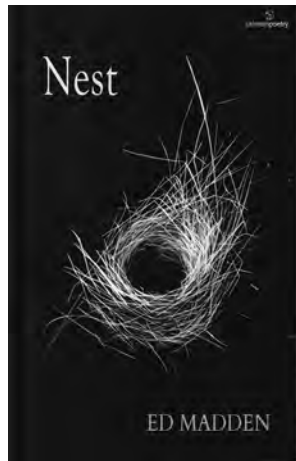


Reviews

***Nest.* By Ed Madden. (Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, Ireland: Salmon Poetry/Dufour, 2014. Pp. 81, acknowledgements. \$22.95, paperback)**

Ed Madden's collection begins with "Inferno," a poem about burgeoning, forbidden lust. It begins, "Hell appeared when Ben sat on the levee, / and the outer darkness opened up behind him. / Before then, it did not exist . . ." (p.13). On the one hand, the poem is elegant in its beautiful descriptions, transposing spring to the boy's maturing. "The rice // was coming up all over, like a green / fuzz, like hair" he explains. "I didn't look. I did" (p. 13). On the other hand, this beautiful scene is shadowed by the possibility of shame and damnation. But in Madden's deft hands, the poem manages not to be drowned in this possible interpretation. Instead, the vitality of this scene shines through. The poems in this section deal with the poet's childhood on a rice farm in Arkansas. "Among Men" is like a photograph of the past, describing a bunch of farmhands gathered around the shop while one gets a haircut. "Family Bible" lends insight into the traditions of the family, which can be suffocating at times. He describes his name in the list of family and ancestors, "my name, a boy beneath so many dead" (p. 18). The first title poem describes dirt-daubers, "knobbed nests



like clods chunked and lodged / along the beams, eggs packed inside, / nestled beside tiny spiders, stung, / paralyzed" (p. 21). Madden draws parallels between the insects and arachnids and his own childhood, ". . . we assumed the adults around us / knew what they were doing, the wasps sealing // their young up with the spiders, stung / paralyzed, ready to be eaten alive" (p. 21).

Section II contains more autobiographical memory poems. Madden's humor is revealed in this section in poems like "Church camp, summer 1977" which describes kids "spend[ing] an afternoon looking // for dirty stuff in the Bible" (p.33). "Chosen/Commentary on Psalm 139" is a bittersweet lamentation on body image and social norms, "he is learning to see himself, learning / shame" (p. 34). These two sections counterpose two parts of the poet's youth, the place and its influences and the awakening self-image, self-understanding. The tension in these sections comes from the tension between these two ideas. The place is trying to indoctrinate the young man, to make him belong, but the limited norms also push him away.

Section III begins with Madden's love of the literary and cultural history of Ireland. "Teanga Na mBlathanna / The language of flowers" is an ode to the beauty of the island. "In Glencolmcille, I am learning / the name of each flower I find," it begins (p. 45). Madden's language is as delicate and precise as the images he describes. He sees intent everywhere:

The swallows interpret the field.
The sheep say beatha, beatha-life, life.

I don't know the name for the horsetails.
What is the name for a thistle,
gilded silver with rain? (p. 45)

"Saint's finger, Hill of Slane," describes finding bones mixed in the gravel at a graveside. The human history of the place so palpable, the

remains of distant saints and popes have mixed in with the soil, the roads. As the section progresses, Madden moves to his love of the natural world, spanning the globe from Texas to Hawaii.

Section IV brings us back to the beauty of rural Arkansas and memories from Madden's childhood and then beyond to his current life. "To get to Cowlake," deals with Madden's ambivalent relationship with his past through the conceit of giving directions to an old hangout. He's no longer a child, stuck in this place. He's wizened, now, and knows his own mind. There are great tongue-and-cheek lines in this poem, such as, ". . . if // you're coming from Memphis, always remember Memphis / is the best way out" (p. 61). He describes passing landmarks representing kinfolk, memories. "Don't look for a church. / It's no longer there, just a bare yard" (p. 62). And later, "To get to Cowlake, / don't look for cows or a lake. There are no cows. // Sometimes, though, the creek floods." This place he remembers isn't real, he's saying. It's exaggerated, idealized, changed. But that doesn't mean there isn't truth, there.

Madden has a series of poems named "Nest," and the one in this section deals, in a beautiful way, with the passing of his father. It offers a spare description of mourners visiting his mother, but focuses mostly on a little bird's nest he spots, hidden, on the porch. He shares the image of beauty, "I lift my niece to see the bird / on the nest, its tiny black eyes / looking back at us" (p. 63). And here we see the heart of what Madden's poems are all about: even in the midst of tragedy, there is life. These poems, full of tragedy and heartache, are a love letter to old lovers, to an old life, but mostly to life itself.

--CL Bledsoe



***Silent Movies.* By Gordon Osing.
(New York: Spuytin Duyvil, 2015.)**

Pp. 66. \$12, paperback)

Creative writing students often find themselves at a loss. Everything has been written about before, and no emotion is new. The trick is in the expression:

how do you show what has been shown before but in a unique way? In his tenth volume of poetry, *Silent Movies*, Gordon Osing shares his voice and vision. The collection's title is its focus, not just actual silent movies such as those of Charlie Chaplin, but the silent movies that are part of all our lives.



The back cover of Osing's book addresses the reader directly with its poem "Reader, Friend." This poem serves not as an invitation to enter into a relationship with the speaker, but as an assumption that this friendship already exists. A reader of poetry must be a friend to it, and a friend will read with the best intentions in mind.

Such a connection is only the first of many in this collection. Osing explores community in these pieces, and his community is vast and wide. Andrew Marvell, Geoffrey Chaucer, Milan Kundera, Tammy Wynette, John Milton, Martin Luther, Henry James, Jesus, Charles Dickens, Moses, Eve, Mark Twain, J.S. Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Frost, W.C. Fields, Nietzsche, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Herod, W.H. Auden, T.S. Eliot, Thornton Wilder, Gustav Mahler, Eudora Welty, Samuel Johnson, Paul, John Dryden, Simon and Garfunkel, William Stafford, Aristotle, D.H. Lawrence, Johannes Brahms, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, and Elizabeth Bishop are only some of the names used in the poems in *Silent Movies*, and William Butler

Yeats and Leonard Cohen appear on more than one occasion, signaling a particular affinity there. These individuals, with their ideas and their art and their lives, are part of the speaker's life so familiarly that a moment's discussion of one flows into the other.

Artists, philosophers, and religious figures are not the only ones that cross our paths in Osing's writing. Just as ordinary for him to include are the characters in the art themselves, such as the Thin Man, Willy Loman, Tarzan, Wylie Coyote, Prospero and Caliban, Abbott and Costello, and more. These figures are presented as no less or no more important than any other in the poems. They inhabit the speaker's sensibilities most naturally.

Likewise, Osing's poems hold a variety of religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity) and languages (Latin, French, Chinese, German). All are part of the cosmic whole that he shows as existence. Whether you be "Romans, Parisians or Apaches" (p. 14), you get equal treatment in Osing's work.

In all of this, the reader, the friend, is guided. Osing's title may be *Silent Movies*, but he is not silent. He does not leave the image to speak for itself. Instead, he is conversational, and his voice is a steady rhythm as we navigate through his words.

Just as these words combine a variety of figures, they also take us to a variety of geographical places, such as Paris, France; Cass County, Illinois; the Delta; Russellville, Arkansas; and Memphis, Tennessee. Osing also positions us into a smaller space, such as Walgreens, the lake on a "blue Sunday" (p. 19), and the parlor.

Again, it is important to keep in mind Osing's intention. Just as the poem on the back cover of the book addresses us as a friend, the first poem in the collection does also. "Get the Picture?" uses the colloquial saying as its title to show our relationship with the speaker—he feels he has the right to talk to us in this informal and direct way—as he begins the collection with his combination of the silent movie and his vision. At the end of the poem, the speaker

cements his invitation, saying, "So sit in the silent dark with me, my friend, / in the ringings in other of my nickelodeons" (p. 3). This shows Osing's intimacy, his musings, his sound play and rhythm at its best.

Osing is adept in handling form. An example of this is "Sestina Roadshow," which begins with a reference to Martin Heidegger. This poem uses the sestina's emphasis on its six key words to steer us towards the poem's focus. Repetition of "dollar," "square," "refined," "vintage," "stuff," and most particularly what Osing chooses not only to repeat but also to be the last word of the poem, "past" (pp. 52-53), shows the speaker's mindset as he considers what does and does not matter and how we construct our history.

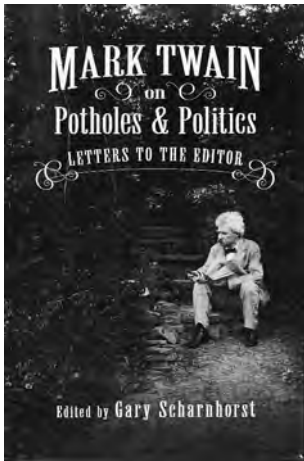
The dedication at the beginning of Osing's collection notes love, and the poem on the back cover notes mercy. This then is a collection of worlds, figures, and ideas crafted with not only attention to the line but also the big picture. "Happy are those who know that / behind all words stands the unsayable," reads the epigraph from Rilke at the collection's beginning, and Osing ends on a similar theme, writing in his final poem in the collection, "They adore absences in slices of time / too settled in poses to have any meaning, / unless you count lives that aren't there" (p. 66). Osing counts every life in *Silent Movies*, and so should we.

--Angie Macri



***Mark Twain on Potholes and Politics: Letters to the Editor.* Edited by Gary Scharnhorst. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2014. Pp. vii-xii + 185, notes, index. \$35.00, hardcover)**

With his ever inquisitive mind and pro-



found talent of expression, Mark Twain truly imbibed his world, and in response he produced an almost inestimable number of words. Many general readers, however, being familiar only with his most popular works, such as his witty aphorisms or the adven-

tures of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, often view Twain as being only a humorist. Gary Scharnhorst has compiled a concise and accessible collection of Twain's editorial letters that will dispel such limited estimates of Twain by illustrating the variety of his interests and the unbridled range of his rhetorical powers.

Twain scholars will appreciate having these 101 letters in one volume, and general readers will especially welcome the well organized and uncluttered format. These letters are ordered chronologically and span forty-four years of Twain's career from 1866 to eight weeks before his death in 1910, and each is numbered for easy reference. Scharnhorst, who has produced more than forty books about American literature, holds his editorial apparatus to a minimum, allowing Twain an almost uninterrupted opportunity to editorialize. Scharnhorst introduces each letter by listing its publication history, and he occasionally proceeds or follows a letter with a brief contextualizing comment. For example, he follows Twain's letter of complaint about Charles C. Duncan's conduct as shipping commissioner of the Port of New York with a note pointing out that when Duncan responded to Twain's letter with a \$100,000 libel suit, he "was awarded twelve cents and removed from his position" (p. 108). Scharnhorst follows the body of these letters with seventeen pages of footnotes and an index listing more than 200 persons referenced in the letters.

This collection showcases the wide variety of Twain's interests and his sometimes nuanced views on these topics. Everyone fulfills more than one social role, and in several letters Twain's interest is clearly dictated by a specific role. For example, he speaks as a father about how to discipline a child, as an author when he complains about copyright laws, and as a boat captain and passenger when he offers advice about lifeboats, and at other times he speaks as an irate city resident, a spastic humorist, or an abused celebrity. As with all editorialists, Twain is sometimes misinformed, irrelevant, or simply wrong; yet, he often offers thoughtful comments on complex and controversial issues. Perhaps one of his finest moments is in "American Notes/ The Temperance Insurrection." Twain first points out that female temperance crusaders should stop giving God the credit for their numerous successes in closing saloons because, Twain reasons, it is not their prayers but their presence that forces these closures. He then observes that these crusaders' actions are "[b]y no means" legal but are "thoroughly justifiable" because women "find themselves voiceless in the making of laws and the election of officers to execute them" (p. 75).

