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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Song of My Life: A Biography of Margaret Walker.

By Carolyn J. Brown

Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014. Author's note, afterword, acknowledgements, illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xi, 147. \$20.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781628461473.

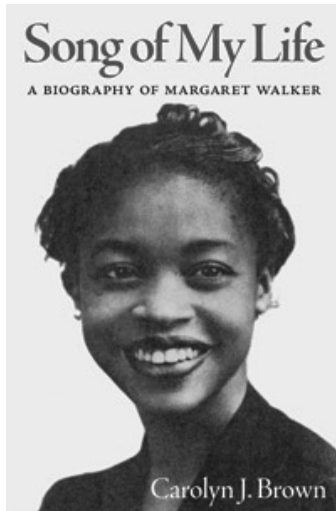
In a 1986 interview with Jerry W. Ward, Jr., Margaret Walker briefly discussed an autobiography she was in the process of writing. Unfortunately, Walker was unable to complete it before her death in 1998, but, in that interview, she described her intent that the book “won’t be purely social and intellectual history. But I do want it to be a song of my life... I think it should be a song that all men and women can hear singing in their own hearts.” Carolyn Brown’s biography of Margaret Walker, *Song of My Life* (2014), successfully captures the essence of Walker’s sentiment.

Brown draws from her unpublished autobiography and her journals, which have been digitized by the Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University, to substantiate the particulars of Walker’s coming of age. She describes her early struggles and later triumphs and, in doing so, endears Walker

the daughter, the sister, the student, and the young woman to readers.

Brown’s biography brings Walker’s history to life in a way that interviews and journal or magazine articles on Walker have not. The facts of her life and career are well-documented in other texts. One of the most influential but understudied Southern writers, Walker, born in Birmingham and raised in New Orleans, was the first African American to receive the Yale University Younger Poets Award for her poetry collection *For My People* (1942) and emerged as one

of the most critically acclaimed American poets of her generation. Her novel *Jubilee* (1966) arguably was the first neo-slave narrative, and her hallmark poem “For My People” was (and continues to be) widely anthologized. Walker’s association with Richard Wright, the WPA, and South



Side writers in Chicago; her friendships with Langston Hughes and, later, Eudora Welty and Nikki Giovanni; and her lawsuit against Alex Haley are well-known and recounted in the book. However, the intimate relationships and personal insights explored in Brown's biography fill in the details of Walker's life in ways that make her career and story even more compelling. Brown describes and contextualizes Walker's childhood, contemplates the intellectual and creative development of a young Margaret Walker, and attests to her struggle to meet the needs of her family and her artistic endeavors.

Brown moves the reader between seemingly mundane facts and defining moments. Each chapter explores and considers the ways small incidents and coincidences profoundly influenced Walker and shaped her career as a writer and educator. For example, in the chapter "Chicago: Richard Wright and the South Side Writers' Group," Brown explains that Langston Hughes, Walker's literary idol and mentor, asked Richard Wright to include Walker in a writers' group Wright was organizing. Wright included Walker and introduced her to Marxist and literary texts that directly informed her poetic vision. Brown locates Walker, Wright, and Hughes in Chicago, in 1936, at the beginning of the Black Chicago Renaissance; in doing so, she expands the scope of southern literature. Certainly, Walker, born in Alabama and a resident of Jackson, Mississippi, for more than forty years, was a southern writer; however, she, like Wright, was also a participant in the Great Migration, an era in which African Americans moved en masse from the South to other regions of the United States. Her education at Northwestern University and the University of Iowa and her work with the WPA in Chicago affected her personally

and creatively. Brown presents Walker's time in the Midwest as a defining moment and suggests that it was the period in which the author came of age.

Brown's biography is not comprehensive. Instead, it is a primer for those unfamiliar with Walker, a call to reclaim and restore her legacy within American letters, and a song of a life lived well.

SERETHA D. WILLIAMS
Georgia Regents University

Searching for Freedom after the Civil War: Klansman, Carpetbagger, Scalawag, and Freedman. By G. Ward Hubbs. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2015. List of illustrations, preface, prologue, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. ix, 223. \$34.95 cloth, \$34.95 ebook. ISBN: 978-0-8173-1860-4.)

G. Ward Hubbs's *Searching for Freedom after the Civil War* explores how, after the Civil War had been fought on battlefields across the South, a diverse range of Americans fought each other—physically and ideologically—over the structure of American society. Hubbs plumbs some of Reconstruction's ideological struggles by charting out the story of an infamous political cartoon. In the fall of 1868, at the height of what was perhaps the most racially-charged and violent election in American history, Ryland Randolph, a Klansman and editor of the *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, published a woodcut titled A Prospective Scene in the "City of Oaks," 4th of March, 1869. It depicted a donkey emblazoned with "K.K.K." on its side walking away from two men hanging from a tree, one with "OHIO" stenciled on his carpetbag. The woodcut purported to show what would happen if Democratic presidential candidate Horatio Seymour

won that fall's national election. If Democrats were victorious, white carpetbaggers and scalawags would be hanged and, its caption implied, African Americans driven away from the political realm entirely. The woodcut was widely reprinted as evidence of southern violence, and it is often used today to illustrate how the Ku Klux Klan both threatened and practiced political violence.

