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# Gulf South Historical Review

Vol. 20

No. 2

The Journal of the Gulf South Historical Association



**TWENTY FOURTH  
GULF SOUTH HISTORY AND HUMANITIES  
CONFERENCE  
WITH SPECIAL THEME SESSIONS ON  
HISTORY AND RELIGION IN THE GULF SOUTH**

**October 6 - 8, 2005  
Pensacola Beach, Florida**

The Gulf South History and Humanities Conference is an annual event sponsored by the Gulf South Historical Association, a consortium of Gulf South colleges and universities including the University of South Alabama, the University of West Florida, Pensacola Junior College, the University of Southern Mississippi, Southeastern Louisiana University, Texas Christian University, and Texas A&M Galveston.

The 24<sup>th</sup> Gulf South History and Humanities Conference, hosted by the University of West Florida, on beautiful Pensacola Beach, welcomes all researchers and scholars to propose papers, panels, roundtables, performances and workshops exploring all aspects of the history and cultures of the Gulf South and Carribean Basin.

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A complete list of conference sessions and topics will be mailed to each registrant in the first week of September, 2005.

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# Gulf South Historical Review

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# **“If it weren’t for bad luck I’d have no luck at all”: NASCAR, Southern Boosterism, and Deep South Culture in Talladega, Alabama**

Jeff Frederick

In 1969, CBS introduced the nation to *Hee Haw*, a corn pone country and western variety hour designed to be a cross between the *Grand Ole Opry* and *Laugh-In*. Hosted by Roy Clark and Buck Owens and featuring a cast of Southerners including Minnie Pearl, Grandpa Jones, and Junior Samples, the show was a surprising hit on the network for two years, and lasted for two more decades in syndication. With little alternative except *The Lawrence Welk Show* in an electronic world comprised of three channels, countless youngsters tumbled out of their Saturday night bath just in time to watch the show. The show had something for everyone: mama sang along with the Hager Twins; daddy tried not to stare too long at the *Hee Haw* honeys; and the children knew both might get distracted long enough not to send them to bed. A recurring musical comedy bit, “If it weren’t for bad luck I’d have no luck at all,” lampooned the hard luck themes of country songs.

In the same year that *Hee Haw* debuted, the Alabama International Motor Speedway in Talladega, Alabama, held its inaugural race. The birth of the speedway is replete with southern themes: the quest for economic diversification, inside deals from government figures, powerful business elites resisting unionization, and the path toward modernity for a sleepy Deep South community. The first race also foreshadowed many issues that would characterize the rise of NASCAR to a major sports and entertainment spectacle: mass marketing, the ruthless leadership of Bill France, engine and tire wars, and the dichotomy between breaking speed records and keeping drivers safe. But for many in Alabama, the rise of the speedway seemed to borrow liberally from the *Hee Haw* song of woe. Every step of the way from site selection through the inaugural race weekend, issues and events seemed to conspire to keep Alabama—a state that needed to escape its image of massive resistance in the worst way—from having its day in the sun.

In 1960 when Alabama was beginning to earn its badge of civil rights infamy, Talladega County, located in the central portion of the state forty miles or so east of Birmingham, boasted a population of just over sixty-five thousand. Few people outside of the state could

