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Mobile's Solitary Sentinel: U.S. Attorney William H. Armbrecht and the Richard Robertson Lynching Case of 1909

David E. Alsobrook

Shortly after midnight on January 23, 1909, twenty-five to thirty heavily-armed masked men quietly entered the unlocked Mobile County Jail and removed Richard Robertson, a black carpenter charged with murder. When the mob arrived at the jail, two deputy sheriffs guarding Robertson offered no resistance, and the night-duty jailers were sleeping outside the cells. Sheriff Frank Cazalas, an elderly Confederate veteran, was at home, also sleeping soundly at the time.¹ Incarcerated for only two days, Robertson was charged with murdering Deputy Sheriff Philip Fatch and wounding another deputy, W. N. McCarron. On January 21, the deputies had attempted to serve a warrant on Robertson for assault and battery and abusive language. During the ensuing gun battle, Fatch and McCarron had returned Robertson's fire, wounding him three times.²

The members of the mob bound and gagged the wounded Robertson and carried him to the southeast corner of Church and St. Emanuel streets. At that point Robertson began to scream through his loosened gag, and the mob's leader ordered his men to shoot their prisoner. Three pistol shots in rapid succession pierced the quiet night. Then the mob stripped Robertson of his blood-soaked clothing and hanged him from a towering oak tree in the shadow of Christ Episcopal Church. Eyewitnesses later testified that Robertson, kicking wildly and bleeding profusely, was conscious when he was lynched. Around 2:30 A.M., over an hour after the mob dispersed, two policemen arrived and cut the body down from the tree. After examining the mangled corpse, Coroner H. P. Hirschfield hastily convened five jurors at the nearby police station house. The six men ruled that Robertson had died from hanging "by parties unknown to this jury."³

Richard Robertson's lynching was the first case of mob violence within the Mobile city limits in over thirty years. However, in 1906 and in 1907, three young African Americans accused of rape had been lynched near Plateau, just north of the city.⁴ This geographical distinction between suburban and downtown Mobile as lynching sites was significant to white leaders of that time. If the mob had the common sense and basic decency to conduct their bloody business outside the city limits, Mobile's leaders simply could blame it on the

rural "lawless element." Robertson's murder, however, occurred in the very heart of downtown Mobile, in an exclusive residential neighborhood dominated by historic Christ Episcopal Church. Consequently, this brazen act shocked many white Mobilians. Attorney Harry Pillans exclaimed, "If this be suffered, we are reduced to savagery and anarchy."⁵ His son and law partner, Palmer Pillans, ruefully recalled over sixty years later, "We thought we were immune from it."⁶

The *Mobile Register's* Erwin Craighead, whose impassioned editorials had denounced earlier lynchings, angrily condemned the latest atrocity: "[I]t is not the negro murderer that is to be defended, but the majesty of the law that guarantees to every accused person—no matter how base the act—an open and fair trial." The respected editor further asserted that the "so-called 'orderly mob' of 'good citizens' intent upon avenging a grievous wrong done womanhood, points the way to the disorderly mob, the ordinarily lawless element, actuated by no thought of right or wrong and wholly without respect for the citizenship of which it is a minor part."⁷

On January 24, Craighead attended a citizens' meeting convened at the law offices of ex-Mayor Joseph Carlos Rich and William H. McIntosh. Rich chaired the meeting of thirty prominent attorneys and businessmen. They drafted resolutions requesting Governor Braxton Bragg Comer to investigate and determine whether Sheriff Frank Cazalas was negligent in protecting Robertson from the mob. An amendment to the resolutions asked the governor to offer a reward for the arrest and conviction of the lynchers. Captain A. C. Danner also recommended hiring attorneys to assist local and state officials in gathering evidence for prosecuting the criminals. Before adjourning, the men raised a substantial \$960 for attorneys' fees.⁸

Also on January 24, several ministers delivered fiery sermons excoriating this latest episode of lawlessness in Mobile. The Reverend H. H. McNeill, pastor of the St. Francis Street Methodist Church, blamed Robertson's lynching on citizens who had ignored the breakdown in law enforcement for several years: "We stand today with another chapter of shame and disgrace added to the fair name of our city by the Gulf." McNeill, an outspoken prohibitionist and opponent of Sunday movies, vaudeville, and baseball, had established Mobile's Law & Order League in 1908. He scoffed at Jailer Hugh Gillis's account of the "storming" of the jail as a "farce,...[a] burlesque, even giving the mob a certificate of good character" because they were quiet, efficient, and orderly.⁹

On January 26, McNeill received two threatening letters, one signed by the "Committee of 100." Identifying himself as "the leader of the lynchers," the writer acknowledged that he had participated in the Mose Dorsett lynching in September 1907 and warned McNeill: "[Y]ou and some of your friends are going to get a rope around your necks if you don't keep your mouths shut about the negro lynching....I will attend to you if you do not cut out some of that hot air you have been expounding around here."¹⁰

After placing the letters back in their envelopes, McNeill went to the third floor office in the Customs House of the United States Attorney for Alabama's Southern District. William Henry Armbrrecht, the lean, sandy-haired thirty-five-year-old U.S. Attorney, adjusted his spectacles on his long, angular nose and carefully examined the two letters. He then spent much of the day studying federal and state legal statutes and privately conferring with attorney Joseph C. Rich, City Court Judge Oliver J. Semmes, and U.S. District Judge Harry T. Toulmin.¹¹

Born in Port Chester, New York in 1874, Armbrrecht had lived in Mobile since December 1888 when his father, a decorated Union Army veteran, had moved the family to the Port City from Knoxville, Tennessee. His parents, Caesar and Anna Armbrrecht, were well-educated, German immigrants, and young Will grew up in a household where learning was cherished. Caesar Armbrrecht personally tutored Will and his brother Charles in English, German, French, Latin, and Greek. At age fourteen, Will Armbrrecht worked as an office boy in Lyman H. Faith's law firm while studying stenography at night. Between 1889 and 1897, he was a stenographer with attorneys Rich and McIntosh and the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. During the mid-1890s, Armbrrecht read law in the office of E. L. Russell, the M&O Railroad's vice-president and general counsel. Admitted to the Bar in June 1897, Armbrrecht married Anna Belle Paterson in December. Over the next eleven years, they had two sons and two daughters. After employment as the M&O Railroad's personal injury attorney in 1898-1900, Armbrrecht entered private legal practice until President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him to the U.S. Attorney's position in 1904. In 1906, while also serving as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney General, Armbrrecht successfully prosecuted the Honduras Lottery Case in Louisiana.¹²

So, despite his youth, Armbrrecht was a seasoned attorney by January 1909 when the Reverend McNeill visited his office. He also

Armbrecht also reported that Judge Semmes believed that the act of mailing these letters violated Section 6218 of the *Code of Alabama of 1907* which applied specifically to postal communications of "a threatening or abusive nature which may tend to provoke a breach of the peace."¹⁶ Thus, Armbrecht reasoned, despite no applicable federal law, mailing the threatening letters was "clearly a violation of the State statutes," and U.S. postal inspectors and Justice Department special agents could secure "evidence of a violation of a State law, whenever [it]...involves a misuse of Federal instrumentalities."¹⁷

While recognizing that "the Federal Courts have no jurisdiction of matters of lynching," Armbrecht hoped that an investigation into the letter-writer's identity would attract the attention of state officials. Any evidence which emerged from this investigation about the mob's leadership and personnel could be turned over to the Alabama Attorney General. "[B]y that means good could be done in two ways," Armbrecht wrote, "First, by ascertaining whether or not a Federal crime has been committed; and second, by furnishing the State authorities with evidence upon which the prosecuting officer could act."¹⁸

He recommended the assignment of three federal investigators to the case: Postal Inspector O. J. Clarke, stationed in Chicago; and Justice Department Special Agents Irving O. Sauter and L. J. Baley, currently posted in New York City and Selma, respectively. I need "first class men who do not come from this section," Armbrecht urged, "and especially men who can mingle with people of some prominence, as I am informed that some of the members of the mob left the scene of the lynching in automobiles." Closing his letter to Bonaparte, Armbrecht emphasized the necessity of conducting a confidential investigation to avoid publicity "so detrimental to good service" which usually occurs when state officials are involved.¹⁹

On January 30, 1909, the Attorney General notified Armbrecht that his request had been referred to the Postmaster General "for his consideration" and advice on "any action which he may deem to be appropriate."²⁰ On February 3, in response to Armbrecht's letter, the Postmaster General detailed Postal Inspector O. J. Clarke from Chicago to Mobile. Clarke arrived by train in Mobile on February 5, and met immediately with Armbrecht. However, the Attorney General ignored Armbrecht's request for special agents from the Justice Department to join the investigation. Obviously frustrated by the Justice Department's refusal to allocate additional personnel to the case, Armbrecht telegraphed the Attorney General requesting a second postal inspector

Sunday baseball ordinance in Mobile County since the spring of 1908. The governor undoubtedly knew that impeachment of Cazalas would serve as a strong lesson for other sheriffs who were lax in upholding the laws. In early March 1909, Comer ordered impeachment proceedings against Cazalas to be initiated at the end of April.²⁷

On March 17, 1909, Postal Inspector O. J. Clarke filed his final report on the threatening letters. Clarke, who devoted about three weeks to the case, pointedly noted that no special agents from the Justice Department "were assigned to make any investigation whatever." His interview with H. H. McNeill revealed that the minister had received a number of threatening letters and postcards during the previous six months, all in the same handwriting as the alleged mob leader's. These earlier letters attacked McNeill's criticism of the police for not enforcing prohibition. Clark concluded that the letter-writer probably was "some opponent of the liquor law" since "it does not seem reasonable that the leader of the mob would write a letter admitting himself to be such." Clarke also stressed that he had "ascertained almost beyond a doubt that one J. T. Jett," whom Armbrecht "suspected of being the leader, was at home at the time of the lynching and had no part in it." Clarke recommended closing the case because it lacked "sufficient importance to spend any more time in its investigation," adding, "State authorities know exactly who killed the negro, but they can find no one who will go before the Grand Jury and admit that he knows anything concerning the matter."²⁸

Clarke's findings probably disappointed but did not surprise Armbrecht. Like many Mobilians, he believed that Sheriff's deputies and policemen had lynched Robertson in retaliation for Fatch's murder and also understood that a large crowd of prominent citizens had witnessed the crime but would not testify in open court. While he was not a crusader for African Americans' equality or moralistic reforms like prohibition, Armbrecht believed fervently in upholding the law and as U.S. Attorney remained true to his oath of office. As a diligent student of legal precedents, he also was aware that U.S. District Judge Thomas Goode Jones had attempted to prosecute the lynchers of Horace Maples in Huntsville in 1904, not as murderers but as violators of their black victim's Fourteenth Amendment rights.²⁹ Like Judge Jones's ingenious ploy in the *U.S. v. Powell* case, Armbrecht's attempt to obtain convictions for the murderers for violating postal laws foreshadowed similar legal strategies used by the Justice Department during the Civil Rights Era of the 1960s. At the very least, Armbrecht had hoped that his federal investigation would produce evidence for

continued through April and May of 1909, Comer's reputation as a "law and order" governor became tied inextricably to the final verdict.³⁴

On the eve of the Alabama Supreme Court's ruling on the Cazalas case, W. H. Fitzpatrick notified Comer: "We are informed today the hoodlum crowd are arranging a great procession and jollification in the event...of Cazalas[']s acquittal. They will of course be joined by the 'lynchers', [and] will visit the homes of all the ministers who are active in [the] reform movement. Should they wish to commit an overt act there will not be a policeman - mayor - sheriff or his deputy to say nay." Fitzpatrick asked the governor to place the state militia on alert for such retaliation by "criminal elements."³⁵

