

Dorothy Hodder, Compiler

**T**he public's interest in military history—particularly the history of the American Civil War—has no apparent limits, and publishers are rushing to meet the demand. This trend has been a boon for North Carolinians who want to know more about the history of their state and localities. Although the books being published vary in quality, they reflect a commendable effort to balance popularity and scholarship, thus helping the reader to place localized topics in historical context. Both *Fort Macon: A History* and *Fort Anderson: Battle for Wilmington* will entertain and educate those readers interested in the history of North Carolina's coastal defenses.

Branch, park historian at Fort Macon State Park, North Carolina, traces the history of fortifications built at Old Topsail Inlet (now Beaufort Inlet) to protect Beaufort harbor, the only port in North Carolina that opens directly to the Atlantic Ocean. He does this against a backdrop of colonial, state, and federal plans for a system of coastal defenses. Following Forts Dobbs, Hancock, and Hampton, Fort Macon was begun in 1826 as part of the country's "Third System" of forts. Completed by 1834 and renovated during the early 1840s, the fort was named for United States Senator Nathaniel Macon, who had championed the initial appropriation.

Paul Branch.

## ***Fort Macon: A History.***

Charleston, SC: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1999. xiv, 292 pp. Cloth, \$28.95.  
ISBN 1-877853-45-3.

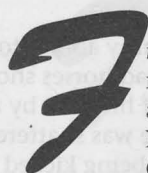
Branch devotes a third of the book to the fort's role and capture by Union forces during the Civil War and briefly describes activity (or lack thereof) during subsequent periods of peace and conflict, including the Spanish-American War and World War II. The author also describes North Carolina's efforts, beginning in 1924, to develop the site as a state park. The book's extensive endnotes and bibliography reflect a great deal of solid research. Also included are illustrations, appendices, an index, and—

— unfortunately — too many typographical and grammatical slips. In *Fort Anderson: Battle for Wilmington*, Chris Fonvielle continues his efforts to document the history of the Lower Cape Fear region during the Civil War. Filled with excellent maps and photographs of soldiers, officers, ships, and battle scenes, this well-written paperback volume expands on one aspect of the author's recent book, *The Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope* (Savas, 1997). Begun in 1862 on the west side of the Cape Fear River at the site of colonial Brunswick Town, the extensive earthen defenses that came to be known as Fort Anderson were designed to protect Wilmington, one of the Confederacy's most important ports. Fort Anderson fell in February 1865 during an attack of Union naval and ground forces, an extensive action that sealed the fate of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia several months later. The author

briefly traces the history of the site since the end of the Civil War and describes the development of the Brunswick Town State Historic Site, which interprets both the colonial port and the Confederate fort. Fonvielle's endnotes and bibliography thoroughly document his lively narrative.

Public, academic and some school libraries, particularly those in the southern coastal area of the state, will want to consider adding these books to their collections. The story of Fort Anderson may be of broader interest to the general public.

— Maurice York  
East Carolina University



*Freedom's Altar* takes place in western North Carolina during the chaotic aftermath of the Civil War. The major characters are three returning soldiers who are attempting to rebuild their lives and come to terms with the past. One is Daniel McFee, who returns to the ruined plantation of his former owner, Madison Curtis, to start a farm after serving in the Union Army. Daniel struggles to reconcile his affection for his former owners with his anger at having been a slave. The second is Andy Curtis, the only survivor of Madison Curtis's three sons. He is unable to reconcile the weakness he sees in himself with the responsibilities he is forced to assume in order to ensure his family's survival. The third is Oliver Price, a common Confederate soldier, who returns to his family in northern Georgia only to find that his loyalty to the Curtis family and his moral convictions once again call him away from his sickly wife. The catalyst for the story is Nahum

Bellamy, who brought slaves and Union sympathizers across the border during the war and afterwards received an appointment to the Freedman's Bureau. Part fanatic and part opportunist, Bellamy is a radical Republican who seeks rights for former slaves as a means of consolidating personal power. He also engages in an illicit terrorist campaign against people he believes to have been war criminals, and singles out the Curtis family for persecution. Daniel cautiously sides with Bellamy, while Andy seeks assistance from Oliver to achieve safety for his family and bring Bellamy to justice.

Charles F. Price.

## ***Freedom's Altar.***

Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1999. 291 pp.  
Cloth, \$19.95. ISBN 0-89587-177-7.

*Freedom's Altar* is Price's second book about the Curtis family and their friends. His first, *Hiwassee: A Novel of the Civil War*, was published in 1996. Although *Freedom's Altar* is a sequel, it is possible to read and enjoy this book without having read the previous one.