At the same time that Hardwick was spearheading various municipal improvement schemes, NASCAR patriarch Bill France was seeking to expand his own borders. France had been the driving force in the transformation of stock car racing from good ole boys with bad-boy moonshining reputations driving on sand and dirt tracks to the mass-marketed, corporate sponsor driven, entertainment extravaganza it would become. France came to Daytona, Florida, in 1934 with a wife and young son. Through his interaction with customers at his Amoco Station and his own passion, France began to promote racing. By 1947, a formal organization was in the offing and on February 18, 1948, the first official NASCAR race was held. Within a few years, France, with the able assistance of his wife Anne, had lined up a few national sponsors, largely by promoting a “win on Sunday, sell on Monday” ethos. France cobbled together expense money for some drivers, cajoled sponsors to stay committed even when gruesome accidents took the lives of drivers and spectators, and worked ceaselessly to build a flagship speedway at Daytona. France could be compassionate, thoughtful, ruthless, or dictatorial; more than anything he was driven. Perhaps his greatest skill was subsuming the crass commercialism of the sport, despite the elaborate track signs and car decals that proliferate, and perpetuating a down-home, just-folks, romantic past that tugs on the heartstrings of blue collar fans. The reality is that NASCAR’s roots are not exclusively southern or rural; France himself was from Washington, D.C., and the first races he ever saw were in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland. “For every unreconstructed rebel back then,” author John Douglas Miller reminds, “there was a clean cut Yankee; for every moonshiner in overalls, a Detroit businessman in a suit—one just never hears about these less colorful personalities.” The massive 2.5 mile track at Daytona opened in 1959; two years later NASCAR racing was on network television, and the sport began its transition from southern fascination to national obsession.<sup>4</sup>

Daytona was the most exciting track on the NASCAR circuit, the Super Bowl of stock car racing long before football had dreamed of such an extravaganza. But France, never satisfied, wanted something bigger, something better, something faster. He commissioned Fonty Flock, part of a legendary Alabama racing family, to find a suitable site for a new superspeedway. France had some clear ideas about the land he wanted: a place where local and state officials would provide access roads and keep taxes low, and where millions of people were within three hundred miles. At the same time Flock was

Wallace's awesome power and popularity were very important to the ultimate construction of the speedway. "No question," Jim Freeman, Executive Director of the International Motor Sports Hall of Fame recalled four decades later, "that George Wallace is the reason why the speedway is in Alabama." Bill France instantly realized that gaining Wallace's support was a key consideration to the project becoming reality. Reflecting the slick business acumen which belied NASCAR's hillbilly public image, France brought a comprehensive marketing portfolio, "Racing is fun at Daytona," and stressed the way one of his speedway's could reshape Talladega's future. He offered the governor exclusive use of his private aircraft to come and tour the impressive Daytona facilities, all the while promising that Talladega would be bigger, faster, and better. "It wouldn't have been possible without the Governors Wallace," France reminded reporters a week before the groundbreaking and less than two weeks after George's wife and successor, Lurleen, died of cancer. Wallace appointed Beard to be the liaison between the state and NASCAR and communicated regularly with Highway Director Herman Nelson to make sure road work was progressing. "Let's get this done soon," Wallace wrote to Beard, reflecting the importance of the project to Alabama.<sup>8</sup>

Wallace's relationship with France paid personal dividends as well. France was a supporter and contributor to Wallace's presidential campaigns. "George Washington founded this country," France bellowed during the 1968 election, "and George Wallace will save it." Wallace's characterizations of law and order, Vietnam War pronouncements, and anti-federal government diatribes found good purchase in the fertile soil of the blue collar racing community. A crowd of seventy thousand at the Darlington Speedway waved Confederate Flags and cheered Wallace's stump speech with glee. A few of the NASCAR drivers sported Wallace decals on their race cars. In 1972, France served as Wallace's Florida Campaign Coordinator and provided photo opportunities for Wallace and his new wife Cornelia at the Daytona complex. Cornelia even took a spin around the speedway in a pace car.<sup>9</sup>

With Wallace on board to help land the speedway, the focus turned back to local efforts to secure financing, gain Federal Aviation Administration approval to modify the local airport, and patch together a thousand different details before the first spade could be turned. With Hardwick and George Jones assisting, O. V. Hill became the point man for clearing obstacles out of the way. France understood Talladega's desire to land the speedway was the centerpiece of its push toward economic modernity. With that leverage, he held out the possibility of

impression on him." The meeting, promoted by the local Exchange Club, was packed and, though France tried unsuccessfully to reign in his enthusiasm, he could not contain himself. "This speedway is still not official—it's in the working stages.... I see, at this point in the planning, nothing to keep it from being built. The main thing we need to know now is how to finance the project. If you have any suggestions, I want to know about them."<sup>13</sup>