In addition to introducing some of Twain's many interests, these letters serve as a tour de force of his rhetorical innovations. Twain engages multiple voices, moods, and forms of humor—all within the genre of the editorial letter. In his introduction, Scharnhorst refers to Twain's ability to create a "cacophony of voices" and identifies "Female Suffrage/ A Volley from the Down-Trodden" as an example of Twain's use of numerous voices (p. 1). In this bogus response to his letter published the day before attacking women's suffrage, readers first hear from Mrs. Mark Twain who attacks her husband and the editors who published his letter, and then Twain steps in to comment on his wife's remarks. Then a militant suffragist castigates Twain with even stronger words than his wife, and Twain offers his response. Finally a delicate and romantic suffragist offers tears and poetry,

and Twain closes the letter by noting that he sees “a procession of ladies filing in at my street with tar-buckets and feather-beds” (p. 13). In addition to numerous voices, there are a great number of moods in these letters, ranging from frivolous and rambling humor to direct and biting invective, from vicious insults to some of the finest compliments ever penned.

The editorial page remains one of the most popular pages in newspapers today. On this page readers often encounter the spontaneity and catharsis of average people expressing a range of charged emotions—delight, frustration, indignation. *Politics and Potholes* offers this same experience, except the author of this spontaneity, catharsis, delight, frustration, and indignation is one person who was in a unique position as an editorialist, for Twain had an ever-growing sense of justice, the public position to be heard, the willingness to speak out, and the talent to say what was needed with the necessary force and humor.

-- Phillip Howerton



***Apocalyptic Sentimentalism: Love and Fear in U.S. Antebellum Literature.* By Kevin Pelletier. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015. Pp. ix-xii + 192, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95, hardcover)**

Nat Turner wrote in his *Confessions*, about his insurrection, “For as the blood of Christ had been shed on this earth and had ascended to heaven for the salvation of sinners, and was not returning to earth again in the form of dew . . . it was plain to me that the Saviour was about to lay down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and the great day of judgment was at hand” (C 47, quoted in Pelletier p. 45). The in-

timate relationship in Turner’s mind between divine judgment and slave rebellion runs through various strands of antebellum abolitionist literature, from David Walker through Turner, Maria W. Stewart, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and beyond. Kevin Pelletier’s *Apocalyptic Sentimentalism: Love and Fear in U.S. Antebellum Literature* thoroughly investigates an important but neglected aspect of the American culture of sentiment: “its passionate investment in fear as an indispensable engine of cultural and political transformation,” particularly with regard to the development of widespread anti-slavery sentiment (p. 3).

“Apocalyptic sentimentalism” is a rhetorical tradition, the genealogy of which Pelletier proposes and then traces in American letters, that is characterized not by any list of bedrock tenets but by the “complex negotiations of seemingly oppositional emotional economies,” particularly between love and fear (p. 4). Pelletier argues that the traditional scholarly narrative of nineteenth-century sentimental culture ignores the way in which widespread fear of God’s wrath, and the concretized form of such in the supposed imminence of violent black vengeance upon the sinning white ruling class, was instrumental to the socio-political and aesthetic project of love and sympathy, as well as the way in which that sympathy could in turn produce calls for swift vengeance. This double logic runs throughout the entirety of the book, to the extent that it can sometimes be quite repetitive. But at his best, Pelletier shows how deep this two-sided affect of sentiment actually runs in antebellum literature, arguing quite persuasively that it cannot be dismissed as mere surface affect. He acknowledges from the beginning that



there are multiple sentimental traditions and various structures of feeling accompanying each, but Pelletier's project is one of depth rather than breadth, and he makes a compelling case that the center of abolitionist discourse tends to move around this peculiar structure.

Pelletier traces the development of this tradition quite ingeniously, and in a way informed by rigorous challenges to a number of scholarly commonplaces. With the widest possible view, one might see the contemporary significance of this work in terms of affect studies, as a re-orientation of a misunderstood literary genre toward negative feelings at the politically significant moment when positive affects like love falter. The concrete ways in which love alone falters—particularly love of the racialized Other—are traced in Pelletier's historiography. David Walker's *Appeal* illustrated "that anti-slavery reform will need some corrective measure to activate white sympathy and to calibrate these sympathies with their proper object," and his reliance upon "the threat of God's vengeance" in this project exemplifies an early ("emergent") structure of sentimental persuasion where "[r]epresentations of God's wrath typically follow soon after pleas for love" (p. 42). Stewart's examination of gender in addition to race broadened the scope of apocalyptic sentimentalism, and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was an apotheosis of this form of rhetoric, "inviting her readers to ruminate on God's wrath and the destruction that befalls a people who fail to uphold the theological imperatives of justice and mercy" (p. 98).

Pelletier also examines the deep archive surrounding the figure of John Brown, including lectures and letters, in order to position him as both the historical incarnation of apocalyptic sentimentalism and the vessel of its decline. Brown was indeed a great "icon of love" (portrayed most notably in a fictional image of Brown kissing a black child in the *New York Tribune*), but the uneasiness many Americans felt about his brutally violent acts led large swaths of the generally sympathetic Northern

public to regard terror as an unnecessary and harmful aspect of sentimental politics, which "unraveled as a mechanism for binding individuals and avoiding conflict" (p. 157). Finally, the onset of the Civil War and the rhetoric of Abraham Lincoln, who "reformulated God's wrath from a threat one side directs toward the other into something the nation experiences collectively," revised the rhetoric of vengeance completely, severing it in a moment of national healing from the positive affects of compassion and love (p. 183). This national story, while not above challenge from scholars and historians of the abolitionist movement and Reconstruction, is coherent on its own and very readable, generating a number of promising leads for scholars of various stripes and finally offering the possibility that apocalyptic sentimentalism has returned to contemporary America—a thesis that all but begs for additional treatment.

--Zachary Tavlin



Of the Soil: Photographs of Vernacular Architecture and Stories of Changing Times in Arkansas. By Geoff Winningham. (Fayetteville: The Fay Jones School of Architecture and the University of Arkansas Press, 2014. Pp. 160, acknowledgments, index. \$44.95, cloth)

Geoff Winningham began this project in 1980. He traveled throughout Arkansas with Cyrus Sutherland, a professor in the Fay Jones School of Architecture in Fayetteville. Their goal was to document exemplary vernacular buildings. A year later, one hundred photographs from his fieldwork were exhibited in Little Rock by their sponsor, First Federal Savings

OF VERNACULAR
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GEOFF WINNINGHAM

and Loan Association. He continued to work with Sutherland over the next three years, adding Parker Westbrook to their partnership. At the project's completion, they had photographed over 3,000 structures. The project was put on hold for various reasons, until Sutherland's death in 2008. Rediscovering his interest in the photographs, Winningham digitally scanned the negatives to make black and white prints from the collection, and the images are now accessioned into the University of Arkansas's archives. He also returned to numerous sites where he discovered that many of the buildings were no longer standing. Curious about the history evoked by the imagery and his own experiences, Winningham located people who lived in these regions, and he used the photographs to elicit memories, descriptions, and narratives about these sites. The result is a handsome volume of 130 striking images enhanced with dozens of stories from the people whom he met.

The first image is a detail of a photograph that features an elderly woman on the front porch of her home in Perry County. It's followed by a written transcript of an interview with Travis White who recalls this house and its resident—reminiscing how he couldn't recall her name but remembered her for the number of cats that she kept. Following images of a shotgun house, a meeting house, and a barn, the book features a quote from Frank Lloyd Wright. Scholars of vernacular architecture and modernism will recognize this excerpt from Wright's

1910 preface to *Studies and Executed Building* that he reworked in his essay "The Sovereignty of the Individual." The quote is a major link to modernist aesthetic values and the idea of vernacular architecture. Wright calls us to appreciate vernacular buildings within architecture by drawing an analogy to the appeal of folksong in relation to art music. Just as the appeal of folksong is connected to relationships within communities and people's interactions with environment, Wright argues, what we now term "vernacular architecture" is a reflection of aesthetic values rooted in intimate connections between people and place. This epigraph serves as an index for Winningham's own artistic vision as displayed in the book.

Frank Lloyd Wright and Geoff Winningham share the view that vernacular architecture consists of the constructions crafted by untrained builders and that their buildings are intimately connected to regional cultural identity. Those who research vernacular architecture conceptualize this work as distinct from the high style buildings of known architects who have formal training and work with other professional architects. Scholarship in vernacular architecture would question their assumptions about these buildings being more "natural" than the high style buildings, however, and scholars of vernacular architecture may also question the potential for placing a romanticized gloss over these buildings when the emotional appeal of these structures is celebrated. Nevertheless, there is a strong aesthetic appeal to the houses, barns, churches, out-buildings, and other vernacular buildings.

This appeal is central to Winningham's focus in this art book. He printed the negatives in black and white. Although he doesn't discuss his technique, it's likely that the photographs were made from black and white film with a low-speed sensitivity that resulted in tight grain. They were printed in the book with a varnish that gives each image a silver patina to create a nostalgic tone to the project. The compositions emphasize the formal balance of

many of the buildings, and the use of contrasting light also adds to the high quality of the photography. It's clear that Winningham is inspired by Wright's interest in the way that vernacular architecture often emphasizes pure form and unpretentious ornament. His photographs portray these subtle yet powerful elements of their aesthetic appeal. He also presents excerpts from interviews directly and with virtually no contextual information. We have to infer meaning in these narratives in a highly inductive way that models how Winningham wants us to see his photographs. An overall theme, however, becomes evident throughout the book. Namely, the photographs and the text emphasize the precarious future for these buildings. Those who read the book and study the images will reflect on the relationships between the loss of many of the buildings and the disappearance of older ways of life in Arkansas. Many of the buildings that he photographed over thirty years ago are gone because of the dwindling population of these settlements.

Visually the book presents these and related themes in a poignant and thought-provoking manner. As documentation of Arkansas's built environment, however, there are some problems that create challenges for those engaged with the serious study of vernacular architecture and regional culture. The first is methodological. There's no discussion of how the recordings of the stories were made or edited. Some colloquial speech is misrepresented. For example, the burlap bag known as a "croker sack" is misidentified as a "cocoa sack," and the attempt to replicate southern dialect borders on stereotype. There's also very limited discussion of the methodology of photographic documentation, and only exteriors of the buildings are displayed in the book. There are few oblique shots of the buildings, so size and scale is presented impressionistically rather than directly.

The bigger problem is the lack of engagement with the burgeoning scholarship in vernacular architecture. While an in-depth index isn't necessary for an art book, this addition

would have added to the presentation of images in *Of the Soil*. This limited engagement with scholarship on vernacular architecture becomes more serious when buildings that fit more into the high style movements are cast as "vernacular" mainly because they are old and often derelict. Although the captions are useful and identify basic features and the locations of buildings, these descriptions reflect the writing of architectural historians who specialize in high style edifices. That's not to say that the buildings are wrongly identified. Rather, terming what clearly is an I-house as an "American Gothic residence" reveals some major gaps in the understanding of scholarship. The problem of describing buildings using high-style nomenclature becomes serious when regional styles like the prow-house are ignored for the non-descript term "wood frame Queen Anne cottage." Although he does use the term "saddlebag," many of the actual saddlebag houses in the book are labeled as "double houses." The tension between names used in the book versus the terms used in the study of vernacular architecture indicates a big problem. Namely, the emphasis in the book's description tends to highlight ornament or construction material whereas the more significant element of many of the buildings is the formal quality of distinct styles. More engagement in scholarship by writers like Sarah Brown, Henry Glassie, Fred Kniffen, John Vlach, and others who have written on Arkansas's vernacular architecture could have contributed not only to how the buildings have been identified and described in the book: a deeper grounding in writing on vernacular architecture would have influenced how Winningham photographed the sites and how he processed the photographs.

The book provides vivid representations of a sample of vernacular buildings. It works beautifully as an art book, and readers will appreciate the engaging stories and reminiscences. The book's flaws are understandable because the imagery is designed to be more evocative than objective. Nevertheless, like the patina of the

images, the shortcomings can create a distorted understanding of the state's history and culture that needs to be embellished by a deeper understanding of this fascinating topic.