Fitzpatrick's fears proved to be premature. On June 3, 1909, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled five to two for Cazalas's impeachment. The court found that Cazalas had exhibited an inexcusable negligence of duty because he failed to heed widespread rumors that vigilantes would lynch Robertson. As soon as news of the decision reached Mobile, a policeman appeared at Palmer Pillans's residence and advised him to stay inside that evening. Pillans wrote that the evidence provided "no suggestion of complicity on [Cazalas's] part with the lynching." He added that the sheriff's able defense attorneys, Gregory L. Smith and Francis J. Inge, presented voluminous testimony in behalf of Cabalas's integrity, courage, and exemplary service to Mobile County. "That was substantially all they had. They did the best they could with it," Pillans noted.³⁶

Pillans's memoirs suggest that Cazalas was a scapegoat, and he probably was. The enfeebled Confederate veteran may have been the only member of the Sheriff's Department who did not participate in Robertson's lynching on January 23, 1909. Pillans and other attorneys who had sought Cazalas's impeachment also exhibited considerable sympathy for the sheriff. Within a month after impeachment, Pillans, Stallworth, Rich, and the new sheriff, John S. Drago, appealed to Comer to relieve Cazalas of the financial burden of his legal fees. State Representative Francis O. Hoffman and State Senator Max Hamburger Jr. also introduced debt relief bills in Cazalas's behalf.³⁷

In the aftermath of the Cazalas affair, Comer received considerable praise for his impeachment initiative. William Vizard, a timberland investor and a member of Rich's citizens committee, wrote the governor: "The decision marks the opening of a new era. It means much for Mobile, more for Alabama and the entire South."³⁸

While Vizard may have overstated the significance of Cazalas's impeachment, Sheriff John S. Drago, a wholesale grain merchant

appointed to this post by the governor in June 1909, understood what was expected of him. Less than a month after the Alabama Supreme Court's ruling, Drago responded decisively to rumors that his black prisoner would be lynched and moved him under heavy guard from the city prison to the more secure county jail. "There will never be a lack of protection to any person under my charge,"³⁹ Drago proudly reported to the governor, who cheerfully congratulated him: "A fearless officer who discharges his duty without fear or favor is a very pleasing sight to his fellow-man and to the Lord."⁴⁰

In February 1910, after a mob cut the precinct telephone lines and threatened to lynch Heustis Mosley, a black man accused of attempted rape and murder, Drago again demonstrated his resourcefulness. He strengthened his existing cadre of deputies with thirty-five state militiamen and informed the press that he and his men would protect Mosley and use the "old cannon" if a mob gathered at the jail. The night passed quietly without incident.⁴¹ The governor was so impressed with Drago's aggressive action that he ignored his haphazard enforcement of liquor laws.⁴²

The legacy of Cazalas's impeachment eventually extended beyond Mobile County and the Comer Administration. In the spring of 1911, Governor Emmet O'Neal launched impeachment proceedings against the Bullock County sheriff, who also had failed to protect a black prisoner from a mob. This sheriff also forfeited his position, and O'Neal ultimately became a leader in the national anti-lynching campaign between 1916 and 1920.⁴³

The Cazalas affair served notice on sheriffs in Mobile and across the state that dire consequences awaited them if they did not protect prisoners in their custody. Sheriff John Drago and one of his successors, William H. Holcombe Jr., consistently and courageously carried out their protective duties. However, threats of mob violence persisted in Mobile after 1910, particularly during the summer of 1919.⁴⁴ While the state's impeachment power may have stiffened the resolve of law enforcement officials in Mobile and elsewhere in Alabama, race relations continued to deteriorate through the World War I era.

In the aftermath of Richard Robertson's lynching in 1909, no black leaders in Mobile protested, at least publicly. By 1909, with Jim Crow rigidly in force in Mobile and the city's African-American population completely subjugated, intimidated, and terrorized, their leaders were incapable of even a whimper of protest. A. N. Johnson, the charismatic editor of the *Mobile Weekly Press*, who had petitioned

local and state officials for sympathy in behalf of the city's blacks before the double lynching of 1906, narrowly escaped with his own life and by 1909 had established a lucrative undertaking business and a newspaper in Nashville.⁴⁵ The black leaders he left behind did not wish to share Johnson's fate of exile by protesting Robertson's lynching.

With Mobile's blacks silenced by Jim Crow, a small band of white attorneys, businessmen, ministers, editors, physicians, and educators raised the banner of protest after Robertson's lynching. Trade, commercial development, economic prosperity, and governmental efficiency formed the credo which united these Mobilians. How could Mobile attract northern capital and innovative entrepreneurs and investors and recapture her antebellum position as a vital seaport if lawlessness reigned in the streets? This group of nascent progressives was not tightly-knit and continually fragmented over moral reform issues of the day, especially prohibition, Sunday "blue laws," and regulation of prostitution. Yet, they stood firmly united on any issue which promoted Mobile's image and business opportunities.⁴⁶

Will Armbrecht's life and career reflected Mobile's particular brand of progressivism which emerged prior to World War I. After his role in the Robertson investigation ended, Armbrecht apparently never discussed this episode with his family or friends until his death in 1941 at age sixty-seven. He moved on to other pressing matters which crossed his desk as U.S. Attorney, including successful litigation over depredation of U.S. timber lands in Mississippi, peonage in Monroe County, and a nationwide wholesale jewelers fraud ring headquartered in south Alabama.⁴⁷

During the last year of his tenure as U.S. Attorney in 1911-1912, Armbrecht volunteered his legal services without compensation in the Mobile Chamber of Commerce and Business League's suit against the M&O and Southern Railroads. This suit charged that the railroads had engaged in discriminatory shipping rates in transactions with Turner-Hartwell Docks and other private wharfage and steamship companies.⁴⁸ After the Interstate Commerce Commission ruled against the M&O and Southern Railroads in May 1912, Armbrecht hailed the decision as a great victory for the Port of Mobile and the removal of "the last vestige of unreasonable control" by the railroads which could no longer monopolize ocean going traffic. He modestly brushed aside public accolades for his efforts: "The people of Mobile owe me nothing. What little I have been able to do is only in partial re-paymen

justice. Likewise, as the Chamber of Commerce and Business League's unpaid lawyer in 1912, Armbrecht soundly applauded the ICC's ruling against the monopolistic practices of the M&O and Southern railroads. In all fairness, Armbrecht was not the only Republican who detested the New Deal's proliferation of new federal agencies created by "That Man in the White House." Yet, today it is interesting to imagine Armbrecht's reaction to a later generation of historians who have characterized the New Deal as the heir to Theodore Roosevelt's progressivism.

Whether analyzing the causes of the Great Depression or paying tribute to Mobilians like railroad builder John T. Cochrane or black Baptist minister A. F. Owens, Armbrecht emphasized the nobility of public service. In brief remarks at a Rotary Club meeting in November 1924, Armbrecht revealed some of his own philosophy of civic and personal responsibility. His words written in 1924 easily apply to the young U.S. Attorney who sought no fanfare or public acclaim in carrying out his sworn duty under the law. Perhaps in the final analysis these selected passages are a fitting tribute to Will Armbrecht:

The purpose of all law is to teach men to so live their own lives as to respect and promote the interests of others....Fame, wealth, and power that come to a man because of his outstanding achievements are not his personal property; they are simply the outward evidences of his broadening opportunities and his increasing responsibilities....[G]reat cities are not built alone by the ability of a few great men; great cities are built by the co-operative effort by men of average ability who consecrate at least a part of their lives and substance to the common good....Is it not as much our duty to sit on juries, to hold office when the office calls us, to vote intelligently, carefully, aye, prayerfully, in order that our government may be properly administered?...Patriotism consists not alone in organizing and giving to drives of various sorts, in cheering boys as they pass by, but it consists as well in the performance of the ordinary duties to the state, where there is no applause, and where the work is done as silently as the coral insect at the bottom of the sea, where life is sacrificed in order that the reef may reach higher and higher still.⁵⁵

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Letter, Committee of 100 to "My Friend" [H. H. McNeill], January 25, 1909, enclosed in William H. Armbrecht to the Attorney General, January 26, 1909, Record Group 60, General Records of the Department of Justice, U.S. Attorneys Files, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. Hereafter cited as RG 60, NA.

¹¹William H. Armbrecht to the Attorney General, January 26, 1909, *ibid.*

¹²Armbrecht Biographical File (microfilm), Alabama Department of Archives and History; Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (4 vols.; Chicago, 1921) 3: 51. Hereafter cited as Owen, DAB. Caesar Armbrecht Union Army Pension File, Record Group 15, Records of the Veterans Administration, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; William H. Armbrecht to Attorney General (with attached appointment certificate and oath of office), February 8, 1904, RG 60, NA.

¹³See *Mobile Register*, September 17, 1902, December 2, 1904, February 8, 1908; C. F. Z. Caracristi to Booker T. Washington, January 3, 1904, Booker T. Washington Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Hereafter cited as BTW Papers, LC.

¹⁴William H. Armbrecht to the Attorney General, January 26, 1909, RG 60, NA.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.; James J. Mayfield, *The Code of Alabama* (3 vols.; Nashville, Tenn.: Marshall & Bruce Co., 1907), 3: Criminal, Sec. 155, p. 273.

¹⁷William H. Armbrecht to the Attorney General, January 26, 1909, RG 60, NA.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰The Attorney General to William H. Armbrecht, January 30, 1909. *ibid.*

²¹Acting Postmaster General O. P. Granfield to the Attorney General, February 3, 1909; the Attorney General to Postmaster General F. H. Hitchcock, February 5, 1909; Armbrecht to the Attorney General, February 6, 1909 (telegram); Bonaparte to Armbrecht, February 8, 1909 (telegram), *ibid.*

²²*Mobile Register*, January 28, 29, February 2, 14, 1909.

²³*Ibid.*, January 27, 29, 1909; Pillans, "Mobile in Two Centuries," 177.

²⁴"Lawlessness Begets Lawlessness," Erwin Craighead Editorial, *Mobile Register*, January 24, 1909; *Chattanooga Times*, quoted in *Mobile Register*, January 30, 1909.

²⁵J. T. Turner to Governor B. B. Comer, January 30, 1909, Comer Official Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. This archival depository hereafter cited as ADAH.

⁴²Comer to Drago, February 16, August 17, 1910; H. H. McNeill to Comer, January 9, 1910, Comer to McNeill, January 14, 1910, Comer Official Papers, ADAH.

⁴³Governor Emmet O'Neal to F. O. Hoffman, April 25, 1911, O'Neal Official Papers, ADAH; Booker T. Washington to R. R. Moton, May 27, 1911, BTW Papers, LC; Charles Flint Kellogg, *NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1909-1920* (Baltimore, 1973), 211, 233-34.

⁴⁴See *Mobile Register*, June 6, 1919; W. H. Holcombe Jr. to Governor Thomas E. Kilby, August 11, 1919, Kilby Official Papers, ADAH.

⁴⁵David E. Alsobrook, "Mobile's Forgotten Progressive—A. N. Johnson, Editor and Entrepreneur," *Alabama Review* 32 (July 1979): 188-202.

⁴⁶Alsobrook, "Mobile During the Progressive Era," 109-114, 311-57.

⁴⁷*Mobile Register*, March 23, October 29, 1911; *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, March 18, 1911.

⁴⁸*Mobile Register*, November 19, 1911; *Mobile Chamber of Commerce et al. v. Mobile & Ohio Railroad Company et al.*, ICC Opinion No. 4242, May 7, 1912, Record Group 133, Records of the Interstate Commerce Commission, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

⁴⁹*Mobile Register*, n.d., c. May 8, 1912, clipping in possession of William H. Armbrecht III, Mobile, Alabama.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, March 12, September 3, 1913, January 14, September 20, 1914; William H. Armbrecht to Governor Emmet O'Neal, April 28, May 3, 1913, O'Neal to Armbrecht, May 9, 1913, O'Neal Official Papers, ADAH; Alsobrook, "Mobile During the Progressive Era," 103-107.

⁵¹Alsobrook, "Mobile During the Progressive Era," 107-108; L. C. Irvine to Governor Emmet O'Neal, July 2, 1913, O'Neal Official Papers, ADAH; *Mobile Daily Item*, October 27, 1913.

⁵²*Mobile Register*, n.d., c. 1913, clipping in possession of William H. Armbrecht III, Mobile, Alabama.

