



**Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Bryant Simon, eds.** *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000. xi + 325 pp. \$55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-691-00193-7.



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## Private and Public Power in the South since the Civil War

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*Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics From Civil War to Civil Rights* is a collection of essays by both established and young scholars in which the definition of politics is expanded to include areas ranging from the ballot box to the train station. Edited by Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon, the essays emphasize the role of gender and power to illustrate the many varieties of political struggle in the South.

In a particularly poignant Preface, C. Vann Woodward pays homage to this new group of historians while disparaging his own role in their creation. He notes, "what distinguishes the new history is not only its inclusion of subjects that the old history neglected, but the new questions it raises and the way it treats the traditional subjects" (p. xi).

In their Introduction the editors call white supremacy the central theme of Southern history and show how their collection will address that theme. In their words, "these essays demonstrate the continuous con-

test between southern blacks determined to assert their civil rights and whites determined to deny blacks that power" (p. 5).[1] They suggest the ongoing debate over change versus continuity in Southern history can be resolved if the focus changes from whites enforcing white supremacy to African Americans resisting (or jumping) Jim Crow. This is an intriguing and seemingly valid idea that is not developed enough either in the Introduction or the essays that follow.

In "The Politics of Marriage and Households in North Carolina during Reconstruction," Laura F. Edwards discusses the importance of legal marriages for freedmen. Her essay looks at both the reaction of the legal system to these marriages and the words of the freedmen as they asserted their claims to this new right. The household is a political entity here where African Americans assert power and the white political system reacts negatively. It is also a place where African Americans did "jump" Jim Crow and fits in nicely with the work's stated theme.

The attempts of women to assert power in different arenas is the subject of Elsa Barkley Brown's "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere" and W.

Fitzhugh Brundage's "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South, 1880-1920." Brown looks at African American women (particularly in Richmond, Virginia) participating in the decision-making process in churches and attempting to vote in elections at the turn of the century. White women creating a "usable past" is the story in Brundage's work. Organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy allowed elite southern white women to dictate how that war would be remembered and their decisions live on in the thousands of memorials that dot the Southern landscape. Both of these essays forcefully move women into the political landscape, but neither seems to fit comfortably within the framework of an anthology that focuses on the central role of white supremacy in Southern history, one that features conflict between blacks attempting to assert power and whites wanting to keep it. In contrast, these chapters focus on intraracial issues, rather than the interracial dynamic that seems to propel the work as a whole. They are extremely interesting and well-done essays that merit attention but seem out of place here.

Grace Elizabeth Hale's "'For Colored' and 'For White'" effectively discusses African Americans using the power of the pocketbook (from the 1880s until the 1930s) to assert economic and social rights even as they lost political ones. She argues, "the marketplace, southern blacks asserted, would not join the ballot box as an arena of racial exclusion" (p. 163). Hale tells of African Americans refusing to patronize establishments where they were treated poorly and why certain businesses (restaurants especially) were harder to integrate. This essay provides essential background information about the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s.

Traditional political power is the subject of both Jane Dailey's "The Limits of Liberalism in the New South" and Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore's "False Friends and Avowed Enemies." Dailey's essay features the Readjuster Party of Virginia. She provides an intriguing look at the inner workings of that party and how splits between the interests of blacks and whites (particularly regarding school integration) doomed it. Gilmore takes a new look at the reasons African Americans switched political allegiances in the 1936 election. Instead of seeing that election itself as critical, Gilmore finds the roots of the switch in the 1920s when the Republicans began to invite white women in while they pushed African Americans out.

