

part of the main story" (p. ix). The historians in this volume introduce readers to southern female Choctaws and Cherokees, Jews and Moravians, urban poor and Appalachian poor, ex-Confederates and African American educators, Garveyites and New Deal Democrats, lesbians and feminists, and members of other fascinating communities. No one can read the entire book without being impressed by the ingenuity and determination with which so many women have faced a vast array of challenges. When placed side by side their stories uncover not only the variety of women's experience but also many commonalities, such as the strategy of emphasizing the utility of traditional female skills and cultural practices in achieving a particular community's broader aims.

Readers unfamiliar with southern women's history will welcome the "Editor's Notes" before each essay. These are not so much narrow introductions as concise summations of relevant economic, social, and cultural developments in United States, southern, and women's history. They give each essay a clearer context while also serving as bridges between them. In addition, the supplemental notes allow Farnham to introduce otherwise omitted subgroups, such as colonial French and Spanish women, and to highlight frequent themes, such as the extent to which women have tried to assimilate into mainstream American society without totally sacrificing their natal cultures and identities. As in most books of this type, the individual essays vary in their style, quality, and usefulness. Some are synthetic works, such as a chapter on Choctaw Indians by James Taylor Carson or one on Appalachian women by Margaret Ripley Wolfe, and cover more than one century and a dazzling array of topics. Other essays, including Jean Friedman's study of two Jewish educators in North Carolina and Adele Logan Alexander's discussion of allegations of sexual misconduct at the Tuskegee Institute, are narrowly focused monographs. Although only Anne F. Scott's introductory essay has been previously published, some chapters, including those by Nina Silber, LeeAnn Whites, and Martha Swain, summarize or supplement material in the authors' earlier works.

I appreciate Farnham's ability to keep this volume to a reasonable length, but I wish she had included a bibliography of the most significant works on the history of southern women, especially since the notes for some of the included essays do not give many suggestions for further reading. A selective bibliography could also remind readers of categories of southern women either omitted or covered only briefly in this book, such as indentured servants, slaves, and textile workers. I expect that enough people will appreciate the merits of *Women of the American South* that future editions will be required, in which this omission and some unfortunate misprints can be corrected.

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CITA COOK

Black Movements in America. By Cedric J. Robinson. (New York and London: Routledge, c. 1997. Pp. ii, 179. Paper, \$16.99, ISBN 0-415-91222-9.)

Is it possible to cover the four-hundred-year history of African Americans in the New World, to recount that history in a coherent and compelling fashion, to challenge established historical interpretations, and to do it all

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within 150 pages, without leaving gaping holes for reviewers to swoop down and peck at? Of course not, or so you would think until you read *Black Movements in America*. Cedric Robinson reaches for the unreachable in this work, and he gets pretty close to grasping it. In constructing his history of mass black political movements Robinson synthesizes some of the finest work on Afro-America, from Edmund S. Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975), which begins the book, through Herbert Aptheker's work on slave rebellions, Leon F. Litwack's *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago, 1961), Du Bois's book on Reconstruction, to less well known studies that tie African American protests to various movements occurring beyond the United States. At one level this work represents a narrative history to accompany and provide context for Robinson's earlier pathbreaking work on black Marxism.

The focus on black political movements may seem somewhat forced at times—early slave revolts fitting into a kind of movement culture—but it does enable Robinson to describe African Americans as pivotal actors determining the course of American history. By giving blacks agency, Robinson is able to challenge the work of numerous historians. He disputes, for example, Gordon Wood's famed characterization of the radicalism of the American Revolution, which is founded in an erasure of the issue of slavery and those slaves who opposed the patriots. Robinson also argues that it was black abolitionists, David Walker and Martin Delany in particular, who gave force and direction to the abolitionist movement. He also delineates the central role of African Americans in the Civil War and, in accord with Du Bois's notion of a "General Strike" and contra James MacPherson, among others, what might be considered the African Americans' self-emancipation.