What fewer people probably know is that the woodcut was not just a vague warning but a direct threat against three men in Tuscaloosa. Hubbs structures his book as a series of biographies of the four men the woodcut brought together: Ryland Randolph, the local Klan leader and prominent Democrat; Arad S. Lakin, a white Methodist minister originally from New York who had come to Alabama from Ohio before being appointed president of the University of Alabama; Noah B. Cloud, a white South Carolinian and former slave owner who pioneered scientific methods of cotton cultivation and who joined the Republican Party because of its commitments to public education and economic diversification; and Shandy Jones, a black barber and well-known, local Republican.

Hubbs's book vividly historicizes a complicated image that historians too often use as a self-evident illustration about Klan violence. His choice to structure the book around the stories of four different men allows Hubbs to show a wide range of ideologies held by Alabama men during Reconstruction. Ryland Randolph, the Klansman, embraced what Hubbs calls "the people's freedom;" Arad Lakin believed in Christian freedom; Noah B. Cloud worked for Whiggish freedom; and Shandy Jones "found a type of freedom in hope," a hope that went largely unfulfilled for him and fellow African Americans (161).

I wonder whether framing these men's stark differences in political values as a

shared commitment to different conceptions of freedom is the most useful way to understand their conflicts. Hubbs asserts that each of the four central people in his study ascribed to a different type of freedom and that these men's individual views were representative of larger trends. The latter assertion he ably proves; the former assumption is a bit shakier. The lives and ideologies of the four people whose story Hubbs excavates were at such odds that they are best united by a death threat. Perhaps rather than framing Reconstruction as variations on a shared theme—the search for freedom—it might be more instructive to emphasize that political differences during Reconstruction were so pronounced that they resulted in the worst political violence in American history. Virtually all of that violence was committed by men like Ryland Randolph, men whose worlds had been grounded in the slavery of African Americans before the Civil War and whose central political belief after the war was denying any more freedom to slavery's survivors. Despite the shortcoming of his framing, Hubbs's thoughtful and well-researched book gives us an interesting new lens into the ideological conflicts of Reconstruction—struggles that remain timely and important.

BRADLEY PROCTOR

Yale University

Choctaw Resurgence in Mississippi: Race, Class, and Nation Building in the Jim Crow South, 1830-1977. By Katherine M. B. Osburn. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. Acknowledgements, illustrations, maps, notes, index. Pp. 342. \$65 Cloth, \$25 Paper. ISBN: 0803240445.)

The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830 removed the majority of the Choctaws to

lands in Indian Territory, but Article 14 of the treaty allowed certain Choctaws to remain within the state of Mississippi as landholding citizens. Osburn's book follows the Choctaws who remained from removal to the time of the so-called "Choctaw Miracle" in the 1970s. She argues that a "dynamic and fluid tribalism" of the previous century and a half provided the tribe with a foundation to create economic and political prosperity (210). By exploring previously overlooked state and regional sources, Osburn's study provides context for the resurgence of the Mississippi Band of Choctaws. Osburn argues that Choctaws used land promises stemming from Article 14, their creation of a third race in the biracial system in the South, and state and local political patronage to affirm their status as a sovereign tribe. As a third race in the Jim Crow South, the Choctaws strategically separated themselves from blacks as well as whites to signify racial purity that, to whites, was "symbolic of their own racial attitudes" (5). Choctaw men refused to share accommodations with blacks in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), women refused housekeeping jobs, and Choctaw families were cognizant of where their children went to school, refusing to enroll their children in black schools, where they might appear "colored" to whites. These actions helped the Choctaws to protect and assert their separate, tribal identity.

Throughout the book, Osburn shows how Choctaws used land claims to establish their Indian identity. Not until 1963 were the Choctaws finally forced to abandon their fight for the right to the land promised by Article 14 of the Removal treaty. Osburn argues that the Mississippi Choctaws "believed that claims to their homelands... gave them a collective juridical identity" that allowed the tribe to adapt to a shifting political landscape in Mississippi for more than a century (7). To win support for their

political status, Choctaws appealed to arguments that resonated with white southerners. Marrying the concept of dispossession with the Lost Cause rhetoric that pervaded Mississippi by the 1890s, "Mississippians re-envisioned the Choctaw's refusal to emigrate as a tragically doomed defense of their homelands from incursions by a stronger power" (31). The Choctaws gained valuable political allies, including members of the Ku Klux Klan and racist politicians who assisted in their attempts to create tribal sovereignty. Refusal to remove, once thought of as an impediment, became a sense of "regional pride and defense of homelands against invasion" (5). Dichotomous Indian identities emerged in order to both cater to the ideology of the "vanishing Indian" as well as the notion of progressive Indians and their involvement as landowners and economic developers for their county.

Exploring the local and state patronage system, Osburn notes that white Southerners adopted Indian accomplishments to "shore up regional pride" (82). State and county officials worked in conjunction with the Mississippi Choctaws for industrial improvements in the decades before the "Choctaw Miracle." During the civil rights era, Choctaws confronted issues of segregation through their indigeneity and belief that Jim Crow laws did not apply to them. The role of the Mississippi Choctaws and their use of sovereignty against racial discrimination, Osburn argues, is "an overlooked story of the civil rights movement" (209). Osburn synthesizes a complicated realm of regional politics, class, and race that illustrates the ways that Choctaws sometimes "played Indian" in order to gain allies and establish their sovereign identity in a biracial South.