Even as the speedway seemed to be back on track, some local citizens were grumbling. Some property owners, such as J. C. Hooper, objected to the condemnation of private property through eminent domain to garner additional acreage for parking. "I have been led to believe," Hooper wrote George Wallace, "that you are against controls or take over of civil liberties, such as taking over of a person's private property.... A private enterprise, through the help of some money grabbing land developers and the city officials of Talladega, are attempting to take over private property for an auto race track through condemnation." Hopper, sure that Wallace would sympathize with his concerns about excessive government power, was crestfallen when he learned his property was gone in the name of progress: "It is very disappointing to find out that the political leaders of Alabama have allowed the state...to take away the civil liberties of private citizens.... I feel that if such action is allowed to take place, Alabama is following in the footsteps of the 'Great Society' by taking the property and rights of our citizens."<sup>14</sup>

Despite the complaints, the speedway project proceeded. While financing options were being explored, newly elected Congressman Bill Nichols assisted in negotiating FAA approval. Since the old runway was being converted to a parking lot, authorization to build a new seven-thousand-foot runway and passenger terminal was required. Another minor complication involved getting a release from the Department of Defense since the old airstrip was officially still licensed for military use. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the runways had been used as a minor Air Force operations center. Skillful preparation by city attorneys, the economic impact of the speedway, and Nichols's influence made the aviation issues relatively easy to overcome.<sup>15</sup>

France was so convinced the project was progressing he began lobbying Wallace and other political stakeholders to use his proposed facility for vehicle inspections. "You are probably aware," France wrote state senator Pat Vacca, "of the major speedway and testing facility being developed for the city of Talladega. I hope to make the Talladega plant the country's most modern and comprehensive testing

In front of inquiring reporters, the interested parties downplayed the recent turn of events. "We think that we've gotten most of the obstacles answered," France declared. Hardwick was equally upbeat, declaring a one in three chance of securing the bond financing before the expiration date: "If the deadline for getting tax exempt bonds goes by, we'll travel another route. I'd say the project is more alive today than it has ever been." Hill's passionate appeals to the Talladega County Commission for the road money resulted in a resolution pledging to "use our best efforts to improve and construct the public access roads in the vicinity of the speedway area." The letter-of-intent, however, was non-binding.<sup>19</sup>

Optimism notwithstanding, the bond financing deal fell apart at the March 15 deadline, placing the speedway project in jeopardy of total collapse. By now, Hill had emerged as the key Talladega area leader on the project. "The people involved in this transaction," he dejectedly moaned, "weighed the advantages and disadvantages and have decided not to go the bond route." Despite the gloomy news, Hill kept a stiff upper lip: "Bill (France) told me this morning that he would designate an alternative proposal for financing within a week or ten days.... This does not mean that we are not going to build this racetrack." Just days later, the project, and the community, suffered another tremendous loss; O. V. Hill died from a massive heart attack.<sup>20</sup>

Two months after Hill's death, France and his attorneys developed a private financing plan. The Talladega city commission passed three resolutions to complete the deal: 814 acres were deeded to Daytona International Incorporated in exchange for a new six-thousand-foot jet runway; a city option on adjacent land was transferred to the speedway; and 155 additional acres were leased for parking. Hardwick promised France the city would not single out the speedway for any additional taxes on concessions, tickets, or land use. Official documents were signed at the Talladega National Bank and the speedway, despite nearly four years of fits and starts, was one week away from its official groundbreaking. The Alabama sports community was thrilled. "Here friends," *Birmingham News* sports writer Benny Marshall chirped, "is the kind of BIG money for Alabama that usually has Chamber of Commerce folks doing handstands in the streets. My hats off to the Talladegans who were willing to dream along with NASCAR's Bill France, and whose efforts are about to bring tourists and dollars into here in bunches like bananas." Exhausted by the drama, France told reporters that Talladega was probably his last major project.<sup>21</sup>