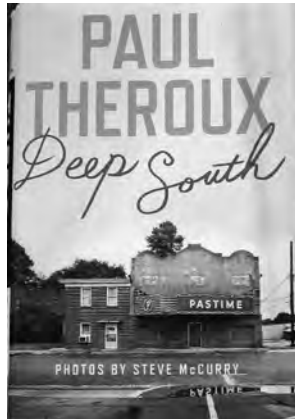
--Gregory Hansen



***Deep South: Four Seasons on Back Roads.* By Paul Theroux. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Boston: Eamon Dolan, 2015. Pp. 464. \$29.95, hardcover)**

In Robert Altman's 1975 film *Nashville* a character named "Opal" pretends to be a reporter for the BBC. In a couple of memorable scenes Opal struggles to find metaphors for Nashville, America, and the South with amusing and tin-eared results. Speaking into her recorder and wandering through a junkyard, she muses about the cars piled around her: "The rust on their bodies is the color of dried blood. Dried blood . . . I'm reminded of . . . of an elephant's secret burial ground. Yes. *Le val de mystere* . . ."

Opal came to mind while I was reading *Deep South: Four Seasons on Back Roads*, Paul Theroux's compulsively readable but ingenuous travel epic with a portfolio of color photographs by Steve McCurry. Few things crossing Theroux's path can escape an allusion, a metaphor, or an analogy—sometimes vivid, sometimes forced, and usually entertaining. There is much in the rural Deep South that reminds the author of life in Zimbabwe, Namibia,



Kenya. A college football fan with an Alabama "A" tattoo evokes "body modification as a proof of loyalty and cultural differentiation, like a Hindu's caste mark or a Maori's tattoo or the facial scarring of a Sudanese Dinka" (pp. 65–66). Visiting the store in Mississippi where Emmett Till whistled at a white woman, Theroux writes, "Enclosed in a tangle of vines and the roots of parasitic trees, like a cracked structure of rusticated stone in Angkor Wat, the store was perhaps held together for the same reason, by the clinging claws of roots and vignettes" (p. 204). Reading such passages, I envisioned Opal walking along the dusty road enunciating into her microphone.

Theroux knows whereof he speaks when he evokes exotic world locales. He spent much of his career outside the United States beginning with a 1960s stint in Malawi with the Peace Corps. He has lived and written about world travel in Africa and Asia and was an American expatriate in London for years.

Deep South is Theroux's first travel book set in the United States. He takes on the challenging task of four road trips from his home in Massachusetts to the southeastern United States, eschewing population centers and sticking to back roads and hamlets off the beaten path. Over a period of a year and a half he visits and revisits these neglected locales in every season and tries to find what makes the region such a singular and distinct—even foreign—part of the United States. He seems to be entranced and drawn to the area even as he expresses barely hidden contempt for some of the folks and folkways he encounters.

Three "Interludes" interrupt Theroux's travelogue. The first, "The Taboo Word," provides Theroux's exploration of the "N-word." The other two cover Southern literature with one devoted entirely to William Faulkner. Each covers well-worn territory and the usual Southern suspects while also allowing Theroux a forum for insights. This is an ambitious premise for a "travel book" and a fun ride. I was ready for it to end when I got to the end, but didn't

regret getting totally immersed in Theroux's Southern baptism (all those metaphors are contagious).

Casual errors and misstatements pop up throughout the book which begins in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where Theroux grossly exaggerates the size of a statue at Bryant-Denny stadium and refers to "Union Boulevard" when he clearly means "University." He writes that Alabama's civil rights-era football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant "avoided recruiting black players for years" (p. 67) even though it is well-documented that Bryant sought to recruit African-American players despite being thwarted at the state level. While exploring Alabama football, Theroux refers to the Crimson Tide in the same sentence in which he refers to the Alabama A logo as "the *scarlet* letter" (p. 65, my italics). The allusion is painfully obvious and it makes no sense.

Traveling to Faulkner's home in Oxford, Mississippi, Theroux describes Faulkner's office in detail. This is the room in which the outline for *A Fable* is scribbled on the wall. Theroux places the room upstairs in the house even though it's on the first floor. Faulkner's novel *Absalom, Absalom!* is referenced and quoted frequently. "Absalom" is misspelled as "Absolom" each time. Such errors are trivial perhaps but they are significant and frequent enough that they make the reader question the veracity of other statements presented as factual observation.

Such reservations aside, Theroux clearly tries to maintain an open mind toward an enigmatic region. He is curious about and tuned in to much of what drives these lesser-traveled areas he visits: the mysterious "Atomic Road" area of South Carolina and Georgia near the Savannah River nuclear facility; Alabama's Black Belt; Mississippi's Delta; the foothills and hollows of the Arkansas Ozarks.

Obvious motifs run throughout the book. Theroux seems irresistibly drawn to gun shows; he visits four of them and reports on the alarming things he hears from the dealers and atten-

dees. He uses the gun shows to illustrate a certain element of the South without acknowledging that such people and incendiary rhetoric are found at a gun show anywhere in the United States in the 21st century. For Theroux, gun shows share space with churches as places to check the pulse of the region and much time is spent at each.

Some of the author's digressions strike an uncomfortable chord, as when he refers to "the inevitable Mr. Patel" (p. 159) and clarifies the distinction between a "dot Indian with a caste mark on his forehead rather than a feather Indian" (p. 25). The frequency of the surname "Patel" for owners of Southern motels and convenience stores is harped upon to the point that it becomes offensive and (perhaps unintentionally) racist, but it gives Theroux a convenient excuse to explore the political ascendancies of Louisiana's Bobby Jindal and South Carolina's Nikki Haley.

In his attempts to duplicate the sound of various Southern accents Theroux makes the reader question what he finds important—the idea expressed by the speaker or the way it sounded. Nonagenarian author Mary Ward Brown punctuates a comment about race relations with the words "Time will help." Theroux presents the thought in standard English but can't restrain himself from adding in italics "*Tahm will he'p*" (p. 287). Such moments are frequent and clunky and stop the book in its tracks when they occur. Quoting a preacher on dying, Theroux follows the quote with an italicized "*dah*." Such broadly drawn and cartoonish dialects are gratuitous and, on occasion, cruel.

The book rambles from place to place within the Deep South, frequently crossing state lines. When Theroux crosses the river into Arkansas (which is not usually classified as a "Deep South" state) some of his festering themes come to a head. Most of the last one hundred pages of the book wander around Arkansas, and the author's restrained pique comes to the surface as he channels outrage about topics like the outsourcing of jobs. His

annoyance at the Clinton Foundation and the Global Initiative for not providing assistance state-side (and especially in Bill Clinton's home state) is palpable throughout the book and gains prominence during Theroux's Arkansas sojourn. The author repeatedly asks community organizers and beleaguered residents if they have received assistance from the Clinton Foundation. Like a good lawyer, he knows the answer to the question before it's asked. Irritation at Clinton gives Theroux the opportunity to explore the history and evolution of Hot Springs, Arkansas, as metaphor for the evolution and shortcomings of Bill Clinton.

Theroux's final extended metaphor in *Deep South* is a meditative and elegiac denouement in which he compares himself to "Old Man River," the mighty Mississippi. Theroux is now in his seventies and his decision to conclude the book with observations about his own aging indicates that the book's journey might be the author's own exploration of his aging and impending irrelevance. He seems a little frightened that a world that he has understood with such perception may be slipping from his grasp. Theroux mentions that only two of the many people he encounters in the South have heard of him and read his work. He protests that this anonymity doesn't bother him and is good for him as a writer and observer. Yet he mentions it more than once.

Theroux is passionate that one needs to travel the back roads of the American South and discover its truth and rewards for oneself. Ultimately, the book exhibits an appreciation for the region, its beauty and people, seasoned with exasperation at what the author feels needs to change or improve or be addressed. Each time Theroux leaves Massachusetts to travel south, there is a contagious sense of anticipation and excitement. "I nearly always felt I was in the presence of friends," he writes (p. 439). He doesn't even complain about the southern summers.

Deep South is a saga of a writer trying to understand a part of his own country that is in

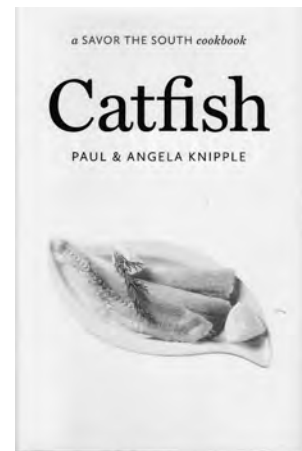
ways more foreign to him than Namibia. In the exploration, he seems to make discoveries about himself, where he's been, and where he's going. Theroux has written a provocative, fond, prickly, and puzzling addition to literature about the Deep South, a place where he feels like a "fortunate traveler in an overlooked land" (p. 439). I'm glad he wrote about it. I just wish he had paid more attention to being more accurate and less obvious in some details along the way.

--Edward Journey



***Catfish.* By Paul and Angela Knipple. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Pp. 136, acknowledgement, index. \$19, hardcover)**

In their introductory remarks to *Catfish*, Paul and Angela Knipple write, "For southerners, catfish is about more than the meal. There's also the hunt. Giant catfish were always the topic of stories about 'the one that got away'" (p. 1). Indeed, who among us hasn't been cornered by a tangentially related uncle at the requisite Thanksgiving dinner and regaled with a dubious tale of some bottom-feeding monster that broke the line? Such a "hunt," a quest for "the big one" is at the heart of the latest in the University of North Carolina's Savor the South cookbook collection.



One of the aspects that intrigued me most about the prospect of writing a review of a cook-

book was, well, the cooking that would be necessary to adequately assess the recipes. Much to the chagrin of my wife, who prefers saltwater swimmers, I prepared a steady diet of recipes from the Knipples' cookbook and found them to be, by and large, appropriately described with detailed instructions, full of flavor, and accessible to even the most mediocre of chefs (i.e., myself).

Following the recent academic trend of understanding the South through its global connections, the Knipples employ the esteemed whisker-fish in a variety of international dishes. Ranging from a spicy Szechuan catfish stew to the savory delicate pastry of catfish empanadas, the Knipples cover a wide breadth of international flavors and preparations, while keeping their hearts rooted in the South. Particularly delectable was the Nigerian catfish stew. Utilizing relatively easy to find ingredients, the stew has a terrific consistency, just the right amount of spice, and ages terrifically. Less successful were the catfish empanadas. While the interior—a mixture of catfish, peppers, and onions—was flavorful and light, the pastry itself was overly dense and detracted from the delicate stuffing. Nevertheless, the empanadas make for a terrific appetizer and maybe an even better conversation starter. Be aware though, the international recipes typically require a trip to an international grocery store, and some of the more exotic ingredients might be difficult to acquire if all your town sports is a Piggly-Wiggly or Bi-Lo.

While the international recipes proved excellent, the more traditional southern dishes occasionally fell short of expectations. Cookbooks purporting to cover regional cooking are always a dangerous proposition, especially so if that region happens to be the culinary juggernaut that is the South. By and large, the Knipples tread lightly and are forthcoming in acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses. Recipes calling for the fish to be blackened or fried tend to be excellent. The catfish sauce picante and catfish gumbo (a catfish gumbo? Come on, now . . .),

on the other hand, might be better left to experts of Cajun cooking. Beyond this, I found it necessary to modify the hushpuppy recipe by increasing the amount of flour and cornmeal and had to cut back on some of the salt in the white beans.

At this point in the review, I should probably address the elephant in the room: How was their recipe for fried catfish? I tested both the thin-fried catfish and the fried catfish filet recipes. Admittedly, upon reading the recipes I felt apprehensive. The Knipples call for catfish, patted dry, and then dragged through a spiced cornmeal breading before being fried. That's it. Could a recipe so simple prove delicious? How much breading would stick to the catfish without first dragging the fish through milk or egg to add a gluey texture? Despite some initial trepidation, my worries were quickly allayed when I removed a beautiful, crispy, perfectly cooked catfish with just the right amount of breading. My dinner guests who joyfully consumed every last crumb seemed to concur.

Beyond a wealth of carefully planned recipes, the Knipples also provide an engaging, if brief, introduction in which they trace the rise of catfish across the South and globally. From festivals in Tennessee and Louisiana to songs by Bob Dylan and Jethro Tull, it's clear that the catfish has long been firmly entrenched in the southern zeitgeist. And, although the Columbus Catfish and Carolina Mudcats minor league baseball teams receive their due credit, I was somewhat distraught to see that the Huntsville Channel Cats, a minor league hockey team I grew up watching, somehow slipped off the Knipples' radar. In the end, for all of the contextualization the Knipples provide, there is always a desire for more information.