Osburn's book is a valuable addition to the growing historiography that challenges a biracial view of the South. Joining historians like Malinda Maynor Lowry, Arica Cole-

man, and Mark Edwin Miller in identifying the issues of tribal sovereignty in the Jim Crow South, Osburn provides a striking account of over a century of nation-building that the Mississippi Choctaws underwent to realize the promises of federal recognition.

Jeff Washburn
University of Mississippi

Stennis: Plowing a Straight Furrow. By Don H. Thompson (Oxford: Triton Press, 2015. *Acknowledgments, illustrations, notes.* Pp. 176. \$35 cloth. \$14.95 paper. ISBN: 1936946467.)

On the very first page of his very first chapter, Don Thompson throws down the gauntlet: "It is interesting to see how this place and its people shaped the life of John Cornelius Stennis. From this small town in the Mississippi hills, he became 'Mississippi's Statesman of the Century.'" Does his biography make the case for those who assert Stennis was a statesman? I don't think so, but more on that later. First, the book.

Don Thompson does the state a huge favor by writing the first biography of John Stennis, Mississippi's United States Senator from 1947 to 1988. He digs into the Stennis correspondence and oral history collections at Mississippi State and, to his great credit, does not hold back when the findings are less than flattering. Thompson provides more than enough evidence that, in his early Senate years, Stennis believed blacks really were not equal to whites while in his later years believed black Mississippians should simply wait their turn to enjoy equal rights.

While I could cite many examples Thompson provides in his book, this 1948 statement by Stennis is one of the most revealing: "We have taken the most backward people from the world's darkest continent,

and in a little more than a century, we have trained them, given them a religion, given them an education, given them the rights of citizenship, protected these rights in and out of court, and, to a certain degree, given them a culture" (58). As late as 1988, Stennis told a reporter, "My idea was that the so-called civil rights bills were too abrupt. . . went too far and were out of line. Adjustments were made under the law. . . We finally got out of that extremism. It takes time to make adjustments" (140). More dramatically, Thompson quotes from constituent letters that urge Stennis to take a different course on the matter of race. One 1944 letter in particular came from a Kemper County World War II soldier: "You know that the Negroes are with us as well as the white. And after this war they are going to want the same treatment as we get." Thompson then confessed: "Its message was prophetic, but unheeded by Stennis" (60).

The reader should know the book contains no index and no bibliography, nor does it provide an introduction or conclusion. Consequently, the author never explains what he hopes to accomplish with his biography nor does he offer any concluding analysis, such as, why Stennis deserves the "statesman" trademark.

Moreover, Thompson assumes that the reader picks up the book aware of much state and national history. Unless you know something about Truman's Fair Employment Practices Committee, the 1948 Dixiecrat campaign, the move to confer statehood on Alaska and Hawaii, and the unprecedented war between the state Democratic factions at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, it is difficult to appreciate what Thompson writes about Stennis during these times since he provides little background and context. There are also several key events in Stennis's career, which Thompson brushes over, that surely

are worthy of more attention, including the Joseph McCarthy speech, the siting of the NASA facility in Hancock County, and the *Southern Manifesto*.

All of that being said, Thompson provides comprehensive treatment of the James Meredith debacle at Ole Miss, the 1964 Stennis re-election, and his 1982 campaign against Haley Barbour.

Thompson's coverage of Stennis's 1964 campaign, and the threat Ross Barnett posed as an opponent, is the most revealing section of the book. Thompson makes clear Stennis sought to avoid that threat by mimicking Barnett on the issue of segregation. Stennis was not going to let Barnett get to his right and joined the rest of the delegation in congratulating Barnett on his stand against Meredith, and he stayed silent during the famous 1963 decision by the MSU basketball team to leave the state to play a team with black players (84, 88). The letters and quotes from Stennis during this time, along with the author's analysis, represent fine reporting and, for those seeking to designate Stennis a "statesman," constitute an almost insurmountable hurdle.

Three contentious issues dominated the years Stennis served in the Senate: civil rights, Vietnam, and Watergate. Thompson gives his readers compelling documentation that Stennis not only did everything he could to delay justice for black Americans but believed in what he was doing. He stood by and allowed Johnson and Nixon—even as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee for part of the war's duration—to turn Vietnam into a national disaster; and he backed Nixon through all of the Watergate mess until the final tape recordings proved the president was a liar. None of this strikes me as rising to the level of "statesmanship."

There is a lot more to be uncovered about Stennis's career, but Don Thomp-

son has taken the first step and shown us why archival research is so critical. As a consequence, his work lays bare a Stennis that his partisans will have a difficult time explaining away.

Jere Nash
Jackson, Mississippi

Corazón de Dixie: Mexicanos in the U. S. South since 1910. By Julie M. Weise. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Acknowledgments, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. 358. \$32.50 paper, \$29.99 e-book. ISBN: 9781469624969.)

Julie M. Weise has produced a groundbreaking book on the understudied history of Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans in the U. S. South as well as the formation of race in that region beyond a black and white paradigm. *Corazón de Dixie* centers upon the Mexican American history of New Orleans from the 1910s through the 1930s, the Mississippi Delta within the same period, the Arkansas Delta from the 1940s to the 1960s, southern Georgia from the 1960s to the early 2000s, and Charlotte's exurbs since 1990. Drawing from over one hundred oral histories, personal papers, photographs, and archival materials from both the United States and Mexico, Weise develops several arguments. First, the author asserts that since the early 20th century, "no consistent and unchanging 'Mexican reaction' to the U. S. South" existed just as there "was no unchanging southern 'white perspective' or 'black perspective' on the newcomers arrival" (17). Weise argues that various "local actors engaged selectively with the regional and national politics of race, class, and citizenship to create a variety of outcomes throughout the twentieth century" for Mexicanos in the South (8). Generally,

the author contends, “southern communities nearly always emerged as more receptive to Mexicans than western ones” (8).