Price successfully portrays the uncertainty and fragmentation of the Reconstruction period. His descriptions of competing social and political factions and their effects on the relatively isolated communities of western North Carolina are compelling. He is not as successful at character development, too often identifying the character's strengths and weaknesses without demonstrating them convincingly. Despite this failing, the evocation of the time and the place is vivid and readable. *Freedom's Altar* is recommended for public and academic libraries that collect Civil War stories and regional fiction.

— Amy K. Weiss  
Appalachian State University



General Bryan Grimes was an avid letter writer and this biography, the only full-length work available on his life, was written primarily from his correspondence to his father, brother, daughter, and second wife. Consequently, readers feel as if they get to know General Grimes as they journey through his life.

The book begins with Grimes's boyhood and student days at the University of North Carolina before the start of the war. In this first section are many references from letters between Grimes and his father concerning troubles with classes and other school mischief. The author concludes that the father wanted young Bryan to excel academically like his brother William and strive for a professional career, instead of spending his life farming the Grimesland Plantation as he himself had done. Bryan's chivalrous character emerges during this period, and reappears frequently throughout the book. One early instance was a confrontation with a fellow student that almost ended in a duel on the Chapel Hill campus, an unimaginable event today.

The majority of the book details Grimes's Civil War career in the 4th North Carolina Infantry Regiment, from his first action just after the Battle of 1st Manassas to his part in the Battle of Appomattox Court House and the eventual surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. Grimes's detailed letters aptly chronicle the history of the 4th North Carolina, which was made up of soldiers from Iredell, Rowan, Wayne, Davie, Wilson, and Beaufort counties. One of the more interesting aspects of

T. Harrell Allen.

## ***Lee's Last Major General: Bryan Grimes of North Carolina.***

Mason City, Iowa: Savas Publishing Company, 1999.  
347 pp. Cloth, \$24.95.  
ISBN 1-882810-23-6.



Grimes's career was his uncanny ability to dodge the bullet. On three separate occasions, Grimes had horses shot out from beneath him. His knapsack was once blown off his back by artillery fire, and on another occasion his brass belt buckle was shattered by a minie ball. His worst injury of the war came from being kicked in the foot by a horse, causing him to miss the battle of Antietam. Since no commissioned field officer from the 4th North Carolina survived Antietam, this injury may be said to have saved his life.

The book concludes with Grimes's return to civilian life and the troubles he faced as a former high-ranking Confederate officer. He was eventually murdered by William Parker, who was himself lynched eight years later, after bragging about the crime while drinking.

This book is a must for academic libraries and public libraries that emphasize the Civil War or North Carolina history in their collections, since at this time it is the only available biography on General Grimes. It is well written, has few typos, includes great photos and maps, and has an extensive bibliography and index. The author is the Director of Communications at East Carolina University. His previous publications are in the field of communications and the social sciences.

— Michael Seymour  
Rowan Public Library

**A**

t 38, Maggie Sweet Presson is still waiting for her "real life" to begin. Maggie lives in Poplar Grove, a small North Carolina town that must be just down the road from Clyde Edgerton's *Listre* (*Raney, Walking Across Egypt*). Poplar Grove is a place where everybody knows everybody else's business, and the slightest deviance from the established rules of conduct are not tolerated. Chic, short hairstyles, pierced body parts, and divorce — especially divorce — are simply unacceptable.

Whisked off to nursing school by her family just a few hours after graduating from high school, Maggie is unable to let the love of her life, Jerry Roberts, know what has happened to her. She trades nursing education for beauty school (Maggie is a true artist when it comes to precision cuts), but Jerry is gone, married to someone else. In her grief, she marries a man ten years her senior, and exchanges one child-parent relationship for another. Her husband, Steven, does monthly meal menus, cutting costs at every turn except when his hoity-toity mother visits. He spends the time he is at home locked in his study; he spends the vacation money for two cemetery plots, and, worst of all, he absolutely forbids her to work as a hair stylist. Now, after 19 years, Maggie is tired of always having to do the "right thing" and feeling guilty if she doesn't. Her family can't understand her unhappiness: her grandmother observes, "I think Maggie has gone and lost her simple mind. Why, she's got everything a body could want — a family, a house in the historical part of town, and that add-a-pearl necklace." Her twentieth high school reunion is approaching, and two events occur almost simultaneously that change her life forever. First she overhears Steven tell a female friend that he can host a committee meeting with refreshments at his house because "you already work too hard and good, old reliable Maggie doesn't have anything else to do." Then Jerry, in the midst of a divorce, returns to Poplar Grove.

In this slight, easy-to-read story, Judith Minthorn Stacy leads us through the small southern town version of the Stepford wives as Maggie and several of her friends strive to begin their "real lives." The resolution may be simplistic, but the motivations are all too real. Come on, Judith, give us a sequel—what's Maggie Sweet going to do next?