⁵³Miscellaneous clippings, *Mobile Register*, April-May 1927, *ibid.*

⁵⁴William H. Armbrecht Speeches, c. 1924-40, *ibid.* William H. Armbrecht to Herbert Hoover, October 7, 11, 12, 1939; Hoover to Armbrecht, October 13, 1939, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa; "Armbrecht Tell of Talks With Presidential Timber," *Mobile Register*, October 6, 1939.

⁵⁵William H. Armbrecht Speeches, c. 1924-40, in possession of William H. Armbrecht III, Mobile, Alabama.

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The Best History Money Can Buy: Eugene Campbell Barker, George Washington Littlefield, and the Quest for a Suitable Past

Fred A. Bailey

In the esoteric world of academic politics distinctive customs facilitate recruitment of the financial resources necessary for scholarly pursuits. So in 1914, when Austin banker George Washington Littlefield donated twenty-five thousand dollars toward the creation of the Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas, the wife of Department of History chair Eugene C. Barker expressed her appreciation for his largess. "As a young Southern woman intensely interested in anything that concerns her country," she enthused, "I want to thank you myself for the generous gift to the University. It seems to me its about the most splendid thing that has been done for the South since '61 and I almost envy you the privilege and pleasure you feel."¹

The legacy of this Texas financier and former Confederate Army major increased by an additional one-hundred thousand dollars at his death in 1920, underwrote the creation of a major repository of southern materials, and in 1950 became the foundation for the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center.² Although this happy act of philanthropy remains to this day a boon for those scholars interested in the late Confederacy and the regional culture associated with it, the story of its creation illuminates a darker recess of southern intellectual history. The financing of an archival research depository was, paradoxically, a part of the crusade among southern elites to suppress academic freedom and to impose upon their homeland a version of the past essential to the perpetuation of their power.

Littlefield clearly stated the intent of his gift. "It has been my desire," he wrote, "to see a history written of the United States with the plain facts concerning the South and her acts since the foundation of the Government, especially since 1860, fairly stated." He wished that "the children of the South may be truthfully taught and persons matured since 1860 may be given opportunity to inform themselves correctly." At his death six years later, Littlefield's will pointedly provided that the vastly increased fund was to be used by the university's board of trustees for the publication of "a History of the United States" that would give a correct accounting of "the South and especially of the Southern Confederacy." Littlefield's concept of "plain facts" and "truthfully taught," however, envisioned a patter of history

The Confederate patriotic societies—the United Confederate Veteran, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and United Daughters of the Confederacy—joined with educators and politicians in an intellectual quest to reaffirm the southern aristocracy's suzerainty over the states of the late Confederacy. Class stratification had sculpted the antebellum South, as a small elite of slave-rich planters and related professionals—attorneys, physicians, and merchants—molded a culture premised upon man's innate inequality and assumed that social order was best served when every individual resided in his proper place. Ensclosed at the top of virtually every southern community, the "best families" were rarely challenged by less-favored whites and virtually never threatened by African slaves.⁵

Aristocrats led the South out of the Union in 1861, confident that subsistence farmers and impoverished laborers would follow them in their grim campaign. Initially they were correct, but in time the realities of deaths, wounds, and suffering families prompted the white under-class to question its role in a war fought that aristocrats might own slaves. The lesser whites's departure from the Confederate cause dealt southern elites a severe ideological blow. If proper social order mandated the subordination of most men, white as well as black, to the aristocrats's leadership, then the common soldier's flight from faith raised a major challenge to traditional class relationships.⁶

The Confederacy's defeat made difficult the reassertion of aristocratic hegemony after the war, and in the century's last decades discontented black and white agrarians repeatedly denounced elite governance just as northern historians harshly judged the antebellum planter class. The menaced southern patricians responded vigorously, preaching the linked doctrines of class stratification and white supremacy. Although they had reestablished their personal fortunes, and at Reconstruction's demise their political influence, the elites could no longer count upon the quiet acquiescence of small farmers and artisans. The Grange movement, the Farmers's Alliances, and the Populist Party Crusade evidenced powerful discontent with the southern oligarchy.⁷

Northern historians, caught up in worship of egalitarianism and national progress, especially questioned patrician rule. Southern aristocrats were offended by what they interpreted as northern attacks upon the South but in reality were harsh critiques of a particular group of Southerners, the aristocrats themselves. In thick tomes, James Ford Rhodes, James Schouler, John Bach McMaster, and Hermann von Holst prosecuted the planter class, condemning its reactionary philosophy, exposing its inhumanity, and placing upon it the onus of war guilt.

censored by the Confederate veterans and the Daughters of the Confederacy," the UDC textbook committee of 1915 could declare all school histories free from sectional impurity.¹¹

In reality, Texas school books and like-toned volumes everywhere in the South painted truth subjectively, romanticizing the plantation culture, designating slavery as essential for the black race, commiserating with defeated but unconquered Confederate soldiers, condemning northern-sponsored Reconstruction, and hailing those who redeemed the South from Carpetbagger rule. The Confederate societies refused to allow any deviation from their rigid proscriptions. "Strict censorship is the thing that will bring the honest truth," proclaimed Mary Mayfield Birge, chair of the Texas UDC's textbook committee in 1915. "That is what we are working for and that is what we are going to have."¹²

By the twentieth century's second decade the South had developed an intellectually closed society. Only one version of history was tolerated and all who dared challenge it faced the destruction of their carefully nurtured careers. The Confederate societies intensely scrutinized every level of education and they especially watched the region's colleges and universities. Recognizing higher education's role in the training of primary and secondary teachers and in creating scholarly books and articles that influenced future generations, Confederate partisans demanded that college administrators employ only men and women absolutely "loyal" to the South. As Louisiana State University historian Walter Lynwood Fleming lamented to a North Carolina colleague in 1911, "if you want to get into trouble just run afoul of the Daughters of the Confederacy."¹³

This was the climate in which the University of Texas Department of History chair Eugene C. Barker negotiated with George Washington Littlefield. Both men possessed an intense love of history, shared a common view of its proper interpretation, and longed to create a respectable academic infrastructure necessary to perpetuate their ideological views. In spite of this, the path to success would not be easy. Their campaign to establish the Littlefield Fund for Southern History became snared in the Byzantine politics of southern historiography. They were caught up in a drama that drew together a cast reaching beyond the limited confines of the Austin campus and constantly threatened their endeavor.

Barker dreamed that one day his Department of History would rank among the nation's best and to that end he deemed a strong manuscript collection necessary to attract to the university both teachers



*Eugene C. Barker, 1940. Texas State Historical Association,
The Handbook of Texas Online.*

instrument...guiding the nation through the wilderness of threatened disunion." That Elson disparaged Reconstruction and considered Negro citizenship a travesty against the white race hardly mollified enraged apologists for the Lost Cause.¹⁸

Within weeks the controversy spread beyond Virginia's borders. Confederate societies from Baltimore, Maryland, to Marshall, Texas, joined in the chorus, and sympathetic newspapers registered their displeasure. The New Orleans *Picayune* professed to favor free speech but declared that southern children should not attend classes where they will "see their fathers and grandfathers vilified and slandered in textbooks and lectures"; the Charlotte, North Carolina, *Observer* demanded that "no institution in this country...should touch Elson's 'History...' with tongs"; and the *Florida Times-Union* of Jacksonville shrieked, "Not only do we object to books which instill...heresies, we insist that teachers who hold such view are unfit to instruct Southern children.... Put out the bad books and refuse to employ the teachers."¹⁹

Before Thorstenberg tendered his resignation from Roanoke College and left the South for good, he protested that Elson's history was commonly used throughout the country and in fact had been adopted by at least twenty other southern colleges. This intelligence thereby sparked a wave of hysteria as Confederate societies everywhere demanded that their schools and libraries remove "such damnably false literature as this Elson's history." Trinity College (now Duke University), the University of North Carolina, and the University of Georgia purged the offending textbook from their curriculums. Much to his consternation, Littlefield learned that the University of Texas's Department of History required that its students read Elson's "damnably false" history.²⁰

Prodded by Littlefield, President Mezes demanded an explanation from the Department of History chair. Barker immediately acknowledged Elson's analytical shortcomings, but pointed out that his was but one of several reference books used by students to compare and contrast historical interpretations. Whatever Elson's failings in regard to slavery and Lincoln, Barker argued, at least his discussion of postbellum events was fair to the South. "Of 'Carpetbaggers' he speaks as contemptuously as they deserve, and he finds no excuse for the Reconstruction governments." Barker assured the university's chief administrator that he and his department remained loyal to the South. "I beg to remind you, sir, that I am a southern man. I was born, and have lived all my life, in Texas. My grandfathers...and several of my uncles fought in the Confederate Army." But stilling his academic

and her cohorts reluctantly agreed to Charles Kendall Adams and William Peterfield Trent's *A History of the United States*, but only if subject to revisions carefully screened by a committee drawn from members of the United Confederate Veterans's Austin camps. Sympathetic to Birge's demands, a compliant Texas Textbook Board willingly endorsed her position and ordered appropriate actions.²³

Littlefield praised the role played by the textbook committee of the John Bell Hood Camp in pressuring the board. "Your protest is just and honorable," he applauded. "Texians should know we have men like you who will contend for the rights of the Southern people and that the truth may be given our children in school." Since the governor also chaired the textbook board, Littlefield assured the committee of chief of state's fidelity. He "will demand" honest history "for Texas and I hope you may stand by him for the best interest of our people. Every true Southern soldier will honor your committee."²⁴

Shortly after the Board's adjournment, one of its members, W. F. Daughy, published in the *Texas School Magazine* a brief summary of its deliberations. "The law required that no history be adopted which did not treat fairly Southern sentiment with reference to the interpretation of the Constitution," he informed his readers. Having consulted with the Confederate veterans, the Board eventually found a high school text that was both scholarly and teachable, but which did "not always interpret things quiet as favorably to Southern ideals as preferred." Reluctantly the Board adopted the Adam and Trent book, but with instructions for appropriate revisions. "Strange as it might seem," he mused, "not one history of high school rank was offered by a Southern author."²⁵

Barker found in the Board's actions, Daughy's article, and his own humiliation over the Elson episode an opening to win Littlefield's favor. Appealing to the university regent, he lamented that the "recent failure of the Text-Book Board to find a suitable text in United States history and the fact that there is no satisfactory text for college use are cause for humiliating thought to every Southern man." The problem was that no southern university had sufficient faculty and, more important, scholarly resources to attract quality students. "The accumulation of historical material in Northern libraries has attracted to the Universities of the North the greatest historical scholars and teachers of America."

doubted "if an adequate course in any phase of Southern history can be given south of Mason's and Dixon's Line unless...in Texas" where the illiberal South merged into the more progressive Southwest. "The best courses in Southern history are given in Northern institutions where the library collections afford a sufficient basis for work."²⁸

To be sure some repositories had been established in the South, but Fleming had little faith in their integrity. Noting that the state of Louisiana subsidized New Orleans's Confederate Memorial Hall with its valuable collection of manuscripts, he explained that as "a rule the Board has wished to keep out of" it "all who would not make firm promises to write 'sound' history.... What I have said about this collection holds good, I think, of nearly all strictly Confederate collections. I have tried several of them." Nor did he have any better opinion of the recently established Louisiana state archives in Baton Rouge. It had degenerated into little more than a center for collecting the records of Confederate soldiers. "The present organization of this Confederate work does not permit attention to any phase of history except that falling between 1861 and 1865."²⁹

In one veridical paragraph, Fleming castigated those proponents of "truthful" southern history, who willingly destroyed the academic careers of even the most inoffensive dissenter. He was deeply shaken by the recent dismissal of historian Enoch Marvin Banks from the University of Florida for suggesting in an article that fifty years beyond the Civil War's beginning Southerners should make a "frank...acknowledgement of [the South's] errors, where errors were found." Banks "was driven out by a lot of loud mouthed politicians," Fleming fumed, "for writing an article, which in my opinion was rather crude and on the whole...somewhat stale, but which contained nothing that scores of leading Confederates have not said in slightly more tactful words." When Barker requested his secretary type for distribution to Littlefield copies of all letter received, he ordered this paragraph deleted.³⁰ The Texas historian would soon learn why Fleming feared the Confederate societies.