Weise opens the book by tracing how between 1910 and World War II roughly 2,000 Mexican immigrants assimilated into the fringes of New Orleans’s white society. While binary segregation solidified in New Orleans, middle-class Mexicans “created a Europeanized version of *Mexicanidad*” (8). Armando Amador, Mexican vice consul and later consul at New Orleans from 1928-1932, and other elites “emphasized the compatibility of Mexican culture with European culture describing its indigenous elements as beautiful yet inevitably subordinate to European ones” (43). Such simplistic and ethnocentric rhetoric permitted many middle- and working-class “Mexicans to quietly assimilate into white New Orleans geographically, culturally, economically, socially, and religiously” (17). Synchronously, local white politicians and business owners—envisioning their city as a growing gateway for U. S. - Latin American trade—“used the city’s Mexican immigrants as symbols of this Pan-American future” (50).

In the cotton fields of the Mississippi Delta, Mexicans initially “tasted the brutality and exclusion that the region’s white planters had used to segregate, terrorize, and control African Americans” (56): poverty wages, wage theft, the jailing of workers who protested abuses, beatings, forced labor, and murder. However, after 1925, most Mexicans in the Delta became sharecroppers who had greater bargaining power and the ability to move in search of higher earnings. Weise explores how Mexicans who settled in the Delta emphasized their European heritage in an attempt to culturally whiten themselves and used the Mexican consulate in New Orleans to pressure local officials and the state government to allow Mexicans into segregated white spaces. Their efforts were

at times successful, but Weise concludes that the limited acceptance of Mexicans into the Delta’s white society came at the cost of the public concealment of their ethnic identity.

In the Arkansas Delta, the author tracks Braceros from World War II to just before the passage of the Civil Rights Act. While Arkansas planters sought a passive workforce, Braceros saw themselves as modern “citizens of a nation that championed the cause of working people” (117). Thus, Mexicans appealed to their consulate to pressure planters to reject anti-Mexican discrimination in the Arkansas Delta and to pay workers the wages required under the Bracero Program. Planters complied since they needed a steady supply of workers. When studying southern Georgia since the 1960s, Weise reveals a social world where agricultural employers and rural politicians “framed Mexican migrants’ lifestyles as archetypical examples of upright working poor who merited the opportunity to stay in town, earn wages, attend school. . . despite their foreign accents and racial difference” (124). Because they were vital to the area’s agriculture, Mexicans in southern Georgia found some local acceptance while the state level and national anti-immigrant movement coalesced during the early-2000s. Importantly, Weise asserts that the region’s anti-Latino immigrant movement did not originate within the South, especially the region’s rural areas. Using Charlotte and its surrounding exurbs as her example, Weise proposes that in “the twenty-first century, middle-class white residents of the region’s least southern spaces—exurbs that developed more than a decade after the fall of Jim Crow—took their lead from the West’s exurban anti-immigrant movement as they mounted the South’s first major anti-immigrant movement targeted at Latinos” (184).

Despite its innovations, *Corazón de Dixie* does not adequately examine black

and brown relations and largely fails to account for the Mexican people who were unable or unwilling to enter white society in New Orleans or the Mississippi Delta. Nevertheless, this book is a must read for both Chicana/o and southern historians.

Joel Zapata

Southern Methodist University

The Great Melding: War, the Dixiecrat Rebellion, and the Southern Model for America's New Conservatism. By Glenn Feldman. (*Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015. Acknowledgements, notes, index. Pp. x, 388. \$59.95 cloth, \$59.95 ebook. ISBN 978-0-8173-1866-6.*)

The late Glenn Feldman's second volume of his planned trilogy concerns the former Confederacy's transformation from the geographic base of the Democratic Party to that of the Republicans. In the first volume, *The Irony of the Solid South: Democrats, Republicans, and Race, 1865-1944* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), Feldman narrated the Alabama Democratic Party's story from the end of Reconstruction through the Great Depression and World War II. In *The Great Melding*, he studies Alabama Democrats from Redemption to just before the concurrent rise of the modern civil rights movement and massive resistance in the 1960s. In this second book, Feldman especially focuses upon Alabama politics during the Great Depression, World War II, and the 1948 Dixiecrat Revolt.

For Feldman, the white South successfully switched political vehicles midstream during the deluge of the black freedom struggle, abandoning the Democratic Party in favor of the GOP in order to preserve white supremacy. Accordingly, white southerners since the end of the American Civil War perfected conscious intellectual

dishonesty, thereby successfully transitioning from a *de jure* to *de facto* Jim Crow caste system. Feldman labels this subterfuge as sophistic pruning, whereby white southerners slowly but surely removed the more notorious forms of white supremacist political actions like spectacle lynching and demagogic race-baiting from their tactical arsenal, in order to preserve such vestiges of white supremacy as residential segregation, voter suppression, and wealth disparity.