On the level of materiality, *Catfish* is an interesting cookbook. The latest Savor the South cookbook is a handsome, slim, hardcover bound volume that would look great on any bookshelf. Unfortunately, people rarely take as good care of their cookbooks as they do their volumes of

fiction or poetry. The relatively few pages in a hardcover make it difficult to lay the book flat open—breaking the spine was even somewhat difficult. Moreover, the pages are not glossy, so they tend to absorb any grease, flour, or juice that may be circulating near the book. So, if you find a recipe you're particularly fond of, it might not be a bad idea to make a copy that can be more easily read in the kitchen.

The best stories about cooking, much like fishing, often rely on the details of preparation—acquiring the ingredients, the travails of the kitchen—as much as the finished product. The Knipples' new cookbook, *Catfish*, is sure to give you enough fodder and inspiration for your next endeavor. Indeed, I found that their cookbook encouraged my wife and myself to not only expand our culinary horizons, but also to pack up the car and take a mini-pilgrimage from Lafayette to Des Allemands, Louisiana to pay our respects to the self-declared “Catfish Capital of the Universe” (p. 6) and sample some of the best of “the South's beloved bewhiskered fish” (p. 6). Now how many cookbooks can you say that about?

--Jim Coby



***The Memorial Art and Architecture of Vicksburg National Military Park.* By Michael W. Panhorst. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2015. Pp. vii-xii + 131, appendices, bibliography, index. \$19.95, paper)**

“Art” is the optimum word for Panhorst's attractive guide to Vicksburg's memorial and commemorative statuary. As a professional art historian and preservationist, Panhorst emphasizes the artistic “design, production, placement, and meaning” (p. 6) of the park's 177 stone and

bronze figures, busts, and reliefs. The first half of the book is dedicated to guiding readers to a deeper understanding of the artistic merits of the statuary they encounter along the guided tour route. As a result, some who purchase this book without careful notice of the tiny superscript, “The Memorial Art and Architecture of,” Vicksburg NMP may be disappointed because it does not cover the battle for Vicksburg. Nevertheless, if either the uninitiated Civil War battlefield visitor or the Civil War purist will take the opportunity to engage with the author, he may indeed gain a fuller appreciation of and greater insight into the memorial art and architecture of the park.

A significant aspect of this park is the presence of so many memorials, many of large size, which some purists consider a detraction from the historic context the park preserves. Vicksburg NMP, like Gettysburg NMP and others, is either blessed or cursed with the presence of many memorials, depending upon one's preference for commemorative art or for “pristine” battlefields (Pea Ridge NMP for one) which boast no such obstructive, invasive, or distracting remembrances, however laudatory. Panhorst barely touches upon this debate between commemoration and preservation. Nevertheless, the extensive material he provides concerning the historical and creative background of these works is intended to elevate the memorial statuary beyond being obstructive or distracting to the historic battlefield.

The purpose of this guidebook, then, is not to recount aspects of the battle for Vicksburg, but to guide the reader through the years following the contest which sanctified these acres in the memory of veterans, their descendants,



and a grateful nation. Regardless, twenty-five years of healing had to pass before there were any concerted efforts to preserve and interpret any of the major battle sites. Not until 1899 did organized efforts begin at Vicksburg. Panhorst gives a concise account of these years of planning, development, and placement along with informative background allowing the reader to better appreciate how these monuments and memorials are more than just static art, but are reflections of the wishes of those states whose men and boys contested so fiercely at Vicksburg, on both sides, to never have their valor and sacrifice forgotten.

Desirous of giving readers a fuller understanding of both the technical effort and deeper content which went into creating Vicksburg's memorial art, Panhorst guides readers through the techniques of molding and casting in bronze; carving in stone; the pros and cons of either equestrian or full standing figures; busts versus reliefs; the history of late Victorian art styles; attitudes towards commemorating the dead (honor, valor, sacrifice, reunion) and how to interpret the resulting monuments from these perspectives. The first wave of installations was pre-World War I, all from northern states (Mississippi excepted, 1909), and so these installations are imbued with the tastes and emotions of the period. The author notes the initial reluctance of southern states to memorialize a battle they lost. Only in the post-World War I era did the southern states begin to honor, not their loss, but the heroic efforts and sacrifices of their men. Panhorst follows the addition of new monuments and the subsequent changes in artistic tastes and styles, along with the influence of economic conditions and cultural and political issues which they reflect through the newest of placements (Kentucky, 2010). However, in providing this extensive background, Panhorst risks lecturing the informed visitor on points known, while boring the more casual visitor with artistic ephemera and technical minutia. Handily, he provides a good glossary of art and architectural terms.

With the first half of the text given to artistic and historical background, the second portion begins with a small but helpful map of the park which marks the major monuments. The text and color photographs proceed along the park tour route. All major monuments and some significant smaller memorials are featured. The text provided is generally brief and usually highlights the author's interpretation of the piece's symbolism and artistic merit. Significantly, the author includes pictures and text for those monuments outside the park proper and not a part of the official tour, meaning these memorials are generally overlooked along with the achievements of their honored dead. Picturing this collection of exterior memorials, mainly from states which provided small contingents on remote parts of the battlefield, may now garner more notice, especially from those of their states seeking to locate and view them.

One of the outstanding points of this guidebook is the copious color and historic black and white photographs of the statues, monuments, and reliefs. Of additional interest is the second appendix, which lists all the artists and foundries associated with the monuments. Each artist has a brief biography, including other works he/she produced, while a history of each foundry is outlined along with its other significant works. An extensive bibliography emphasizing memorial art sources and histories is also provided.

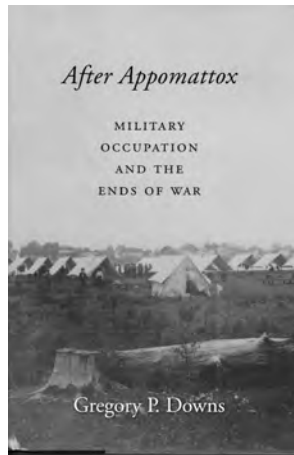
--Paul D. Haynie



***After Appomattox.* By Gregory P. Downs (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. ix + 253, appendices, abbreviations, notes, acknowledgements, index. \$32.95 hardcover)**

Throughout his 2015 volume *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War*, Gregory P. Downs poses the basic question that faced the North and South in the immediate years after General Lee's military surrender to General Grant. In fact, Downs makes clear that the question of peace, and the definition behind it, was far more complex than simply the laying down of arms by the Confederacy between April and June of 1865. As Downs establishes with ample documentation, the struggle to define the post war era began with General Lee's letter of April 8 asking General Grant for terms of "peace" (p. 1). Grant and his aides knew that Lee was not asking for terms of "surrender," which fell within a military commander's purview, but for a state of action that the President could determine (p. 1). That distinction between "peace" and "surrender", as Downs put it in a rather significant understatement, "would make a great deal of difference over the next five years" (pp. 1-2). It is a difference, he argues, that has continued to shape the role and function of the American military all the way through our occupation of Iraq after 2003.

In his crisply written and easily accessible book, Downs builds a strong case for the necessarily ambiguous, and ultimately hurtful distinction between what he calls the states of "battle time, postsurrender war time and peace time" to explain America's years of Reconstruction" (p. 2). While on several occasions during the book, Downs establishes that some Northern politicians and, as 1865 eventually became 1870, an ever-increasing share of Northern public opinion, wanted to withdraw their troops, with all deliberate speed one might say, from oc-



cupied territory, they soon discovered that while white Southerners may have surrendered, they were only interested in their definition of "peace" (p. 1).

As early as the summer of 1865, these same Southerners discovered they had an unexpected ally on their side. Once the formal shooting had stopped, at least on the battlefields, Downs argues that the crucial question did not revolve around the strict status of the former Confederate states, "but [who] had control over war powers" (p. 66). Both President Andrew Johnson and the Congress laid claims to the definition and use of those powers, and what soon evolved was a form of political and legal chaos that resembled the social and cultural upheaval occurring in the defeated South. Key players such as Thaddeus Stevens, William Fessenden, and Benjamin Butler all receive their due from Downs as participants in the chaos. At its heart, not only, as Downs describes, were there arguments between Executive and Legislative branches of government, but also intraparty struggles between the Republicans, and between that party and the Northern Democrats who saw the reseating of Southerners as an avenue to renewed Congressional power. With such vitriol flowing through Washington, politically astute former Confederates began to realize that a formal declaration of "peace," and with it their goal of restoring white supremacy through as many means as possible, would not be too long in coming. Downs suggests with appropriate detail that these Southerners realized, well prior to many of their Northern victors save the now deceased Lincoln, the labyrinthine difficulties in achieving a definition of "peace" that brought an end to the necessity of war powers while somehow maintaining the newly gained rights of the freed people.

In establishing the basic problem facing the North, Downs cites repeated instances of evidence that the only institution capable of maintaining those rights, and with them, the definition of American citizenship, was the mil-

itary. In turn, to sustain a military presence, even in sporadic geographic form, meant that a state of postsurrender war had to be maintained as elections began to occur in the South within a few months after Appomattox. Such a presence through a state of ongoing war, and even to preserve basic rights, only caused more concern in Washington about the danger of a militarization of American society as the price to sustain the rights of the freed people. Downs makes clear, however, that to declare “peace” was, in effect, to admit political surrender and to do so would subject black Americans to conditions with which they were all too familiar.

Downs writes with restrained eloquence about the byzantine chaos that exploded across the country after Lee’s surrender. At the same time, he notes that when blacks held political power in Southern states, they quickly established humanitarian institutions such as hospitals and schools. Nevertheless, these institutions of benevolence only survived as long as Northern muskets remained close at hand. Such argument, however, does put one more, and hopefully a final, nail in the refutation of the Dunning School of Reconstruction. Appropriately as well, Downs lastly analogizes these events, and their legal as well as socio-political difficulties, to those facing Americans in post-surrender Iraq during the earlier years of the present century. These discussions, with a graceful, skillful prose that mercifully avoids professional jargon, establish this volume as a needed read for scholars and students of the post-bellum era.

I do wish, however, that Downs would have paid a bit more attention to the religious forces, which, as George Marsden, Mark Noll, Drew Gilpin Faust, Albert Raboteau, and Eugene Genovese and others have argued successfully, helped to instigate the war and interpret its progression. In a nation where large majorities of its people throughout the antebellum era, black and white, attended Christian worship services, further understood theirs to be a Christian nation (by which most meant a specific form of

evangelical Protestantism), and carried these beliefs into secession, battle, surrender and victory, Downs might have incorporated these cultural forces into his discussion. With that minor notation, Gregory P. Downs has penned a wonderful work that is highly recommended for personal and library collections.

--Richmond B. Adams



***The Blue, the Gray, and the Green: Toward an Environmental History of the Civil War.* Edited by Brian Allen Drake (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015. Pp. vii + 224, epilogue, contributors, index. \$22.95, paperback)**

Environmental history, which originally emerged as a discipline among American historians in the 1960s and focused on how humans have changed the environment, has steadily



evolved into a field that focuses on more complex and mutual interactions between humans and their world. Today’s environmental history looks not only on the traditional issue of the impact of humans on their surroundings but of the effect of their physical surroundings upon humans. This

book of essays reflects the state of current environmental history in examining not only how the people involved in one event, the American Civil War, impacted the environment but on how environment shaped the military and

social experiences of that war. As its editor notes, it is a history that gives voice not only to humans, including those often ignored in the past and attended to by the new social history, but to “[g]eography, climate and weather, natural resources, flora, fauna, microbiology, and the like” (p. 2).

The Blue, the Gray, and the Green consists of papers delivered at the UnCivil War Conference held at the University of Georgia in 2011. That conference originated at least in part in response to Jack Temple Kirby’s 2001 National Humanities Center essay that called on historians to bring together environmental history and Civil War studies. Brian Allen Drake, the editor, details the sources of inspiration for this work in his Preface, then provides a useful and informative introduction to the historiography of environmental history and places the book’s essays within that historiographical tradition.