Barker submitted his full proposal to Littlefield in March 1913, but before the wealthy philanthropist could respond the Department of History chair once again found himself trapped in the vortex of a free speech controversy. Without warning, the John Bell Hood Camp, United Confederate Veterans denounced the University of Texas for requiring that its sophomores read Edward Channing's *Student's History of the United States*. Publishing their protest in the *Austin Statesman* of April 28, they excoriated the book as "written by a person

of Regents formal acceptance of his gift on April 28. Public records revealed nothing of the arm twisting which had occurred, but in a private memorandum, Barker ruefully noted that in the Board of Regents's informal discussions they "recounted previous difficulties in getting satisfactory text in history—really meaning the difficulty of getting books satisfactory to Confederate camps." They "thanked Major Littlefield and...admitted the justice of the previous complaints of partisanship" in the Department of History. Publicly, however, Barker wrote in the *Nation* magazine for July 2, 1914, that "Major Littlefield's gift is gratifying to historical students as a symptom of the South's drawing consciousness of obligation to its own history.... It is no part of Major Littlefield's purpose to promote the partisan study of history."³⁴

The episode plainly illustrates Littlefield and the southern elites's definition of non-partisan history. An eminent historian had been brought to heel and a state's major university had been subjected to a rigorous discipline, one imposed by those with little or no professional training in the field of study they censured and who possessed no regard for academic integrity. Certainly the Confederate organizations, spokesmen for those who envisioned a new South under the command of those who had ruled the old one, proved extraordinarily successful in taming independent thought and insuring that the minds of the South's youth would remain unsullied by historical reality. In doing, the white elites had, without conscience, undermined the fundamental reason for a university's existence.

Barker's retirement from the University of Texas in 1950 necessitated rituals appropriate to the peculiar nature of academia, and the designation of the university's extensive manuscript collections as the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center honored the towering figure who had enriched the institution for almost a half century—and who had sold his discipline's soul to the Confederate societies. George Washington Littlefield had, of course, long gone to his grave, resting for eternity with his loving wife buried on one side and his faithful Negro servant from Civil War days interred on the other.³⁵

Notes

¹Mathilda Le Grand Barker to George Washinton Littlefield, May 1, 1914, George Washington Littlefield Papers, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, The University of Texas, Austin. Hereinafter the George Washington Littlefield Papers will be referred to as Littlefield Papers.

Arthur Bailey, *Class and Tennessee's Confederate Generation* (Chapel Hill, 1987). To these should be added the older work of Roger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1939).

⁶Frank L. Owsley, "Defeatism in the Confederacy," *North Carolina Historical Review* 3 (July 1926): 446-56; Georgia L. Tatum, *Disloyalty in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, 1934); Escott, *After Secession*, 94-135; Bailey, *Class and Tennessee's Confederate Generation*, 99-104; James L. Roark, *Masters Without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 1977). Stephen V. Ash's "Poor Whites in the Occupied South, 1861-1865," *Journal of Southern History* 57 (Feb., 1991): 30-62, explores at length the disloyalty of the southern impoverished during the Civil War crisis.

⁷See Jonathan M. Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885* (Baton Rouge, 1978); Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*; Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill, 1985); Bailey, *Class and Tennessee's Confederate Generation*; Stephen V. Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870* (Baton Rouge, 1988). A useful study of agrarian agitation in Virginia is William DuBose Sheldon, *Populism in the Old Dominion: Virginia Farm Politics, 1886-1900* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1935).

⁸James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* (9 vols; New York, 1900-28); James Schouler, *History of the United States under the Constitution* (6 vols.; New York, 1894-99); John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States* (8 vols.; New York, 1883-1913); Herman von Holst, *The Constitutional and Political History of the United States*, trans. John J. Lalor (8 vols., Chicago, 1876-1902); *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Texas Division United Daughters of the Confederacy...1911* (n.p., 1912), 30 (quotation).

⁹C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, vol. 9 in *A History of the South*, ed. Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (10 vols., Baton Rouge, 1949-77), 321-49.

¹⁰General Laws of the State of Texas...Twenty-Fifth Legislature (Austin: Ben C. Jones and Co., 1897), 238 (quotation), 239-43. For a general discussion of neo-Confederate school textbooks and how this particularly impacted Texas, Virginia, and Arkansas see: Fred A. Bailey, "Textbooks of the Lost Cause: Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75 (fall 1991): 507-33; Fred A. Bailey, "Free Speech and the 'Lost Cause' in Texas: A Study of Censorship and Social Control in the New South," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 47 (January 1994): 453-79; Fred A. Bailey, "Free Speech and the 'Lost Cause' in the Old Dominion," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 103 (April 1995): 237-66; Fred A. Bailey, "Free Speech and the 'Lost Cause' in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 55 (December 1996): 143-66.

¹¹Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Texas Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy...1910 (n.p. 1911), 51 (first quotation); Dora Davenport Jones, *History of the Julia Jackson Chapter #141, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Fort Worth, Texas, 1897-1976* (Fort Worth, 1976), 34 (second and third quotations); *Seventeenth Annual Meeting and Reunion of the Texas Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy...1908* (n.p., 1909), 14 (fourth quotation); *Twentieth Annual Convention of the Texas Division United Daughters of the Confederacy...1915* (n.p., 1916), 42 (fifth quotation).

²³Ernest William Winkler, "The Littlefield Fund for Southern History," (typescript), n.d. (quotation), Ernest William Winkler Papers, BCTH; W. F. Daughy, "Work of the State Textbook Board," *Texas School Magazine* (December 1912), 15; Eugene C. Barker, Charles W. Ramsdell, Charles S. Potts, *A School History of Texas* (Chicago, 1912); Charles Kendall Adams, William Peterfield Trent, *A History of the United States* (Boston, 1913); C. J. Maxwell to Henry G. Askew, July 5, 1913, The Macmillan Company by J. C. to Henry G. Askew, July 5, 1913, E. A. DeWitt to Henry G. Askew, July 5 1913, United Confederate Veterans, Texas Division Archives, BTHC. Note Henry G. Askew chaired the UCV committee overseeing revisions of the Adams and Trent textbook.

²⁴George Washington Littlefield to W. B. Walker, H. G. Askew and the Committee Appointed by the John B. Hood Camp United Confederate Veterans, October 30, 1912, United Confederate Veterans, Texas Division Archives.

²⁵Daughy, "Work of the State Textbook Board," 15.

²⁶Eugene C. Barker to George W. Littlefield, December 5, 1912, Eugene C. Barker to E. J. Mathews, May 16, 1914, Eugene C. Barker, memorandum, undated, Littlefield Papers (HR).

²⁷Eugene C. Barker to Reuben Gold Thwaites, December 17, 1912 (first quotation), Barker Papers; Eugene C. Barker to E. J. Mathews, May 16, 1914, Reuben Gold Thwaites to Eugene C. Barker, December 20, 1912 (second and third quotations), Littlefield Papers (HR).

²⁸Barker wrote the same letter to R. P. Brooks (University of Georgia), R. H. Dabney (University of Virginia), Walter Lynwood Fleming (Louisiana State University), J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton (University of North Carolina), Dallas T. Herndon (Arkansas History Commission), J. H. T. McPherson (University of Georgia), Franklin L. Riley (University of Mississippi), David Y. Thomas (University of Arkansas), December 17, 1912, Littlefield Papers; for their responses see: Franklin L. Riley to Eugene C. Barker, [December 1912], J. H. T. McPherson to Eugene C. Barker, [December 1912], Dallas T. Herndon to Eugene C. Barker, December 21, 1912, J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton to Eugene C. Barker, December 23, 1912, John S. Patten to R. H. Dabney, December 23, 1912, Walter Lynwood Fleming to Eugene C. Barker, December 30, 1912 (quotations), David Y. Thomas to Eugene C. Barker, January 7, 1913, Littlefield Papers (HR).

²⁹Lynwood Fleming to Eugene C. Barker, December 30, 1912, Littlefield Papers (HR). When in 1906, Virginia historian William Edward Dodd was researching his biography of Jefferson Davis, the director of New Orleans's Confederate Memorial Hall denied him access to its collection of Davis manuscripts. Fred Arthur Bailey, *William Edward Dodd: The South's Yeoman Historian* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1997), 46.

³⁰Lynwood Fleming to Eugene C. Barker, December 30, 1912 (second quotation), Littlefield Papers (HR); Fred Arthur Bailey, "Free Speech at the University of Florida: The Enoch Marvin Banks Case," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 71 (July 1992): 1-17 (Bank's quotation is on p. 8).

³¹Eugene C. Barker to E. J. Mathews, May 16, 1914, Littlefield Papers (HR); *Austin Statesman*, April 28, 1913.

Settling Scores in British West Florida: Who and How

Robin F. A. Fabel

In a letter from someone in Pensacola to a friend in Jamaica in the year 1772, the following quote appears: "Were I to give you all the news from West Florida since you left it, you would give me little thanks for it: it would be full of murders, duels and drownings."¹ The letter writer exaggerated, but only slightly. His main point, that the colony, after nine years under British rule, was a rough and violent place, was accurate.

Sometimes recourse to duels and murders arises from a failure to obtain justice by more civilized means. However, in 1772 the institutions of justice were present in West Florida. After all the British had been establishing royal colonies in North America for a century and a half, and West Florida had the full array: a court of chancery, a court of common pleas, courts of oyer and terminer, a vice-admiralty court, and regularly held quarter sessions. The trouble was that difficulties of time and distance made recourse to them impossible for West Floridians who did not live in or near Pensacola or Mobile.

Except for the quarter sessions, all the courts mentioned met in West Florida's capital, Pensacola, and the province embraced so much more than its two ports on the Gulf Coast: today's Florida Panhandle in its entirety, half of what is now the state of Alabama, much of what is now the state of Mississippi, and all of what is now southeast Louisiana. To travel to Pensacola from, say, Baton Rouge, took weeks. If a judgment were appealed it would have to be considered in London, a process that took months.

Then, too, colonists knew that the courts in the province had been badly warped by politics. West Florida's first governor, George Johnstone, had suspended both the province's chief justice and its attorney general for political reasons. Johnstone's successor, Montfort Browne, also interfered with the workings of the judicial system, according to a contemporary, who wrote: "He endeavors to oblige the Chief Justice by threats, and even force to give judgment as he orders."² Where courts cannot be relied on to provide justice, people are tempted to settle disputes through personal violence and one such method is dueling. Given its small white population, dueling was common in West Florida. One reason for it was that dueling was endemic in the British Army, and West Florida was fundamentally a military colony. Two

battalions occupied West Florida in 1763 (later reduced to one). A battalion at full strength contained one thousand men. That may not seem much, but it is, if one realizes that at its height West Florida had a white population of between four and six thousand.

Under European social codes a gentleman might duel only with another gentleman. In the British Army, holding the king's commission automatically conferred the status of gentleman. The pairing of "officer and gentleman" recurs repeatedly in eighteenth-century documents. The legal code governing the army was the Articles of War. They forbade dueling. Not just the combat itself, but issuing a challenge and even upbraiding an officer for refusing a challenge—all were court martial offenses. The standard sentence for those found guilty was cashiering, that is, to be dismissed from the army and, an added penalty, barred from ever again being employed in the public service in any capacity whatever. The penalties were mostly theoretical. In practice few officers were court-martialed for dueling and even fewer found guilty.

If a death resulted from a duel, an officer could be handed to the civil authorities for trial. Such deaths were murders in English law and, for murder, execution was the common penalty. Again the official punishment was mostly theoretical. Juries were lenient to duelists. John Atkinson, in his book *Dueling Pistols and Some Affairs They Settled* found only two instances, both in England, of the death penalty actually being carried out for killing in duels.³

Not everyone was as complaisant. All Christian churches condemned dueling for moral reasons. The leading eighteenth-century philosophers, including Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, denounced the custom as unreasonable, while Richard Sheridan ridiculed it in his play *The Rivals*. Even so, dueling flourished like a weed in the British Isles, especially in Ireland and particularly among the military. As mentioned, army officers were comparatively thick on the ground in West Florida and the Irish were well represented among them.

