

Reviews

Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching, by Crystal Feimster. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009. 336 pages. \$35.00, cloth.

This book uses the contrasting stories of Rebecca Latimer Felton, a Southern white woman whose long career advocating for women's rights culminated in her being momentarily seated as the first female member of the U.S. Senate, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a daughter of slaves who became an outspoken and radical opponent of lynching, to discuss the politics of race, gender, and violence in post-Civil War America. Feimster argues that the controversies surrounding gender, race, and violence that animated both Felton and Wells, albeit in startlingly different ways, had their roots in slavery, abolitionism, the Civil War experience, and the postwar efforts to restore the union. She claims that Southern white women like Felton not only experienced the Civil War as a failure on the part of Confederate males to protect them from rebellious slaves and Union soldiers, but also faced the physical and economic realities of defeat. This sense of grievance against men emboldened women like Felton to campaign strenuously for protection against real and imagined threats. At the same time, newly freed black women such as Ida Wells-Barnett fought against sexual exploitation, white-on-black violence, and the emerging Jim Crow system.

Rebecca Felton, the daughter and wife of slaveholders, spent the immediate postwar years supporting her husband's political career, but by the 1880s was pushing her own causes, including protection of black female prisoners and raising the age of consent for sexual relations. A member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), she campaigned for home protection in the form of temperance. As a populist in the early 1890s, she advocated education and economic independence for poor white farm women. However, by 1897, Felton's message was changing, and while the complexity of her views were ignored and misrepresented, "in the end, she clearly chose to align herself solidly with the white supremacist South" (p. 131). She defended white mob violence after the Wilmington riots and supported lynching as a protection for white womanhood against black rapists. Later, Felton would shift her emphasis and partially blame alcohol for interracial violence. By 1920, she was coming out strongly against the rape of black women and the lynching of black men. On the other hand, she continued to advocate votes for white women as protection against both white men and black men.

Ida Wells was born in 1862 in Holly Springs, Mississippi. After emancipation, her parents became leaders in the black community and managed to send Ida to nearby Shaw

University, where she completed a teacher training program. Eventually, Ida moved to Memphis to teach school. There, she sued the local railroad company for discrimination. In March 1892, after a friend was lynched, Ida embarked on her lifelong crusade against lynching. In her pamphlet, *Southern Horrors*, she pointed out that “black women suffered sexual violence at the hands of white men while black men fell victim to white mob violence for engaging in consensual sexual relationships with white women” (p. 91). In another broadside, she extended her analysis proving that economic and political motives, rather than rape, lay behind most white lynching of blacks in the postwar South. In the 1890s, Wells married Ferdinand Barnett, another anti-lynching activist. Throughout this period, Wells-Barnett allied herself with the more radical wing of the anti-lynching movement attacking Francis Willard and the WCTU for accepting the myth of the black rapist and criticizing Booker T. Washington for claiming educating blacks would somehow discourage lynching. She pushed the newly founded NAACP to be more militant on the subject and supported voting rights for black men and women as “the only way that blacks would be able to guarantee their own protection against white violence” (p. 217). Wells-Barnett died in 1931, but her efforts to stop lynching were not formally recognized by the U.S. Senate until 2005. No legislation against lynching was ever passed at the federal level.

This book delivers intellectual biographies of both Felton and Wells-Barnett while also providing readers with a sophisticated discussion of gender and racial divides in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In addition, the book has an excellent chapter on the lynching of black and white women exposing cross-currents and complexities ignored by most historians. The one surprising weakness of the book is that Rebecca Felton emerges as a much more clearly defined character than Ida Wells-Barnett. I suspect this may be due to the fact that it is more difficult to say something new about Ida Wells-Barnett than Rebecca Felton. This book would be an excellent reading for advanced undergraduates interested in race, gender, or Southern history. The book also contributes greatly to our understanding of the role violence played in the nation’s attempt to construct a more perfect union among whites in the post-Civil War years.