The essays are organized to some degree into groupings that reflect different ways of looking at environmental history. The first four examine how environmental factors affected the making of war and give them a determining function. Kenneth W. Noe’s essay explores the role played by weather and climate, suggests how a study focused on weather and climate might look, and offers topics for further exploration that scholars will find useful. Megan Kate Nelson uses a case study to show how environmental factors influenced military decision makings, explaining how Major Isaac Lynde’s abandonment of Fort Fillmore, New Mexico, and disastrous retreat, seen as unaccountable behavior by other historians, is understandable when considered within an environmental context. Timothy Silver’s essay on Yancey County, North Carolina, argues for environmental agency. He demonstrates how drought and frost compounded the county’s agricultural problems. Examining the men from the county who entered Confederate service, he shows how heavy rain that created environmental conditions that increased disease among the troops may have influenced the outcome of the Peninsular Cam-

paign. Finally, Kathryn Shively Meier’s contribution reveals how nature and particularly the weather contributed to straggling. Meier’s essay also contends that the individual soldier’s equation of disease with nature often encouraged this straggling, thus arguing not only for the agency of nature but for the importance of perceptions of nature in determining historical action.

The fifth and sixth essays shift to a concern with how the war helped to shape American views of the environment and particularly nature. Aaron Sachs uses landscape painting, particularly the portrayal of stumps, to suggest that the war changed how Americans viewed the natural world, destroying faith in the romantic view held before the war. John C. Inscoe also emphasizes how wartime experience created a particular perception of an environment by examining contemporary and more recent literary portrayals of the Appalachian environment. He finds that in this period the idea of the mountains as wilderness refuge and an environment that produced, when compared with the inhabitants of the Southern lowlands, a people of moral rectitude came into being.

The final four essays see a more interactive play between environment and humans, an approach the editor calls “hybridity” (p. 9). Lisa M. Brady’s examination of battles at Fort Donelson, Iuka, and Perryville concludes that “acoustic shadow” was a critical component of unanticipated and unpredictable problems, Carl von Clausewitz’s “friction,” that must be dealt with in battle. Drew A. Swanson argues that farmers’ understanding of the ecological characteristics of bright leaf tobacco and the nature of their farm lands helped ensure that piedmont farmers in Virginia and North Carolina continued to grow tobacco in the face of the South’s dire need for food crops. Guano is the focus of Timothy Johnson’s look at the cotton industry. He connects debt peonage in the post-war South with the environmental impact of cotton farming on the land, the realization that fertilization could improve crops, and the marketing

of fertilizers as a means of ensuring cropper indebtedness. Mart A. Stewart's essay proposes that a true environmental history of the Civil War requires scholars to understand how combatants and noncombatants moved through the landscape and provides examples of how looking at walking, running, and marching make a first step towards such a history.

Paul S. Sutter's "Epilogue," concludes the volume with a call to arms for environmental historians to achieve the marriage of environmental and Civil War history called for by Jack Kirby. Sutter sees that if progress is to be made toward that goal, a revolution in how historians consider nature and how they use the concept of agency must take place. Further, he calls for environmental historians to be more forthright in their purposes, purposes that he believes should be to explain how humans have come to live in the world as they do and to provide a critique of the implications for society of that history.

As with so many other collections of conference-delivered essays no over-arching theme emerges other than that environmental history, in its various approaches, offers new insights into Civil War history. The editor recognizes this outcome and states as well as any reviewer can what might be gained from the book when he calls the essays "a methodological smorgasbord, so to speak, a platter of interpretive hors d'oeuvres that serves as both an inspiration and a model for more substantial meals to come" (p. 7). Rightly described as exploratory in nature, the essays in *The Blue, the Gray, and the Green* nonetheless offer insights into the developing field of environmental history worth examining by all interested in history. Students of the Civil War will find challenging interpretations. The general historian will find them illuminating of an important and useful methodology.

--Carl H. Moneyhon

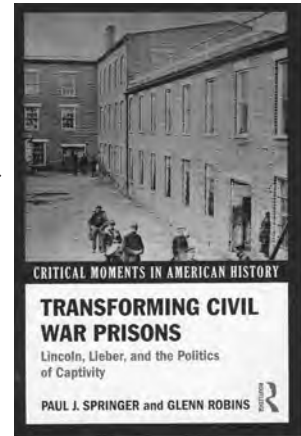


***Transforming Civil War Prisons: Lincoln, Lieber, and the Politics of Captivity.* By Paul J. Springer and Glenn Robins. (New York: Routledge, 2015. Pp. xii-xiii + 139, documents, bibliography, index. \$34.95, paperback)**

With this newly published volume, part of Routledge's Critical Moments in American History series, critics Paul J. Springer and Glenn Robins have delved deeper into the subject of Civil War prisoners

and their respective plights than many academic scholars before them. *Transforming Civil War Prisons: Lincoln, Lieber, and the Politics of Captivity* is an exhaustive investigation of the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the capture, exchange,

and maintenance of prisoners during the American Civil War. The authors tirelessly argue their interpretation of the historical events which lead them to their main claim—that neither the North nor the South is to blame for the casualties suffered on both sides because of the poorly managed existing prison system during the war. Rather, they argue that both the Confederate and the Union belligerents were not necessarily victims, but mere participants in a flawed system that was incapable of handling the number of captives this new war generated. Springer and Robins agree that mistakes were made by certain commanding officers (such as Colonel William Hoffman and General John H. Winder), but contend that few of the circumstances were navigated with actual malice toward the prisoners on either side.



Both Springer and Robins have previously published on historical aspects of the long saga of POW history in America, ranging from the Revolutionary War to present day conflicts. However, where *Transforming Civil War Prisons* effectively covers new ground is in its treatment of the lasting effects of the Civil War on American culture and the world at large, specifically in war-time conflict resolutions that follow the guidelines initially implemented by General Orders No. 100, also known as the Lieber Code, which was the actual code of conduct governing the treatment of Civil War prisoners of war.

In this interesting text, Springer and Robins set out to explain the circumstances—political, financial, and logistical—leading up to the failure and subsequent mismanagement of the prison system during the Civil War. The first two chapters, “Prisoner of War Policy and Practice” and “The Captivity Experience,” both work to establish a solid historical background of POW policies and experiences prefacing the Civil War and to explain the context surrounding the breakdown of POW captivity and exchange largely due to the problematic conditions within the prisons after the beginning of the Civil War. Springer and Robins explain how the Dix-Hill Cartel—which was initially designed to govern the exchange of prisoners—disintegrated, leading to both Confederate and Union suspicions regarding exchanges in the future as well as an unprecedented number of captives filling up dwindling prison facilities as they awaited new agreements to be reached regarding their exchange or transfer. In addition to problems of overcrowding, prison camps in the North suffered from widespread outbreaks of disease; in contrast, the Southern camps had more difficulty providing substantial rations for their prisoners, many of whom were held captive far removed from enemy lines to prevent escape in remote areas—reaching even to the Delta region, like Cahaba Prison in Alabama—that could not support feeding the additional popu-

lation.

Chapter Three, “The Culture of Captivity,” examines the experience of captivity, both in the Union and the Confederacy, relying heavily on first-hand accounts from prisoners and officers at the time. The following chapter, entitled “The Politics of Captivity,” highlights the political milieu encompassing the prison systems, including a longer discussion of the trial of Henry Wirz, a commanding Confederate officer in charge of the prison at Andersonville, Georgia, who was suspected of imposing cruel and unsanitary conditions on his captives. Wirz’s trial is a pivotal moment, and well worth discussing within the context of this book, because many historians claim his conviction and execution functioned as an obvious scapegoat for government officials in answering for the heinous conditions prisoners endured in captivity during the war. The conviction of Henry Wirz also established a precedent of morality that dictates certain wartime actions remain unacceptable, even if committed under orders—an idea in keeping with Springer and Robins’s claim that the repercussions of the Civil War continue to linger much more prevalently than many critics have previously acknowledged.

In the fifth chapter, “Honoring Civil War Captives,” Springer and Robins outline the various cemeteries, monuments, and celebrations that exist across the United States as recognition for those who served during the Civil War. The sixth and final chapter, “Civil War Prisons in History and Memory,” clearly situates the authors’ argument among historical and contemporary studies into the issue of Civil War prisons and moves into an analysis of how the Civil War contributed to American cultural memory, as evinced by many representations in popular culture—such as the paintings of Winslow Homer and the opening of the National Prisoner of War Museum. This chapter concludes with a note on furthering the field through examinations of previously overlooked individual camps (excluding the much-studied Anderson-

ville/Camp Sumter) and closes with a reflection on the influential legacy of the Lieber Code, which can be clearly seen in later documents of war like the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949.

To conclude, the authors have incorporated a poignant first-person look with the addition of first-hand documents, including selections from the Lieber Code, field inspection reports of specific prison camps by officers during the war, and several narratives of captivity in the form of documented journals and notes by actual prisoners of the time who comment on the conditions of their incarceration. Overall, this text will make an excellent addition to the library of any serious scholar of the Civil War, especially those who wish to expand their knowledge of the complex inner workings of the Civil War prison system and how its seemingly haphazard construction and maintenance contributed to the deaths of inordinate numbers of POWs due to poor rations and the spread of disease via overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. This volume may also interest those who desire to familiarize themselves with the details of class/race relations, particularly in the South, during this time period.

--Jamie Korsmo



***Confederate Odyssey: The George W. Wray Jr. Civil War Collection at the Atlanta History Center.* By Gordon L. Jones. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014. Pp. vii + 415, notes, index. \$49.95, hardcover)**

As the historical narrative unfurls, readers of the *Confederate Odyssey* by Gordon L. Jones march in unison to the beating drums of Confederate soldiers—an endeavor perusing

through some of the bloodiest days on American soil. Jones, in coordination with the Atlanta History Center, chronicles the George W. Wray Jr. Civil War Collection, an immense body of artifacts rife with stories which Jones will bring to life within his book. The purpose behind *Confederate Odyssey* is humble in scope:

This book is very much a part of that [educational] mission. It is not intended as a technical reference guide to Confederate artifacts, but rather as a visual catalogue . . . describing [the artifacts'] stories, significance, and context to both the general reader and Civil War buff alike. (p. 6)

His efforts to reveal the deeply profound histories of each artifact within the collection offer an illuminating narrative, which coalesce to form a book worthy of praise—a true tour de force.

The book opens with a very brief introduction to the Wray collection and how the Atlanta History Center acquired this unique assemblage of artifacts. Jones explains that “Wray had assembled a world-class collection; only after many years of studying it have we begun to fully appreciate the depth of his accomplishment” (p. 4). Initially, acquisition of the collection seemed unlikely because The At-



lanta History Center already housed the DuBose Collection; therefore, raising the funds required to acquire the Wray Collection seemed “more than a little problematic” (p. 5). However, Jones after deliberation and examination

garnered the funds and purchased the collection.

After acquiring the artifacts, Jones and others began delving into the rich tapestry of Confederate history etched into the blood-soaked coats, engraved buttons, tattered hats, and sundry of guns and ammunition within the immense collection. Thus, it is at this point that the narrative begins. Each chapter opens with a brief historical overview of a particular collection of artifacts. For example, the second chapter “Plowshares into Swords” (pp. 55-108) reconnoiters the Confederate States’ attempts not to manufacture and supply weaponry and uniforms to their army, but rather how the southern states repurposed and refurbished older weaponry and clothing into functioning weaponry and clothing. The Wray Collection preserves several of these artifacts, which Jones utilizes to tell the story of the burgeoning Confederate States of America as they fight against the United States to maintain their freedom and desired way of life. Each of the eight chapters follow the events of the Civil War chronologically, each pointing to specific time periods, skirmishes, and, ultimately, battles within the war. Additionally, the chapters offer technological insights behind the evolving Confederate military (e.g. clothing and weaponry): the how and why each artifact is produced before and during the Civil War. These insights paint the war from a mechanistic and tangible perspective. To that end, these technical details chronicle the minutiae of the war and help guide readers towards Lee’s eventual surrender in 1865. The textual accounts are complemented by Jack W. Melton Jr.’s photographs of each item within the Wray Collection.

The book is a beautiful narrative of Confederate triumphs, struggles, and eventual downfalls within the Civil War. As a result, it focuses primarily on the prodigious artifacts of the southern states. Therefore, it is not a comprehensive guide to the Civil War. However, that said, the areas which it covers are deeply entertaining and informational. It offers astute

insights into often overlooked areas of the war, and provides a detailed narrative progression of the Civil War inspired by the Wray Collection. To that end, the book is highly effective and achieves its educational purpose.