The May 1968 groundbreaking was a festive event which brought momentary closure to the difficult events of the previous four years. Executives from Firestone, Goodyear, Union Oil, Ford, Chrysler, and other national firms attended. Governor Albert Brewer-Lurleen Wallace had succumbed to cancer just days before—sent three members of his personal staff and cabinet. Crowd estimates ranged from two hundred to twelve hundred, and the assembled throng viewed the outline of the speedway and new airport through smoke-bomb marked boundaries. Colorful racing banners and flags lined the dais. Paul “Bear” Bryant, University of Alabama football coach and the most popular man in the state save George Wallace, was invited. Peggy Luker, Miss Talladega High, Hardwick, and NASCAR commissioner Harley Earl thrust silver shovels in the earth while the Talladega High School band serenaded the luminaries. France paid tribute to the local organizers by announcing the first feature race, to be held September 14, 1969, would be called the Talladega 500, and indicated the main grandstand would be named in honor of Hill. It was a true mixture of progress and tradition, Alabama folk culture and big business. Alabamians, castigated across the nation for the better part of a decade for violence against civil rights protestors, were about to have their day in the sun.<sup>22</sup>

Predictably, Talladegans were busting their buttons with pride. “The average Talladegan,” local reporter Anne Plott observed, “seems to be walking a little taller these days and there is an air of optimism around the city.” An un-named realtor confided to Plott that his business was already looking up: “We’re getting the attention of national corporations...chains that wouldn’t even look at us before.” Another local businessman, Jimmy Naff, was equally bullish: “Growth begets growth. Once you start the ball rolling, you have momentum.” Indeed, a record number of building permits were filed in July, 1968. August retail sales in the city increased 19.4 percent over the same month in 1967. Once construction began, France did nothing to dissuade the optimism: “I personally know of several large industries very interested in moving into Talladega County in the very near future. I have brought their representatives here to visit and look the area over.” Optimistic Speedway Corporation estimates suggested that the local economy would enjoy a \$5.5 million annual impact. By mid 1969, the area was awash in new construction including a hospital, two church additions, a municipal complex, new water and sewer systems, and an addition to an elementary school, with four million dollars worth of low income housing in the planning stage. Talladegans were convinced they were on the fast track to a Modern South Creed: small

Hardwick worried that Wallace's candidacy would result in a victory for Richard Nixon, thereby jeopardizing the city's chance at landing a federal building in its new municipal complex.<sup>26</sup>

And local politics pivoted around the speedway as well. Some local decisions reflected city pride for its multi-million dollar development. Hardwick championed a new city slogan—Talladega the Fastest Name in Racing—and city seal, an aerial view of the speedway. The airport water tower was emblazoned with the words “Talladega Speedway.” Other local issues were more contentious. The city commission wanted the speedway to be officially incorporated into the city limits, a plan that would require city fire and police protection of the complex and adjacent industrial parks. Even though he suspected incorporation would eventually lead to higher taxes, France did not initially reject the idea. Instead, he asked the city to delay any recommendation on the matter until he could study it further. Hardwick inadvertently revealed the limits of his power to pursue incorporation; if France was against it, he pledged to table the matter. Under Alabama's archaic constitution which prevented localities from making these types of decisions without the legislature's imprimatur, an incorporation bill had to be advertised publicly for four weeks. State senator Kyser Leonard was also willing to defer to France: “Frankly, I don't know if Bill France wants to come into the city limits. I don't think it would be fair to take in a private property owner without consulting his wishes.” With the legislative session winding down, France hoped to skirt the issue by delaying his decision until the clock had run out. When local incorporation advocates demanded action, France declared his opposition: “I just think that it would be a mistake to come into the city at this time—maybe in a few years. I have worked and worked, talking to everyone I come in contact with, to sell Talladega as a place with promise. I've tried to influence several industries and some have appeared interested.... But if they do this (incorporation), they will lose me as a salesman.” The next day the city announced it would not push for incorporation and thirty-four years later the speedway remained outside of the city limits.<sup>27</sup>