Ripon College

Barbara McGowan

Civilizations of Ancient Iraq, by Benjamin R. Foster and Karen Polinger Foster. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. 297 pages. \$26.95, cloth.

Few parts of the world have a more disjointed history in the eyes of Western scholarship than the region stretching from the Iranian plateau to the eastern Mediterranean. When Alexander took Babylon in 331 B.C.E., he was not the first conqueror to capture the city, nor would he be the last. And while the Macedonian’s victories did not extinguish the millennia-old cultures that flourished there, he did succeed in becoming the conclusion to many textbooks on the history of the Ancient Near East—including Amélie Kuhrt’s *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000-330 BC* (1995), Marc Van De Mieroop’s *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC* (2004), and William H. Stiebing, Jr.’s *Ancient Near Eastern History and Culture* (2009). Hellenism rendered the next one thousand years of the region’s history the domain of Classicists and Byzantinists, for whom the Persian empires of the Parthians and Sassanians are peripheral. The revelation of the Quran around 610 C.E. marked the birth of Islam and inaugurates many textbooks covering the Middle East.

One only has to begin with the title of the Fosters' book to see that they have disposed of traditional schema and contextualize the Ancient Near East as part of the history of the modern Middle-Eastern state of Iraq. Indeed, the book emerged from the Fosters' contributions to *Iraq Beyond the Headlines: History, Archaeology, and War* (co-authored with Patty Gerstenblith) and a series of public lectures devoted to the ancient and classical history of Iraq and the destruction of Iraqi antiquities since the First Gulf War. In seven very accessible chapters, the Fosters cover Iraq's past, from prehistory to the fall of the Sassanian Empire at the hands of Arab invaders in 637 C.E. An epilogue describes the effect of looting on the cultural treasures produced by these civilizations, and the pictures of artifacts throughout the book are accompanied by captions that describe the fate of the objects.

Although not written as a textbook, *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq* has much to recommend it for use in the classroom. The writing is engaging, introducing the reader to the region's history with an admirable combination of detail and brevity; but in the classroom, the book would not be sufficient on its own and an instructor will need to provide supplementary material. Fortunately, the Fosters have provided an extensive bibliography that will aid those gathering additional readings and primary sources. Most instructors will have an area of expertise germane to such a course, but not a comprehensive background covering the full scope. Such limitations get at the dilemma faced by faculty who fill ancient history positions at colleges and universities, some of whom are also expected to cover Medieval Europe, and highlight the need for more books like this one.

The criticisms of *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq* leveled here are minor and intended for historians who are Classicists or Medievalists who intend to offer such a course. The first criticism focuses on the Fosters' frequent use of literary excerpts from cuneiform sources to elucidate Mesopotamian civilization. Such an approach is not objectionable, but it is typical of other generalist books on the Ancient Near East. This emphasis on literary texts is understandable given the fame of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, but it has the potential to lead to two outcomes in the classroom: first, the obvious Biblical parallels can create the impression that an understanding of Mesopotamian civilization is only important as it related to and influenced ancient Israel; and second, it reinforces images of a mythical and exotic civilization. The reality is that literary compositions are found on a small fraction of the hundreds of thousands of tablets available to scholars. The vast majority of these are legal or administrative documents that reveal a dynamic civilization which, during its greatest epochs, relied on bureaucratic management of resources, extensive trade networks, and military conquest to support centralized states comprising complex institutions. For example, the Fosters' treatment of Shulgi and the Ur III Empire represents a missed opportunity to present the reader with translations of administrative tablets as a counterweight to the many literary pieces cited, and to communicate fully the extent to which cuneiform sources provide scholars with a detailed picture of state organization in antiquity.