The Atlanta History Center and their curator Gordon L. Jones tout one of the most comprehensive and world-class Civil War exhibits in the world. The Wray collection only amplifies their already immense assemblage of artifacts by complementing the DuBose collection, which offers an enlightening portrait of the Union during the war. As a result, Jones utilizes the Wray collection within his book with tremendous clarity. It is both educational and enjoyable to read. Any person looking to learn more about the Civil War would benefit immeasurably by tagging alongside Jones as he embarks on a journey through the Wray collection to explore the war. As the book wanes into its final few pages, he concludes with a chilling reminder of the Confederate soldiers’ sacrifice and eventual defeat:

Confederate soldiers were neither ignorant of their cause nor deceived into fighting for it. In their time, in their place, in their world view, it was a cause worth dying for. And die they did. . . . The material story of that defeat is spelled out in intimate detail in the Wray collection, written into the weapons, uniforms, and flags of the men who fought and lost the bloodiest war in American history. (p. 415)

Therefore, it is the posterity of the men and women who fought and perhaps died within the Civil War that stands as one nation examining the remnants of the bloody war, hoping to avoid making the same mistakes. It is only through the remarkable efforts of collectors like George W. Wray Jr. and historians like Gordon L. Jones that we are able to look into our past to glean insights for our futures.

--Dylan Travis



Beyond Freedom's Reach: A Kidnapping in the Twilight of Slavery. By Adam Rothman. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. ix-xi + 186, prologue, epilogue, appendix, notes, acknowledgements, index. \$29.95, hardcover)

Many Americans think that with the Union victory in the Civil War, slavery ended. Actually, the end of slavery varied from region to region and was messy and imprecise. *Beyond Freedom's Reach* explores the case of one New Orleans woman's attempt to regain custody of her children from her previous owner who had taken them to Cuba in an attempt to maintain her valuable human property. Rose Herera and her free husband, George, had three children, Joseph Earnest, Marie Georgiana, and Marie Joesphine. Even though George was free, his children were slaves because they followed the status of their slave mother. The family was owned by several people until purchased by James De Hart, a dentist, and his wife, Mary, of New Orleans.

Enslaved people in the Crescent City hoped that occupying Federal forces would end slavery. The period was turbulent and chaotic. Slaves resisted in both public and private ways. Thousands of African Americans joined the Union, but women without that option became defiant and refused to behave as faithful slaves. Owners were desperate to maintain their valuable human property and went to great lengths to prevent freedom, trying to withhold information about the Emancipation Proclamation and taking slaves to remote places in an attempt to prevent emancipation. Rothman shows how New Orleans and Havana were closely connected socially and commercially, and since slavery was not threatened in Cuba, the De Harts decided to spirit the three children to

Cuba to continue to own them. The flight was complicated by an incident of violence that resulted in Rose's arrest and imprisonment.

Rose was involved in an altercation with her owner's aunt and was thrown in jail. There she suffered physically from the poor conditions and was in terrible health. De Hart came to the prison repeatedly asking Rose to go with her to Cuba with the enslaved children. Rose refused to leave the jail and entreated De Hart not to take the three young children out of the county. Demonstrating that enslaved parents had no authority over their own children, De Hart boarded a ship with the children. It is telling that their free father, George Herera, came to the ship and saw the children but was powerless to prevent their passage—a dramatic and cruel example of the powerlessness of the parents of slaves.

When the war ended, Rose pursued legal action, charging that her children had been illegally kidnapped because Louisiana's slave code, Code Noir, prevented separating children under ten from their enslaved mothers. In the shifting jurisdiction of courts she found a sympathetic prosecutor who vigorously pursued justice by the return of her children. In a shocking reversal of power, Mary De Hart was arrested and charged with kidnapping, just two years after taking the children against their mother's will to Cuba. Rothman expertly dices the complex legal arguments as newly freed people, their former owners, lawyers, and judges of differing opinions navigated the uncharted legal waters of freedom. The old slave society had been destroyed but issues of what would replace it were fiercely contested. Fundamental questions included: Who was a rebel? Who was a



slave? When did slavery end? Who had jurisdiction? Who would appoint judges? These issues were hotly fought over during this time of social, cultural, and legal turmoil. Rothman skillfully recreates this suspenseful and gripping account. Never does the reader forget this was a mother desperate to regain custody of her children. The significance of the verdict was lost on no one. The real possibility of enslavers kidnapping newly freed African Americans and whisking them to Cuba for sale was a threat blacks and northern politicians desperately feared. The Senate and State Department followed this case, understanding the legal and moral significance and the precedence the ruling would establish.

Sadly, George Herera died, leaving Rose to reconstruct her family alone. Her story has never before been told. Rothman reconstructs the events by mining primary sources of court records and expertly places them in historical context by drawing on his depth of knowledge of secondary sources. What emerges is a suspenseful, gripping and important addition to our understanding of the ending of slavery and the beginning of freedom. Rose Herera's is the rare recorded story. How many other families of which there is no account were destroyed in the waning days of slavery? We will never know. We do know that against all odds, the court system awarded custody of the three children back to their widowed mother. The 1880 census tells us that three generations of Hereras lived in a house together. How tragically close this family came to being forever separated takes your breath away.

The monograph has five chapters with a Prologue, Epilogue and an Appendix of Rose Herera's Court Petition and over fifty pages of endnotes. Sadly there are no photographs of Rose and her family but images do include an 1858 advertisement for Rose's sale, an ad for Dr. De Hart's dentistry practice, a list of local slave dealers, maps, and a useful summary of the main characters in this true story. Additionally, Rothman has an online homepage for *Beyond Free-*

dom's Reach. (Search using the title.) This excellent page provides links to primary documents sites, featuring Abraham Lincoln's and Benjamin Butler's papers, the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, maps of the period, *Garner's New Orleans Directory for 1861*, and other sources, allowing the reader to further explore aspects of the book that interest him or her. Educators will find this online feature valuable in teaching about primary sources.

Beyond Freedom's Reach will appeal to specialists and non specialists, teachers of both high school and college will find Rose's story informative and inspirational. This is a rare book that is historically important, meticulously researched, well written, and contextualized in both the Atlantic World and Civil War New Orleans. Adam Rothman has contributed a gem to our understanding of the end of slavery by sharing with us Rose Herera's story of resilience, persistence, and the fortune of good timing.

--Minoa Uffleman



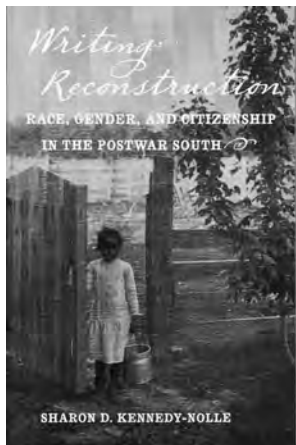
***Writing Reconstruction.* By Sharon D. Kennedy-Noelle. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Pp. xi-xiv + 301, notes, bibliography, index. \$45, paper)**

Courses surveying the history of American Literature are routinely spilt into two general periods: Colonization to the Civil War, and the time thereafter to the present. Yet the latter division, 1865–, often leaves a curious gap in the fore portion of the dash, picking up sometime around the fin-de-siècle while perhaps touching on a few notable luminaries (Henry James, Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson) to represent the balance of the century.

In her *Writing Reconstruction: Race, Gen-*

der, and Citizenship in the Postwar South, Sharon D. Kennedy-Noelle illuminates a time and region often overlooked: postbellum literature produced in the South during the Federal occupation of 1865–1890, a twenty-five year period of radical transformation wherein the Old South became the New South. The volume is organized geographically, with a chapter on each of the five military districts established in the former Confederacy during Reconstruction. Such a division, beyond an efficient method for organizing her text, allows Kennedy-Noelle to report on literary proceedings from each distinct region—this was, after all, the era of “local color”—and to track the cultural and literary differences between Arkansas and Florida, North Carolina and New Orleans. What results is the impressive analysis of a set of popular novels that strove not only to inform the reading public about life in the postbellum South, but also to influence those perceptions by promoting a vision of what they felt it ought to be.

Kennedy-Noelle moves beyond a simple close reading of these texts, however, and actively forms, then investigates, wide-ranging connections within Reconstruction literature,



which she in turn uses as a lens to chronicle the highly contested struggle to shape the postbellum world. Foremost among the book’s subjects is the complex relationship between race, gender, and citizenship (as referenced in her subtitle), much of which was tied to

postbellum conceptions of property. The Reconstruction South featured a motley mix of humanity: plantation owners, many of whom had been divested of their land; poor whites, who had none to begin with; and black Freedmen (as they were then called), who had once

been property themselves and were striving to form an identity as landowners and citizens. Traditional notions of personhood were as much a casualty of the war as the Confederacy; after the upheaval wrought by five years of insurrection, citizenship was based not on the traditional relationship one had with the land, nor on the legal rights bestowed by amendments to the U.S. Constitution, but instead migrated to a definition based on ethnicity, literacy, and reputation. So it is that many of the same Reconstruction writers who “sought to explore the responsibilities of duty as black and white southerners” also wrote in order to “resolve the meaning of reputation around understandings of citizenship” (p. 292).

From the thousands of Southerners writing during the period, Kennedy-Noelle has selected an admirable and motley cross-swath of authors: tourists, homesteaders, Creoles, and carpetbaggers. Among the authors surveyed are Constance Feminore Woolson, writing from the “Tourist Outback” of Florida, who advocated that Freedmen be assimilated as had Minorcan immigrants; and Octave Thanet, writing from Arkansas, who sought to import the agricultural labor model she had known growing up in Iowa. Beyond these initial chapters, it is a delight to encounter prominent historical figures such as George Washington Cable, the “first modern Southern writer” and author of *Madame Delphine*, alongside the eminent Albion W. Tourgée, author of *A Royal Gentleman* and later a lead petitioner in the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. Kennedy-Noelle’s assembled canon of Reconstruction writers belies the notion that this period was a literary vacuum, bereft of noteworthy fiction.

While she provides an admirable survey of the literature of white writers and reformers, Kennedy-Noelle is remiss, perhaps, in her coverage of the primary literature of African Americans. Though much ink is spilled regarding white responses to the “Negro Question,” she neglects to feature any singular writers of color, devoting only one chapter to works written by

Blacks. And even that chapter, "African American Literary Activism in a Divided District," is set in the isolated, relatively northern locale of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, hardly representative of the Deep South, and features periodical writings from local Storer College and Pioneer Press, hardly influential publications on a national scale. If Kennedy-Noelle was forced to make this editorial decision due to a lack of significant African-American writing during the period, the underlying context would be worthy of exploration itself, especially on account of the widespread crisis of Black self-identification that may have been investigated through Black-authored literature (as did later authors like Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Charles Chesnutt).

Ultimately the diversity and depth of material is a central strength of *Writing Reconstruction*, which offers a lengthy sojourn into the postbellum South, a literary world often overlooked. Kennedy-Noelle's "Conclusion" is a fitting capstone to the main scope of her book, shifting chronology into the Jim Crow era inaugurated by men like *Atlanta Constitution* editor Henry Grady, who called for a roll-back on much of the progress achieved by Reconstruction reformers. For authors like Tourgée and Cable, Woolson and Thanet, the "New South" would prove a disappointment, as their ideas were ignored or dismissed, Southern society regressing so as to approximate its antebellum status. Their views and visions will be read and appreciated in this century, at least, thanks to Kennedy-Noelle and her trenchant work in *Writing Reconstruction*.

--Adam Nemmers



***One Mississippi, Two Mississippi: Methodists, Murder, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Neshoba County.* By Carol V.**

George. (New York: Oxford, 2015. Pp. ix-xiv + 230, epilogue, acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.99, hardcover)

Carol V. George's historical analysis of the racial divide in Neshoba County, Mississippi covers the years between 1833 and 2000. In this three part work, George begins by chronicling the settling of Longdale and the establishment of the Mt. Zion Methodist church, which prided itself on its racial inclusivity. Section II covers the ways in which the church hierarchy sanctioned segregation during Jim Crow, and Section III focuses on the aftermath of the Neshoba county murders, and the eventual retrial of Edgar Ray Killen for murder.