Why very senior officers, including the general in command of the southern brigade, condoned the illegal practice of dueling is mystifying to the twenty-first century mind. Probably it relates to eighteenth-century battlefield practice. Using camouflage and taking cover were future virtues. Standing openly and unflinchingly in the face of enemy fire, keeping a proper distance, shooting only on command, all were vital to the efficient performance of the European battle tactics of the day, and all were present in the duel. Cowardice was much more despised than irrationality, and courage and coolness

The pistol used was invariably part of a pair, somewhere between ten and eighteen inches long, weighed about two pounds, and could throw a lead ball a good 250 yards. To rest one's pistol on the forearm for greater stability was considered unsporting. When held at arm's length in the 'Present' position a steady hand must have been difficult to maintain. We know that Alexander Pushkin, poet, duelist, who had, of course, nothing to do with West Florida, customarily went for walks with a cane of solid iron to strengthen his firing arm. Although rifled pistols existed by 1770 the classic dueling pistol was of smooth bore. Rifling would have been an unnecessary refinement. The benefit of rifling is to impart greater accuracy to the ball. At the short ranges at which duels were customarily fought—twelve to fifteen yards—rifling would have made no difference.

In Europe whether a man could claim the rank of gentleman depended on a combination of birth, occupation, and money, but mostly birth. European tradition specified that only gentlemen could duel with gentlemen, but social distinctions in West Florida were more fluid than in Britain. Outside the army and navy, gentlemen there were more of a rarity than they would have been in Europe. Governor Johnstone, himself the son of a baronet, described West Florida's population as 'the overflowing scum of empire.' Other than the planter Sir William Dunbar, this author has yet to discover the holder of a knighthood, let alone a peerage, among the colonists of West Florida. Settling in West Florida was a way to achieve social elevation. William Richardson, an immigrant from South Carolina, wrote home of his delight at hobnobbing with senior army officers in Mobile, treated, he said, like a gentleman, as evidently he was not back in Charleston.⁸

The immigrant John Fitzpatrick, a trader, complained that another Mississippi trader, Thomas Bentley, had slandered him. Fitzpatrick would have challenged Bentley except that Bentley was a justice of the peace and was thus, to quote Fitzpatrick, "effectively screened by the title Esquire, which in one sense is quite arbitrary on this river."⁹ Fitzpatrick's words show that there still existed respect for the British class distinctions, even in West Florida's wilder regions. They also suggest that it was easier to qualify as a gentleman there.

After Governor George Johnstone hurriedly left West Florida to, among other things, be elected to parliament and fight a duel with Lord George Germain, his lieutenant governor, Montfort Browne acted in his place. Browne had served in the French and Indian War as an infantry officer. Before that, as young buck in London, he had appeared before a magistrate for violent escapades. He was well

often did, with no one seriously hurt, no legal action would have been taken against the participants. What made the authorities more active in this case was the real possibility that Evan Jones's wound would kill him. That chance put into motion, inefficiently to be sure, the creaking legal machinery that sought to limit the excesses of dueling.

Browne's opponents, Hodge, Godley and Jones were gentlemen by West Florida standards, but many in the colony were gentlemen by nobody's standard. For somebody of no status to insult a gentleman in a fashion that could not be ignored could pose a dilemma. Under the European dueling code no gentleman could challenge a social inferior any more than he could accept a challenge from such a person. He could give him a thrashing. Such was the way that Lieutenant John Ritchy solved such a dilemma.

Ritchy commanded a detachment of twenty men at Fort Tombigby. Also living there, not at all amicably, was a Frenchman in British pay, Eli Lagardere, whose duty was liaison with the Choctaw Indians in West Florida. Lagardere patronized the, probably young, subaltern, assured Ritchy that he could not possibly know as much about Indians as he did, and Lagardere told Ritchy how to do his job, for example advising him of the placement of cannon in the fort. The resulting tension culminated in Lagardere's calling Ritchy a blackguard, an unforgivable insult. Since clearly Lagardere was no gentleman in Ritchy's opinion, he seized him, thrashed him, and publicly kicked him around the parade ground.¹¹

Another officer who lived in the colony's hinterland was Lieutenant John Thomas of the Royal Artillery. Seconded to the trading post at Manchac, where the local merchants detested his officiousness, Thomas soon found himself facing a dilemma similar to Ritchy's. Not a trader but a mere trader's clerk, George Harrison, so manifestly no gentleman in Thomas's eyes, quarreled with him, reportedly about his treatment of slaves. The outraged Thomas drew his sword, perhaps to use its flat side to teach his underling a lesson. Possibly to his surprise the stick that Harrison carried proved to be a sword-stick with which Harrison tried to defend himself. In the fracas that ensued, Thomas ran Harrison through, fatally wounding him.¹²

The fight was of the kind that gave rise to rumors. One was that Thomas's wife Margaret begged him to flee to New Orleans, Spanish territory. Perhaps so, but he did no such thing. He gave himself up to a local justice of the peace who sent him to Pensacola to be tried. There, after a thirteen-hour trial, a jury that evidently believed his plea of self-defense acquitted him. This was the usual consequence of a trial

duello. The pair put things right by exchanging shots on Gage Hill. Nobody was hurt and the two resumed their former friendship.¹⁵ No doubt there were other similar incidents of which we have no record. This article does not discuss all the duels and challenges of which we have no record. However it has mentioned enough to show that Bertram Wyatt Brown in his excellent book called *Honor and Violence in the Old South* was not totally correct in contending that dueling “was introduced to America by British and French aristocrats living in America during the Revolution,”¹⁶ since all the duels referred to took place in the 1760s or early 1770s, that is, before the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

Perhaps this author has overemphasized duels and thrashings as a way of settling disputes in West Florida at the expense of legal cases. There were plenty of lawyers in the province in comparison to the population and enough law courts for plenty of business. Writing about them would not be easy, because the law court records from British West Florida, which certainly once existed, have not survived.

From fragments of evidence it seems that the social distinctions of England became frayed in West Florida, in particular the qualification for the status of a gentleman. There was an attempt to mimic the dueling code as practiced in Britain. The chief participants were army officers, but civilians were involved too, and dueling was part of the culture of the pioneer colony. Many of the officers garrisoned there had roles elsewhere in America once the revolutionary war began. No doubt they took their attitude to dueling with them. Almost none of them would have stayed in the United States after Britain lost the war, but their civilian opponents in many areas did stay, and no doubt contributed the dueling lore they acquired to a tradition that was part of American culture in postwar years, especially in the South.

Notes

¹*New York Gazette*, August 17, 1772.

²Robert R. Rea and Milo B. Howard Jr., *Minutes, Journals and Acts of the General Assembly of British West Florida* (University, AL, 1979), 318.

³John A. Atkinson, *Duelling Pistols and Some Affairs They Settled* (London, 1964), 21.

⁴John Roger Williams, ed., *Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal and Letters, 1767-1774* (1900; reprint, Freeport, 1969), 242.

⁵Great Britain, Public Record Office, WO 71/54:148.

Siccing Prof. Bassett on City Hall

Gene Owens

If I were a conjuring man, I would conjure up the ghost of Professor John Spencer Bassett and sic it on City Hall in my former hometown of Mobile, Alabama. Bassett would surely haunt the daylight hours of the council chamber after its conviction over George Ewert, director of the Museum of Mobile, who dared suggest that the Ted Turner film, "Gods and Generals," whitewashed the Confederate States of America. Ewert compounded his felony by reviewing the film in a publication of the Southern Poverty Law Center, which is a liberal outfit, for crying out loud.

The brouhaha broke out just two weeks after my return from Durham, North Carolina, where I helped a dozen or so scholarly folk observe the centennial of Professor Bassett's brave stand for academic freedom at Trinity College, the institution that later became Duke University. Bassett had the nerve to suggest, in 1903, that Booker T. Washington ranked somewhere near the level of Robert E. Lee among great Southerners of the nineteenth century. Rebel yells quickly demanded Bassett's expulsion from the faculty. The Board of Trustees voted eighteen to seven for academic freedom.

James Lutzweiler, my friend from Jamestown, North Carolina, invites a coterie of friends and acquaintances to meet with him annually to commemorate the victory. How ironic that a week or two later I received notice of the Ewert affair in Mobile.

Ewert went after the Turner film with bare knuckles. "'Gods and Generals,'" he wrote, "is part of a growing movement that seeks to rewrite the history of the American South, downplaying slavery and the economic system that it sustained. In museums, schools and city council chambers, white neo-Confederates are hard at work in an effort to have popular memory trump historical accuracy."

That was too much for those among us who cannot deal with the possibility that the blood of a half-million brothers was shed over a cause no nobler than the preservation of slavery. But the fact is that the documents through which the Confederate states declared their separation from the Union explicitly gave the preservation of slavery as the prime cause. The drafters of the Confederate constitution took pains to guarantee the right to maintain "slaves of the African race," and to deny individual states the right to forbid slavery.

Now the mayor, City Council members, and apostles of "one nation eminently divisible" have a right to dispute Ewert's version. But

Book Reviews

Anthony S. Parent Jr. *Foul Means: The Formation of Slave Society in Virginia, 1660-1740*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003, xiv, 291 pp. Cloth, \$49.95, ISBN 0-8078-2813-0; Paper, \$18.95, ISBN 0-8078-5486-7.

Michael D. Pierson. *Free Hearts and Free Homes: Gender and American Antislavery Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003, xii, 252 pp. Cloth, \$49.95, ISBN 0-8078-2782-7; Paper, \$19.95, ISBN 0-8078-5455-7.

Susanna Delfino and Michele Gillespie, eds. *Neither Lady nor Slave*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, viii, 324 pp. Cloth, \$55.00, ISBN 0-8078-2735-5; Paper, \$19.95, ISBN 0-8078-5410-7.

Demetrius L. Eudell. *The Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, x, 238 pp. Cloth, \$45.00, ISBN 0-8078-2680-4; Paper, \$18.95, ISBN 0-8078-5345-3.

In the thirty-odd years since consensus history capitulated in the face of assaults by a spate of “new” methodologies and interpretations, social and cultural historians have made enormous strides in understanding how slavery shaped southern society and differentiated it from the rest of America. This effort, obviously, has given scholars a far more complex understanding of the slave South. The four books under review here all testify to the vitality of that ongoing endeavor and all demonstrate an exceptionally sophisticated appreciation of the societies they chronicle.

The first of the books is Anthony S. Parent’s superb *Foul Means*. In it, he propounds a new version of the process by which the South became a slave society. Making the bellwether society of colonial Virginia his laboratory, he takes aim at Edmund Morgan’s thesis that Bacon’s Rebellion caused Virginia planters to turn irrevocably away from white indentured servitude and toward African-American slavery, and that this process gave white Virginians a heightened regard for their own freedom. Parent locates the latter transformation in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century. Without denying the importance of Bacon or the fact that planters

the Market Revolution in the North dramatically altered women's roles. As women entered the public sphere first as economic then as political actors, gained new power over the rituals of courtship and practices of reproduction, and exerted an augmented authority within the household, a new political movement gave voice to the interests and values of these women and their families. The voice was antislavery politics and it embraced not just the ending (or at least circumscription) of the South's peculiar/patriarchal institution but also the larger cultural patterns of the burgeoning northern middle class. Thus, as it opposed the patriarchy that was the hallmark of slave society, it also opposed patriarchy closer to home and endorsed expanded public and private prerogatives for women. Pierson is careful to note that the antislavery movement, associated at first with relatively minor third parties and after 1854 with the Republicans, was no monolith. Just as Abolitionists and moderates disagreed on how best to dispose of slavery, so too did more radical elements differ with their more pragmatic cousins over precisely what rights and privileges to award women. But if there existed divisions on the antislavery side of the fence, the fiercer rift may have been between those who favored more autonomy and power for women and those who did not. Not surprisingly, the most uncompromising factions on both questions—Abolitionists and feminists—tended to be the same people. Like much cultural history, there is a certain airiness to *Free Hearts and Free Homes*, and one often senses a distance between Pierson's evidence and the sometimes grand conclusions he draws from it. If one can quarrel with specifics, however, the overarching thesis is quite plausible and very well defended. Given the direction of antebellum history over the past generation, a book integrating gender with antislavery politics was perhaps inevitable and certainly overdue. One can be thankful, therefore, that Pierson has performed the job so well.