Feldman employs Alan Brinkley's theory that America's conception of liberalism shifted during World War II from one based primarily upon government intervention in the political economy to another focused on basic constitutional rights. This new rights-based liberalism soon meant a direct federal challenge to Jim Crow in the South, specifically seen in the creation and implementation of the Federal Equal Employment Practices Commission (FEPC). According to Feldman, white southerners thus changed their strategy from overt Negrophobia to a surreptitious cultural and political criticism designed to stave further federal intervention in racial matters and maintain the bulwarks of white supremacy. For Feldman, the 1944 elections were the crucible, whereby southern liberals abandoned the New Deal's economic liberalism and engaged in overtly racist campaigns across the South in order to retain their offices. Four years later during the 1948 Dixiecrat Revolt, *laissez-faire* economics melded with white supremacy to unify the white South's social classes against the federal government. Subsequently, white southerners employed the modern Republican Party to keep Jim Crow alive and well in Dixie. Thus, in Feldman's historical analysis, today's Republican Party is the direct lineal descendant of the white supremacist Democratic Party that ruled the single-party police state of the former Confederacy before World War II.

Feldman's book is both thoroughly and selectively researched. His insight into the role of black activism and urban industrial unions in Alabama during the Depression Era and World War II, which possibly laid the groundwork for the famous direct action protests of later decades, provokes penetrating questions and calls for further research. His narrative of the formation of the Dixiecrat revolt, furthermore, is the best that this reviewer has ever read. Although broader than his first volume, *The Great Melding* still focuses largely upon the heart of Dixie, applying the struggles of Alabama to all of the former states of the Confederacy. The University of Alabama Press should allay marketing concerns for title accuracy, so as not to obfuscate Feldman's readership. Similarly, Alabama's black population appears sparingly in his narrative, and then mostly as subjects of white oppression, never displaying their own agency. Feldman also continuously employs terms such as liberal, conservative, Big Mule, and Bourbon, without ever explicitly defining their meanings, all of which are quite malleable over time, the latter two only discernable to the Alabama specialist.

Feldman's connection between Alabama's white supremacists and post-war America's free market libertarians is mostly syllogism rather than being based on factual evidence. Finally, Feldman often digresses into political rants about the current state of southern politics, which distracts an otherwise solid historical narrative. Feldman's conclusions, nonetheless, should be considered by historians whose specialty is the Dixiecrat revolt, massive resistance, and post-war political realignment. This book would also work well in graduate seminars with related themes and be a good addition to university libraries with large collections.

John Kyle Day

University of Arkansas at Monticello
Baptists in America: A History. By Thomas S. Kidd and Barry Hankins. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Preface, acknowledgements, notes, index. pp. xii, 329. \$29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780199977536.)

At one time, many denominational histories, while providing an important encyclopedic narrative of dates and figures, served as celebratory in-house publications commissioned by the denomination itself and designed primarily for members of the group being studied. Over the last several decades, historians producing denominational histories have been active members of nonsectarian historical guilds and have grounded their studies in the wider historiography of religion in America. Schmidt, Richey, and Rowe's work *American Methodism: A Compact History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012) stands in this tradition. Kidd and Hankins provide a similarly strong study of Baptists in their coauthored book.

Emerging in England in the early 1600s, the radical Separatists known as Baptists had no single founder and no single organization above the local congregation from the beginning. The arrival of Baptists in North America in the late 1600s involved a transfer of this diversity that included both Calvinist and non-Calvinist orientations, among other differences. When Roger Williams formed the first Baptist congregation in 1638, he did not introduce the belief system to America. Baptists and Baptist-like individuals among the Separatists were already here, having brought their beliefs with them and having no loyalty to any single founder or organizational structure. The First and Second Great Awakenings contributed to the spread of Baptists across America. The expansion of Baptists in the South came with such numerical success that this minority religion with a heritage

of dissent became the faith of the majority, the only region in the world where this development occurred.

This diversity challenges historians of the Baptist movement, who must decide what parts of the story to include and what parts to exclude in a narrative. Inclusion and exclusion always stand as part of the historiographical challenge, but the topic of Baptist history provides an especially strong challenge. Sectors of Baptist life left out of the narrative, as surely they must be, have their own important stories that some other book must explore. Kidd and Hankins, both members of the faculty at Baylor University, include and exclude in a way that creates a strong narrative and keeps the Southern Baptist Convention largely as the center of their account. In crafting their study, Kidd and Hankins include other Baptist denominations, ranging from the parallel northern Baptists who will come to be known as the American Baptist Churches, USA, to the various African American bodies known as National Baptists, one of which is the largest African American institution of any kind in the United States. However, their narrative links these movements to the history of Southern Baptists, especially after 1845 when Southern Baptists formed a denominational structure and most of the book's descriptions focus on Southern Baptist related topics.

Kidd and Hankins include aspects of Baptist history ignored in many older studies, with careful attention to gender and race both in the secondary literature they reference, as well as the parts of the narrative they include. Issues of class and economics, which undoubtedly shaped the formation of Primitive Baptists, who will be of particular interest to readers of the *Journal of Mississippi History*, are also explored. Kidd and Hankins pay particularly close attention to expressions of mysticism

and religious enthusiasm in the primary documents of Baptists, a topic often left out of the explorations of other historians. As historians, Kidd and Hankins do not ignore the belief systems of Baptists, which are part of the intellectual history of the movement. However, they recognize that other forces shaped this denomination, which captured so much of the religious loyalty of whites and African Americans in the American South.