W. E. B. DuBois's concept of dual consciousness may not appear until page 231 of George's work, but the concept permeates the entire book. The title refers to many different dualities within the state and within Neshoba County: the racial split in the church, the racial split in schools and education, the racial split in terms of community memory. It also refers to the split in consciousness that allowed lawmen to be Klansmen and that allows even now for the celebration of the South despite its racist past. George presents a variety of dichotomies early on in the book as the themes of her work: "hope and fear, alienation and community, death and reconciliation, faith and despair" (p. 9). One of the themes that she doesn't list here that pops up multiple times is that of "The Plantation Myth" which she also refers to (always in quotation marks) as "The Southern way of life".

Not only did the Plantation Myth contribute to a sense of rootedness that led many blacks to resist the Great Migration, according to George, but the church was also part of that rootedness. The founder of the Methodist church, John Wesley, preached that owning slaves was a sin. In addition, the Mount Zion church was established on land donated by

Thomas Jones, a former slave who escaped and later settled in Neshoba County. Despite the inclusivity of the church as a whole, however, as George notes, the church's Central Jurisdiction decided in the 1920s to create a church within a church—establishing separate black leadership for those churches like Mount Zion that had grown since the 1890s implementation of Jim Crow laws. This system within the church was in effect until 1972. George notes that this led to fewer new pastors coming to Mississippi from seminary; no one wanted to deal with the tensions related to the segregation that the Central Jurisdiction's rule justified and endorsed.

The church serves as a symbol for the struggle not only in Neshoba County, but throughout the country; Mount Zion Church was started with that idea of inclusivity and was a figure in the fight for educational opportunities and voting rights, which led to its burning and



to the deaths of the three Civil Rights workers. George details the horrific night that the KKK descended on the church as finance committee members were leaving. Despite the beatings the members endured and the loss of the church, George's use of interviews and

records shows that the incident was not reported largely because some of the victims recognized law enforcement among the Klansmen. Mount Zion was one of fifty churches to burn that summer.

George's work covers the long span of time from the establishment of the church at Mount Zion, to the 1964 murders, and finally to the 2005 conviction of Edgar Ray Killen. One would hope that in that fifty-one years between the killings and the conviction of Killen that

things would have shifted dramatically; while George's work does show that progress has been made, it also emphasizes the slowness of that progress. George focuses a good deal of attention on how the gradualist mentality—the same mentality promoted by Booker T. Washington—was used to delay that progress. The church split isn't the only issue used to indicate how Neshoba County and the state of Mississippi were reluctant to change; the resistance to follow the ruling of *Brown v. The Board of Education* is a perfect example of how the "Southern way of life" ran on its own time; George doesn't shy away at any point in the book, however, in terms of showing that people on both sides of the racial divide slowed the change.

George writes of the 1988 film, *Mississippi Burning*, a fictional account of that summer in 1964, that was "attacked by critics for its sensationalism and savaged by those who took offense of its portrayal of tired old stereotypes; the ignorant white racist and the pious, self-effacing black" (p. 193). George's work shows, however, that the stereotypes have very clear basis in fact, especially in Neshoba County, Mississippi, where Civil Rights workers Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Caney, were brutally murdered. At the heart of the book is the question of how complicit the entire community was in the murders and the subsequent lack of state action in prosecuting Edgar Ray Killen for murder—the original charge was one of "conspiracy to deny the victims their civil rights" (p. 163). George shows, through newspaper reports, interviews with residents, and through political actions, how entrenched the "Southern way of life" myth was and still is.

The book has great historical value, but it also is incredibly timely; just as Mount Zion church was a part of the push to ensure voting rights, so are we still fighting for access to the vote, even as the 2016 elections approach. Likewise, we still see threads of the Plantation Myth present in incidents like Paula Deen's fall from grace when she glamorized that image of Southern culture. And, in a time where Kim

Davis, Mike Huckabee, and others attempt to once again use their faith to halt the Supreme Court ruling in *Obergerfell v. Hodges*, the historical reminder of how that approach has not won in the past offers both hope and perspective.

--Angelic Rodgers



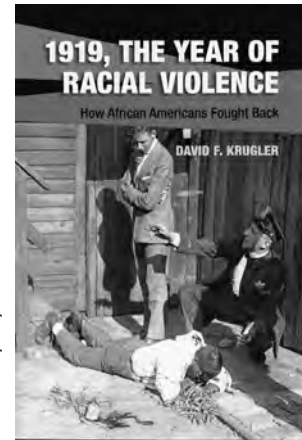
***1919, The Year of Racial Violence: How African Americans Fought Back.* By David F. Krugler. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. vii–xiv + 310, bibliography, index. \$29.99, paperback)**

One of the questions central to debates on the Elaine Massacre of 1919 (an event to which the August 2001 issue of this very journal was dedicated) was: Who shot first? Black sharecroppers attempting to organize a union had placed armed guards around the church where they were meeting, and up to the church drove a car holding three people, including a white deputy sheriff and a white security officer for the railroad. Given that the events which followed branched into two main interpretations—either black laborers were defending themselves against an oppressive system, or white law enforcement was defending everybody from a black insurrection—the question of who shot first becomes laden with significance. However, this weight has, perhaps, led many historians to believe that white culpability for the larger atrocity cannot co-exist alongside the idea of black armed self-defense. In a review essay in the Autumn 2009 issue of the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, historian Jeannie M. Whyne laments the lack of focus upon African-American agency in two books dedicated to the Elaine Massacre—Grif Stockley’s *Blood in Their Eyes: The Elaine Race Massacres of 1919* and Robert

Whitaker’s *On the Laps of Gods: The Red Summer of 1919 and the Struggle for Justice that Remade a Nation*. As Whyne notes, “the positioning of black union men as merely objects of white violence can seem to minimize the challenge they offered” (p. 331).

By contrast, David F. Krugler’s *1919, the Year of Racial Violence* aims to maximize the challenge African Americans offered to the American system of white supremacy, using the year after World War

I ended as a showcase for the various forms that the black struggle against white supremacy took. This struggle covered three fronts: armed self-defense against white mobs, the dissemination of true accounts of white supremacist violence, and the legal struggle to free black



citizens wrongly arrested and convicted. Krugler opens with a survey of the New Negro Movement, born from a mix of black self-help ideologies, socialism, the Great Migration, and the black experience in World War I, which had energized many African Americans to make not only the world safe for democracy, but also the United States itself. Whites, however, largely took exception to expressions of black self-respect and demanded that returning soldiers adapt themselves again to their place at the bottom of the American racial ladder. As Krugler recounts, the first postwar wave of armed black resistance, in fact, occurred at and around military bases: the Navy Yard at Charleston, South Carolina, and Fort Huachuca in Bisbee, Arizona. However, the image of the “black man in uniform” was not solely responsible for the eagerness with which whites engaged in anti-black collective violence, for the federal government had encouraged the rise of volun-

tary associations to promote patriotism and quash dissent: “Even with the war’s end, no one could instantly snuff the hyperpatriotic eagerness for a fight. Encouraged by the federal government, many voluntary vigilance groups expected to keep up their civic policing after the war” (p. 70). A lengthy chapter on the Washington DC riot illustrates how, “in an environment where voluntary vigilance thrived and the distinction between soldier and civilian remained blurred, white veterans and active-duty servicemen had banded together to become a mob in uniform” (p. 98). With regard to the riot in Chicago, Illinois, white athletic clubs also filled the role of vigilantes given semi-official status, and it was in Chicago, Krugler says, that black “self-defense measures reached their highest levels yet during 1919,” moving beyond the instinctive and reactive to include organized patrols by veterans in uniform to stop mob activity (p. 129). As the year went on, outbreaks of anti-black mob violence often expanded to target all African Americans, not just a subset of the population perceived as guilty of some offense, and black residents continued with a praxis of armed resistance, even when it entailed confronting infantry troops.

In the chapter most relevant to the subject of this journal, Krugler surveys how black resistance grew beyond defense against a direct, violent threat to encompass a challenge to economic exploitation. While the author acknowledges that many questions surrounding the Elaine Massacre will remain unanswered, his framing of the sharecropper’s organizing work within the broader New Negro Movement enriches the narrative established by other authors on the subject. Krugler also highlights other cases of labor activism, such as a US Steel strike in Gary, Indiana, and interracial union organizing in Bogalusa, Louisiana, a company town ruled as fiercely as any southern plantation: “The dynamic response of African Americans in all three places demonstrated the readiness of blacks to assert and protect their rights, not just as citizens, but also as workers”

(p. 195). Indeed, the pattern of armed resistance was soon well established enough that the federal government began working with local municipalities and businesses to monitor the sale of weapons and ammunition to African Americans.

Krugler’s last three chapters survey the broader fight for justice, which combined black activism in the court system with attempts to investigate and publicize the nature of these so-called “race riots,” as well as other cases of lynching, with due attention paid to the work of Scipio Jones and the NAACP in securing the freedom of the Elaine Twelve. Though, at times, the record of violence, the ultimate body count, would seem to argue against black resistance making any dent in the American system of apartheid, Krugler sees 1919, the apex of racial violence, as casting a long shadow down the years, finding parallels in the likes of A. Philip Randolph’s March on Washington Movement, the World War II-era Double V campaign, the Deacons for Defense and Justice, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, and more. And here is the real value of this book—it provides important national context not only for each of the cases of racial violence surveyed, but also for the larger civil rights movement of the twentieth century, a movement that included so much more than the nostrums of nonviolence rendered canonical by textbook publishers and politicians. In this book, black Americans are neither victims nor saints but real people who often take up arms (figuratively and literally) against their sea of troubles, and their history is rendered richer for this perspective.

--Guy Lancaster

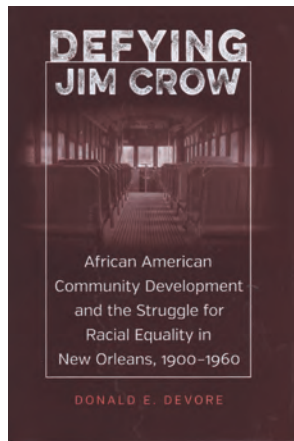


Defying Jim Crow. By Donald E. Devore. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015. Pp.

vii-ix + 228, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00, hardcover)

In this academic study of African American history, Donald Devore offers an invaluable examination of the foundations of black public and political life in New Orleans. Rather than focusing on protest and direct action to frame African American resistance to discrimination, Devore gives a disciplined account of how African Americans formed a close-knit community committed to a lengthy fight against institutional racism. Devore successfully illustrates how the community held education, civic engagement, business, and religious life as priorities to ensure its ability to fight for equality. To do so, Devore offers an exhaustive study of the creation and growth of educational, religious, and economic institutions to sustain a difficult legal and political fight against Jim Crow segregation. He argues that these institutions, built on “an ideology that stressed racial equality and justice, community development, and individual initiative” (p. vii), were necessary to “[achieve] group and individual goals” in New Orleans during the Jim Crow period (p. viii).

Defying Jim Crow is divided into eight chapters that chart the progress of black political power in New Orleans from the Civil War to 1960. Devore begins with an overview of the particularities of race relations in New Orleans during Reconstruction where a more permissive culture than the rest of the South fostered racial interaction and white-black coalitions, resulting in a more integrated city. From there, he illustrates how those rights were eroded with Jim Crow, and in response, the African American



community chose to strengthen itself with institutions focused on building alliances and producing economic power to assert political will. The book ends with the quickening momentum of resistance to segregation after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954); by then, African Americans in New Orleans had built a community with financial backing and political will to challenge a racist system through direct action and legal suits. Devore painstakingly shows the effort of the African American community to establish successful institutions and the effort of the white majority to maintain a segregated system. Using financial records, personal correspondence, census information, voter registration rolls, political records, boards of trustees votes, hiring and firing decisions, and curricular goals and revisions, Devore’s research is exhaustive and overwhelming at times.

Devore’s text fills a much needed gap about Civil Rights history; while there are plenty of texts that cover the 1900–1960 period, like Charles Cobb’s *This Nonviolent Stuff’ll Get you Killed* (2015), Reconstruction and Civil Rights eras still garner a majority of scholarly attention. Devore bridges those periods into his narrative seamlessly, illustrating the quickly shifting public perceptions of race relations and the slowly building mechanisms of resistance from the 1860s to 1960. However, Devore’s strength is in education history. His account of the formation of black public schools and colleges in Chapters 2 and 5 is the most interesting and developed part of the text. He successfully makes the case that education is the foundation for community building. Unfortunately, his interest in education occasionally overshadows his treatment of religious and secular organizations and business and labor efforts.