Robinson provides a very clear sense of African Americans' position in the larger Atlantic world. He does this by examining not just the ways in which two twentieth-century world wars helped change the position of blacks in the United States, but also how the Haitian revolution and worldwide anti-colonial movements became transformative events. Given this admirable use of a wide-angled lens to examine American history, however, Robinson's bifurcation of movements into cultures of resistance and accommodation seems a little forced and simplistic. He argues, for example, that the separate cultures of slaves and freed blacks, kept together by the campaign waged against slavery, created "two alternative Black political cultures" in the aftermath of emancipation (p. 96). Yet the complexity of the story Robinson is telling suggests that the methods of protest and accommodation thrown up by these entwined cultures might be used by either group, albeit to varying degrees. Greater attention to gender, status, color, region, and religion—and recognition of a global context in which the United States' growing imperial dominance diverted some African Americans from a sense of identity of interests with Africans and Afro-Caribbeans—might have led Robinson to an attempt to transcend this cultural dualism.

Despite this caveat, *Black Movements in America* ought to appeal to a wide audience. Some historians may object to Robinson's interpretation, but the fact that the work provides an accessible and polemical synthesis may

contribute to its appeal as a classroom text. The book's particular strength may be that it forces the reader to make some kind of response, to think critically about the author's underlying politics and, by extension, those of all other historians also.

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Tennesseans and Their History. By Paul H. Bergeron, Stephen V. Ash, and Jeanette Keith. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, c. 1999. Pp. xiv, 357. Paper, \$15.00, ISBN 1-57233-056-2; cloth, \$30.00, ISBN 1-57233-055-4.)

The authors of this volume have attempted to write an "up-to-date history of Tennessee" that encompasses the "wealth of new evidence about the state's past unearthed by historians in recent years" (pp. xiii). Their target readers are college students and teachers needing a quality textbook as well as members of the general reading public. The authors follow a chronological approach, first providing readers with a look at the varied geography of the state, a description of the Native American inhabitants, from the prehistoric Paleo-Indians to the Cherokee, Creeks, and other tribes encountered by Europeans upon first entering the region, and a discussion of the arrival of white explorers, trappers, and traders. Succeeding chapters cover the time frame from the 1760s to the end of the Reconstruction era in 1870. The authors address a great variety of topics, such as the emergence of a two-party political system in the 1830s, brought on by reactions to the personality and policies of Andrew Jackson, and the pivotal role of Tennessee in the Civil War.

By devoting nearly half of their book to the state's history since 1870, the authors provide the best account of the more recent past to be found in a survey volume. Chapter 12, entitled "The Civil Rights Era," is an especially valuable and insightful tour of the years from 1945 into the 1960s. Readers will find perceptive analyses of the political demise of the machine of Edward H. Crump of Memphis and the emergence of Estes Kefauver, Frank Clement, and Albert Gore Sr. This was a period of historic social change as the national civil rights movement challenged the system of racial segregation that for generations had consigned black Tennesseans to a status of second-class citizenship. Treatments of events such as the bombing of Clinton High in Anderson County in 1958 and the Nashville Christian Leadership Conference's successful lunch counter sit-in campaign in the capital in 1960 are thorough and thoughtful. The book traces the white political leadership's gradual and halting shift from a stance of resisting the dismantling of Jim Crow to one of embracing the aspirations of black voters.

The quality of the writing is excellent; the style is clear and interesting, crisp and direct. In addressing white antagonism to the activities of the Freedman's Bureau after the Civil War, for example, the authors tell readers that "it was the black quest for equality that stoked the burning resentment of Tennessee's ex-Confederates, for they remained as devoutly racist as they had been before the war" (p. 172). Format is especially important in any volume intended to be used as a textbook. Here the authors and publisher deserve high marks. They maintain the reader's attention by placing throughout the text boxes containing additional information about an event or person. These