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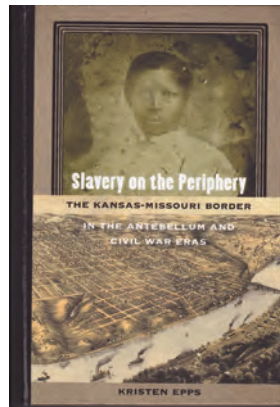
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# Reviews

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*Slavery on the Periphery: The Kansas-Missouri Border in the Antebellum and Civil War Eras.* By Kristen Epps. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2016. Pp. xi-xvi + 265, list of illustrations, acknowledgments, introduction, epilogue, abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index. \$59.95, hardcover)

This book examines slavery and race relations along the border between modern Kansas and Missouri from 1820, the year of Missouri's statehood and Kansas's existence as Indian Territory, into the 1880s. The author, currently an assistant professor at the University of Central Arkansas, contends that the story of slavery that exists in the rich historiography of this area has been considered tangential to the political and ideological conflicts associated with "Bleeding Kansas." This study rectifies that oversight by examining slavery per se and giving voice to blacks as well as the whites whose stories have constituted the history of the area up to this point. Epps recognizes the importance of historians of the Middle Ground in this work, accepting their hypothesis that understanding the frontier requires attention to the collisions that take place between races, cultures, and even the environment and the reciprocal impact of all of these on one another



in the creation of a world different from that each brought to the confrontation. Additionally, she is influenced by the rhetoric of historians concerned with social justice.

Epps's first two chapters address the efforts of white slave holders to turn this area into a slave society between 1840 and 1854. These whites, mainly from the border states to the east, clearly sought to replicate the slave system with which they were familiar. They were forced, however, to accommodate their idealized system to the presence of native American people and the area's unique physical environment. The result was the creation of what Epps calls a small scale slave system in which slave holdings were relatively small and the economy and culture similar but not totally alike that of other border slave states. This small scale system was characterized by greater contact between masters and slaves, a more diverse employment of slaves outside of agriculture, relatively widespread slave hiring, greater slave mobility since slaves often had to accompany their masters on trips to town, and more slave marriages where couples belonged to different masters. Epps maintains that these circumstances made it possible for slaves to gain greater autonomy, a fact that led to increased confrontation between masters and slaves. In this interaction of masters, slaves, and the frontier, Epps sees the emergence of a regionally unique form of slavery. While the system was unique, the transformation allowed slavery, as ownership of individuals, to thrive on the frontier where it and the peoples involved in the system became a central part of the story of Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War. Through this period, Epps considers the border between Missouri and Kansas to be virtually non-existent.

After establishing the character of the borderlands and the slave system within them,

Epps turns to the impact of the growing political crisis on the area in her next two chapters. Almost immediately with the Kansas-Nebraska Act the border line between the two areas began to take a clearer shape as the pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces contested control. How that contest would come out was not clear in 1854. As Epps points out, slavery already was firmly entrenched on the Kansas as well as the Missouri side of this political boundary. Through the early years of the conflict slaveholders controlled not only the territorial government, but also municipal and county governments in the Kansas Territory. Epps finds that slavery continued to thrive through this period, although by 1857–1858, as the entry of Kansas into the Union as a free state became more certain, fewer slave owning families moved into the Territory. Epps argues that this certainty led to a destabilization of slavery along the Missouri border demonstrated by the continued escape of slaves to freedom and increased activity by abolitionists in Kansas. Even before slavery was abolished on the Kansas part of the border, slavery was finished. On the eve of statehood in 1860 only two slaves remained in the Territory. Epps is not as clear how these factors worked in Missouri. Her argument rests primarily on anecdotal information and she fails to address the fact that slaveholding actually increased significantly along the Missouri border in the 1850s.

In a chapter on the war years Epps observes, as have other historians, that in the border country slaves saw the war as the opportunity to assert their freedom, an opportunity used fully to their advantage. Not only did they liberate themselves, but they began, through military service and other ways, to challenge the racist stereotypes prevalent among many whites. Still, through the war years they faced uncertainty because the chaos on the border, and particularly guerilla bands, not only presented opportunity but danger for the runaways. In this case, Epps shows with census figures how the black population in the western Missouri

counties showed a twenty-five percent decrease, reflecting the flight of slaves. In seeking their freedom and in military service, they reshaped society along the border and encouraged a new definition of freedom.

An epilogue carries the story into Reconstruction and on to the 1880s and shows the problems of building a society in which blacks continued to assert their freedom while many whites proved incapable of accepting that freedom. White supremacists existed in Missouri, as they had before the war, but Epps also points out that, rather than comprising a bastion of egalitarianism or individuality, many white Kansans were equally racist. Epps sees these years as a continuation of the struggle by African Americans to gain control over their own lives by a people no longer slaves, but now facing economic inequality and even continued violence.

--Carl Moneyhon



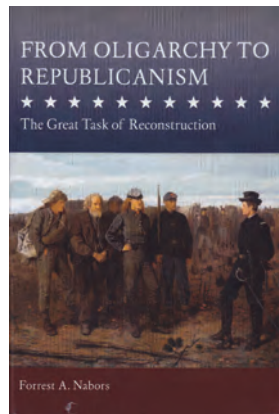
***From Oligarchy to Republicanism: The Great Task of Reconstruction.***  
By Forrest A. Nabors. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2017. xix + 399, preface, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00, hardcover)

*From Oligarchy to Republicanism: The Great Task of Reconstruction* by Forrest A. Nabors is a thoughtful and thought provoking work. It is also an exasperating and frustrating one that spends no small number of pages trying to decide if it is a work of history or political theory. While there can be no denying that it is well researched—up to a point, for the admittedly constricted parameters of the sources that it mines, albeit to full value, are part of its problem—its failure to go beyond its limited research trove, as well as its failure to provide any

broader context for what it finds, make it a singularly frustrating read.

As history, it is a classic example of the old adage that history is written by the winners. But while Nabors acknowledges that much of his work and most of the quotations are selections—ones that he admits are often longer than one usually expects—from the Congressional Republicans who oversaw and implemented Reconstruction, i.e. the war's winners, the lack of any alternative ideas or interpretations, not to mention any context for the remarks, results ultimately in an incomplete and unbalanced picture. While this is his right, it is particularly frustrating for readers familiar with the period who undoubtedly will have questions about the statements by partisan office holders that Nabors presents as fact. Indeed, over and over again Nabors presents political rhetoric as a substitute for historical truth.

Unhappily, while such “facts” are not only central to the work’s argument, they also represent a substantive weakness—at least when the work is viewed as history. Time and again we hear that Congressman X or Senator Y “asserted,” “declared,” or “recalled” something that furthers the argument that the antebellum South was an oligarchy. But there is no evidence beyond the Congressionally-based assertions, and for modern readers steeped in McCarthyism, the Pentagon Papers, and Watergate, “facts” emanating from a government source do not carry quite the weight they once did. Indeed, further undermining the effort is the fact that in the few cases where the assertion is clearly fact-based, rather than opinion or judgment, a fact check of the statement often reveals inaccuracies while the lack of any context leaves the reader with a singularly misleading



impression. These instances, part of the almost exclusive reliance on Republican contributions to Congressional debates, as well as the memoirs of the Leaders of the Reconstruction Republicans, inevitably ask the reader to accept political posturing as scholarly fact. That form of presentation adds to the confusion, making it hard, as previously noted, to determine whether the book seeks to be a work of political theory or political history.

Indeed, if it is political theory, then the way Nabors intermingles the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution when he talks about the Constitution’s power to create a republican government that fosters equality may be appropriate, but it is not good history. Indeed, while the promise of equality central to the Declaration may have been on the minds of the members of the Constitutional Convention, it did not merit inclusion. Equality does not enter the Constitution until the addition of the 14th Amendment in 1868.

While Nabors admits, however unconsciously, that the book offers a one-sided presentation, the approach leaves the knowledgeable reader hungry for the slightest acknowledgment of another perspective. We see what Republicans saw as their challenge and how they sought to address it, but we are not convinced that it was the whole problem, or that it had been solved—in either the former Confederacy or the nation as a whole, then or going forward. Indeed, based on the title, we can expect to learn that the Republicans had succeeded in transforming the South from an oligarchy to a republican form of government, but we are never definitively told that it happened, an interesting omission in a book that thrives on often unsupported assertions. It is hinted, and even implied, but it is never fully demonstrated, perhaps because the post-war South that Nabors presents is one in which black rights exist only on paper and the realities of the governing process make it no more republican than it was before the war.