The second criticism concerns the Fosters' presentation of the Ubaid and Uruk periods in Mesopotamian prehistory. Making sense of prehistoric evidence can often be thorny, and the interpretations presented here are alternatives—not corrections—to the ones presented by the Fosters. Ubaid civilization is presented by the Fosters as idyllic and egalitarian, but Sabah Abboud Jasim's *The Ubaid Period in Iraq: Recent Excavations in the Hamrin Region* (1985) and Gil J. Stein's "Producers, Patrons, and Prestige: Craft Specialists and Emergent Elites in Mesopotamia from 5500-3100 B.C." in *Craft Specialization and Social Evolution: In Memory of V. Gordon Childe* (1996) discuss evidence from the site of Tell Abada indicating a stratified society in which power was concentrated among a limited circle and stamp seals were employed to control resources. Likewise, the discussion of art-historical evidence from the Uruk period would benefit from mention of representa-

tions of a king-like figure engaged in military as well as religious activities. The exercise of power and violence were not limited to historical periods.

Civilizations of Ancient Iraq is a welcome addition to the small library of popular books devoted to the Ancient Near East. It should be considered essential reading for any non-specialists planning to teach a course on the subject and has much to recommend it as a textbook for students. Particularly worthy of applause is the chronological scope of the book. When one considers that Stiebing's very accessible textbook, *Ancient Near Eastern History and Culture*, also includes Anatolia, the Levant, and Egypt up to 330 B.C.E., it is not unreasonable to call for the production of a textbook that combines the Fosters' chronological coverage with a greater geographical breadth in order to present students with the history of the Middle East in antiquity.

Loyola University of New Orleans

John P. Nielsen

The Horrors of Andersonville: Life and Death Inside a Civil War Prison, by Catherine Gourley. Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, 2010. 191 pages. \$35.00, cloth.

Catherine Gourley's recent book, *The Horrors of Andersonville: Life and Death Inside a Civil War Prison*, aptly describes the conditions endured by Union soldiers captured by the Confederates and imprisoned at Andersonville, Georgia. Based on the men's experiences, Andersonville deservedly earned its reputation as the worst prisoner of war camp in the Confederacy. Gourley methodically combed soldiers' diaries, court records, newspapers, and published first-person accounts to piece the story together. Starvation, malnutrition, and diseases such as smallpox and scurvy compounded the misery of those incarcerated. Gourley effectively combines good storytelling with historical accuracy to create a book suitable for upper elementary through high school students.

The opening pages of the text list the major players in the tale with a very brief overview of each person's role in Andersonville. Similarly, the ending pages provide more details about some individuals involved in the prison and, where available, a small photograph appears next to the biography. One notable visitor to Andersonville at the end of war in July 1865 was Clara Barton. Intent on helping families identify the burial place of loved ones lost during the Civil War, she accompanied Dorence Atwater, a prison survivor who had meticulously kept a roster of the more than 13,000 dead soldiers buried at Andersonville as part of his assigned duties. Miraculously, Atwater managed to make a second copy of the record and smuggled it out upon his release. After bringing the information to the attention of the federal government, Atwater and Barton traveled to Andersonville together tasked with discovering the final resting place of thousands of Union soldiers. Atwater and Barton successfully placed headstones on nearly all of the gravesites. According to Gourley, the emotional toll of seeing so many graves quickly overwhelmed Atwater and Barton. Atwater never completely recovered from his return visit to the camp. Barton later became an activist for missing soldiers.

Interestingly, according to Gourley, some of the major characters in the Andersonville saga disappeared from the historical record shortly after the Civil War ended and the prisoners were released. The combination of grainy images and snippets of information serve to pique the interest of the reader. This approach may encourage students to explore Andersonville prison and the men who stayed there in more depth, thereby increasing their historical research skills.

Throughout the book, Gourley keeps the student in mind as she explains vernacular expressions from the Civil War and uses both American and metric measurements to describe the size of things such as tents and the height of the stockade. Another aspect of Gourley's work is the vignettes included in each chapter. Some of these sidebars simply make clear slang words used by the prisoners. Others clarify topics that students may not have exposure to, such as how to delouse a person, ration food supplies, or transport large numbers of people to Andersonville. These supplementary textboxes are clearly delineated from the main text, but occasionally the placement interrupts the flow of reading. However, these short descriptions help bring Andersonville's story to life for the reader. Additionally, to appeal to students' visual learning styles and their need for image-rich content, Gourley's book makes extensive use of maps, photographs, and drawings. Nearly every page of the text contains primary source materials that predominantly come from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly*, both popular news media of the day.