Those with an interest in the history of Mississippi will find *Baptists in America* to be particularly interesting and helpful. Kidd and Hankins provide more coverage of Baptists in Mississippi than any other study of Baptists that is not focused exclusively on the state. Richard Curtis, founder of the first Baptist congregation in Mississippi in its Spanish colonial days, figures prominently in the book. Curtis's attempts to practice his Baptist religion in violation of Spanish colonial law led to a call for his arrest and his flight from the region, only to return after the United States acquired the area. Although this story is well-documented and fits clearly with themes of Baptists as a persecuted minority in their early years, it is largely unknown and uncited in other histories. Richard Boyd, a former slave from Noxubee County, who founded part of the National Baptist Convention, figures prominently in their study, as well.

The complex relationship of white Baptists in Mississippi to the civil rights movement has a strong and detailed exploration in the work of Kidd and Hankins. The two historians include lengthy discussions of the civil rights involvements of Mississippians, including Will D. Campbell, Thomas and Robert Hederman and their publishing enterprise, and W. D. Hudgins, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jackson. The authors situate Hudgins's theological identity in a Baptist distinctive known as priesthood of the

believer or soul competency. The authors argue that the commitment of Hudgins to soul competency, a term popularized by another Mississippi native, E. Y. Mullins, who served as a professor and as president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kentucky, caused the pastor to distance himself from social action and ignore racial justice issues. This thesis needs further examination and leaves some unanswered questions. The vast majority of religious white Mississippians, including lay Roman Catholics and United Methodists, for whom soul competency played no role, supported Mississippi's segregated social practices. It is likely that a belief in soul competency had little to do with Hudgins's silence or the support of the Hederman brothers for the status quo.

The last chapter of *Baptists in America* provides a strong examination of Baptist distinctives, something almost every historical study of Baptists includes. Surveying current responses to the difficult-to-answer question, "What makes a Baptist a Baptist," Hankins and Kidd propose their contribution. In the midst of their diversities, Baptists have three markers: an interest in adult baptism and a historic rejection of infant baptism, radical congregational autonomy, and, finally, "the willingness to call oneself a Baptist" (p. 251). Kidd and Hankins provide an important contribution to the historical study of this theologically and racially diverse movement that forms a strong part of religion in the American South, as well as the nation.

Merrill Hawkins, Jr.
Carson-Newman University

One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America. By Kevin M. Kruse. (New York: Basic Books,

2015. *Acknowledgements, notes, index.* Pp. xvi, 352. \$29.99. ISBN: 9780465049493.)

The populist myth of America's Christian origins contains a narrative of a golden past of a shared evangelical worldview that originated with the Puritans and continued with the nation's founders. The myth claims that the nation emerged as a Christian society and that the society's Christian values remained dominant until the mid-20th Century. The myth, like many myths, does not correlate with the actual events of the time, nor does the myth reflect the narratives of professional historians. One needs look no further than Edwin Gaustad's *Faith of the Founders; Religion and the New Nation 1776-1826*, second edition (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004) to find strong explanations of the complexities of religious and political thought in the nation's beginning.

How, then, did so many people come to believe that the nation's secularity in the 1950s and 1960s was a radical departure from the heritage of Roger Williams and Thomas Jefferson? A standard explanation contends that national anxiety generated by the Cold War, in particular the official atheism of the Soviet Union, created the sense that the United States was under a religious assault externally and internally. These Cold War events created the myth of a Christian America under assault. Coupled with the Cold War threats were numerous Supreme Court decisions on religious liberty issues that ruled state-sanctioned prayers unconstitutional.

Kevin Kruse, however, makes a well-documented case that the myth of a Christian America under assault originates earlier than the events that motivated Congress to add the words, "Under God," to the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1950s or to attempt to put a right to pray amendment in the Constitution. The subtitle of his book,

“How Corporate America Created Christian America,” reflects his purpose and his thesis. American corporate leaders, reacting to Roosevelt’s New Deal and to the progressive orientation of Social Gospel-inspired mainline Christianity, formed an alliance with conservative evangelical leaders to promote religion and free enterprise. This alliance, which connected the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce and prominent businessmen, such as J. Howard Pew, with religious leaders ranging from Billy Graham to Norman Vincent Peale, worked to deconstruct religious support for the social vision of Franklin Roosevelt. With roots in the 1930s, this alliance of economic leaders and religious populists continued through the appeals of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush to a particular sector of the religious public, all detailed in Kruse’s book.

Kruse grounds his work in an extensive study of primary documents of various types, ranging from newspapers and magazines to personal papers of various leaders. He brings new insight into the political agenda of familiar leaders, like Graham, and he introduces lesser known figures who played a significant role in the battle to create a Christian narrative, such as Congregationalist minister James Fifield and Methodist minister Abraham Vereide. He includes brief vignettes of the role of Mississippians in advancing the identity of a Christian nation, recording John Stennis’s words at a 1949 prayer breakfast for new appointees to the Supreme Court and James Eastland’s denouncement of the Supreme Court ruling against school prayer in *Engel v. Vitale* almost twenty years later.

One Nation Under God provides a strong contribution to understanding the rise of a belief that the nation has its beginnings as a Christian society and that this Christian society faced an assault in the 20th

Century. Kruse details the origins of this belief in the opposition of economic conservatives to the New Deal, an opposition that created a business-religious alliance that extended to the 1980s. The study will provide a long-lasting resource for understanding the role of religion in the public arena.