Again, while the book’s subtitle makes clear

Nabors' belief that the real challenge of Reconstruction was the need to achieve what he frequently terms a "regime change," the transformation from an oligarchy to republicanism is never revealed. We are never shown how reconstruction provided a new republican government in the South, and without an effort to do so, the reader versed in history could easily argue that the oligarchy as Nabors defines it continued through and after Reconstruction, at least in terms of the many groups left without power or denied their rights under a republican government. But in fact, that lack of information is very much in keeping with a disconnect between actions and words that is a troubling constant throughout the work. Indeed, perhaps it is because of Nabors' political theory bent, but we see much more theorizing, not to mention pontificating, than we do actions. It is history without human action, and it is a history where words speak louder than actions, especially the action of writing and ratifying a Constitution which sanctions the existence of slavery. Too often it appears that Nabors thinks that if he comes up with enough words he can obscure reality. Certainly nothing demonstrates this better than his treatment of the slave-holding Founders whose slave ownership he excuses by reading their minds (or at least their mail), divining their intentions, and crediting their hopes that slavery is an evil that will end. He even goes so far as to label them "slaveholding abolitionists," a phrase which, I acknowledge I had never seen before. Happily, a Google search made clear that I am not alone. In the end we are reminded that words can only go so far.

For all of these concerns, one must recognize the thorough manner in which Nabors analyzes aspects of Southern political thought in the antebellum period. Certainly anyone unfamiliar with the ideas of South Carolina's John C. Calhoun should come away with a considerably greater understanding of the philosophy of the Yale-educated statesman. And yet even his treatment of Calhoun takes us back to one of the most troubling aspects of the book—his un-

willingness to come to grips with the failure of the Founding Fathers to directly address the poisonous issue that bedeviled the document and the whole founding era, slavery. While unable to ignore the slave holdings of Washington, Jefferson, and company, he lets them off easy, again solicitously referring to them as "slaveholding abolitionists" while arguing that they did not take a harder line for fear of disrupting the union.

Admittedly, Rhode Island had less clout than South Carolina, but in fact the Convention did proceed without Rhode Island and the new government got started before either Rhode Island or North Carolina had ratified the document. The bottom line—one that Nabors struggles with—is that the Founders, however much they may have loathed slavery, still wrote a Constitution and established a country that allowed the practice to go on. He treats this reality almost as if it were an accident. And yet it is asking a lot of the reader to excuse the Founders, to accept that they not only had no choice but that they believed that slavery would eventually die out—or Congress would eventually act—so it was acceptable in 1787. Nabors knows that not only could unforeseen events change things, but in fact, an unforeseen development—the invention of the cotton gin—did change everything. Yet Nabors's determination to look at the philosophic underpinnings of the road to the Civil War causes him to refuse to assess the changes in views on slavery. He acknowledges a change in the way the South views slavery, but sees it only as a philosophical one, a product of John C. Calhoun's persuasive wiles. He gives no substantive consideration to the way views on slavery could have been impacted by the changing role of slavery in the altered economic landscape. The invention of the cotton gin changed everything—including the role of slavery in the southern and national economy. He mentions it—how could he not? But that is the end of it. Instead, he chooses to focus on the philosophically motivated changes in attitudes, failing to



give even short shrift to the financial factors—or more simply put, greed—that could have triggered the change.

Indeed, in the end, Nabors is so intent on making the reader aware of Calhoun's influence that he minimizes the reality of the nation's roots, all but ignoring the stark reality of the Constitutional embrace, however awkward, of slavery, while also ignoring the economic factors that were as much, if not more, likely to have changed the region's attitude towards slavery. Ironically, Nabors cites the South's illiteracy as evidence of the oligarchy; he still puts a greater emphasis on the influence of this major political theorist when a simple recognition of the shift in the economic role, value, and impact of slavery might well be the real key.

Not surprisingly, Nabors also minimizes the important foundation that Jefferson and Madison laid for Calhoun through their Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, saying simply that they abandoned them. Yes, they did, when the idea was no longer needed after their victory in the election of 1800 made the issue moot. Calhoun's initial position was no different from theirs—he was in the minority trying to salvage his position, but unlike Jefferson and Madison, he was unable to gain power in a way that might have made his effort as irrelevant as theirs. Instead he continued to fine tune and hone his arguments to serve his purposes. We can only speculate whether Jefferson or Madison might have done the same had Adams—or even Burr—won the election of 1800.

The narrow focus that characterizes this work leaves those with a broader understanding of American history asking numerous questions. As Nabors describes the imbalance and exploitation that marks the antebellum south, the discussion of the dominance of the wealthy elite and their control of the political process that renders the south oligarchical rather than republican, one cannot help but think of a comparable imbalance to come with the late nineteenth-century advent of industrialism and the rise of Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Morgan

to name but a few. Anyone familiar with that era cannot help but see the similarities and wonder how Nabors would reconcile those efforts with his ideas about the regime change in the South.

In the end, *From Oligarchy to Republicanism* offers an interesting look at the antebellum South as well as a distinctive take on the role of slavery in the fledgling United States. Its dense, often academic jargon and approach probably limits its audience, and the greater understanding and familiarity of that more select audience will also take Nabors right into the lion's den given the many questions and problems that arise from the lack of breadth and context, issues that a higher level of reader cannot help but recognize. And yet the questions, issues, and arguments that characterize Nabors's work cannot help but force any reader to reflect and rethink their previous perceptions. While he may not always persuade, he seldom fails to provoke, and at a time when the debates over race in America are forcing the nation to relook at its past and the roots of that issue, a work like this, one that forces us to consider what the past really entailed, is always of value. But it would have been nice if Nabors himself had done it in a broader fashion.

--William H. Pruden III



***The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition.* By Linda Gordon. (New York: Liveright Publishing, a division of W.W. Norton, 2017. Pp. xiv, 272, preface, acknowledgments, appendices, notes, index, \$29.95, hardcover); *Ku Klux Culture: America and the Klan in the***

**1920s. By Felix Harcourt. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. Pp. 253, acknowledgments, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$45, hardcover)**

The fall of 2017 saw the publication of two important books about the 1920s Ku Klux Klan. Both books add significantly to the growing body of literature about the Klan.

Linda Gordon, professor at New York University and winner of two Bancroft prizes, examines the Klan as a coast-to-coast all-American phenomenon, unlike the original Klan of Reconstruction which only flourished in the former Confederate states. Gordon argues that the Klan constructed a mainstream ideology of intolerance that spawned a political movement in the mid-1920s. But even after the decline of the Klan in the later 1920s, its legacy shaped far-right political culture in the United States for years to come.

In a highly readable form, Gordon describes six “ancestors” of the KKK: the original Ku Klux of the 1860s; nativism; anti-liquor organizations, such as the WCTU and Anti-Saloon League; fraternal associations, such as Masons and Oddfellows; Christian evangelicalism; and the vaguest of the six, populism. She convincingly charts ways these earlier movements leant elements of structure, motivation, and ideology to the 1920s Klan.

Another chapter introduces Klan leaders, whom she describes as an eclectic mix of eccentrics. These include founder William Simmons, charlatans such as Indiana Klan leader David Stephenson, entrepreneurs like Edward Tyler and Elizabeth Clarke, and serious-minded moralists such as Hiram Evans, the key leader in the 1920s.

Gordon exposes the dichotomy in the Klan between something old and something new. Klan ideology rejected many changes occurring in modern America, and the hokey rituals and

hours-long speechmaking at Klan events seem hopelessly dated. Yet some Klan methods were not only modern but innovative. Simmons hired public-relations experts Tyler and Clarke, and they transformed the Klan into a business. Membership skyrocketed in 1921 and 1922 when Tyler and Clarke developed a recruiting process reminiscent of a pyramid scheme. With this system recruiters kept \$4 of the \$10 initiation fee and sent the remaining \$6 up the chain with each higher official getting a cut until the rest arrived in the hands of Simmons, Tyler, and Clarke at the Klan's headquarters in Atlanta. The Klan profited greatly from the sale of robes, hoods, and other paraphernalia. The leaders made fortunes.

Gordon interprets the Klan through the prism of gender, considering vigilante violence as an expression of manliness. She notes the violence was occasional and often an adjunct of local police departments. In her analysis of KKK feminism, she owes much to Kathleen Blee's *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (1991). Unlike Blee, however, she oddly fails to even mention Little Rock's Robbie Gill Comer, the head of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan for all but a year of its existence in the 1920s.

The book closes with an analysis of political action by the Klan. Gordon ably explains the seldom-told story of the 1924 Democratic National Convention. At this gathering in New York City, Klan leaders and delegates vigorously opposed the nomination of the Roman Catholic Governor of New York, Al Smith. The Klan pushed the candidacy of a strict prohibitionist, William McAdoo. The convention also saw a show-down over an anti-Klan plank proposed for the party platform. The position failed by just four of nearly a thousand votes. The Klan faction was so large and firm that the Smith/McAdoo competition became a stalemate going through 103 ballots, making it the longest presidential convention in American history, before a compromise third candidate received the nomination, John W. Davis. The

Klan controlled state houses and city halls throughout America—from Portland, Oregon to Portland, Maine, including Little Rock here in the middle of the country. On the economic front, both women’s and men’s Klans organized boycotts of businesses owned by Catholics, Jews, or those deemed immoral, and steered business to shops owned by Klansmen.

Gordon’s book is a beautifully written and reasoned overview of the 1920s Klan, and it nicely incorporates the new historiography of recent years. If the book has a central thesis, it is how mainstream American bigotry in the 1920s against Catholics, Jews, African-Americans, and immigrants created a legacy of intolerance in this country to the present day.