Another matter, Talladega County's plan to slap a fifty cent levy per race ticket, caused even more friction. When the county commission began considering the plan, France called any potential tax “shortsighted,” and expressed shock that “anyone would even think of a such a thing.” Probate Judge Joe Phillips was equally surprised at France's comment since the two had discussed a possible tax a year earlier. As with the incorporation issue, Hardwick came to France's

into the 33 degree north turn and onto the front straight with its trioval bend of 18 degrees and again past the start/finish line.” Ticket brochures also featured the idea that this track was different than any other layouts: “Think about it. Fifty rumbling, roaring NASCAR Grand National stockers blasting down the longest straights in stock car racing...then dipping three abreast into the steepest banks in the business at better than 180 miles per hour! The toughest, bravest, and fastest drivers in the world battling each other for 500 miles...fighting heat and fatigue...pushing their machines to the limit and sometimes beyond.” The promotional material promised a day at Talladega “may be the most exciting day of your life.” In an era where nondescript, cookie-cutter stadiums–facilities in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh were hardly different than venues in St. Louis or Cincinnati–were being built for Major League baseball teams, France had vowed to make Talladega something distinctive from other tracks on the NASCAR circuit. And race fans were paying attention.<sup>30</sup>

By late July, France declared the track 92 percent complete and testing sessions were scheduled. Lee Roy Yarborough and Alabama native Donnie Allison, Ford drivers both, were the first to take to the track. Team owner Junior Johnson, a former driver whose rural background helped shape much of NASCAR’s good ole boy public image, surveyed the track and summed up his expectations: “The speeds they will reach this week in the tests will be very close to what they will get in the race. I would say the cars will reach 200 mph during a race....” The key question for reporters, drivers, team owners, and manufacturers was simple: can the cars and tires take the stress of those speeds for 500 miles? “If anyone has a machine that will run the track,” an optimistic Chuck Blanchard of Goodyear contended, “Goodyear will have a tire.” Even so, Blanchard and his colleagues brought 150 different tires in order to find one that was safe. And tire concerns were nothing new. For years, faster cars and more daring tracks had pushed speed often to the detriment of driver and spectator safety. According to historian Dan Pierce, “tire technology had not kept pace.” After a 1964 Atlanta race saw only a quarter of the drivers finish the race, Junior Johnson summarized the problem: “We haven’t learned enough to keep the cars handling safely at the speeds we can travel. And the tire companies are having trouble developing compounds that will give adequate tire wear.” After running a few laps at Talladega, Yarborough and Allison were less convinced than Blanchard, and pronounced the track “not ready.” Yarborough, who set an unofficial speed record of 195.7 mph on one of his laps, was convinced the track

exemplified by Richard Petty's twenty-seven victories that year in a Plymouth. Ford answered back in 1968 with a redesigned Torino and Mercury Cyclone, both of which ran considerably faster than the Chrysler entrees in most sanctioned events. Chrysler responded by dramatically reshaping its Dodge Charger with a taper nose and two foot rear wing which gave the car a high-tech look. The curious looking tail spoiler helped earn the new cars the moniker, "SuperBird." Petty, unaccustomed to having one of the slower cars on race day, wanted in on the new Charger, named Dodge Daytona. Curiously, Dodge officials were reluctant to let Petty drive the vehicle, even though as a Plymouth man he was in the Chrysler family. Upset at the in-house squabbling, Petty bolted for Ford, severing a ten-year relationship with Plymouth. "Ford has a vast storehouse of knowledge," he explained, "much more than Chrysler. If I could get a better deal I'd take it. Even if I was working in a supermarket.... I honestly feel like the potential for winning more money and races is much, much greater with Ford."<sup>34</sup>

"Chargin' Charlie" Glotzbach first tested the Superbird in Chelsea, Michigan, turning a lap in excess of 193 mph and convincing Chrysler engineers that the new design was as fast as they had hoped. By the time Buddy Baker and Bobby Allison arrived in Talladega for additional testing, Chrysler had decided to enter the new vehicle in the inaugural race. Both Baker and Allison were amazed at the combination of the Alabama speedway and the Daytona car." It's superdooper," Allison beamed about the car, "I think the fin is a big contributing factor to the way the car felt in the turns. The car felt extremely good." Allison predicted qualifying speeds during race week could shatter the 200 mph barrier, but was not enthusiastic about the track: "[It] has great big holes.... I mean great big holes. The asphalt starts out thick, then gets thinner and thinner. Where the machine was refilled, it's thick again. You know what, that caused great big dips every few feet all the way around the track."<sup>35</sup>