To accompany the excerpts from prisoners' diaries and newspaper accounts, which are sometimes awkward for adolescents to read and comprehend, Gourley's writing employs shorter sentences and language easily understood by students in upper elementary and middle school grades. Some terminology will challenge lower-ability students, but Gourley provides sufficient context clues to adequately assist the reader in deciphering appropriate meaning. Additionally, the various sources that Gourley references throughout the book—from common soldiers to the general in charge of Andersonville—encourage teachers to discuss varying points of view.

Another useful feature that Gourley incorporates into her work is the list of further reading, films, and websites. These items reflect current scholarship on Andersonville and appeal to today's technologically savvy students. Clearly written, Gourley's book allows students to understand the complex details surrounding Andersonville's role in the Civil War. Students will enjoy reading this book and teachers can easily integrate the material into lesson plans that focus on historical content and improving literacy skills.

West Memphis High School

Marjorie Hunter

A Vietnam War Reader: A Documentary History from American and Vietnamese Perspectives, edited by Michael H. Hunt. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. 223 pages. \$59.95, cloth. \$19.95, paper.

In a field with several good readers, Professor Michael Hunt has added what may be the best of the bunch. Given Hunt's reputation as a leading scholar in diplomatic history, one would expect that his reading selections would be judicious, his chapter introductions well-grounded, and his notes before each selection succinct yet sufficient. He does all of these things without fail, but brings three features to the book that make it stand out from the pack. First, he places the war in a one-hundred-year history of Vietnamese struggle against outsiders. Secondly, he reinforces that construct by using almost as many Vietnamese documents as American. Lastly, he continually raises big and enduring questions about the one-hundred-years war and the American chapter in that long saga, even using the analogy of Vietnamese struggles as a "drama" with a prologue, five acts, and an epilogue.

Hunt includes familiar and indispensable documents, such as the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, North Vietnamese directives for

the Tet Offensive, and the Paris Peace Accords. He also has selections from a variety of viewpoints: Viet Cong, supporters of the Diem-Ky-Thieu governments of South Vietnam, American policy makers, American protestors against the war, and soldiers from every group involved in the war. What will probably be of greatest interest to students would be the longest chapter, "The View From the Ground, 1965-1971," followed by "The War Comes Home, 1965-1971." Here, one finds over thirty of those personal recollections that generally "hook" students best. What teachers may find most appealing are the plethora of selections from Vietnamese, especially the repeated use of writings of Le Duan, the lesser-known of the "big three" revolutionaries (the other two being Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong), who led the Communist party to ultimate victory in the war.

The last reading selections in the book's concluding chapter, "Outcomes and Verdicts," are particularly useful and revealing. Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and former Minister of Defense Vo Nguyen Giap met in the 1990s to discuss the war. Where McNamara tried to focus on the "misunderstandings" that led to war, Giap said that there were none: "We did what we had to do to ... drive you and your puppets out" (p. 204). That is a fitting end to this provocative book, because it shows a fundamental divide between the interpretation of the causes and results of the war by the victorious Vietnamese and the defeated Americans.

As a reader, the book has the strengths and weaknesses of the genre. To this reviewer, the weakest section is "The View From the Ground," simply because there is such a wealth of material that 20 one-page selections cannot do the topic justice. On the other hand, if students are not assigned such primary source materials separately, then a smattering of a variety of viewpoints is a good start. By contrast, the strongest chapter would be the last, which allows policy makers from several sides to express *their* answers to what the war meant.

This book is appropriate for college students or very advanced high school students taking a special year-long course on the Vietnam War. It is a first-rate reader on this controversial war.