While Gordon’s book nicely sums up what we know about the 1920s Klan, Felix Harcourt’s *Ku Klux Kulture* breaks new ground. Harcourt examines the Klan as a cultural movement, rather than an organization. He argues that the Klan captured the imagination of popular culture, with both with positive and negative interpretations. However, the Klan also itself used genres and technologies of popular culture to publicize the organization and its message.

Some of the cultural artifacts Harcourt discusses have come up in other historical literature about the 1920s Klan, such as Gordon’s book. But Harcourt is the first to examine systematically the cultural manifestations of the Klan. He contextualizes these artifacts, which strike us today as ridiculous, comical, or sinister within the mainstream culture of the twenties.

The 1920s may have been the heyday of newspapers and popular print media. Harcourt devotes considerable space to an exhaustive accounting of newspapers that both championed

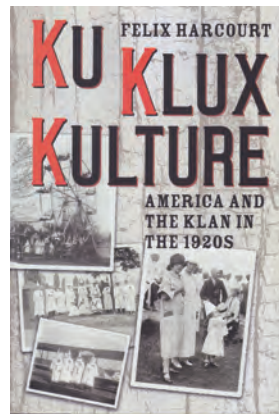
or criticized the Klan. He also surveys the Klan’s own long list of national and local papers. Another chapter looks at cheap novels that took on Klan themes, such as University of Arkansas professor Murray Sheehan’s *Half-Gods*, set in a university town in the Ozarks where a small-minded Klan mob serves as moral conscience for the community.

Harcourt moves from print media to other avenues of culture. A chapter on film predictably starts with *Birth of a Nation*, which inspired Simmons to reorganize the Klan in 1915 in a case of life imitating art. Nonetheless, Harcourt surprises readers with a recounting of many now-forgotten films and stage productions with Klan themes. Another chapter examines how the Klan used music in rallies and sponsored bands and choirs. One such group, the Chicago Mammoth Klan Band, with six hundred members, tried to claim the title as world’s largest band. With the enormous interest in the Klan, there was money to be made selling sheet music and phonograph recordings of such hits as “Daddy Swiped Our Last Clean Sheet and Joined the Ku Klux Klan.”

Another chapter describes radio programming that gave a voice to Klansmen and women on the airwaves. Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans first spoke on the radio in Kansas City in August 1923. By 1927 the Klan had purchased its own radio station and license, WTFF, and pumped out a powerful broadcast heard in all parts of the United States, even Canada and Cuba.

Lastly, Harcourt talks about how the Klan capitalized on the public fascination with sports. The KKK sponsored boxing tournaments and organized its own basketball and baseball teams. It is hard to imagine the reality of Klan teams taking on squads of other fraternal organizations, the Knights of Columbus, even slugging it out with Jewish and African-American teams.

Harcourt piles on the evidence to support the book’s thesis that the Klan, both as subject and consumer, was at the center of American





popular culture in the 1920s. The bulk of the book sometimes reads like a catalog of Klan-related cultural artifacts. Still, therein too lies a strength, for it provides a handy reference work that will be much used.

Together, these two new works demonstrate the centrality of the Klan to mainstream America in the 1920s. This Klan was very different from the short-lived and regional Ku Klux of Reconstruction and the modern Klan of the Civil Rights era and beyond, which hugged the fringes of society as an extremist movement. These books suggest there is still more to say about the 1920s Klan. Today, as nativist positions increasingly form part of the public conversation, I expect the Klan will receive even more attention in the future.

--Kenneth C. Barnes



***Goat Castle: A True Story of Murder, Race, and the Gothic South.*** By Karen L. Cox. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2017. Pp. 227, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.00, hardcover)

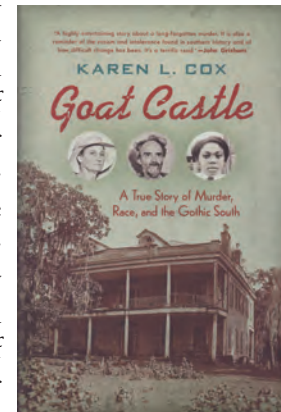
On the night of August 4, 1932, Jennie Merrill was shot to death in Natchez, Mississippi. Soon after, her body was found dumped in the woods near her home. The “Goat Castle” case, as it was known, became a national sensation. In addition to its southern Gothic elements, it played into American racial fears, as the alleged murderer turned out to be a black man who was shot and killed by a Pine Bluff police officer. But what fascinated people more were the principle white figures: the shrewd and manipulative Octavia Dockery, an elderly native of Arkansas dubbed the “Goat Woman,” and her live-in companion, the eccentric “Wild Man” Dick Dana.

Dockery and Dana lived in “Glenwood”—what became known as the “Goat Castle”—a filthy, crumbling antebellum plantation home adjacent to Merrill’s property. Animals had the run of the house. Goats gnawed on the furniture and antique books stored inside. Dockery’s housemate, Dick Dana, was a former pianist who liked to take off his clothes and roam the woods nearby. Dockery, the daughter of a Confederate general, had once been a belle with literary aspirations. Despite the ghosts of aristocracy that haunted Glenwood, Dockery and Dana did not own the property. In fact, they were broke and living on what their goats and chickens could provide.

The Goat Castle case garnered attention not only for its bizarre circumstances and racial drama, it excited Depression era readers who sought to alleviate their woes by reading about crime and murder. It was the age Bonnie and Clyde and the Lindbergh kidnapping. The Goat Castle found an easy place in national headlines. It seemed cut from the pages of Edgar Allan Poe or William Faulkner. Visitors flocked to see the Goat Castle. Eventually Octavia Dockery and Dick Dana cashed in by giving tours of the house for a quarter per visitor.

Dockery and Dana had much to offer those who were fascinated by Merrill’s murder. The story Cox is most interested in, however, is the fate of Emily Burns (known as “Sister”), the young black woman who was arrested as an accomplice of George Pearls, the man officially named as Merrill’s killer. Since Pearls was killed before he could be put on trial, authorities wanted to bring Burns to justice—whatever that might mean in 1930s Mississippi.

As Cox illustrates, it is likely that Merrill’s killing was accidental, rather than premedi-



tated. Merrill put up a fight the night she was killed. Armed with a pistol, she fought off her attacker, though unsuccessfully. The local sheriff had evidence Dockery and Dana were accomplices to robbery and subsequent homicide, though they were never tried for it. Octavia had feuded regularly with her neighbor and fought her in the courts. Octavia's and Dick's fingerprints were all over the crime scene.

Emily Burns, however, was the one who took the fall. In Jim Crow era Natchez, officials were loose with due process. "Sister" languished in jail for months without representation. Her trial was sham, and though it is likely she never entered the house on the night of the killing, she narrowly avoided a capital conviction. She ultimately served eight years in the notorious Parchman prison farm. She was released because the governor pardoned her, citing the fact that Sister helped Pearls only under duress.

The story of the Goat Castle is an interesting one, and Cox tells it well. The book is well researched and written, though it contains more clichés than I would expect from a seasoned historian. The book gets off to a shaky start, due to Cox's sketchy knowledge of Delta history, more specifically, her grasp of numbers concerning the slave population in the Mississippi Delta, the slave trade, and the difference between farmers and sharecroppers.

She is also occasionally vague concerning her sources. The paper trail for the principle actors in the Goat Castle drama is slim before the night of the killing. As someone who has researched the case myself, I was surprised that Cox is not more concerned with certain details. For example, she cites Dockery's birth year as 1866, though her tombstone, available for viewing on findagrave.com, has her listed as being born in 1865. If the headstone is wrong, then Cox could have mentioned this, even if only in a footnote.

Cox is eager to speculate on some of the figures in her story, though, surprisingly, she refrains from doing so for others. When it comes to Emily Burns, for example, Cox traces her an-

cestors' travel from Maryland to the Deep South via the slave trade. But she has no documentary evidence for this. She assumes her statements are true based on an inductive reading of secondary sources. At the same time, Cox refrains from speculating about Merrill's friend Duncan Minor, who visited Merrill every night and was the sole beneficiary in her will. Merrill never married, but what was the nature of her and Minor's relationship? Friends? Lovers? Whatever it was, Merrill clearly cared for him. While *Goat Castle* is a slim book, Cox could have spent more time on Minor rather than, say, including five pages of acknowledgments, much of which is devoted to her cat.

*Goat Castle* should appeal to historians at all levels, from undergraduates to advanced scholars. The book would serve well those teaching depression era US or southern history and have a love for the bizarre. The story is timely, from its attention to race to the behavior of white people thriving under the media spotlight. As was true during the Goat Castle case, we are confronted daily by shameless white people who know how to manipulate the system in order to inflate their egos and reap financial gain. In too many ways, America has not changed much since the 1930s.