In the midst of mounting track concerns, another complicating factor crept closer to center stage: labor issues involving a union of NASCAR drivers. The Professional Drivers Association, led by president Richard Petty, was organized on August 14, 1969, at a meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Petty enumerated three goals for the fledgling PDA: "A retirement plan and insurance plan for drivers, a formation of a uniform purse structure, and driver and crew convenience at tracks." Beyond these simple hopes, drivers hoped to wrest some greater control over their profession from France. A

tearing up over there on the fourth corner. I don't know why. Maybe it's the base. But when you go in that corner, something like 5000 pounds are on that right front wheel. That keeps digging it up. Maybe they were in too big a hurry to get a race in. Its just so rough you don't know whether its going to tear the wheel out from under you or not."As Goodyear and Firestone scrambled to find a tire capable of handling speeds up to 220 mph on the straightaways, it became increasingly clear this was more than a minor issue. Off the record, some drivers feared more than just tire damage. "If you hit a pothole going 200 mph," one anonymous driver noted, "there isn't a tire in the world that will hold up." Petty expressed similar concerns: "It's better not to race at all than to race and know some of us aren't going to come back."<sup>38</sup>

In fact, tires had worn thin after as few as two laps on the trioval. "As much as I hate to admit it," one anonymous tire company official admitted, "the tires just won't withstand the pressure of running 200 mph. This is a whole new realm for us and it shows." Firestone, convinced it did not have a product that could withstand the rigor, announced it was withdrawing from the race. As Goodyear was nearing a similar decision, France called a news conference and admitted the track had problems, but denied Firestone was pulling out, assured reporters that Goodyear was sending new tires to the track, and promised that the race would be run. "I don't know what caused the cuts in the tires," the NASCAR baron bellowed. "They seem more prevalent on the right side than on the left side. Tomorrow we'll conduct a minute inspection of the track to see if any foreign objects are on the track." Though he admitted the tire companies had not had adequate time to prepare for the intensity of racing at Talladega, France stopped short of admitting the tire issue was a major problem. "That," *Birmingham News* reporter Clyde Bolton averred, "was the optimistic statement of the decade." Mere moments from throwing in the towel, Goodyear official Chuck Blanchard, manager of stock car operations, announced that his firm's top two tire experts were en route to investigate the problem and find a suitable solution. In the end, no additional testing was conducted and both tire companies told drivers to stay below the 190 mph threshold.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time France was conducting his press conference, PDA drivers were meeting in the garage area to discuss their options. France initially attempted to crash the meeting but was confronted by driver Cale Yarborough. "Where do you think you're going?" the fiery South Carolinian challenged. "This is a driver's meeting and only

drivers are coming in.” Motivated both by safety concerns and a desire for greater control over their profession, the drivers voted on Friday September 12—two days before the inaugural race—to boycott the Talladega 500. “We stick our neck out every time we race,” Petty declared, “we aren’t foolish enough to play Russian roulette. The track is rough and dangerous.” In fact the track was so uneven that some drivers were reluctant to drive aggressively. Fifty-four miles per hour separated the qualifying speed of the Glotzbach and Henley Gray. Attempts to convince France to postpone the race fell on deaf ears. France suggested the drivers keep their speed around 180 mph. Petty countered such a strategy would be unfair to the race fans who had been promised 200 mph speeds and understood that once the race had started, drivers would be unable to moderate their instinct to push the throttle through the floor board and race-to-win.<sup>40</sup>

The prospect of no racing on Sunday or an event without Petty and Pearson and the Yarboroughs and Allisons was yet one final obstacle in the arduous path of Talladega’s genesis. Time after time, from site selection to financing to construction, all the way to race week, it appeared that the Talladega community and the State of Alabama would be frustrated in their attempts at economic development, civic boosterism, and a race day in the sunshine. Some had to feel cursed. Some had to feel the nation would never look past Bull Connor and his dogs and hoses to see that Alabama was more than cotton plantations, night riders, and moonshiners. The ghosts of Alabama history are powerful forces, locking the state into a cycle of inferiority, even as Helen Keller, Bear Bryant, and Hank Williams gave the state’s rich and poor, black and white occasional injections of self esteem. Were the ghosts at work in Talladega?