Roanoke College

John G. Selby

Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic, edited by Derek R. Peterson. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010. 235 pages. \$64.95, cloth. \$28.95, paper.

In observing the bicentenary of the end of the slave trade in the British Empire in 1807, Tony Blair apologized for his nation's involvement. The neo-liberal prime minister made no mention, however, of the huge profits that British capitalists made in selling Africans into bondage. Furthermore, he legitimized his administration's obsequious role in the U.S. occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan as affirmation of Britain's long commitment to human rights. The equation of abolitionism with the current crusade in the Middle East was dubious at best. This anthology, the initial installment of a series emanating from the Cambridge/Africa Collaborative Research Programme, is a corrective to Blair's platitudes. The importance of this volume, particularly for teachers of history, is that it provides an overview of current work on abolitionism and imperialism in the Atlantic world. The seven essays resulted from lectures given on the occasion of the bicentenary. A central theme is that abolitionism had multiple locations, including Britain, Africa, and Caribbean. Slaves and planters, working-class radicals and evangelicals, African kings

and British parliamentarians, all played a part. As editor Derek K. Peterson puts it, “The empire was the crucible wherein British values were worked out” (p. 5).

Peterson’s introduction explicates the role of abolitionism in the making of British identity. Teachers will find the review of the historiography useful. During the first decades of the twentieth century, historians G. M. Trevelyan and Reginald Copland used the antislavery antecedent to argue for the civilizing mission of British colonization of Africa. While Eric Williams’ landmark book, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), attacked this moralizing, his economic argument that the slave trade was midwife to the birth of capitalism and that abolition was pallbearer at its death has been significantly revised. Joseph Inikori and Seymour Drescher concur with Williams that slavery contributed to eighteenth-century British capital formation, but Drescher notably argues that abolition was “econocide,” for in 1807, the slave system was economically robust. David Brion Davis moved the debate beyond the poles of idealist evangelicals and profit-mongering capitalists. He argued for a broader orientation in British economic and social life in which Christian reformers challenged physical constraints and championed bourgeois ideals of internalized discipline. The present volume agrees with Davis’ formulation.

These essays show the wide-ranging uses to which abolitionist discourse was employed by a variety of actors in diverse places at different times. In three West African kingdoms, John Thornton finds that indigenous leaders had no moral qualms about the slave trade. These kings used slavery to augment their power and only objected to the commerce when it threatened their dominance. Boyd Hilton suggests that Britain outlawed its slave trade as an act of atonement for the loss of North American colonies and the rise of Napoleon. The loss of the American colonies, Christopher Brown suggests, encouraged the possibility of a thriving commerce in West Africa to supplant a slave-based economy, such as Olaudano Equiano famously advocated. “But few, in the 1780s, including Equiano,” Brown emphasizes, “could anticipate the inequalities that would ensue from the ideas all abolitionists embraced” (p. 95). Focusing on the Caribbean and Atlantic context, Philip D. Morgan shows that slave revolts, planter reforms, and free black assertion bolstered the abolitionist imperative. Abolitionism, he writes, was “an entangled world of pragmatism and principle” rather than an act of pure virtue (p. 121).

The end of slavery cleared the way for European dominance of Africa by the late nineteenth century. Drescher explains, “A movement that had ended an era of individual bondage functioned as a rationalization for the indefinite dependency of peoples” (p. 145). Despite the gross abuses of new imperial forms, he concludes that the world is better off with the elimination of slavery. Robin Law’s essay shows that the British imperative to halt the slave trade allowed them to violate the sovereignty of African nations. This humanitarian intervention cleared the way for European nations to divide up Africa by 1900. Jonathon Glassman writes that in twentieth-century Zanzibar, the rhetoric of slavery and antislavery in the British Empire became an ideological battleground between Arab elites and their nationalist opponents. His larger point is that historical narrative is crafted “with the aim of fostering particular ways of imagining a collective self” (p. 181). These cutting-edge essays provide rich material for classroom teaching.