--Colin Woodward



***Omar Nelson Bradley: America's GI General.* By Steven L. Ossad. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2017. Pp. 460, list of maps, acknowledgments, abbreviations, chronology, prologue: "The 1913 Army-Navy Baseball Game," introduction, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$36.95, hardcover)**

There is no shortage of publications on World War II. Fueled by blockbuster movies and dynamic television documentaries, interest in the conflict has exploded in recent decades. It should come as little surprise that a war which witnessed the height of human sacrifice as well as the depth of human depravity has garnered such attention from an audience that includes both academics and the general public. Larger than life American military commanders such as Dwight Eisenhower, George Patton, and Douglas MacArthur have all been the subject of extensive scrutiny as have the common soldiers who have been collectively labeled “the greatest generation.” Despite widespread interest in the war, many aspects of the conflict remain neglected, dwarfed by topics that arguably make better copy. One often overlooked figure is American commander and Missouri native Omar Bradley, a man whom famed combat journalist Ernie Pyle dubbed the “GI General” for his common dress and down to earth demeanor. Military historian Steven L. Ossad attempts to spark interest in this lesser known WWII commander in his simply-titled biography, *Omar Bradley: America’s GI General, 1893–1981*.

Ossad’s work features a well-balanced narrative. Although he trumpets Bradley’s importance to the US war effort, he also highlights that the general often got himself into trouble for his failure to admit mistakes or to assess in any meaningful way his shortcomings. These negative traits proved, according to Ossad, a consistent feature of Bradley’s life stretching from his days as a West Point cadet to his meteoric rise in America’s wartime Army. Ossad proves most effective in addressing the general’s post-war experience as head of the Veterans Administration and as Commander of the newly formed Joint Chiefs of Staff. Naturally, the war years are also covered, including Bradley’s key role in aiding the faltering Eisenhower during Operation Torch as well as his prominent contributions to the invasion of Normandy and the race to liberate France. Throughout, Ossad remains objective, stressing

both Bradley’s firm grasp of infantry tactics as well as his periodic shortcomings as a commander, none of which proved as glaring as his failure to recognize that the December 1944 Nazi attack along his front in the Ardennes was something other than a diversion for a more substantive assault elsewhere. Valuable time and countless lives were lost as Bradley initially downplayed what became known as the Battle of the Bulge as it unfolded directly before him. True to the form noted by Ossad, Bradley never took full responsibility for his miscalculation.

Ossad, a one-time Wall Street technology analyst turned military historian, has a lot to teach academics who sometimes lose sight of the importance of retaining at least the spirit of objectivity. Many “amateur” historians also struggle to strike an unbiased stance, yet excel at telling an engaging story by bringing their characters to life—something their professional counterparts often fail to accomplish. Ossad proves just the opposite of his peers writing outside of academia in that he presents a balanced portrait of the general, yet he does little to elevate Bradley to something other than a one-dimensional figure—a man who did his job with a reasonable level of competence but nothing more. Bradley’s personal life and basic character are never fully developed in Ossad’s narrative which does little to dispel popular perceptions regarding the general as a rather bland figure. In the pages of Ossad’s book, Bradley comes across as rather flat.

Although never fully humanizing the general, Ossad’s work certainly reveals the supreme importance of the general during WWII as well as the valuable contributions he made after the war. In an age of mounting discontent with the inefficiency of the Department of Veterans Affairs, there is certainly something to be learned from Bradley’s generally effective leadership of the organization at a time when millions of WWII combat veterans called upon it, following rapid demobilization at the cessation of hostilities. Pulling from an array of primary source material associated with Bradley’s military ca-

reer including West Point records and documents from the US Army Center of Military History, Ossad succeeds in making a case that Bradley deserves a spot at the table with more well-known WWII commanders. Where Ossad's work misses the mark is in developing the personal characteristics of the man—in adding that human element that elevates a biography into something other than a mere recitation of accomplishments. For readers interested in General Bradley's public career and in WWII in general, Ossad's book is a must read. Those who want to truly understand Bradley's private thoughts and actions would be better served looking elsewhere.

--Keith M. Finley



***Remember Little Rock.* By Erin Krutko Devlin. (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017. Pp. xi + 189, notes, index. \$28.95, paper)**

That the personal is political is a cliché that possibly should not be employed by a writer of any discipline, and yet that standard is especially applicable in the current political climate where identity and individual truths have been elevated as matters of policy and strategy. Integral to personal experience is memory, yet memory rarely belongs solely to a single person, as it is certainly shaped and colored by external forces that ultimately render intimate memories as political moments in time. This understanding of memory is the cornerstone of Erin Krutko Devlin's splendid work, *Remember Little Rock*. Her volume examines the well-worn subject of city's Central High School integration attempt from the provocative stance that the triumphant "rhetoric of the 'post-civil rights era'" wildly deviates from the "reality of persistent

racial inequality in American education" precisely because of how the public memory of Little Rock has been shaped over six decades (p. 3). Political "moderates" have manipulated a victorious narrative of social progress by pedestaling the tokenism of passive resistance and white "tolerance," while ignoring full black inclusion that was the actual goal of civil rights activists, as well as erasing the voices and agency of black actors in the 1957 event and ongoing attempts to make education equitable in Arkansas's capital. In their efforts to literally whitewash the ongoing legal and social battle that is the story of the recently-state controlled Little Rock School District, Devlin observes that the city's civic and political leadership have been able to blame lingering educational inequity as products originating within Little Rock's black community, rather than credit six decades' worth of administrative practices and persistent white intransigence for the gulf. *Remember Little Rock* is a welcome—and timely—addition to the ever-evolving story of the city's failed attempt to truly integrate its public school system, in an era when traditionally marginalized voices are demanding that their experiences and memories be used as a platform to disrupt self-serving revisionism.

Devlin structures her work along the chronology of the Little Rock saga. She details the competing definitions of "successful integration" as conceived by the city's black activists led by Arkansas's NAACP chapter president, Daisy Gaston Bates, and the families and children who participated or tried to participate in integration beginning in 1956, against the members of the Little Rock School Board, Superintendent Virgil Blossom, and "moderate" white actors who only accepted the





bare minimum of token compliance with the Supreme Court's 1955 mandate of "all deliberate speed." She deftly argues that these self-identified moderates immediately began laboring to separate moderation from resistance and showcases that these efforts included private and public citizens. Throughout the 1950s and after the crisis, US Representative Brooks Hays argued the virtues of tokenism as "more effective" than actual systemic integration that would have included sending white children to all-black institutions, and hiring black and white faculty and administrators to lead neighborhood schools. The effect of tokenism on black Little Rock remained a "secondary consideration" to moderates seeking to paint white Little Rock in the best possible light (p. 76). Devlin further notes that for forty years after 1957, city, state, and national leadership participated in a concerted effort to amplify white memoirs and voices of the integration attempt that overwhelmingly asserted that massive, violent resistance or general intransigence to black bodies in white spaces came from outside agitators. Indeed, Daisy Bates's memoir, and writings and interviews from the Little Rock Nine (Melba Beals Pattillo, Minniejean Brown-Trickey, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Gloria Ray Karlmark, Thelma Mothershed Wair, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls LaNier) remained the lone black voices that received any credence regarding the era, until historians began earnestly examining and publishing work on the depths of black Little Rock's civil rights activism after 2000 (p. 99). Devlin argues that even Bates's and the Nine's words were manipulated for propaganda efforts by successive Presidential administrations to positively spin Little Rock as evidence of the on-going evolution of American democracy, to specifically counter Communist governments' charges of US hypocrisy. Importantly, she also highlights recent and frank discussions from members of the Little Rock Nine regarding the media training they received from Bates and NAACP activists as the crisis unfolded—

"accentuate the positive" and "don't complain too much" about the abuses daily meted out by segregationist students, faculty, and adults outside of Central High School (p. 168). Devlin's most important chapter, "Resisting Historical Erasure," focuses on the determined efforts of the surviving members of the Nine, their families and supporters, as well as Little Rock's black community and black activists nationwide, to counter the heretofore accepted narrative of white moderates as any kind of allies and re-center black actors as aggressive agents in their own history.

Other important observations in this impressive study concern Little Rock's grudging acceptance of limited desegregation (never actual integration) after 1970, and the successful attempts to implement new forms of segregation in the post-civil right era that have been supported by city, state, and corporate leadership, and have been mimicked in cities across the United States. Court-mandated busing begat resentment and gave birth to "school choice"—the preferred term for twenty-first century white parents who want to avoid sending their children to the majority-black schools that white flight wrought, but who also want to imagine themselves as crusaders for their children, rather than complicit participants in mechanisms designed to keep public education separate and unequal. Imagination and memory are the beating heart of *Remember Little Rock*. Devlin's work is essential reading for anyone looking to understand the continuing education crisis in Arkansas's capital.

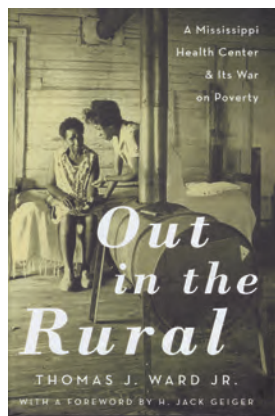
--Misti Nicole Harper



*Out in the Rural.* By Thomas J. Ward Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. vii-xxv + 170, bibliography, index. \$34.95, hardback)



When Arkansas Representative French Hill declared support for community health centers during the congressional budget debate in early 2018, he was addressing a well-established feature of what has passed for social welfare in the modern United States. However, community health centers have a complex history that defies the popular notion that they are merely dispensaries for the down-and-out. In *Out in the Rural*, Thomas J. Ward writes about the Tufts-Delta Health Center, which came into being at a time when social tensions and hopes for a better society went side-by-side.



