book is a supplement to an award-winning documentary of the same name. From the start, Mariel exiles have had to maneuver deeply

entrenched stereotypes, not only from their former compatriots in Cuba, but from their new communities of reception in the U.S. Thus, emotion runs deep in this book and this collection of oral histories provides a compelling narrative of the *marielito* experience.

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The South of the Mind: American Imaginings of White Southernness, 1960-1980. By Zachary J. Lechner. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018. Introduction, acknowledgments, notes, appendix, index. Pp. 1, 219. Cloth \$99.95, paper \$28.95, ebook, \$28.95.)

During the 1976 presidential campaign, Republican nominee Gerald Ford turned to a member of the first lady's staff – native southerner Frances Kaye Pullen – to try to get a bead on the appeal of former Georgia governor and Democratic Party candidate Jimmy Carter. Pullen wrote that the Georgia governor “[played] on two essentially conflicting myths – the ‘good-ole boy’ rural South and the ‘black and white together’ new South.” Effectively capitalizing on these “myths,” Carter represented the “good [white] southerner” and thus was uniquely qualified to heal the nation's racial divide. He was precisely what the nation needed at that time. Some sixty-one percent of Americans responding to a May 1976 survey in *Time* felt that “something is morally wrong with the country”; of those, a majority supported Jimmy Carter. Carter's personification of the “Changing South” is just one of many imagined Souths interrogated by historian Zachary J. Lechner in this wide-ranging and thought-provoking study. Lechner argues that the varied and often contradictory “imaginings” of the region appealed to Americans who feared that the political and cultural upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s had cut the nation free “from its core beliefs in the durability family, community, and political- and faith-based institutions” (137). These postwar Americans, suffering from “rootlessness” and craving “authenticity,” found comfort in an imagined white South perpetuated in popular culture and embodied in certain public figures.

Just as there are many Souths, so too, are there many imagined Souths and representations of “southernness” that (white) Americans gravitated toward in the postwar era. Lechner begins his study by illustrating how southern imaginings in the 1960s and

1970s emanated from three essential representations of the region that emerged during the civil rights movement: The Vicious South (“backward, mean, aggressively racist...yet tough and masculine”; the Changing South (“a region on the mend that reaffirmed a progressive story of American equality”) and the Down-Home South (“a rural paradise, free of modern, technological, and racial anxieties”) (22). From this basic “raw material,” a wide range of “Souths” were deployed in popular culture and elsewhere that, collectively, positioned white southerners as holding the key to national renewal.

The breadth of examples and the author’s ability to tease out deeper meaning from those examples gives this book its power. Lechner casts a fairly wide cultural net, examining the variety of imagined Souths deployed by television shows such as *The Andy Griffith Show* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*; movies such as *Deliverance* and *Walking Tall*; bands such as The Band and the Allman Brothers Band; and political figures like George Wallace and Jimmy Carter. Whether one was attracted to Wallace’s defiant masculinity, the “masculine rebirth” experienced by the soft suburbanite Ed in *Deliverance*, or the racial tolerance and countercultural vibe embodied by the Allman Brothers Band, at heart these often contradictory images of southernness provided satisfying models of white male masculinity. Those comforted by these imaginings were not hampered by cognitive dissonance. It was possible for a fan to embrace the seemingly contradictory southernness of the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Both served as “counterweights to the unpleasant realities...of 1970s America” (134). The author is clear about what this book is and what it is not. Those readers seeking African American or feminine voices or “imaginings” will not find them here; however, their absence does not detract from this thoroughly engaging and well-written book.

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