University of Connecticut

Lawrence B. Goodheart

Black Culture and the New Deal: The Quest for Civil Rights in the Roosevelt Era, by Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 312 pages. \$35.00, cloth.

Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff's excellent study examines how federal arts programs impacted black cultural advancement in the 1930s and 1940s. In particular, she devotes separate chapters to African Americans in the Federal Theatre Project (FTP) and Federal Writers' Project (FWP), the use of heavyweight boxer Joe Louis in the propaganda campaigns of the Office of War Information (OWI), attempts by the Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS) to reach black Americans, and the role of race in the OWI's systematic reviews of Hollywood films. Building on others who emphasize the impact of culture on New Deal political coalitions and civil rights (including Michael Denning and Glenda Gilmore), Sklaroff's contribution is unique in that it "does not situate racial liberalism under the larger rubric of a working-class agenda or the plight of organized labor," nor does it simply present "a history of generous liberals and eager black participants" (pp. 7, 9).

Instead, Sklaroff frames her chapters around four important themes. First, she notes that these programs "served as important locations for black cultural advancement" in an era when minstrel images and segregation still permeated popular music, literature, and film (p. 2). She also insists that racial debates within the FTP, FWP, and OWI indicate the centrality of "cultural emancipation" to the overall struggle for civil rights, and emphasizes how an examination of culture reveals important continuities between the 1930s and 1940s. The administration continued to articulate its racial policies via art and media projects well after the war began, providing a foundation for postwar federal programs to do the same. (Here the book becomes an important link between the work of "cultural front" scholars and those who examine the politicization of black culture during the Cold War, such as Penny Von Eschen.) Finally, Sklaroff argues that an understanding of cultural development offers new narratives of the civil rights movement itself, for her examples provide "less obvious signs of success and failure and an equally important framework for understanding how black and white Americans wrestled with the racial issues that most concerned them in addition to the compromises they often made in challenging the status quo" (p. 3).

After chronicling the administration's failure to pass civil rights legislation, Sklaroff first explores the FTP's "Negro Units." Officials debated the production of several plays featuring African American artists and themes, most notably *The Swing Mikado* (1938), the successful black musical based on Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera. The problem of cultural authenticity surrounds all of Sklaroff's examples, and in each chapter, she addresses the question well, noting that FTP administrators "privileged particular visions of African Americans as more authentic reflections of black life and more indicative of black artistic talent ... whether advocating race-related themes that they believed were most pressing or 'blackening' classic productions" (p. 34). Next, Sklaroff examines the FWP's Negro Affairs division and its head editor, famed poet Sterling Brown. Brown held a remarkable degree of power, editing material produced by white writers (including Southerners) and calling for more sensitive depictions of black life. Although he was often overruled, Brown's influence led the FWP's landmark American Guide Series to incorporate progressive narratives of black history that predated those produced by liberal academics after the war.

Sklaroff then turns to the OWI's wartime cultural programs, including a chapter on the construction of Joe Louis as a symbol of "black inclusion in the war effort" (p. 13). Noting that Louis became both booster and distraction, she concludes that "in and through the Louis persona, state managers could advocate an ethos of racial liberalism, while still skirting the issue of discrimination in several areas of American life" (p. 127). Likewise, the government's use of radio to address black Americans—notably the famed broadcast "America's Negro Soldiers" and the variety series *Jubilee*—sought to "cool down the heated subject of racial inequality" with the "familiar black voices" of Louis Armstrong, Ethel Waters, Lena Horne, and others. Compared to Joe Louis, these artists were able

to communicate more confrontational messages, including songs with anti-segregation and anti-lynching themes. Finally, chapter six explores prominent wartime movies and the OWI's efforts to "confront Hollywood with a series of directives for creating films that would offer particular portrayals of black Americans" (p. 13). Nevertheless, the result was a wide range of depictions, from movies like *Bataan* and *Sahara*—featuring heroic black soldiers and visions of an integrated army—to films that presented more controversial African American characters, such as the black females in *Cabin in the Sky* and *Stormy Weather*.