Ward's thesis is that community health centers were forgotten accomplishments of the civil rights movement and the War on Poverty. Inspiring thousands of other American community health programs, the Center was a "radical assault on both . . . medical and social status" in the deeply conservative Mississippi River Delta (p. 170). The Center illustrated the persistent tension between social reformers and half-hearted government support. Committed to serving all people barred from private medical service in majority African-American Bolivar County, Mississippi, founders struggled to maintain a truly community-run clinic. This mission clashed with the state's racist power structure and ingrained local superstitions. The Center's relations with the Office of Economic Opportunity were difficult. Favoring hierarchical management, the OEO ended its grants in 1972.

Ward stresses the Center's early leaders and their backgrounds, local activities, and approach to healthcare. Other chapters deal with environmental factors, the health center's cooperative farm, and relations with authorities

in Jackson and Washington, DC.

H. Jack Geiger was the Center's guiding force. A northern physician, he was influenced by South Africa's rural community health movement. Called a "crazy man" by an exasperated US Surgeon General official, Geiger worked with the Medical Committee for Human Rights formed in the context of Freedom Summer (p. 5). Becoming the Center's first director in 1966, he faced steep opposition from Mound Bayou's white elite plus resistance within the black community. Believing that meaningful civil rights and community health were linked, he saw healthcare in socio-economic terms.

Geiger hired black social worker John Hatch to run an outreach program with Bolivar County blacks (the first black law student at the University of Kentucky, Hatch had briefly taught high school in Arkansas). The pair constructed the Center's governing structure, composed of a network of "health associations" run by county residents. Concerns handled included childcare, education, housing, hunger, unemployment, and voter registration.

To the Center's founders, the key to effective healthcare service was a better physical environment. Black Alabaman Andrew James supervised digging new wells to extract clean ground water for county residents. His sanitation division eradicated diseased vermin, picked up garbage, and improved housing. This was a "microcosm" of the War on Poverty in the sense that ambitious goals were undermined by poor financing (p. 109). L.C. Dorsey, a black Mississippian voter-rights organizer, took over the Center's farm co-op in 1967. She was frustrated by the "plantation mentality" many members had (p. 132).

Mound Bayou's "social and professional isolation" led to high turn-over in the Center's small staff (p. 89). Although one-third of professional staffers were black, non-natives were often deemed outsiders by area residents. Hatch left in 1971 to finish his doctorate in public health at Chapel Hill (Geiger had left two years

earlier to head the community health department at SUNY-Stonybrook).

Center healthcare providers discovered a “rampant . . . malnutrition crisis” in Bolivar County (pp. 72, 74). Many patients received prescriptions for food. At the risk of losing OEO funding, the Center backed class action lawsuits and other protests of shocking living conditions. A three-month-long protest in Rosedale sensitized the town’s white elite to problems experienced by black residents. The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission retained a spy to monitor the protests; nothing incriminating about the Center was found.

Bolstering the goal of eradicating hunger, the short-lived farm co-op was the Center’s “most creative and ambitious venture” (p. 134). Deemed essential for self-sufficiency since Mississippi’s racist welfare program was meant to fail, the co-op drew on various funding sources and was administered by Mississippi State University consultants. However, problems getting locals to be farmers led to increased mechanization and production of cash-crops. Ward observes that the Mississippi Delta had a tradition of farm co-ops and community gardens from the 1930s.

Ward substantiates his findings with interviews he conducted and oral histories on file with the Southern Poverty Law Center. He also consulted manuscript collections at Meharry Medical College (Nashville, Tennessee), the Mississippi State Archives, and Mississippi State University.

There are criticisms. Regarding Governor William Waller’s veto of OEO funding in 1972, Ward does not elaborate on a probe of the Center the American Public Health Association “was tasked” with conducting (p. 158). Comparisons with other community health centers would have been useful (in fact, Center veteran Christian Hansen subsequently worked at a community health center in inner-city Newark, New Jersey). *Out in the Rural* is yet a good complement to Fred C. Smith’s *Trouble in Goshen: Plain Folks, Roosevelt, Jesus, and*

*Marx in the Great Depression South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014) and Batrix Hoffman’s *Health Care for Some: Rights and Rationing in the United States since 1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). Ward addresses themes raised by Greta DeJong in her essay in *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964–1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

The story of the Tuft-Delta Health Center parallels the larger narrative of US social welfare policy, from equivocal commitment in the 1960s through rejection under neoliberalism. We also learn that despite official capriciousness, advocates of social justice will always be with us, particularly in the most difficult circumstances. Ward makes an important contribution to the interest in poor people’s institutions and to the fullness of southern history.

--Anthony B. Newkirk



***Willie Morris: Shifting Interludes.***  
Edited by Jack Bales. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002. Pp. xiii + 209, contents, introduction, index. \$25, paperback)

This collection of essays by renowned author Willie Morris was first published in 2002, shortly after I first encountered his classic, *North Toward Home* (1967). Having just completed an undergraduate history degree and accepted the responsibility of teaching history to inquisitive young minds in rural Alabama, I found an evocative power in his words. There were stories about ourselves and our region that we must know, share, and teach. I eventually made time for Morris’s *Yazoo* (1971) and *The Courting of Marcus Dupree* (1983). The former shaped my understanding of school desegrega-

tion in the Deep South, while the latter influenced my pedagogy for a course in sports history. Morris wrote beautifully. I could converse with him through these texts. He was someone to emulate.

However, almost twenty years after his death, these essays do not always resonate in the same way. In a world of #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo, his nostalgic commentary on race relations and women appears naïve at best. We may forgive a twenty-year-old Morris for describing the main street of his Mississippi hometown in 1955 as “the epitome of civilization,” noting “the warm laughter of the Negroes,” and hearing in it only “the raw joy of living” (p. 90). But what are we to make of a prurient description of an Ole Miss student in a 1989 essay, one of several women who “served to encourage the Socratic method” (p. 184), or a 1995 essay that employed a favorite timestamp of patriarchy: “back in those days when you could call a woman a girl and get away with it” (p. 59)?

The current scholarly inclination to diminish southern distinctiveness in recent US history further complicates how we might remember Morris. Was he a great southern writer who ascended to the heights of the New York literati, dutifully interpreting the South(s) for the self-absorbed Yankee, or was he more simply a great writer who happened to hail from Mississippi? In a 1986 essay, Morris anticipated this reassessment of southern identity by asking if the South still existed. It did, he concluded, through some persistent qualities—all positive in his estimation—that cannot be found at the country club or college seminar but are readily apparent at the “the ball games and the funerals and the bus stations and the courthouses and the bargain-rate beauty



parlors and the little churches and the roadhouses and the joints near the closing hour” (p. 125).

Here we certainly find an enduring legacy, even as we quibble over the persistence of an identifiable South, a region with its share of negative qualities, too. These essays show how Morris moved comfortably among lettered and unlettered, rich and poor, black and white. He wrote most poignantly on universal topics that touch us all: aging and death, love and loss, family and friends, or the comforts of home. Readers grieve with him at his grandmother’s funeral, sense the pain of his divorce, or laugh at youthful indiscretions. Morris could tell a story, and his stories captured complex emotions that are not easily conveyed.

In Morris’s work, one also detects hints of the regional defensiveness and even professional insecurities that sometimes haunt southerners or writers in general. Does a country boy from Mississippi really belong at the University of Oxford or in New York City or editing *Harper’s*? The answer is yes, of course, if he wants to be there, but Morris was not always certain. He was just vulnerable enough to invite sympathy from readers and just arrogant enough to know that he was remarkably gifted.

One occasionally senses that Morris liked to name-drop. Readers discover brief encounters with Alger Hiss and Richard Wright, for example, alongside deeper friendships with Truman Capote, James Jones, and Winston Groom. However, one of the more captivating essays in the collection, “Mississippi Queen,” profiles Eudora Welty, and one cannot imagine a biographical essay with more charm and deference. It is the latest piece in the collection, originally published in *Vanity Fair* a few months before Morris’s untimely death in 1999, and it embodies so much of what readers liked about his sense of place and ironic humor.

Jack Bales, a fan and academic acquaintance of Morris, compiled this collection, initially sifting through approximately 700 articles with Morris and choosing 90 that best repre-

sented the scope of his work. Bales eventually pared that number down to the 32 essays in this book. They are organized around the themes of people, places, and memories. Essays are arranged chronologically within those three categories, though readers must refer to the publication page for original publication information, including dates. This volume is the largest anthology of Morris's work and covers his entire career, making it an excellent introduction to the author's writing.