Gender lies, too, at the center of the essays Susanna Delfino and Michele Gillespie have edited into *Neither Lady nor Slave*. While women's historians have made enormous strides over the past two decades exploring the lives of plantation mistresses and slaves, relatively little headway has been made in understanding the existences of free working women. Delfino, Gillespie, and their crew of contributors aim to rectify this state of affairs and, in so doing, show that there were large numbers of ordinary southern women whose lives were not primarily characterized by "subordination to husbands, fathers, and white men in general." The essayists of *Neither Lady nor Slave* illuminate a world very different from the South imagined by Pierson's Northerners, who saw a region irretrievably lost to

and armed rebellion and immigration in the Indies—and in both disfranchisement and grinding poverty. Like *Free Hearts and Free Homes*, Eudell's book is a product of the starting-to-look-threadbare linguistic turn, and those who are uneasy with that method of analysis and the overwhelming importance it sometimes attaches to what may seem casual turns of phrase may wish to take a pass on *Political Languages*. (In fairness, of course, historians of language would say that there are no "casual" turns of phrase, that everything that passes through the lips or from the pens of historical actors is informed by a set of cultural norms of which they are only semi-cognizant at best—which is precisely why language is so revealing.) However, new and important insights await those who are willing to follow Eudell. As Peter Kolchin recently pointed out anew in *A Sphinx on the American Land* (2003), there is much yet to be gained from studying the nineteenth-century South in comparative perspective, and Eudell's good work certainly bears that out.

With the exception of Emily Clark's essay on New Orleans Ursulines in *Neither Lady nor Slave*, it must frankly be noted that little in these books pertains directly to the Gulf South. However, to the extent that all deal with the South—and to the extent that the Gulf states are a subset of that region—they have much to say about the history and development of America's south coast. If one wanted to take the temperature of southern historical scholarship in general, moreover, he or she could do worse than starting with these four works. In addition to being interesting for their findings, they are exemplars of three of the more currently fashionable historical methods. Since the advent of the new labor history in the seventies, historians have stressed the agency of subaltern groups in relation to societies' ruling classes. Parent, Pierson, and the contributors to *Neither Lady nor Slave* continue in this vein by emphasizing the roles played respectively by slaves and women North and South in shaping their own destinies. And as previously mentioned, Pierson and Eudell work in a now venerable tradition of cultural historians who divine meaning by careful analysis of past texts. Finally, Pierson and Delfino and Gillespie's band of essayists afford the reader fresh insights into the picked-over terrain of antebellum history by viewing their subjects through the lens of gender.

Parent, Pierson, Defino, Gillespie, and Eudell prove that, over thirty years on, the revolution wrought by the new histories continues unabated. But the social and cultural history of recent years has the defects of its virtues. Even as the proliferation of perspectives and methodologies paint an ever more complex picture of nineteenth-

who had managed the estate and sold many of Clark's holdings in the twenty-odd years between Clark's death and the filing of the first suit. If Gaines was determined to be Clark's legitimate heir, she would claim title to the property of many of the most prominent families in New Orleans. After dizzying legal twists and turns, amidst charges of intrigue, fraud, and betrayal on both sides, the United States Supreme Court finally ruled in Gaines's favor in 1867. It proved to be pyrrhic victory. To fund thirty-three years of continuous litigation, she exhausted the fortunes of two husbands, and borrowed extensively against her hoped-for inheritance. She faced hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal bills. Settling the estate required another thirty years of litigation, during which Gaines herself died. In the final reckoning, though newspapers estimated her net worth at more than thirty-five million dollars (representing the value of her inheritance, plus the rents and improvements since her father's death in 1813, plus interest), Gaines's estate ultimately received just under one million dollars. After satisfying her various creditors, her heirs were left to split a paltry sixty thousand dollars. One cannot help but ask, was it worth it?

Alexander presents an entertaining narrative, offering detailed biographies of the case participants. Much of the book describes the history of New Orleans, and the context in which Daniel and Zulime engaged in their affair and Daniel amassed his wealth. Myra Clark Gaines herself is a fascinating character, one who clearly constructed her identity around her notoriety as a litigant. Indeed, she traveled the country in the 1840s speaking to mixed audiences with little controversy, and at one point even served as her own attorney at trial. Alexander argues that Gaines was ultimately successful in her suit because she was able to craft a narrative that tugged at the heartstrings of a public attached to the melodrama of sentimental fiction. Portraying herself as an orphan cheated out of her birthright, who only sought her "rights" and to protect her mother's good name, she demanded that the court recognize her irregular, though legitimate, family and protect its economic interests from villains who had betrayed her father. The case, Alexander concludes, "allowed the nineteenth-century judiciary to construct a new kind of family law, which provided special protection for women, children, and marriages."

Such a sweeping conclusion comes as a shock in the last paragraph of what is primarily a detailed narrative. Alexander provides no evidence that the Gaines decision led to any changes in the adjudication of later cases. Indeed, she presents the justices on the Supreme Court in conflict over the issues of family law that the Gaines

in North Carolina); in others they were on par (as in Louisiana). Their overall numbers varied widely, too: miniscule in South Carolina and Mississippi, substantial in Tennessee, Arkansas, and North Carolina. Baggett's composite biography doesn't really alter our understanding of scalawag identity. The largest contingent of 'waggers were small farmers in those mountain counties V. O. Key once called "the great spine of Republicanism [that] runs down the back of the South." Smaller in numbers but no less influential were modernizers ("Henry Clay economic nationalists") resident in the region's commercial centers, followed by a smattering of forward-looking planters and opportunistic (in the broadest sense of that term) prewar political leaders, like Joseph Brown in Georgia and Lewis Parson in Alabama. For the most part they were ex-Whigs and Douglas Democrats. What united them was a strong sense of Union nationalism, though this varied in intensity. In contrast to their northern counterparts, very few became Republicans because of antislavery beliefs.

Professor Baggett's major contribution is to carefully delineate the various pathways scalawags followed into the Republican party. For the "truly loyal" as well as draft dodgers and stay-at-homes the route was fairly direct, and they moved as a group, not as solo operators: opposition to secession, covert peace activity, flight and exile, enlistment in the Union army (one hundred thousand white Southerners wore blue during the Civil War), involvement in wartime Reconstruction politics (where Union military presence and significant numbers made that possible), disillusionment with Andrew Johnson's restoration policies, participation in the 1866 Southern Loyalist Convention, all capped off by the imposition of military rule and black suffrage. The latter position they came to after discovering the need for political allies and the impossibility of disfranchising their political enemies into oblivion. "Failing to win the white man's vote," Baggett writes, "they reluctantly accepted the black man's vote to gain power and protection. In the process, they became Republicans." Baggett makes a strong case for the coalition-building talents of the scalawags while also noting their achilles' heel. Their unwillingness to embrace black officeholding made it possible for the redeemers to use race as a wedge issue against them.

For the "original Unionists" who joined the Confederacy after that new nation became a "finality" the pathway was more circuitous: antiwar politics during the war, support for Andrew Johnson's policies after it, and then a sudden conversion once it became clear Congressional Republicans, not the President, represented northern

virtually ignores that hereditarian ideas existed world-wide before Galton. Although eugenicists attempted to create an international movement, differences in culture, local context, and religion (among others) all limited the formation of a consensus approach to improving humanity. Instead of acknowledging this original diversity, Black inaccurately states that, "American eugenicists exported their philosophy to nations throughout the world, including Germany," positing a one-way transmission of ideas that warps the dynamics of multi-national scientific correspondence. According to Black, "the American effort to create a super Nordic race came to the attention of Adolf Hitler." Black's implication is that American eugenicists were responsible for the horrors of the Holocaust because, in his view, America was the font of international eugenics and the pioneer of sterilization, immigration, and the marriage restriction laws that the Nazis later carried to insane extremes. While there is some truth to this story, Black ignores its complexity.

He begins stuffing his straw man by misreading both Galton and the methodological split between him and later eugenic theorists. Claiming that, "Galton could not have envisioned that his social idealism would degenerate into a ruthless campaign to destroy all those deemed inadequate," Black persistently ignores Galton's own eugenically justified prejudices against the poor, the infirm, and those of darker complexion. Black also misconstrues as prudence Galton's dogmatic belief that biometry, the statistical correlation of body measurements, pointed the way to human perfection. In contrast to Galton, virtually all subsequent eugenicists—including many in Britain, not just America as Black implies—relied on the hereditarian ideas that led to modern genetics. To prove his point, Black misinterprets a letter between Galton and William Bateson (the British scientist who coined the word genetics). Galton expresses his "fervent hope that exact knowledge [of eugenic principles] may be gradually attained and established beyond question, and I wish you and your collaborators all success in your attempts to obtain it." Black contends that this statement evinces Galton's caution; it is actually a slur, and had Black read beyond the eugenic literature, he would have recognized it as such. In Galton's view, biometric eugenics was all right, the geneticists were all wrong. Galton wished the geneticists "*attempts*" well; he was too much of a Victorian gentleman to state directly that he thought they would fail because he believed biometry had already succeeded.

Although Black charges other historians with sloppy scholarship, his desire to inculcate Americans in Nazi genocide leads

encountered eugenics in the early-twentieth century, should approach Black's argument with a healthy dose of skepticism.

Gregory Michael Dorr

University of Alabama

Chester R. Burns. *Saving Lives, Training Caregivers, Making Discoveries: A Centennial History of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston*. Texas State Historical Association, 2003, 660 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 0-87611-187-8.

In *Saving Lives, Training Caregivers, Making Discoveries*, Chester R. Burns, a noted historian of medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB), provides a comprehensive and panoramic account of the development of this important institution. Based on an exhaustive examination of archival sources, complimented by the wide use of oral history interviews and a sound grasp of the pertinent published literature, this book provides a sensitive and insightful account that should quickly establish itself as the definitive history of the institution.

Burn's gaze in the book is broad. The history of UTMB, like that of other academic medical centers, is dominated by the medical school. This story is told in the book skillfully and fully. Yet UTMB also houses a School of Pharmacy, a School of Nursing, a School of Allied Health Sciences, a Graduate School of the Biomedical Sciences, a Marine Biomedical Institute, and an Institute for the Medical Humanities. The history of these institutions is seamlessly incorporated into the book as well. Thus, it serves as an account of the medical center and not just of the medical school.

After an opening chapter on the creation of UTMB in 1891, the book is organized thematically. Individual chapters are devoted to such topics as political networks and executive leadership, financial resources, the growth of the physical campus, the care of sick patients, education, research, and patterns of daily life on the campus. Though such an organization deviates from the chronological approach adopted in most historical works, the approach works extremely well in this case. The story comes together in a clear, intelligible fashion without redundancy or overlap.

Why should there be a major medical school in Galveston, in view of the presence in Texas of much larger cities such as Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio? To this reviewer, the story of the

enterprise. Attention is similarly given to nurses, allied health professionals, and clerical and custodial workers—important agents in allowing a high level of patient care to occur at UTMB or any institution. Particularly interesting are the various political battles that took place, both within the school and in the campaigns for external support. All of this amounts to excellent social history.

Writing the history of an individual academic medical center is not an easy job. Many such books focus so narrowly on people and events that they are only of parochial interest. Others succeed in contextualizing the history of the institution without providing enough particular grist to interest local readers. Burns succeeds in developing both perspectives. The result is a notable history of UTMB that will appeal to scholars and supporters of the school alike.

Kenneth M. Ludmerer, M.D. Washington University in St. Louis

Michael W. Fitzgerald. *Urban Emancipation: Popular Politics in Reconstruction Mobile, 1860-1890*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002, xvi, 302 pp. Paper, \$24.95, ISBN 0-8071-2837-6; Cloth, \$67.50, ISBN 0-8071-2807-4.