The Saturday ‘Bama 400, featuring the smaller engines, lighter weights, and slower speeds of Grand Touring class cars, was completed without incident. The race featured only three cautions—because of oil spills and blown engines—and no serious spin-outs or wrecks. Thirty-seven-year-old Ken Rush, in his first year of big track racing, piloted his Camaro to a first place finish over Wayne Andrews in his Mercury Cougar. When a night’s sleep left the Grand national drivers no more interested in racing on Sunday, France, still clinging to the idea of running at reduced speed, ordered the garage area cleared of the rebellious drivers. “Who is to say,” Petty noted, “what the racing speed would be on this or any other track. To win, it might require us to race at 190 or 195 mph, and all of us are here to race to win. We contend that the track is not safe at the speed we would be required

feet and college students stacked beer cans as proof of their youthful accomplishments. Don Schissler, an engineer from Wayne State University, prepared to race when only days earlier no spot would have been available. Bill Ward, the Anniston insurance agent who gave France the idea for an Alabama track, savored the possibility of sweet revenge over France by winning the Talladega 500. Ward had run a respectable ninth place in the "Bama 400."<sup>43</sup>

The common link between the Talladega city fathers who saw the track as a future pot of gold, France and the NASCAR officials, the drivers, mechanics and car owners, and the fans in the stands, was the color of their skin. Four decades after the inaugural race weekend at Talladega, NASCAR has begun to cultivate minority interest in the sport. But in the late 1960s as Southeastern conference football and basketball teams began to move across the color line, NASCAR remained a sport peopled by white folk who reveled in a mythology that stressed Deep South roots, moonshine drivers speeding away from unwanted government intervention, and personal competition that served to define masculinity. Blacks were not excluded from the race, but they were not welcomed either. Because most of the fastest factory racers were gone and the so much of the field was comprised of Grand Touring cars, the Talladega 500 was the safest race of the entire NASCAR season. No holes were found in the track; no cars spun sideways; no crashes marred the race; only seven cautions flags were unfurled. Brickhouse led for thirty-three laps, including the final eleven, averaged a pedestrian, 153.778 per lap, and earned his first and only Grand National victory. His only foible was scratching his number 99 Superbird, Charlie Glotzbach's car, on a fence as he pulled into victory lane. NASCAR officials and driver Bill Ward claimed he drove his Camaro in both the "Bama 400 and Talladega 500 on the same set of tires. Six hundred eleven airplanes landed at the new airport without incident and only one serious traffic accident was reported on the newly constructed thoroughfares. An ebullient France could not resist taking a poke at the thirty drivers who boycotted the event: "I have a saying for them. Cannonball Adler, the first commissioner of NASCAR told it to me: a winner never quits and a quitter never wins." His commentary, carried over the public address system, resulted in a spontaneous burst of applause and rebel yells that even surpassed the roar for favorite son George Wallace.<sup>44</sup>

France's partners were also eager to claim victory. "Approximately two years ago," Bill Moss crowed, "Bill France came to us and requested we build him the fastest speedway in the world. This past

made NASCAR racing more big business than rural experimentation. The new speedway finally lived up to its intended reputation as the fastest track and wildest racing on the NASCAR circuit, and unsafe pavement conditions became a distant memory. Bill Elliot turned the fastest lap in NASCAR history, 212 mph, at Talladega. By 2003, two annual race weeks at Talladega meant some 170,000 visitors to the area, and race fans consumed over 500 tons of ice, 24,000 soft drinks, 76,000 bottles of water, 40,000 hamburgers, and 46,000 hot dogs on feature race day. Sixteen garbage trucks are required to haul away the 700 tons of accumulated trash.<sup>47</sup>