Overall, *Black Culture and the New Deal* successfully combines all of these examples into a valuable, cohesive study. Chronicling how a variety of state-sponsored cultural programs evolved to incorporate African American artists and address the black experience, Sklaroff's book is an important contribution to our understanding of race and culture during the late 1930s and World War II.

Central Michigan University

Lane Demas

The 1960s: A Documentary Reader, edited by Brian Ward. West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 241 pages. \$29.95, paper.

Brian Ward's solid collection of primary source documents is part of the series, "Uncovering the Past: Documentary Readers in American History," edited by Steven Lawson and Nancy Hewitt. It is aimed at undergraduates, designed to introduce them to the raw materials of history so they can learn how to analyze and interpret, rather than simply absorb, information. Each volume contains a selection of social, cultural, economic, and political sources to reinforce the multi-faceted influences on historical development, and the documents in Ward's book reflect this variety. Ward presents the decade of the 1960s as the "long 1960s," so he chose documents that stretch chronologically from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, wrapping up with a "Myth and Memory" chapter containing pieces from the 1990s and 2000s.

The volume opens with an eighteen-page Introduction that clearly lays out, in a style appropriate for the undergraduate audience, the organization and scope of the collection. Ward uses a kaleidoscope analogy to explain why historians have been unable to agree on how to best describe the 1960s or even assess its strengths and weaknesses: "The slightest shift in the perspective of the observer or a change in the shards of evidence under scrutiny can radically alter the appearance of the decade, generating very different assessments of its most significant features, lessons, and legacies" (p. 3). The fact that historians have so many different sources from the 1960s at their disposal, he points out, means that they have to carefully consider not only the content, but also the kinds of sources they are analyzing. Where those items originally appeared, why they were created, and how they were disseminated are just as important as the factual information they contain. This thoughtful Introduction makes Ward's book more valuable for undergraduates than a similar collection, *America in the Sixties: Right, Left, and Center* (1998), edited by Peter B. Levy.

Ward makes clear that the 1960s were about more than protests and hippies. Within the kaleidoscope, he identifies five frameworks that encompass the important themes and events of the 1960s: the Cold War, debates on the meaning of citizenship, economic growth that prompted a conservative backlash, the large number of young people in the United States, and significant technological and scientific developments. (This approach

makes Ward's book more topically representative than Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines's *"Takin' it to the Streets": A Sixties Reader* (1995), with its decidedly liberal selections.) The documents in the twelve chapters of *The 1960s* all fit into one or more of these frameworks.

The first chapter, "Into the 1960s," reflects Ward's periodization of the "long" decade, opening with television critic Jack Gould's 1956 article on Elvis Presley's appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and ending with President Eisenhower's 1961 Farewell Address. Chapters Two through Ten are topical, reflecting Ward's five frameworks, and they include subjects that most students would expect to find in a book about the 1960s—civil rights, the New Left and the counterculture, and Vietnam. Included are classic documents such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Statement of Purpose, the Port Huron Statement, and the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Chapters on the economy, the Cold War, conservatism, science, and technology reinforce Ward's kaleidoscope analogy, introducing students to Michael Harrington, *Dr. Strangelove*, and Billy Graham. In Chapter Eleven, Ward pulls the "long" decade from the late 1960s into the early 1970s with documents from Woodstock to Watergate. He concludes with "The 1960s in Myth and Memory," four selections from the last two decades.

A couple of weaknesses make this a less than perfect collection. Although gender and sexuality and racial and ethnic identity were integral to the decade, the chapters dealing with them come across as oddly constructed. While the women's movement proposed profound changes for American society, it does not have a chapter of its own, but is instead combined with a couple of documents on the birth control pill and gay power. Selections on the Black Panther Party and Black Power could have been part of the civil rights chapter, yet they appear as part of "Racial and Ethnic Identity: Pride and Politics," which also includes a piece on Native Americans and one on Chicanos. But overall, Ward has produced a good book for undergraduate methods courses, courses on twentieth-century U.S. history, or even American history surveys. Best of all, students can learn the words to the "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag."