The power of mob violence is the theme of four essays. Stephen Kantrowitz's "One Man's Mob is Another

Man's Militia" ably explains the problem in attempting to determine exactly what a mob is. His contribution is a retelling of the Hamburg, South Carolina Riot of 1876 with an emphasis on the role of Matthew Butler and the South Carolina red-shirts (who were attempting to wrest control of the state back from the Republicans). A different look at mobs is the story of "William J. Northern's Public and Personal Struggles Against Lynching" as told by David F. Godshalk. Northern, a former Georgia governor and Confederate veteran, campaigned against lynching in his home state in the early 20th century. While Northern did not dispute that it was African Americans raping whites that led to many lynchings, he tried to convince the white elite that they should be concerned by the involvement of the lower classes in such activity. His failure to convince his peers disillusioned him and the failure of leading African Americans to completely embrace him stunned him.

The most famous lynching case in Georgia is the topic of Nancy MacLean's "The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered." MacLean believes the lynching of Leo Frank needs to be examined in the light of the many issues of gender involved. As more young southern women went to work in factories and mills, southern men became more worried about losing control of them. Mary Phagan had to be presented as dying in defense of her virtue in order to justify the reaction of the men of Atlanta to protect her. Mob violence is also the topic of "Dynamite and 'the Silent South'" by Timothy B. Tyson. Claudia Thomas Sanders was a white South Carolina woman who contributed an essay to "South Carolina Speaks" in which she suggested that whites should gradually accept the *Brown v. Board* decision. The local Klan responded by dynamiting her home. Although she was not hurt, she was forced out of her community while the accused Klansmen were found not guilty at their trials. Each of these essays demonstrates the limits of resistance and how violence was often used to punish those who tried to resist too much.

Strom Thurmond's rise to power and hold on power is a central part of both Bryant Simon's "Race Reactions" and Kari Frederickson's "'As a Man, I am Interested in States' Rights'". Simon's essay provides a particularly clear explanation of why white millhands in South Carolina closed racial ranks after 1938 where before they were more apt to take sides based on class interests. Frederickson discusses why the Dixiecrats believed it was necessary to react to President Truman's Civil Rights policies and is a logical follow-up to Simon's work. Both these essays nicely examine the resistance of whites to the challenges posed by African Americans in the mid-

dle of the twentieth century.

Three very short Afterwords allow Edward Ayers, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, and Nell Irvin Painter to weigh in with their thoughts about not only the anthology itself but also the future direction of Southern history. Along with Woodward's Preface these essays allow the reader to discover the current view of some giants in Southern history.

There are some organizational problems with the work. Organized in a rough chronological fashion the twelve essays feature the southeast (the Carolinas, Virginia, and Georgia) with four of the twelve emphasizing South Carolina. Despite the title only three essays attempt to deal with the South as a whole. South Carolina is clearly over-represented while important states such as Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee are completely absent. While the title suggests the discussion begins during the Civil War all but one of the essays deals with the 1880s or later.

This is the rare anthology where the editors needed to take a little more space for themselves at the beginning of the work. A more comprehensive Introduction would better prepare the reader for the work. The unifying theme here (as stated by Edward Ayers in one of the Afterwords) is really power. Each of the essays deals with the attempt to gain power or the attempt to hold onto it whether in the home or in the State House. More expressly linking the ideas of politics and power at the

very beginning of the work would make the rest of it more clear. The other problem with the development of the unifying theme is that some of the essays (most notably those of Brown and Brundage) do not fit in well with the rest.

Despite these minor flaws, *Jumpin' Jim Crow*, is an important addition to the study of Southern politics. For scholars of Southern history, the notes at the end of each essay provide a wealth of sources to explore. All of these essays raise intriguing new questions and suggest new ways to approach Southern politics. The inclusion of women in the majority of them illustrates that gender must now be included in any effective discussion of Southern politics. The expansion of the definition of politics to include the private household, advertising, and collective memory opens many new worlds to the scholar. This work provides much food for thought for anyone interested in Southern history or politics.

#### Notes

[1]. The idea of white supremacy as the central theme of Southern history is one that C. Vann Woodward clearly embraced in his own works. See particularly his *The Burden of Southern History*, third edition (Baton Rouge and London, England: Louisiana State University Press, 1993) and *Origins of the New South 1877-1913* (Louisiana State University Press and The Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas, 1951).

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