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Confederate Generals in the Trans-Mississippi: Essays on America’s Civil War, Vol. 1, Edited by Lawrence Lee Hewitt with Arthur W. Bergeron, Jr., and Thomas E. Schott. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013. Acknowledgments, illustrations, maps, notes, index. Pp. xxiii, 302. \$54.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781572338661.)

This volume is part of *The Western Theater in the Civil War*, edited by Gary D. Joiner. It is a collection of eight essays on the following generals: Thomas C. Hindman, Jr., Theophilus H. Holmes, Edmund Kirby Smith, Mosby Monroe Parsons, John S. Marmaduke, Thomas James Churchill, Tom Green, and Joseph Orville Shelby.

The essays focus on specific issues, actions, and topics related to the various generals. As noted historian William L. Shea writes in the foreword, the book seeks to rectify the long-held view that the Trans-Mississippi theater of war was “a dumping ground for Confederate generals who failed to make the grade in Virginia. The essays in this volume demolish that myth” (xi-xii). That these generals served in a region deemed less important does not necessarily taint them as less than their counterparts in more decisive theaters.

Thomas Hindman is one of the more interesting figures of the war, and on a broad scale, not only in the Trans-Mississippi. He

was determined to succeed, even if that meant violating civil liberties when necessary. Bobby Roberts does a fine job of tracing Hindman's frustrating journey into the swamp of politics versus military necessity.

Theophilus Holmes should never have been a general; only his friendship with Jefferson Davis made his command possible. He was short-sighted and uncooperative with other commands, and he did not possess leadership abilities. As Joseph Dawson demonstrates, Holmes was a Confederate patriot, but never a nationalist.

Edmund Kirby Smith played a key role in the Trans-Mississippi and, by the end of the war was in command of the whole of it. Possessing an enormous ego, he was often criticized, and he made enemies of two other generals, Richard Taylor and Sterling Price. Jeffrey Prushankin illustrates the course of Smith's war years, showing how much time the general spent defending himself. His inability to put together a true command team doomed his efforts.

Mosby Monroe Parsons is accurately described by Bill Gurley as Missouri's forgotten brigadier general. Gurley examines Parsons's career through the end of 1863; he will finish his study in a future volume. Parsons demonstrated many fine qualities as a battlefield commander and enjoyed several successes. Gurley offers a needed biographical sketch of the pre-war Parsons, but he notes that Parsons's death shortly after the war's end doubtlessly affected his anonymity, for the name he made for himself was in a theater often as forgotten as he was.

John Marmaduke was a fine cavalry leader who served on both sides of the Mississippi. He was aggressive, often described as gallant, and creative in strategy and tactics. He used immobility to force Union troops to stay in place and suffer from weather and lack of supplies. He also operated at night. Helen Trimpi tends to

agree with other historians that Marmaduke had political enemies, the fate of most Confederate generals west of the river. But, he excelled on the battlefield, impressed Kirby Smith and Sterling Price and deserves more attention than he has received.

Mark Christ summarized Thomas James Churchill's generalship as brave, careless, mistaken tactics, with little luck and good fortune on the battlefield. Churchill fought well at Arkansas Post, moderately well at Jenkins' Ferry, and made mistakes at Pleasant Hill, which earned him the ire of Kirby Smith. His was not an uncommon fate of generals who might have done better under different circumstances.

Curtis Milbourn looks at Tom Green's leadership during the Red River Campaign, specifically at Carroll's Mill, Mansfield, and Pleasant Hill. Milbourn concludes that Green did well on all these battlefields, overcoming the restraints of operating in the midst of a large army, which did not allow much creativity for the general. In effect, circumstances kept Green from demonstrating how good he might have become.

Joseph Shelby is one of the better known generals of the group, mainly due to leading a few men of his command to Mexico rather than surrender at the war's end. However, as Stuart Sanders shows, Shelby often had to recruit his own cavalry, had his men fight dismounted, and had an innate ability to fight on his own. Shelby's adventures were many and varied, and, like Nathan Bedford Forrest, he never surrendered.

This book is an outstanding collection of essays that combine details and analysis into good history. For those who seek to know more about the Trans-Mississippi theater, this work is a good place to start.

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Agriculture and the Confederacy: Policy, Productivity, and Power in the Civil War South. By R. Douglas Hurt. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Acknowledgements, maps, tables, notes, index. Pp. xi, 349. \$45 paper. ISBN: 1469620006.)

The sesquicentennial of the Civil War has proven a boon to students of the era thanks to the expansive number of works published on varied aspects of the period. One benefit of this is the reexamination of areas long ignored. One such area of great importance is the role of agriculture in the creation and support of the conflict. R. Douglas Hurt gracefully renews the study of southern agriculture during the War with his book, *Agriculture and the Confederacy: Policy, Productivity, and Power in the Civil War South*. Hurt's book is the first major work on the topic in twenty years, and one of a handful of books to investigate one of the most significant issues related to the cause and logistical continuation of the War since Paul Wallace Gates, a preeminent voice in the field of agricultural history, and the 1965 publication of his collection of essays, *Agriculture and the Civil War*.

This volume is not a conventional work of agricultural history. While the book contains excellent data on crop production and distribution, Hurt works diligently to go beyond the raw information to highlight the role that agriculture played in the foreign and domestic policies of the Confederacy. Readers will recognize the primacy of cotton as an industrial-scale commodity crop and the largest American export crop. Many within the South, including the Confederate government leaders, hoped that Europe's reliance upon southern cotton would result in recognition of the nascent country, if not material assistance from France and England. As Hurt points out early in the

work, it is the lack of a centralized agricultural policy or the creation of a department of agriculture that frustrated these hopes. Self-determination and states' rights trumped any call for a unified agricultural policy within the Confederacy. Without an organization to create and enforce policies surrounding food and fiber cultivation and use, the South failed to capitalize on perhaps the greatest asset it possessed.