Devore’s strength also lies in his ability to weave a narrative that shows how education, civic leagues, religious organizations, and business and labor worked together to amass political power. For instance, Devore uses Central Congregational Church, an important piece of African American history in New Orleans. The

church was led by Reverend Charles Thompson, a Theology teacher at one of the original black colleges in New Orleans, Straight College, and backed with financial support from both the American Missionary Association—an important abolition group—and middle class black New Orleans residents. Central’s congregation was made up of professionals, and the concentration of a small but financially stable congregation meant that Central could offer scholarships, support struggling families, and mobilize efforts to encourage participation in civic and religious life. The congregation chose leaders who would become major figures in the community, including Reverend Norman Holmes, who established early childhood education and social welfare programs for the community and helped lead the Urban League, a civic group dedicated to promoting black business. Groups like Central’s congregation provided a financial and organizational foundation for Civil Rights groups, like CORE and the SCLC, to draw from. Central Congregational Church, like many of Devore’s examples, illustrates how education, civic organizations, church groups, and commerce tied together to promote racial equality and justice, community development, and individual initiative to challenge segregation. It is the strength of these institutions that gave the community a firm foundation to fight for their civil rights in the face of white hostility and a racist government structure.

Devore’s exhaustive look into these institutions and his threading of them into a narrative about community resistance is a necessary contribution to the field; however, his attention to detail and interest in the finances and bylaws of the institutions he studies occasionally makes for a slow read. At times Devore is so intent on giving his readers those details that the focus of his argument is lost. While his work is undoubtedly important in understanding how African Americans mobilized every resource to resist Jim Crow, portions of the chapters could have been easily condensed and a bit more attention

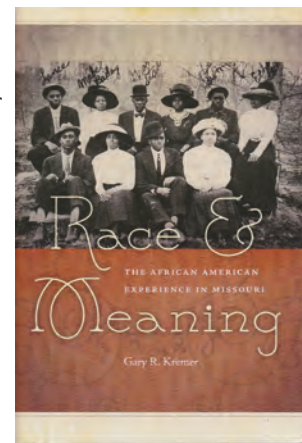
paid to connecting what was happening in New Orleans with other cities. Despite these complaints, Devore’s book is a valuable addition to anyone interested in African American history, the role of education in political life, or activism.

--Tina Powell



Race and Meaning: The African American Experience in Missouri. By Gary R. Kremer. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2014. Pp. ix-xi + 212, epilogue, notes, index. \$35, hardcover)

As a native of the Missouri Bootheel town of Hayti, I have always had a keen interest in the history of the “Show Me State” especially as it pertains to the peculiarities of African American history and culture from slavery to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Missouri was a gateway to the north for black southern exodusters in the late 1800s and seemingly a state where southern and northern ideologies of racial equity for African Americans collided. *Race and Meaning: The African American Experience in Missouri* by historian Gary Kremer provides an introduction as well as in-depth understanding about the rich and textured lives of black people in rural and urban parts of the state.



Kremer’s work is a collection of fourteen masterfully written essays containing detailed

biographical sketches of notable and uncelebrated black people, historical profiles of institutions and communities created for social and economic advancement of African Americans, and an exploration of the resilience of a people who created rich lives with limited resources. The apex of the book deals with the legacy of Abraham Lincoln in Missouri and the university named in his honor, Lincoln University. Each essay in this book attempts to explore and provide understanding of “the problem of the color-line” as spoken by W.E.B. Dubois in *The Souls of Black Folk*.

Kremer credits his craftsmanship of writing biographical sketches to the late Dr. Lorenzo Greene, a historian at Lincoln University and a contemporary of Carter G. Woodson, the father of black history. He ties the stories of people’s lives to broader issues of the time. For example, in the essay, “The Whitley Sisters Remember,” he introduces readers to the creativity and communal support during a time of segregation in Kansas City, Missouri. The biography of the life of these three sisters, raised by their grandparents in an urban town, explained how the collective ingenuity of a black community spurred social agency during the most racially volatile period in American history. Kremer writes, “The Whitley sisters had no desire to leave the neighborhood of their youth. It was a multidimensional, self-contained neighborhood: people lived their public and private lives there and virtually all of the needs of the residents could be met” (p. 140). In addition to the Whitley sisters, the author gives profiles of luminaries who had ties to Missouri such as George Washington Carver and lesser known, but forceful leaders such as Josephine Silone Yates and the institutions and political structures they impacted.

The period following the Reconstruction Era was a stark moment for African Americans in the United States—the emergence of black codes, increased violence inflicted on black people at the hands of terrorist groups such as the Klu Klux Klan, and a wide-range of eco-

nomic impediments hindered African Americans from pursuing a life of liberty and happiness. However, Kremer makes note of an unusual case of black communal development during a period when former slaves were offered few economic concessions by the federal government—the establishment of Pennytown in south-central Saline County. “Pennytown functioned as one of Missouri’s freedmen’s hamlets settled by emancipated slaves, who bought small parcels of land in fee simple from white landowners” (p. 29). The community was steeped in black people’s desire to own their land and the persistence in creating a new cultural identity. Pennytown was a precursor to the civic ingenuity that further inspired African Americans to create communal spaces that deepened their sense of humanity and collective power. During the decline of Pennytown in the 1920s, African Americans outside the urban corridors of Kansas City developed their own “Garden of Eden” in the community of Leeds: “In addition to providing African Americans with an opportunity to own their own homes, the community of Leeds offered migrants a better way of life than they could attain in the city” (p. 116). Kremer notes that African Americans were in a continuous quest to establish environments where they could simply be free and unhindered by the parameters of segregation, even if it meant sacrificing the conveniences of in-door plumbing, running water, and electricity.

As with work, recreation was an essential part of living that also came with restrictions in the Jim Crow era; however, this did not deter African Americans from creating a utopian environment on Lake Placid during the Great Depression era. Kremer details this leisure space that lasted for decades leading to the period of racial integration: “It stands, too, as a testimony to the perseverance, energy, and creativity of multiple generations of African Americans who refused to allow Jim Crow to deny them the opportunity to find recreation in peace” (p. 184). In the final chapters he provides great detail on

the educational institution that served as the bedrock for the social and economic mobility of black people in the state of Missouri.

Black Civil War Soldiers established Lincoln Institute, which later became Lincoln University, located in the Jefferson City, shortly after the Civil War as a subscription school. Kremer focuses on the golden years of the institution, which lasted from about 1921 until the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that declared separate schools for black and white students as unconstitutional. He also points out the educational and philosophical transitions of the institution, which were initially caught in the quandary of the conflicting ideologies of W.E.B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington. According to Kremer, “the intellectual climate created by the presence of the unique gathering of African American scholars at Lincoln University during the 1920s–1950s served as an attraction for black and white artists and literary figures” (p. 165). Eventually, Kremer, a white student from rural Missouri, enrolled at the university where he was developed as a chief authority on black history in the state.

In conclusion, each essay answers many questions in regard to race being a cultural construction that was used as a tool to dehumanize. Kremer tells how people maneuvered social and political oppression and conjured the will to survive in the most dismal circumstances. In addition to these lessons, the epilogue in *Race and Meaning* provides a list of new sources available to Missouri history researchers. Overall, the author tells us why this type of work is important, and like any good public historian, he provides directives on how to do it.

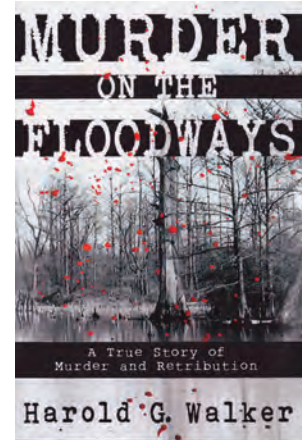
-Jajuan Johnson



***Murder on the Floodways.* By Harold G. Walker. (Geneva, IL: Dragonfly Publishing, 2014. Pp.**

250, epilogue, bibliography, about the author. \$9, paper)

In December 1957, two young men living in rural southeastern Missouri died of gunshot wounds. Donald Ray “Hokey” Busby shot and killed his best friend Harry Leslie “Fats” Shell and then died a few hours later, apparently after turning the gun on himself. More than half a century later, Harold Walker, who witnessed the aftermath of these events as a twelve-year old boy, penned *Murder on the Floodways*, an in-depth reenactment of the events of that ghastly night and of the subsequent fall-out on his close-knit community.



Murder on the Floodways is many things: on one hand, it is an attempt by Walker to sort through exactly what happened that brisk winter evening almost sixty years ago; it is also a coming of age tale and a slice of Americana. Walker and his family lived on a cotton farm in an isolated rural community too small to even have its own name, nestled near the floodways in the Missouri Bootheel. This is, as Walker describes it, a work of “literary non-fiction” (p. vii), imagining conversations as they could have happened, whether or not they actually did take place. Fortunately, Walker is able to draw on a number of primary sources, including personal recollections, interviews with his family and friends, sheriff records, and newspaper accounts, to create an eminently readable narrative.

As a boy, Walker’s life in Pemiscot County, Missouri, revolved around the floodways, ditches used to funnel water from the Bootheel down into the Mississippi River. Until the early

twentieth century, the Bootheel was mostly swampland, derisively called Swampeast Missouri by its few residents. Ditching machines drained the swamps in the 1910s and 1920s, allowing farmers like the Walkers to move in and scratch out a living. Walker's family was better off than many others; they owned their own farm and hired workers (including "Hokey" Busby and "Fats" Shell) to help pick cotton. Even so, they were ever only one or two bad growing seasons from losing the farm. "In the Bootheel," Walker explains, "the poor lived in a perpetual depression, even in good years, with only backbreaking work and meager pay" (p. 194). As an escape, many men turned to alcohol, picking bolls of cotton even in the winter months to earn enough money to spend an evening drinking at the nearest honky-tonk or liquor store. In fact, this was exactly what "Hokey" Busby did the night he shot "Fats" Shell; alcohol, poverty, and despair made for a deadly combination, shaking this small community to its core.

Walker begins his tale in the fall of 1955, when "Hokey" killed Ol' Tom, an orange tabby farm cat. From that killing, Walker traces life in rural Pemiscot County, the endless cycle of school, chores, cotton-picking, and fishing, through December 1957, when "Hokey" turned his gun on "Fats," rather than on a noisy cat. The deaths of Busby and Shell rocked the small, tight-knit community; those closest to the event never really recovered. After taking readers through a detailed reenactment of the killings, Walker describes the funerals. The families amazingly agreed to hold a double-funeral, mourners for the killer and his victim sharing the same church at the same time before being buried in separate cemetery plots by different preachers. Twelve-year old Walker was not allowed to attend the services. His parents feared that he was already too emotionally invested in the deaths, having seen the blood spilled by "Hokey" in a field near his home.

The double deaths of "Hokey" and "Fats" are certainly pivotal moments in Walker's work.

But the real strength of this book is what it reveals about life in mid-fifties rural Missouri. Along with Dan Whittle's book *Canalou*, cited in Walker's bibliography, *Murder on the Floodways* provides readers with tremendous insight into life in the Bootheel, an area Walker himself calls "an oddity, a stepchild to Missouri and an orphan to Arkansas" (p. 2). The daily existence of these residents is well-covered: the changes brought by technology, the vagaries of flooding, and the endless days and nights spent along the rutted floodways. There is a large cast of fully-fleshed out characters, each of whom played a role in the deaths and subsequent mourning rituals. Occasionally, though, this narrative structure bogs down. This is, at least in part, because of Walker's desire to write literary non-fiction. Walker writes beautifully, but at times it is unclear whether particular conversations and events actually took place, or whether they are solely constructs created by the author for the purpose of storytelling. This is a danger of writing literary non-fiction, of course, which Walker generally handles quite well. Perhaps additional editing, particularly in the parts of the book that took place between the deaths and the funeral, would have streamlined the narrative and added to the emotional impact of those two events.

Readers looking for a page-turning, true-crime saga will be pleased with *Murder on the Floodways*. But more importantly, anyone with an interest in reading about life in Missouri's Bootheel should pick this up immediately; it will transport them back sixty years into the past and drop them firmly into the midst of a transformative era in this region and into a double death that disrupted life in a small-town community.

--Adam J. Criblez