--Barclay Key

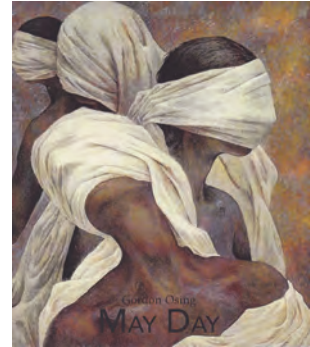


***May Day.* By Gordon Osing. (New York: Spuyten Duyvil Publishing, 2017. Pp. 28. \$10.00, paper)**

There is much to admire in Gordon Osing's 2017 contribution to the world of poetry, *May Day*. Essentially a sectioned love poem to art and to life, the brief collection contemplates the way each is perceived and enacted, or "staged," embracing the artifice of creation and self as the poems travel through their sequence. In doing so, the work exhibits the "courage to love past all meaning" (p. 9). Contemplative yet worldly, accessible yet allusive, lofty yet grounded, these poems subtly evoke the sonnet form in line length (most are 14 lines, with the exception of numbers 3 and 6, which are 15), and reflect the sonnet's goals of contemplation and musicality but without direct end rhyme or standard meter.

The self and the mask (the observing self) and the theaters of existence and of creating art are featured in this collection. The book begins and ends with epigraphs from Yeats, and by length alone could be considered a chapbook. By virtue of density, I would not characterize the collection as such. It is a slim volume only to the fingers. With direct allusions to poetic masters Yeats, Berryman, Keats, Frost, and Co-

leridge, and writers and philosophers Buddha, Calvin, Aristotle, and Lu Shun, not to mention indirect references to Shakespeare, Ptolemy, Blake, and others, one might think the poems would be inaccessible to those not well-versed in these traditions. Not true. The mundane and physical both work alongside the loftier contemplations, containing and expanding them. The result is a well-crafted poetic voice that, grounded in the Delta region, speaks from reason, emotion, knowledge, and speculation. The ideas travel in the way of water—when old water meets new, the distinction is blurred, and the lap-lapping moves both forward and back simultaneously. The poems begin with age and end with birth, which may seem like a reversal of the natural order of life, but since the cycle is not broken by the order—the last poem ends with a beginning—one does not discern a literal line between



old water and new. Thus, the literal and metaphoric—and time as both entity and process—not only share boundaries, they erase them.

Individually, as it should be, each poem stands on its own, but each is informed by and has a dialog with its companions. I am appreciative of the book's structure, which reminds me of a photograph album. Each poem depicts a scene, a moment in time as both stasis and process, and reflects upon art as life. The speaker tells us: "Let contemplation take the place / of time without pretending to cancel it" (p. 9). Later, he states, "Writing conjures truth as circles / of redundancies," which does not diminish but rather celebrates the repetitions, akin to flipping through an album of wordless images to live in the life depicted for a moment (p. 26). One is the whole and one is the one that makes the whole. Structurally, the opening



line of poem 1 sets the tone of a speaker who lives both in the physical world and its more abstract counterparts: “What is May Day to a geezer?” (p. 9). He refers to himself as a “boy codger,” and twice he states, “I feel neither old nor young but both” (pp. 20, 24, 25). Hence, “Time is both thorns and rose” (p. 18).

Another strand of the collection’s braid is the idea of the self as both player and observer-recorder, in life as well as art. This duality is contemplated and celebrated. The self exists in time, while a second self observes, records, and contemplates. In some sense the creating self creates the creator, as esoteric as that may sound. One often has trouble separating these selves or knowing which is which. The second self is the actor, the writer, the artist—or is it the first? Does it matter? When Osing’s speaker contemplates this doubling, there is often reference to the art of writing, or how we write ourselves. In poem 4 we are told

Acting, choose a role, then try  
to get out of it. More binding than  
pathology it is. But you bind yourself.  
The lines and all the right gestures  
become right. (p. 12)

I appreciate the multiplicity of the word “lines,” representing lines of writing, speaking, and occupation, and possibly one’s own borders, simultaneously.

I’ll mention some other areas that resonate for me. The beginning of poem 10 reflects a vision of hope in the art and artifice of both creating and existing: “An empty page is better than most things” (p. 18). The reversal of empty as a positive illustrates much of what Osing does throughout. Finally, the first half of poem 7, and this may just be the work I admire most:

A being that speaks for the silences  
is escaped from the borders of the flawed  
self,  
whose fictivity is his gift for speaking,  
who loves the blank pages of the screen.  
So, a life without borders: done. Unless  
the self has a way of being a border,

to be surpassed by trickery, disassembling,  
art. (p. 15)

Aside from what else is going on here, I am taken by the layers of the word “border” in lines five and six: lines drawn to claim; lines drawn to delineate; the self a border, as in one who resides in the self; and the self a border to the self . . . the spiraling is captivating.

We are all borders in our lives, living on time we do not own, crafting selves and observing the craft, and anticipating the hope and existence in the blank page. Gordon Osing’s book reminds us of this, thoughtfully, intelligently, self-effacingly, and engagingly.

--Lynn DiPier



***Water Tossing Boulders: How A Family of Chinese Immigrants Led the First Fight to Desegregate Schools in the Jim Crow South.* By Adrienne Berard. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016. Pp. ix-xiii + 194, afterword, acknowledgments, notes, oral histories and author interviews, works cited, index. \$26.95, cloth)**

*Water Tossing Boulders* explores how the Lums, a Chinese immigrant family, struggled to survive in the Jim Crow South and fought against Chinese exclusion from white public schools in Mississippi during the 1910s and 1920s. Adrienne Berard, the author of the book, argues the Lums filed a





lawsuit that “would become the first U.S. Supreme Court case to challenge the constitutionality of segregation in Southern public schools” (p. x).

The book is divided into two parts. Part I focuses on Jeu Gong Lum’s experiences of migrating to America. He entered the United States from Canada, found a job in Mississippi, and married Katherine Wong there. Later they had three children, including Martha and Berda. Martha and Berda had been attending Rosedale’s public school in prior years, but due to the changing policies, in the fall of 1924, the principal told these two girls they could no longer attend this school because the school was for whites only. Katherine refused to send her children to the black school, so the Lums decided to file a lawsuit. They hired Earl Brewer, former governor, a Democrat and lawyer to represent their case in court. Brewer built the case around Martha.

Part II describes the Lum family’s legal battles. At first, a local judge ruled in favor of the Lum family and ordered the board of trustees to admit Martha into Rosedale’s segregated white school. One month later, Rosedale’s school board filed an appeal. Soon, the decision was overturned by the Mississippi Supreme Court. Judge George Ethridge, a steadfast segregationist, ruled in favor of excluding Martha from Rosedale’s white school. Frustrated by the result, the Lum family prepared to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, but Brewer decided to hand the case to James Flowers, a novice who had little experience with these kinds of cases. Flowers also abandoned the case, so the Lum family had to fight for themselves. Eventually, the Lum family lost, and “without the participation of any person of the Negro race, the Supreme Court rendered a decision that sanctioned racial segregation within all public schools” (p.137).

Berard’s well-researched book reveals the Lum family’s untold story, and the story of how the Lums fought against discrimination is already compelling. Furthermore, Berard skillfully

uses Sanborn maps, weather reports, newspapers, interviews with descendants, and photographs and letters of the Lum family to vividly recreate life in the early 1900s. Under her depiction, readers can have a more comprehensive understanding of the social, economic, and cultural environment of the Jim Crow South. At that time, racial segregation was rampant. Klansmen lynching black men and black prisoners being tortured or worked to death were very common. These details reflect how hard it was for the Lums to carve out a niche to survive in such a hostile environment, but they still had the courage to fight against discrimination.

Berard’s book is enriched with historical context, but Berard failed to prove *Gong Lum v. Rice* (1927) was a case that led the first fight to desegregate schools in the South because the Lums and their lawyers had no intention to break down white supremacy and fight against segregation. Instead, they asked for Chinese inclusion by proving Chinese degrees of whiteness. As Brewer argued, “these two races (Chinese and Japanese) furnish some of the most intelligent and enterprising people. They certainly stand nearer to the white race than they do to the negro race” (p. 105). In other words, they had little interest in challenging segregation because they relied on claiming racial distance and distinction from African Americans to win the lawsuit.

Furthermore, Berard argues the Lums’s case could “have brought one of the greatest civil rights victories in American history” (p. 120) if Brewer did not abandon it, but what Brewer did to win over the judges was to admit the legitimacy of segregation in the first place and then discuss Martha’s strong personality. Therefore, Berard’s claim is invalid. Brewer’s racism ultimately prevented him from becoming the lawyer who could overturn segregation.

Berard’s writings gives this case a new life, and *Water Tossing Boulders* indeed provides interesting insights about Chinese immigrants’ experiences in the Jim Crow South during the 1910s through the 1920s. Under Berard’s depic-

tion, the Lums's long fight against Rosedale's white public school breaks the typical stereotype of Chinese being silent and passive. However, Berard fails to prove the Lums led the first fight to desegregate schools in the South. In addition, she puts comparatively more attention to Brewer's history than to that of the local Chinese communities, so their reactions to the case and whether or not the case affected or shaped local Chinese people's lives remain unclear. Despite these drawbacks, audiences may still benefit from this book because Berard paints a vivid picture of the Jim Crow South and retells a nearly forgotten story of Chinese immigrants.