*Styles by Maggie Sweet* is Stacy's first novel and the winner of Banks Channel Books' Carolina Novel Award. It is recommended for all public and academic libraries.

— Suzanne Wise  
Appalachian State University

Judith Minthorn Stacy.

## ***Styles by Maggie Sweet.***

Wilmington: Banks Channel Books, 1999. 222 pp.  
Paper, \$12.00. ISBN 1-889199-03-6.

In this new text, Timothy J. Minchin, an historian from England whose research interests include the dynamic milieu of the labor market of the American South, takes a fresh look at the often contentious issue of racial discrimination in employment, along with the related areas of gender and unionism and their relationship to hiring practices by southern textile companies during the 1960s and 1970s. He expresses some provocative notions early on, declaring, for example, that Martin Luther King, Jr., failed in the 1960s in his belated attempt to wage a "war on poverty" in the North. He also alleges that the American Civil Rights Movement failed to embrace economic equality as a high priority issue — thus resulting in erroneous assumptions by scholars that "few economic gains were made by the Civil Rights Movement," and that a growing labor shortage in the textile industry could be seen as the main reason for the parallel rise of a racially mixed workforce.

Timothy J. Minchin.

***Hiring the Black Worker:  
The Racial Integration of the  
Southern Textile Industry,  
1960 – 1980.***

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.  
342 pp. Cloth, \$49.95. ISBN 0-8078-2470-4. Paper, \$19.95.  
ISBN 0-8078-4771-2.

Minchin goes on to demonstrate an alternative interpretation, linked to what he identifies as another major cause of racial integration — the impact of national Civil Rights legislation. Specifically, over the course of eight chapters, he builds a compelling case for his central argument that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibiting racial discrimination in employment) played a key role in removing barriers to job opportunities for African Americans in the South because it spurred litigation that ultimately mandated "color-blind" hiring by employers. Minchin makes judicious use of national labor statistics, data from voluminous records of class action lawsuits, and other documented resources, to show how textile companies finally had to admit African Americans into their workforce through the front door.

For example, he notes that one of the largest textile companies, Cannon Mills of Kannapolis, North Carolina, hired almost no Blacks before 1964, but had about 25% Blacks among its 22,000 workers by the early 1980s. He quotes from a statement made in 1982 by a Cannon Mills public relations agent regarding class action litigation: "This type of suit has been initiated against every major textile company ... so it's not the first of its kind."

Unfortunately, just as this trend toward racial integration in employment appeared to be assured for the foreseeable future, the southern textile industry began a decline in the 1980s, as Minchin acknowledges in an epilogue. The decline has been exacerbated by the 1993 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). With its required gradual elimination of tariff and quota protections, NAFTA has forced many manufacturing businesses, including textile companies, to close down, drastically reduce the labor force, or re-locate to cheaper labor markets outside the United States. Consequently, in recent years many Black textile workers have become personally familiar with another labor phenomenon: last hired, first fired.

This work includes extensive notes, bibliography, index, and seven pages of well-chosen illustrations. For academic libraries, larger public libraries, and special libraries containing labor information resources.

— Kathleen Murray  
Queens College

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In 1865, Jefferson Davis's attempt to flee Richmond in a train came to a sudden stop just twelve miles outside of the city; the locomotive pulling his train could not make the grade. In 1874, a group of railway executives followed that same route in a plush railway coach that took them from Richmond to Jacksonville, Florida. This remarkable transformation did not come easily; political intrigue, violence, and greed all played roles in the rise of a new southern railway system.

Prior to the Civil War, the South's railroads were a mishmash of independent lines that did not connect the region in any meaningful way, as the Confederate army discovered when it tried to supply Lee's Virginia armies from stores in Georgia and Alabama. Southerners had feared the establishment of a unified railway system, believing it would upset the economic system and loosen the hold of slavery.

Scott Nelson's book begins at the end of the war when displaced Confederate soldiers, Reconstruction politicians, and big northern railroads all vied for control of and financial gain from new railroad lines. Southern state legislatures, including North Carolina's, suddenly were willing to do whatever it took to promote the building of railroads, and former Confederate military officers found employment in the management ranks of these rail lines. Larger towns like Greensboro and Charlotte and many smaller communities became a new southern market for merchandise shipped from the North as railroads eased the shipment of goods.

The fervor of railroad building was not without its dark side. There were numerous acts of violence, intimidation, and savage brutality in places like Alamance County, North Carolina, and York County, South Carolina. Railroads

brought a great social change that threatened the pre-war power, labor, and economic structures. Nelson notes that the railroads provided a focal point for some of the Ku Klux Klan's most violent actions during Reconstruction.