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Theresa Kaminski

Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles, by Daniel Widener. Durham, NC and London, U.K.: Duke University Press, 2010. 384 pages. \$89.95, cloth. \$24.95, paper.

Black Arts West is as much a work in American intellectual and social history as it is in African American cultural and political history. Daniel Widener, an Associate Professor at the University of California, San Diego, delivers a thorough and wonderfully written book that examines how black artists, intellectuals, and activists envisioned and utilized creative endeavors as part of the African American freedom struggle in Los Angeles, California from 1942 to 1992. The author argues that black cultural production was not an appendage to African Americans' search for justice and equality in the city and throughout the country; instead, art, including fiction books, music, visual art, film making, and even fashion, were integral to the movement. The centrality of art in the struggle, in turn, led to multiple interpretations concerning how to best use art to achieve black freedom. In some cases, as with artists Noah Purifoy and Betye Saar, visual art was part of an effort to empower black Angelenos through art education. In other cases, as was true with Mayor Tom Bradley, the African American mayor of Los Angeles from 1973 to

1993, expressive culture was used to promote Los Angeles as a multicultural city while compromising black political efforts at economic justice.

Spanning fifty years of history, Widener's eight well-researched chapters are organized into three sections and introduce the reader to a broad spectrum of black creative and discursive politics. Section one examines the multiple ways black expressive artists negotiated local and national racial politics and racial representation in the 1940s and 1950s. Community-based organizations including the Horace Tapscott's Pan African People's Arkestra, the Black Panther Party, and the Us Organization take center stage in section two. Section three examines black expressive cultural politics vis-à-vis the governing structures of the city.

For the novice in African American social and cultural history, *Black Arts West* can be overwhelming because to fully understand the depth and breadth of the text, the reader also requires a depth and breadth of knowledge in the intellectual field within which Widener inserts himself as well as the era about which he writes. From the outset of the book, this becomes readily apparent. For example, in chapter one, "Hollywood Scuffle," the reader is introduced to Duke Ellington's 1941 musical *Jump for Joy* and a cast of African American expressive artists including, but not limited to, Herb Jeffries, Dorothy Dandridge, the incomparable Billy Strayhorn, and Joe Turner. For those conversant in African American music, art, and theatre, these names are well-known, but even the most well-intentioned and motivated high school student or college student would probably never have heard of these important American icons. Instead of doing a bit of online research about the artists' contributions and significance, they most likely would ignore them, hence defeating the purpose of Widener's work and his charge to the reader to think about the importance of black popular and expressive culture's convergence with black politics.

While *Black Arts West* is not suitable for high school students or lower division college students, it would be well-suited for an upper-division elective in African American Studies or American Studies as it uses an interdisciplinary approach to study African American history. The author calls it a "cross-generic framing of popularly directed cultural production" (p. 6). Widener's work is best suited for instructors because it allows them to introduce students to individuals and creative works that have been elided from or forgotten in our historical narratives. In the case of Duke Ellington's *Jump for Joy*, instructors could use the work to expose students to the ways African American creative intellectuals countered racist imagery of African Americans during and after World War II, as well as the ways that art in African American history was a politicized undertaking. This is true not just of Ellington, but also avant-garde artists like John Outerbridge and John Riddle and filmmaker Larry Clarke. The work also helps instructors re-conceptualize and re-periodize the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement in American history. Rather than seeing them as two geographically and ideologically distinct movements, *Black Arts West* allows one to see and assess political and cultural continuity and change over time. Widener's book is convincing and engaging, but much like how black artists were interpreters of black culture to black Americans and the larger non-black society, the instructor will have to interpret *Black Arts West* to her students.



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