--Doreen Yu Dong



***Unnatural Habitats & Other Stories.* By Angela Mitchell (Santa Rosa, CA: WTAW Press, 2018. Pp. 190. \$16.95, paperback)**

Angela Mitchell's debut short story collection consists of seven loosely connected stories set in the Arkansas and Missouri Ozarks. As an eighth generation native of southern Missouri, Mitchell bears witness to a region being reshaped by diminished economic opportunities, drugs, crime, and fragmentation in families and communities. The story titles are both simple and brilliant: evocative of theme and multilayered.

The collection begins with "Animal Lovers," in which a young woman divorces her husband and demands custody of their two dogs. The dogs had simply been a diversion from her husband's desire to start a family. Once Dee has the dogs, she realizes her mistake and wants to get rid of them. They, and she, end up being taken in by Gary, her boss at the insurance company where she works. Gary's place in the country is already home to parrots, lizards, snakes, and a tame bobcat. The story introduces

what become recurring motifs of instinct, wildness, domestication, and control.

"Pyramid Schemes" follows a woman who is unhappily married and cheating on her chicken-farming husband. Having divorced and remarried her husband once already, Tonya continues to look for an escape from the chicken farm, financial scrimping, and the boredom of married life. She begins an affair with Donald, a car salesman who also longs for economic freedom and escape from domesticity and a pregnant wife. The story's title refers to a supper club investment scheme in which Tonya had ventured \$1000 and scored \$8000 in one night. Tonya's search for something more satisfying than a loveless marriage, though, represents a metaphoric pyramid scheme, illusory and unsustainable.

In "Retreat," Dee, the young woman from "Animal Lovers" reappears. When the story opens, Dee has moved in with Gary and his bobcat, Bobbie, and she has brought her two unmanageable dogs with her. Gary lives in a rural area and loves the animals. As in the first story, we have access only to Dee's thoughts. "Gary was her boss and it was probably bad for the



relationship to see each other twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, but it was better than being on her own" (p. 81). Dee's mother, Glynn, appears in this story, first through needing Dee as company and a sounding board but later through visiting her at work, whereupon she buys a dog from Layton, the owner of the company. An uneasy tension lies below the surface of the relationship between Layton and Gary. Dee knows that the men use the insurance business as a cover for selling drugs, but she doesn't know any of the details and the business doesn't follow them back to Gary's

rural home. When Bobbie goes missing, however, and the two dogs soon after, Gary becomes distracted, wondering what has happened to the animals. The story takes an ominous and unexpected turn involving Layton, his new associate, Gary, and even Glynn. The meaning of “retreat” becomes apparent only in the end.

“This Trailer is Free” makes a departure from the other stories. It is only one of two stories with first person narration, and that narration is confessional, conjectural, and at times confrontational. It begins with the supposition, “Let’s just say that we never robbed the bank.” The unnamed narrator traces her way backward to what led to her speaking to the reader from behind prison bars: life in a dingy trailer in Dallas, an opportunistic and mean-spirited boyfriend, a taste for Oxycodone after an injury in the Army, a string of men, the birth of her son, and ultimately an extended story of the year her father bought a trailer, packed up the family, and moved them from Arkansas to Alaska for what he hoped would be profitable work in a canning factory. They hadn’t lasted and on the way home, the trailer got two flat tires. After taking what they could fit in the car, the narrator’s father taped a piece of paper to the trailer. “In all caps, he’d written THIS TRAILER IS FREE. ‘Let somebody else take it,’ he said to me. ‘I give up’” (p. 138). The narrator returns to those words at the end of the story stemming from different circumstances but evoking the same shame and defeat.

The stories in *Unnatural Habitats* are primarily told from a limited omniscient perspective. We have access to the central character’s thoughts but often see or know more than the character him or herself. Mitchell’s characters are realistic, sometimes likeable, sometimes not. She doesn’t explain her characters to readers, but rather she allows readers to see how the characters understand, and misunderstand, themselves. They are teachers, car salesmen, insurance adjusters, farmers, business owners, drug dealers. They are husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, in laws, but especially

loners. The stories don’t evoke great passions yet underlying them are deep longings—for a better lover, more money, the past, connection, and understanding. Thus, Mitchell creates empathy for her characters in their bleak environments, and she makes us question what natural habitats really are for these characters.

The beautiful cover image of a bobcat in a button down sweater highlights the natural/un-natural dynamic that undergirds the entire collection. The reader who selects the book based on the intriguing cover will not be disappointed. The stories are supremely well crafted, the characters memorable, and the meditation on place compelling. It is a stunning debut from Angela Mitchell. Buy it, read it, reread it, and share it. It’s that good.

--Janelle Collins

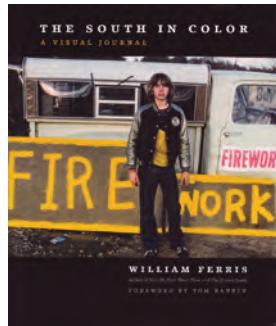


***The South in Color: A Visual Journal.* By William Ferris. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016. Pp. xi-xx + 121, 103 illus., foreword by Tom Rankin, acknowledgments, selected bibliography. \$35, cloth)**

Longtime fans of Bill Ferris’s work will be pleased to see the third in a series of books that have chronicled his ethnographic research from the 1960s into the 1990s. *The South in Color*, though perhaps more idiosyncratic in approach than the previous two, is visually beautiful and contains, in five chapters, a sumptuous collection of his previously unpublished color photographs from the same periods covered by *Give My Poor Heart Ease* and *The Storied South*.

Focused on the places that gave rise to his work, the book is idiosyncratic in the very best sense: it carries with it the echoes of the personal that have made Ferris such a vital con-

tributor to the field of Southern Studies. To powerfully evoke place, he begins with his own early life on “The Farm” (chapter one): the Ferris family home environs in rural Mississippi that shaped him, along with the people who lived there and molded him. Readers of the previous works will see the same lovingly detailed attention paid to color photographs of area residents, many of whom appeared earlier in black and white. The photographs of the Rose Hill Church congregants stand out, as do those of black and white farmworkers: one in which three workers take a break while seated on a pull-behind mowing deck leaps from the page with its immediacy (p. 31), and those of Ferris’s own family members pull us into his early life. We can practically smell the freshly cut hay.



This intimacy is by design. “This book addresses my complex relationship with the South,” Ferris writes. “I bring an appreciative yet wary eye to its people and their history. . . . I feel the South’s power and presence in deep, intimate ways” (p. 1). Both Pecolia Warner’s portrait (p. 47) and she with her quilts (pp. 86-87) embody this contrast: the former a close-up of her frank, cautious, and careworn visage, the latter brightened by her art and her slight smile of pride of work. Ferris’s subjects seem obviously wary and appreciative of their photographer in their turn, and repeatedly the two-way gaze between subject and lens is deeply moving. The eyes of Nora, a neighbor’s child” clinging to the hip of Louvennia Willis (p. 58), stare blankly from her countenance, halfway intimidated by the camera yet comforted by the older woman’s presence. Three unidentified African American men at a farm auction on the facing page (p. 59) offer viewers a similar emotive experience, comfortable with themselves and the situation yet perhaps a little leery of having their picture

taken, just like older, white workman Cecil Crosby, who peers, arms folded across his chest and gaze slightly askew, out from under the sweat-stained brim of his cap while standing against a corrugated tin wall (p. 52).

Chapter two, “Portraits,” chapter three, “Buildings,” and chapter four, “Handmade Color,” all move away from the farm and out onto the road before Ferris returns in the last chapter “Roads Traveled.” Again, we’ve met some of those folks before, but to see them in color propels us across the gap of time: Otha Turner (p. 57), Sergeant Webb (p. 65), and Aden Fisher White (p. 50) are personal favorites in this category. Likewise, after being given significant space and voice in *Give My Poor Heart Ease*, seeing artist and musician James “Son” Thomas (one of many standout interviews and recordings from the first book) with one of his sculpted heads cradled in the crook of his arm (p. 95) is truly a delight. As Tom Rankin notes in his foreword, these photographs “help us see with fresh eyes where we’ve already been . . . to re-imagine even the most familiar of past places” (p. xviii).

The same quality of re-visioning and re-visiting is true even of those we haven’t met before, like the aforementioned Pecolia Warner, but also in many of the unidentified subjects, such as the young white fireworks salesman (pp. 62-63) who graces the front cover, the silver sleeves of his Dallas Cowboys jacket popping against the bright yellow lettering of the hand painted sign for his wares behind him; the African American street actress, coyly peering sidelong out from under her hat (p. 44); or the unidentified pony rider (pp. 66-67) slouching comfortably back on the rug that serves as his saddle against the haunches of his mount. And it occurs in the photographs of buildings, like *Busburgers Restaurant* (p. 74) and *S.M White & Son Crossroads Store* (pp. 70-71); of landscape (*Field near Arlena’s Soul Food*, p. 106); and of both everyday things and objet d’art: the battered white station wagon of a watermelon vendor (p. 102) as well as Theora Hamblett’s



folk art painting of Hubert Hamblett, eyes literally shining, figure radiating light (93).