*Iron Confederacies* focuses on the railroad development that occurred primarily in a corridor running from Atlanta through North and South Carolina to Richmond. Nelson, an associate professor of history at the College of William and Mary, has done meticulous research, much of it in original railroad documents, that brings to light the personalities and tensions that characterized the dramatic rise of southern railways. The text is complemented by an extensive notes section, an excellent index and bibliography, and a series of black-and-white maps and photographs. Although this book is not exclusively focused on North Carolina, it should be included in all comprehensive North Carolina collections and in any collections dealing with railroad and southern labor/social history.

— John Welch

State Library of North Carolina

Scott Reynolds Nelson.

## ***Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction.***

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

257 pages. Cloth, \$39.95. ISBN 0-8078-2476-3.

Paper, \$18.95. ISBN 0-8078-4803-4.

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## OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST ...

*The Keepers* is a collection of profiles of "Mountain folk holding on to old skills and talents" by Robert Isbell, with photographs by Arthur Tilley. Skills range from canning to herb gathering to storekeeping, talents from playacting to dulcimer playing to woodcarving. (1999; John F. Blair, Publisher, 1406 Plaza Dr., Winston-Salem, NC 27103; xi, 129 pp.; paper, \$16.95; ISBN 0-89587-180-7.)

Also on the western end of the state, Robert L. Williams has listed *100 Practically Perfect Places in the North Carolina Mountains*. This useful guidebook is divided in ten sections, covering the best of the mountains, waterfalls, cities and towns, educational sites, get-out-and-go places, scenic driving tours, churches, homes, lakes and streams, and graveyards. Illustrated with color and black-and-white photographs, it is not indexed. (1999; Southeastern Publishing Company, 3613 Dallas-Cherryville Rd., Dallas, NC 28034; xvi, 437 pp; paper, \$15.00 plus \$3.25 shipping and handling; ISBN 1-893330-CO-1.)

Moving east, Pat Garber, an environmental anthropologist, licensed wildlife rehabilitator, and author of *Ocracoke Wild*, returns with more ruminations about living in harmony with nature in *Ocracoke Odyssey: A Naturalist's Reflections on Her Home by the Sea*. (1999; Down Home Press, P.O. Box 4126, Asheboro, NC 27204; 226 pp.; paper, \$14.95; ISBN 1-878086-70-7.)

A little further down the coast, Betsy Brodie Roberts has documented a completely different category of wildlife in *Wilmington Films and Locations: Movie Power in North Carolina*. She includes television movies and series as well as feature films, and provides separate indexes for locations, actors, and directors. (1999; Business Connections Group, 421 Pettigrew Dr., Wilmington, NC 28412; 121 pp.; paper, \$15.00; ISBN 0-9640857-2-0.)

The fourth installment in M. L. Stainer's Lyon Saga is *The Lyon's Throne*. Lost Colonist Jessabel Archade and her Indian husband and friends are captured by Spanish pirates, rescued by an English ship, and transported to London, where Jess seeks an audience with Elizabeth I. Previous books in this series of historical fiction for ages 10 and older were reviewed in the Fall 1998 and Spring 1999 issues. (1999; Chicken Soup Press, P.O. Box 164, Circleville, NY 10919; 153 pp.; cloth, \$9.95; ISBN 1-893337-01-4.)

The Institute of Government announces new editions of several useful publications. Order from Publications Sales Office, Institute of Government, CB #3330 Knapp Building, UNC at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3330.

*County Government in North Carolina*, 4th edition, edited by A. Fleming Bell, II, and Warren Jake Wicker, updates the 1989 edition with expanded coverage of water and sewer services and new sections on airports, off-street parking, public transportation, aging programs, registers of deeds, and community colleges. (1999; xi, 994 pp.; paper, \$36.00; ISBN 1-56011-331-6.)

*Legislative Zoning Decisions: Legal Aspects*, 2nd edition, by David W. Owens, treats new developments in North Carolina's laws since the book's initial publication in 1993. (1999; x, 434 pp.; paper, \$36.00; ISBN 1-56011-341-3.)

*Suggested Rules of Procedure for Small Local Government Boards*, 2nd edition, by A. Fleming Bell, II, updates *Suggested Rules of Procedure for Small Governing Boards*, by Bonnie E. Davis, now out of print. It reflects the requirements of North Carolina's open meetings law and updates and enlarges treatment of several other subjects. (1998; vi, 38 pp.; paper, \$8.50; ISBN 1-56011-319-7.)

Finally, *Punishments for North Carolina Crimes and Motor Vehicle Offenses*, by John Rubin and Ben F. Loeb, Jr., was last updated in 1995. (1999; vii, 124 pp.; paper, \$15.00; ISBN 1-56011-359-6.)