As important as internal governmental policy is in this volume, the author provides ample evidence of the impact of external policy upon Confederate agriculture. Logistical challenges and individual resistance to the needs of the country presented nearly impossible hurdles to Richmond, but the hand of the invader helped complete the failure of farming efforts in the South. The perpetual loss of prime farming territories such as Tennessee, the lack of access to the Trans-Mississippi West, and the inability to protect agricultural assets from the foraging hands of the Federal army combined to cause food shortages for the military and civilian South. Hurt concludes the book with an overview of the complete and utter devastation of southern agriculture incurred during the War, including the eradication of much of the rice industry. Only cotton returned quickly to pre-war cultivation, reclaiming at least a regional economic throne, which drove post-War developments that are beyond the scope of this work.

There is much to recommend in *Agriculture in the Confederacy* to the student of Mississippi history. Hurt uses price data to illustrate the economic impact of the War within the state. As Mississippi was a leading cotton producer before the war, much of the information presented deals with attempts at converting fiber production to food cultivation and with resistance to those efforts. As early as 1862, the state government attempted to enforce limits on

cotton by burning fiber stockpiles. Once the Union Army began the occupation of Mississippi in fits and starts, planters took advantage of the presence of the enemy in order to reopen trade with the North.

Ultimately, works such as *Agriculture in the Confederacy* are needed to refine one's understanding of the totality of the Civil War. Hurt gives the reader a "national" overview of the topic, an entry point for a large audience to experience a critical yet underappreciated aspect of the conflict. This book is a much needed addition to the historiography of the American Civil War.

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Womanpower Unlimited and the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi. By Tiyi M. Morris. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes index. Pp. xvi, 237. \$69.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 0820347302.)

In *Womanpower Unlimited and the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi*, Tiyi M. Morris illustrates how the movement for black liberation cannot be understood from a top-down approach only but must include an analysis of the motivations and actions of a group of local women and their organization, Womanpower Unlimited. These women have been under-researched and underrepresented in history of social movements and in the historiography of the Mississippi civil rights movement. Through careful study of oral histories, Morris's social history captures the essence of a people's movement and further explores the way local history and local people are microcosms of the nation and the world. The Mississippi civil rights movement was intimately connected to the black freedom

struggle nationwide and to raising the consciousness of white Americans about the dehumanization and injustices of racial inequality.

Morris reclaims the agency and importance of black activist women as individual and collective mothers, specifically those in Womanpower Unlimited, who used their community mothering, or "othermothering," for racial uplift "as resistance to societal attempts to dehumanize and denigrate Blacks" (6). In this in-depth study of Womanpower in Mississippi, Morris details how middle-class African-American women who were career activists in male-led organizations like the NAACP utilized their skills and resources to carve out a separate space for a black women's organization. Using othermothering as a form of resistance, Clarie Collins Harvey founded Womanpower Unlimited to address the material and emotional needs of the unjustly jailed Freedom Riders through grassroots funding efforts to provide housing, food, clothes, and cosmetic support. Womanpower provided similar support for civil rights activists and volunteers for Freedom Summer and subsidized four homes in Jackson "which provided cost-free housing for civil rights volunteers" (72).

Morris argues that these activists were intersectional in their approach, a tradition that is rooted in the philosophy of African-American activists like Anna Julia Cooper and in black feminist theory about multiple identities for black women, especially activists. As middle-class black women, the members of Womanpower Unlimited used their femininity, blackness, and relative economic independence from whites to undo multiple oppressions of race, gender, and class. Their position in society allowed Womanpower to create a safe space from patriarchal organizations like the NAACP and to utilize the fullness of its resources to

engage in women's empowerment and the holistic development—political, economic, and spiritual—of subjugated black people.

Extending their activism beyond voter registration and school desegregation, Womanpower's efforts included anti-war and nuclear disarmament ideas through its peace activism, ecumenical prayer, and the fellowship generated between local and national activists, which created interracial dialogue between black and white women from southern and northern states. As Womanpower developed into more than an organization for political enfranchisement, it became a humanist, black feminist, ecumenical, pacifist, interracial group of women who impacted civil rights, human rights, and peace activism on the local, national, and international levels.

Morris urges for the inclusion of black women's stories, the preservation of their histories, and the recognition of their activism. As Morris explains, "The fact that this story has not previously been told speaks, among other things, to the invisibility of certain women in the historical record. This invisibility is a result of black women being less likely to leave written records of their work for concerns over how their image might be [mis]construed by and in a society that has consistently denigrated black womanhood" (13). This invisibility and denigration calls for scholars and activists alike to complicate both whiteness and maleness by including the work and contributions of black women. Recognizing their activism as more than support for the directives of men like Martin Luther King, Medgar Evers, and Aaron Henry, affirms their agency and value as collaborators—with black and white men and women—in their quest for dignity for themselves and liberation for black people. *Womanpower Unlimited* places African American women back in the narrative, filling in the empty

space of black women's history, and centers them as valuable agents in deconstructing systemic oppression with their unique holistic, intersectional activism.

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