Historians have written little about Mobile during the decades following the Civil War and even less about its blacks during those years. Even when writing about the period elsewhere, Fitzgerald contends that “preoccupation with racial equality” has caused historians to favor study of the Reconstruction period rather than its aftermath when equality seemed unobtainable. Those historians who describe Republican factionalism, a major theme of Fitzgerald’s *Urban Emancipation*, have implied that its radical faction, rather than moderate faction, had “unified black support.” Fitzgerald demonstrates this was not the case in Mobile although he finds it impossible to measure how representative Mobile’s urban black political factionalism was because little analysis of other southern cities has been published.

Before turning to his main theme of black political factionalism, Fitzgerald prepares his readers with background on the African-American population in the Confederacy’s fourth largest city. Of the city’s twenty-nine thousand residents, eighty-four hundred were African American, eight hundred of whom were free people, and when added to four hundred more free people in the county, Mobile County had almost half of Alabama’s free black population. Of the slaves in

alliances with dissident Democrats or with Democratic regulars, or with nonpartisan reform tickets, whichever group offered to help meet their needs and the needs of their followers.

Much of Fitzgerald's work is administration by administration accounts of the mayors and the city councils and how both reacted to the black community and its leaders. These accounts of Republican, Democratic, and nonpartisan reform administrations are treated in an interesting fashion as he relates their elections and their decisions, then the reactions of black activists and the African-American community. On occasion, most concerned got caught up in faulty policy, for example, on the policy of economic development grants by Mobile's city government in the early 1870s. Fitzgerald comments that "Mobile's fiscal ruin was a bipartisan, interracial community project."

From 1865 to 1870 black rural migrants flowed into Mobile in large numbers while hundreds of whites left the city. By 1870 the black electorate represented over a third of city voters and once Redemption ended, they continued to vote in increasing numbers. Contrary to common opinion, they refused to give unquestioning obedience to any of their leaders. Rather, they forced their leaders to be pragmatic. While black activists were usually divided in giving their endorsements, the black community as a whole was usually united by election day. Fitzgerald writes that Mobile's "African Americans were able to maintain political relevance safely in Mobile" despite the "abandonment of racial justice" by the federal government. Strangely, after Redemption, when whites felt less threatened, Mobile's blacks made a number of gains, as in the integration of streetcars and juries.

Fitzgerald's work is a valuable contribution to the history of Mobile and to the history of blacks in an urban setting after Redemption. It is thoroughly researched, well-written, and fulfills its writer's objective. One is left, however, with the impression, although unintended by Fitzgerald, that because of Mobile's unique circumstances on the Gulf Coast it could possibly have been more of an exception rather than the rule in the urban centers of the Lower South.

James Alex Baggett

Atlanta, Georgia

states, such as Alabama, prevented their electors from nominating anyone but a candidate who opposed a civil rights plank.

When southern delegates met in Birmingham to organize after failing to prevent the adoption of a civil rights plank and Truman's presidential nomination, they had no clear idea of what they were organizing to accomplish. Some felt that they were forming a new third party, while others, like Strom Thurmond, felt they were the true representatives of the Democratic Party who were protesting against the actions of the national party. Frederickson illustrates that where the Dixiecrats could gain control of the state Democratic Party apparatus, as they did in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, the Dixiecrats won the state, while in states where they did not gain control of the party apparatus, such as North Carolina and Arkansas, the Dixiecrats fared poorly. The Dixiecrats also suffered in organization because political amateurs often ran field offices, and the time between the party's organization and the 1948 presidential election was only a few months.

Frederickson excels at showing how both race and economic issues influenced the Dixiecrat movement. The issue of race, however, emerged as the strongest issue because opposition to federal civil rights legislation was the catalyst for the whole movement. Race also was the issue that inflamed Dixiecrat supporters and attracted people such as Eugene "Bull" Connor, who would later become infamous during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Frederickson portrays Strom Thurmond as a significant part of the Dixiecrat movement but not its driving force. Thurmond campaigned hard to win the nomination but quickly left the Dixiecrats after his defeat. She also reveals the links between the Dixiecrat movement and the resurgence of the Republican Party in the South. She does make clear, however, that the Dixiecrats' mission was not to become Republicans but to reassert a strong position within the Democratic Party.

The book portrays well the political and social upheavals of the post-World War II South. It focuses on the support the Lower South gave to the Dixiecrats because that was where the party was strongest. It would further strengthen the book, however, if she had explored what support or lack thereof the Dixiecrats had in the Upper South. These voters saw more advantage in remaining New Deal Democrats and were not so strongly attracted to the racial aspect of the Dixiecrat campaign message.

This book clearly presents why some Americans would react strongly toward any positive portrayal of the Dixiecrat movement. The

farm women's work on behalf of the household economy "buffered families against the volatility of prices for staple crops, served as an engine of economic change, and reconfigured gender relations," ensuring in the process that their families "never missed a meal."

The six chapters of *Mama Learned Us to Work* follow southern farm women as they act as both consumers and producers, taking advantage of expanding markets and government-sponsored expertise in the New South. Jones begins by describing women's dealings with the itinerant merchants who brought the world of manufactured goods into the countryside. She argues that the rural country store was an economic institution dominated by white males, whereas most transactions with country peddlers were conducted by women. Traveling salesmen who took the product of women's labor in trade—their "butter and egg money"—allowed women to decide about consumption priorities and make their own decisions about what to buy and how much to spend.

By bartering their butter and egg production with an itinerant salesman, women entered the world of production-for-market. Such modest transactions sometimes led to more extensive participation in a wider economic network. Julia Benton Stokes and her daughter Lurline Stokes Murray developed a partnership that supplied twenty-five regular clients and restaurants with eggs and dressed chickens. Other women used the growing mail-order business to reach customers. Jones describes how southern farm women, by experimenting with new ways of raising chickens and demonstrating that their flocks could make money, laid the foundation for the agribusiness poultry industry that emerged after World War II.

Agents of the new agricultural extension services established by passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 helped farm women to market their produce. Rural women encountered the state in the person of the local extension agent, who could examine and intervene in private family life, advocating specific preparation and content of meals, clothing types and styles, child rearing techniques, and sanitation methods. Although Jones admits that the home extension agents urged farm families to adopt middle class urban lifestyles, she notes that farm women did not follow their advice slavishly. However, extension club members did consult agents to determine agendas for meetings and often supported them in conflicts with local county politicians who wished to reduce extension services funding. In the process, farm women learned organizing techniques, public speaking, and leadership skills that led many to become politically active.

West's decade-earlier, free-wheeling and provocative *Race Matters*, Painter wields both a scalpel and an ax as she dissects multiple generations of southern-focused literature. And much like West before her, Painter marshals all her strength to force the issue of race and the American character into new levels of analysis and debate. But buyer beware: this is not a study for the rigid ideologue or faint-hearted reader. Rather it is a work for those who wish to explore southern history and race themes both from a fresh perspective and with a provocative tenor.

In large part, this is a book cobbled together from the author's earlier works. Drawing on her seminal studies, and at times far surpassing them analytically, Painter uses a panoply of disciplines and models to both corroborate and dispute accepted notions of the southern color line. Emulating the venerable John Hope Franklin and Herbert Guttman, whose works preceded and influenced her, Painter attacks the persistence of the color line in both the southern psyche and in the realm of scholarship. The result is a work that, in a series of six extended essays, challenges the reader to comprehend how the color line in the South has generated two competing sets of interests between the races. These inter-racial imperatives have shaped the South historically, politically, and personally.

Painter provides a compelling argument, often supported by fresh approaches to race, sex, class, and even Freudian analyses of life in the South. Her themes are as varied as her models, yet the common thread interwoven throughout them is that black/white life in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century South has been shaped not so much by the demarcation of the color line as by the unspoken convergence of the duality created by it. Whatever the manifestation of public racial separation, the lives of both races profoundly affected their everyday travails, and their everyday fears and aspirations. Indeed, Painter most effectively wields her iconoclastic pen when she addresses the impact of pain and violence on the females of both races. While the color line pushed black and white women apart in terms of class standing and beliefs, victimization of women as largely powerless beings in a patriarchal society has taught all women, regardless of race, many similar lessons. The author provides a number of examples of these phenomena, but she perhaps best integrates her analyses and paradigms in the discussion of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, who lived from 1834 to 1907. In her life and times, readers learn much of southern materialist orientation, violence, pain (and their psychological sequel), cultural symbolism, and sexuality, including transgressive racial sex.

John B. Rehder. *Delta Sugar: Louisiana's Vanishing Plantation Landscape*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1999, xiv, 355 pp. \$52.00. ISBN 0-8018-6131-4.

In this sweeping history of Louisiana's sugar cane industry, John B. Rehder makes the case that sugar culture in the Pelican State is in danger of disappearing after dominating the rural landscape for over two centuries. According to the author, the decline and the uncertain future of the sugar industry in south Louisiana threaten the unique cultural landscape of this Gulf Coast region.

By chronicling both the rise and fall of the Louisiana sugar plantation with text and pictures, Rehder offers a fresh and welcome addition to the history of sugar and also of plantation agriculture generally. In comparison to existing works in the field, *Delta Sugar* provides the broadest historical perspective of the sugar plantation's evolution in Louisiana from the eighteenth century to the present, and it also offers the most thorough visual history of its changing landscape.

Rehder, a cultural geographer, effectively interweaves narrative of Louisiana's sugar history with an exploration of the landscape as material culture. Through the lens of geography, he views the layout of the plantation as well as its architecture (the main house, the sugar factories, the workers' quarters, churches, fields and fences) as both functional and cultural. In chapter two "Culture and Form," for example, Rehder explains the cultural significance of the plantation form (i.e., design) by providing an insightful comparison of French Creole and Anglo-American architecture and settlement patterns in sugar country. Rehder's focus on the declining plantation landscape over the past thirty years also offers a new and welcome analysis of modern sugar history. Whereas J. Carlyle Sitterson's excellent *Sugar Country* (1953) examined the American sugar cane history from 1753 up to 1950, Rehder's study of the past forty years provides a valuable interpretation of the economic, physical and demographic transformations that have wrought the industry and the landscape during these modern times. Importantly, the author does not just criticize these contemporary changes, but in chapter four he offers a "prescription" for preventing the complete decline of this landscape. In short, Rehder views the emergence of a sterile, barren corporate sugar plantation, devoid of inhabitants and architecture (material culture) as a disturbing trend that began in the 1960s. For his prescription, the author holds up the model of the sugar cooperative, a sugar refining operation

stopped, Rehder advocates the preservation of remaining plantations before they disappear entirely under the blades of bulldozers and the streets of subdivisions. Given the uncertain future that sugar growers in Louisiana face, Rehder's point should be heeded if our society wants future generations to understand first hand this unique form of plantation culture in the Gulf South.

Charles D. Chamberlain

Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans

John S. Sledge. *Cities of Silence: A Guide to Mobile's Historic Cemeteries*. Photographs by Sheila Hagler. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2002, 107 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 0-8173-1140-8.

Within the past fifty years, information available from graveyards and cemeteries has been more and more acknowledged for its contributions to the historical and genealogical records. The systematic and scholarly documentation of gravemarker art and inscriptions in a burying ground reflects the social history of its community—providing clues about the social, economic and cultural diversity, and the religious beliefs of the people who were buried there. The records of individual cemeteries also contribute to broader, regional studies of such topics as burial traditions, funerary art and architecture, settlement patterns, and trade and transportation routes.