The main attraction of *The South in Color*, thus lies in seeing this material brought to life in a way transcriptions of field recordings and grey scale print reproductions can't entirely accomplish on their own. In that sense, this book might best be seen as a companion piece to the earlier ones. Those unfamiliar with Ferris's previous works in this series would perhaps be better served starting with either *Give My Poor Heart Ease* or *The Storied South*; but what a warm, vibrant, and charming companion it is.

Especially when placed alongside the audio and video discs that accompanied the first two books, *The South in Color* vivifies both Ferris's youth and his ethnographic research with a vitality that is remarkable, charming, and disarming. It deserves its place on the shelf with the others and readers will love perusing all three as a set.

--Marcus Charles Tribbett



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## Contributors

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Jeffrey Alfier's recent books include *Fugue for a Desert Mountain*, *Anthem for Pacific Avenue*, and *The Red Stag at Carrbridge: Scotland Poems*. His publication credits include *Copper Nickel*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, and *The McNeese Review*. He is founder and co-editor of Blue Horse Press and *San Pedro River Review*.

Kenneth Barnes is the author of *Anti-Catholicism in Arkansas: How Politicians, the Press, the Klan, and Religious Leaders Imagined an Enemy, 1910-1960* (2016) and several other books and articles in Arkansas history. He is Professor of History at the University of Central Arkansas. He is currently working a book about the Ku Klux Klan in Arkansas.

Robbie Borrello is from New Orleans where he currently works as a high school English teacher. As an individual who grew up playing and loving music, his affinities drew him to poetry that mirrors the same rhythmic styles that have always surrounded him, namely jazz and the blues, and it has been in these idioms that he has modeled most of his writings. He is a graduate of Hendrix College in Conway, AR with a BA in English

Janelle Collins is Professor of English in and Chair of the Department of English, Philosophy, and World Languages at Arkansas State University. She is former General Editor and current Managing Editor of *Arkansas Review*. She is the editor of *Defining the Delta: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on the Lower Mississippi Delta* (2015).

Lynn DiPier is Associate Professor of English at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia. Her poems have appeared in *The Midwest Quarterly*, *The Laurel Review*, *Water~Stone*, *Weber Studies*, and elsewhere.

Doreen Yu Dong is a PhD student at Arkansas State University in the Heritage Studies program. Her dissertation direction is towards Chinese immigrants' experience in the South. She currently works at the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, one of ASU's heritage sites, as event organizer and tourist interpreter.

Monic Ductan's writing has appeared in *Shenandoah*, *Water~Stone Review*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *storySouth*, *Tahoma Literary Review*, and several other journals. She is the winner of the 2016 Garth Avant Fiction Award, and a finalist for the 2017 Reynolds Price Short Story Award. She lives



in Tennessee.

Keith M. Finley, PhD, is Assistant Professor of History at Southeastern Louisiana University as well as Assistant Director of the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies.

LaDawn Lee Fuhr is a PhD student and graduate assistant in Heritage Studies at Arkansas State University. Fuhr's background includes a career in media management, marketing, communications, and government. Fuhr is the chairman of the Arkansas State Museum Advisory Council and holds an MPA from Georgia Southern University and a BFA from Arkansas State University.

Laura Goodman lives and writes in Boulder, Colorado. Her work has appeared in a number of quarterlies, reviews, and anthologies, among them: *Cream City Review*, *South Dakota Review*, *Crosscurrents*, *Worcester Review*, *Other Voices*, *Hard Love*, etc., with work forthcoming in *Fiction Southeast*.

J. Todd Hawkins is a professional editor who writes and lives in Texas. He is the author of *Ten Counties Away* (Finishing Line Press) and *What Happens When We Leave* (winner of the William D. Barney Memorial Chapbook Prize). His blues haibun have appeared in *AGNI*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *The Louisville Review*, *Bayou Magazine*, and elsewhere. He holds an MA in Technical Communication, loves the blues, and nightly loses to his wife at *Mortal Kombat* while the kids sleep.

Misti Nicole Harper, PhD, is an instructor in the Department of History at the University of Arkansas. Her current book project, *And They Entered as Ladies: When Race, Class, and Black Femininity Clashed at Central High School*, examines intersectionality and middle-class black women's specific activism as the catalysts for massive resistance.

Dylan Henderson, born in a trailer parked on a former gravel quarry, has lived his whole life within the borders of the Cherokee Nation. An avid reader, he spent much of his childhood studying literature, but at the age of sixteen, he dropped out of high school and, after earning his GED, enrolled at the local community college. Over the next decade, he would earn advanced degrees in history, literature, and li-

brary science while drifting from one entry-level job to another. After graduating from the University of Tulsa, he moved home to Cooweescoowee County where he now lives in a century-old farmhouse on the outskirts of Radium Town, a decaying resort once famous for its mineral springs. The last remaining bathhouse, though no longer operational, is still visible from his upstairs window

Mitsutoshi Inaba was born in Kure, Hiroshima, Japan. He earned a PhD in ethnomusicology from the University of Oregon and is the author of two blues biographies: *Willie Dixon: Preacher of the Blues* (2011) and *John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson: The Blues Harmonica of Chicago's Bronzeville* (2016). He currently teaches Japanese language and culture at Clarksville High School and Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee.

George Kalamaras, former Poet Laureate of Indiana (2014-2016), is the author of fifteen books of poetry, including *Kingdom of Throat-Stuck Luck*, winner of the Elixir Press Poetry Prize (2011). He is Professor of English at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, where he has taught since 1990.

Barclay Key is Associate Professor of History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where he is currently teaching courses on recent US history. His favorite band is the Drive-By Truckers, and he has run at least two miles every day since August 1, 2011.

Robin Kozak's writing has appeared previously in *Crazyhorse*, *Field*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Poetry Daily*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Witness*, and other publications, and her awards include two Creative Artist Program grants from the city of Houston and the 2016 Sandy Crimmins Prize for Poetry. An authority on antique and estate jewelry, she currently is at work on Berkowitz, a collection of short fiction.

Sharon LaCour is a piano instructor living in a small town in western Wisconsin. She grew up in New Orleans and her newly completed novel, *Dolores Couvillon*, is set there and in Cocodrie, Louisiana in the 1920s. Her work has appeared in the *Xavier Review* and the *Embark Literary Journal*.

Carl Moneyhon, PhD, is a specialist in the history of the American Civil War and the South and is widely published in the field. His work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and he recently received one of the first College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Summer Fellowships for Research. He is a Fellow of the Texas Historical Association. He is working on a book on the connection of war-time experience and developed identity among Confederate soldiers.

Anthony B. Newkirk is Assistant Professor of History at Philander Smith College. He is currently working on the lives of Grace and Lee Lorch, civil rights activists in Little Rock during the late 1950s.

William H. Pruden III is the Director of Civic Engagement and College Counselor at Ravenscroft School in Raleigh, North Carolina. A history major at Princeton University, he earned a JD from Case Western Reserve University, as well as master's degrees from Wesleyan University and Indiana University. His stints as a legislative assistant to both a state senator and a US Congressman have informed his over thirty years as an educator where he has taught American history and government at both the collegiate and secondary levels. In addition, he has done presentations and published many articles on history and politics.

C. R. Resetarits has had work recently in *Jelly Bucket* and *Chicago Quarterly Review*; out now in *Chattahoochee Review* and *Confrontation*; out soon in *So to Speak* and *December*. She has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize, in 2016 and 2017. Her poetry collection, *BROOD*, was published by Mongrel Empire Press in 2015. She lives in Faulkner-riddled Oxford, Mississippi.

Michael Streissguth has written and produced three documentary films and published eight books, including *Johnny Cash: The Biography*, which have been widely cited and favorably reviewed in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, and many other publications. A regular contributor to *Rolling Stone*, his work has also appeared in venues such as *The Washington Post Magazine*, *The Journal of Country Music*, *The Irish Times*, *Salon*, *Mojo*, *Living Blues*, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

He is the founding chair of the Communication and Films Studies Department at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York.

Marcus Charles Tribbett is General Editor of *Arkansas Review* and Assistant Professor of English at Arkansas State University where he also teaches for the interdisciplinary Heritage Studies doctoral program. He has published or forthcoming essays on classic (Memphis Minnie) and contemporary (Mem Shannon) blues singers. His most recent essay, "Three Williams and a Subversive Text: Collaboration, Communal Agency, and Resistant Identities in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860)," was published in *Southern Quarterly* in 2017.

Colin Woodward became Editor of the Lee Family Digital Archive on August 31, 2015. Dr. Woodward got his undergraduate degree in history and religion from Trinity College in Hartford. He completed his MA and PhD from Louisiana State University, studying with Charles Royster, who is an authority on "Light Horse Harry" Lee, the Revolution, and the Civil War. For three years, Dr. Woodward was an archivist at the University of Arkansas's Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture. Before that, he worked at Smith College and the Virginia Historical Society. His first book, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race and the Confederate Army during the Civil War*, was published in 2014 by the University of Virginia Press. He is writing a second book on the importance of place, family, and history in the life of country singer Johnny Cash.