Cities of Silence: A Guide to Mobile's Historic Cemeteries by John Sledge, is such a contribution to the literature regarding historic burial sites on the Gulf Coast. Sponsored by the Mobile Historical Development Commission and published by the University of Alabama Press, the book commemorates the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of Mobile. In addition to the beautiful photographs by Sheila Hagler, the text is supplemented with historical documents, photographs and maps. The large format (11" x 11"), high-quality paper and artistic presentation of Ms. Hagler's photographs could lead some to mistakenly regard it as a "coffee table" book; undoubtedly, there are some lovers of Mobile and its environs who will purchase the book precisely because of its aesthetic qualities. However, this is a deftly-written, well-researched work which should appeal to anyone in Gulf Coast history and will perhaps be especially useful to geographers, historians, anthropologists and archaeologists who are interested in studies relating to funerary practices. Mr. Sledge's research uncovered a wealth of new information about Mobile's cemeteries, stories about people who are

excellent examples of how cemeteries indicate cultural backgrounds and the changing religious beliefs of the communities that utilize them. The circular plan of Catholic cemetery's original five-acres (1848, with later sections added in 1866 and 1948) has been a focus of Mr. Sledge's cemetery research for more than a decade (see "A Circular Necropolis on the Gulf Coast: Mobile's Historic Cemetery," *Southern Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1993): 74-82). The two Jewish cemeteries are located next to one another, near the annex of the National Cemetery. The founding of Ahavas Chesed Cemetery is associated with the changing culture of Mobile's early twentieth-century Jewish community. In the late 1890s the city's mostly Ashkenazi Jewish population was joined by more orthodox Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe which purchased their own small plot of land to insure that burials were conducted by their stricter code. Mr. Sledge and Ms. Hagler have richly described the historical development of Mobile's five earliest remaining cemeteries, and within this somewhat narrow field of study have also provided a new context for viewing the city's history. The professional integrity of this book makes it a valuable contribution to a small, but growing, body of literature that documents the historical cemeteries of the southeastern United States.

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J. Douglas Smith. *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, xiv, 411pp. Paper, \$19.95, ISBN 0-8078-2756-8; Cloth, \$55.00, ISBN 0-8078-5424-7.

Gordon E. Harvey. *A Question of Justice: New South Governors and Education, 1968-1976*. Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 2002, viii, 229 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 0-8173-1157-2.

The cover of the paperback edition of *Managing White Supremacy* records an interesting, perhaps even historic event. The photograph, which also appears on page 265 of the book, is of five Negro males accompanied by a white police officer walking out of the Alexandria, Virginia, public library. The date is August 21, 1939, and the Negro men have just been arrested for demanding the privilege of borrowing books. In contrast to many later civil rights demonstrations,

sporadic lynchings again took place there. By the middle 1920s newspapers in Virginia, especially Louis Jaffe in the *Newport Journal and Guide* for which Jaffe won a Pulitzer Prize, were condemning lynching. In 1928 Virginia newspapers were able to persuade the state legislature to pass and a reluctant governor to sign an antilynching law, though an important provision that would have required the local government to compensate the lawful heirs of the lynched with \$2500 had been deleted from the final bill.

Nor was the Ku Klux Klan, unlike in other southern states and even in some northern states, an important force in state politics. In its place were the Anglo-Saxon Clubs, which took as their mission the maintenance of the purity of the white race. Founded in 1922 as an outgrowth of the eugenics movement, the Clubs were behind the passage of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924. This law was a quixotic attempt to keep the white race pure by preventing mixed marriages, using the "one-drop rule" for African Americans. Before a marriage license could be issued, a white person marrying another white person, had to show that both partners had "no trace whatsoever of the blood other than a Caucasian." However, since some of Virginia's first families claimed to be descendants of early American Indians, the "Pocahontas Exception" was written into the legislation, which deemed a person who was one-sixteenth or less American Indian (with no other non-Caucasian blood) to be white.

Racial classification was administered by the Bureau of Vital Statistics, which based much of its classification of Virginia residents on birth and marriage records kept by the state between 1853 and 1896 and beginning again in 1912. For a vast majority of Virginia residents, the racial classification system had no affect on their lives; however, for the few persons for whom racial classification was doubtful, there was no end to difficulties, first with whom they could marry and then to what school they could send their children. One problem that could never be solved was the fact that during the nineteenth century the classification "colored" could mean Negro or Indian or some combination, depending on the official taking the information. In addition, there were numerous Indians living in Virginia, including two tribes on reservations. The whole business finally came to an end in 1967, when the miscegenation laws in Virginia (and fifteen other states) were declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court.

For too long historians have treated the Jim Crow period as the prelude to the heroic civil rights era. This book is one of the first to treat the inter-war years on its own terms, not just as a time between

Arguably, 1963 was the watershed year of the civil rights era. "It was the year of Birmingham," Martin Luther King later recalled, "when the civil rights issue was impressed on the nation in a way that nothing else before had been able to do." The historiography of the civil rights era in the gulf south region has been so heavily focused on major events (Montgomery, Selma, and especially Birmingham), that other important civil rights "news" from the time period has been almost completely forgotten. All too often, historians and journalists have concentrated on the national dynamics of the movement and ignored grassroots community and individual efforts by even rather misdirected people like William Moore.

In 1963, Moore, a mailman and a diagnosed schizophrenic from Binghamton, New York, decided to walk from Chattanooga to Jackson, Mississippi, to hand-deliver an anti-segregation letter to Governor Ross Barnett. "The white man," Moore wrote, "cannot be truly free himself, until all men have their rights." On his "Freedom Walk," Moore wore a cardboard sandwich placard imprinted with "End Segregation In America, Eat At Joe's—Both Black and White" on the front and "Equal Rights For All (Mississippi or Bust)" on the back. On April 23, 1963, as King was completing a third week of demonstrations in Birmingham, Moore was shot dead on U.S. 11 near Attalla, Alabama (just west of Gadsden). The incident received scant notice by the national press. Police arrested grocer and KKK member Floyd Simpson and charged him with the murder. Soon afterwards, Sam Shirah and activists from SNCC and CORE made five separate attempts to finish Moore's walk. All failed.

Freelance writer and public administrator Mary Stanton's book on Bill Moore's efforts and the subsequent attempts to finish his walk make a unique contribution to our understanding of the time period. As in her book on another civil rights "martyr," Viola Liuzzo, Stanton is skillful in telling the tragic life stories of Moore, Simpson, and Shirah--providing the reader with an interesting look at racial activists on both sides of the issue. From Stanton's narrative, Moore emerges as a tortured individual, who once believed that a dead friend was recruiting him to work undercover for President Dwight D. Eisenhower; in turn, Moore landed in the schizophrenic ward of Binghamton State Hospital for a time. He was a radical pacifist, an atheist, a mental health advocate, and a head-strong crusader. Ignoring

fundamentalism compelled Floyd Simpson to join the Klan and apparently murder William Moore.

Unfortunately, at the end, Stanton tacks on a brief first-person epilogue that is trite and totally irrelevant to the main structure of the story she is trying to tell. All too often, authors feel the need to jump into the narrative structure of a civil rights history (for example the recent books on Birmingham by Diane McWhorter and Paul Hemphill) and engage in some sort of catharsis. The information included is important, but the first person account further diminishes the importance and credibility of the book.

S. Jonathan Bass

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Richard D. Starnes, ed. *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History and Culture in the Modern South*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003, 352 pp. Cloth, \$55.00, ISBN 0-8173-1297-8; Paper, \$26.95, ISBN 0-8173-5009-8.

Right from the start the editors of this fascinating collection mark the welcome positioning of tourism as a component of culture, of cultural transformation, and as dynamic. Increasingly tourism is realized as such a distinctive, complex and connected cultural project, both intellectually and in life. Doing tourism is also doing culture; cultures affect the doing of tourism; tourism affects cultures toured. The flows amongst these threads are interactive and complex. In so doing tourism is engaged in cultural-economic processes; working diverse economies and cultures. The fragment of cultural economies that is tourism in the South had its origins in the leisure of the wealthy; their participation in and enactment of tourism was part of a process of their cultural exchange; as resorts emerged, employment and lives shifted as local, usually menial, jobs were created. Exclusive black, as well as white, resorts developed.

The chapters in this subtle, thoughtful, and thought-provoking book track the cultural and landscape territory of tourism in the contemporary period. Working from New Orleans' sex tourism between 1819 and 1917 through Appalachia in the thirties, the contributions take North Carolina's creation of vacationlands up to the beginning of the nineties and Atlanta's Olympics in the last few years. As historians schooled in the wider social sciences, the authors include urban studies and comparative literature in their work.

interpretations rarely observed this, and thus *Southern Journeys* makes a valuable contribution.

David Crouch

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Matthew J. Streb. *The New Electoral Politics of Race*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003, 272 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-8173-1149-1.

Matthew Streb's *The New Electoral Politics of Race* is quite a thought-provoking book. The days are long since past when a candidate's reliance upon racist rhetoric alone can guarantee victory in gubernatorial races, even in the Deep South. Streb argues, however, that while explicit references to race are now viewed as "extremist" and avoided by candidates, voting continues to be polarized along racial lines. And therein lies the puzzle: why has racial polarization in voting increased even as overt reference to race fades from dominance in candidate campaigns?

Streb attempts to solve this puzzle by considering the strategies employed in several gubernatorial campaigns and how they are governed by the percentage of blacks and working class whites in a particular state. Specifically, he looks at campaign strategies in states with large black populations (Alabama and Georgia), medium-sized black populations (Arkansas, Ohio, Virginia), and small black populations (Iowa and Massachusetts). He theorizes that as the percentage of black voters increase in a state, Democratic candidates will focus on class-based appeals that will garner near unanimous black support and enough white support to win while Republicans will resort to using "coded language on implicit racial issues" in order to draw away working class white voters who normally support the Democratic Party. Conversely, as the percentage of black voters decreases, there is little reason for Republicans to emphasize racial issues in order to siphon off working class whites which thus permits candidates from both parties to focus their strategies on issues that other than race.

To test his theory, Streb relies upon the campaign coverage provided by major newspapers in those states. He supplements his content analysis methodology with interviews with both reporters and gubernatorial candidates and their staff members via telephone and email. The result of his research is fascinating, but at the same time, problematic.

increase their efforts to reach out to poor whites. Unfortunately, for a book that has so much to say, one is left wondering if there is not some other explanation for the overwhelming support African-Americans give to the Democratic Party.

Streb has a very engaging writing style and has mined his research sources for some real anecdotal gems. There are only two shortcomings to this book: first, its rather weak conclusion and second, various comments scattered throughout the book such as "race baiting is still a common strategy for Republicans" and "Republicans are likely to play on racial fears" that give the impression Republican candidates generally play the race card. Although Streb's own analysis in several of his cases studies in both the South (Arkansas and Virginia) and elsewhere (Iowa, Ohio, and Massachusetts) contradict these statements, they occur often enough to distract from this otherwise very fine book.

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Robert David Ward and William Warren Rogers. *Alabama's Response to the Penitentiary Movement, 1829-1865*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003, xii, 163 pp. \$55.00. ISBN 0-8130-2663-6.

Together and separately, both authors have published extensively on Alabama and southern history; this slender volume is a worthy addition to their *corpus*.

Ward and Rogers succeed in demonstrating the validity of their thesis that, contrary to popular perception, Alabama's approach to dealing with crime was a fully integral part of the national drive to establish penitentiaries. Criminal justice in Alabama and other southern states in the early to mid-nineteenth century was not a backward, isolated, peculiarly southern phenomenon and the state established its penitentiary during the same era as states in the north and midwest. Likewise, they demonstrate that the convict lease system that developed prior to the Civil War was based on entirely different principles from what developed after 1865.

Alabama was still very much a rural frontier society when Governor John Gayle, along with a few newspaper editors in Huntsville and Mobile, began touting the concept of imprisonment as the solution to crime. The penitentiary was intended for the white criminal population, since slaves remained subject to plantation justice. However, the establishment of the state penitentiary met with opposition from both

of *Convict Labor in the New South* (1996). In this work the authors successfully employ a number of primary sources including governors' papers, state government documents such as annual reports of the penitentiary inspectors, Alabama House and Senate journals, and newspapers.

Most of the literature on the history of criminal justice in Alabama focuses on more recent periods than this work, in part, because Alabama did not become a state until 1819. Ward and Rogers's book is a significant contribution to filling in this gap. While a more in-depth literature review is desirable, this book is recommended reading to historians specializing in criminal justice, the antebellum South, Alabama, and reform movements of the early to mid-nineteenth century.

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