In the end, Alabama had something to take pride in, Bill France had built another impressive piece of the NASCAR empire, and drivers, like it or not, had a track unlike any other. "It's pretty much hell," driver Dale Jarrett noted. "Anybody that tells you it's not the most nerve-racking place we race, they haven't been up in that lead pack and been a part of what goes on." Mark Martin expressed similar sentiment to author Paul Hemphill for his 1997 book *Wheels*: "The last four times I've raced here, I've had three wrecks, and I decided just recently that I'm not real crazy about coming to Talladega. It's great for the race fans, understand. They love it, with the side-by-side racing and everybody bunched together, that big track and the competition, but it's scary and it's dangerous."<sup>48</sup>

Despite the popularity of the events at Talladega, the civic boosterism and economic visions of Mayor Hardwick, O. V. Hill, and the rest of the city fathers remained largely unfulfilled. Though NASCAR, France, and Governor George Wallace worked together again to construct the International Motor Sports Hall of Fame, the area never received the financial windfall so many zealots predicted in the 1960s. As early as one day after the inaugural race, the *Talladega Daily Home* reported the community had received little in the way of a major economic boom during the race week. By 1990, the population of Talladega County had only increased by 8,612 people from the mid 1960s, a far cry from predictions that the county would grow into a juggernaut. The testing and manufacturing industries that were thought to be sure bets for the area never came. Few of the national industries, once thought to be on the verge of relocating to Talladega, built facilities. On the track, Richard Brickhouse was a pariah among his peers. Despite being partially funded by France in 1970 as gratitude for racing in 1969, Brickhouse gradually faded from view until he was back running North Carolina short tracks by 1978.<sup>49</sup>

International Speedway," undated, Alabama Development Office Records, SG007662, ADAH.

<sup>7</sup>Bill Nichols to Bill France, August 11, 1965, Alabama Development Office Records, SG005085, ADAH; Letter from George Jones to Leonard Beard, August 11, 1965, Alabama Development Office Records, SG005085, ADAH; Jeff Frederick, "Command and Control: George Wallace, Governor of Alabama, 1963-1972," (Ph.D. diss., Auburn University, 2003), 80-83, 242-45, 300-301.

<sup>8</sup>Interview, Freeman; "Racing is Fun at Daytona," NASCAR Marketing Portfolio, Alabama Development Office Records, SG005085, ADAH; Bill France to George Wallace, August 23, 1965, Administrative Files of Governor George C. Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; Bill France to George Wallace, January 25, 1966, Administrative Files of Governor George C. Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; *Birmingham News*, May 16, 1968; Memorandum from George Wallace to Herman Nelson, September 6, 1967, Administrative Files of Governor George C. Wallace, SG22427, ADAH; Memorandum from George Wallace to Leonard Beard, August 27, 1965, Alabama Development Office Records, SG005085, ADAH.

<sup>9</sup>*Talladega Daily Home*, September 3, 1968; Frederick, "Command and Control: George Wallace, Governor of Alabama, 1963-1972," 570-73.

<sup>10</sup>*Talladega Daily Home*, October 19, 1966.

<sup>11</sup>Bill Nichols to George Wallace, January 21, 1966, Administrative Files of Governor George C. Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; George Wallace to Bill France, January 21, 1966, Administrative Files of Governor George C. Wallace, SG22450, ADAH.

<sup>12</sup>Bill France to George Wallace, January 25, 1966, Administrative Files of Governor George C. Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; George Wallace to Bill France, January 28, 1966, Administrative Files of Governor George C. Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; Acts of Alabama, Special Session 1967 (Montgomery, AL, 1967), 157-58; *Birmingham News*, September 4, 1966; *Talladega Daily Home*, September 5, 1966.

<sup>13</sup>*Talladega Daily Home*, October 14, October 18, October 19, 1966.

<sup>14</sup>J. C. Hopper to George Wallace, November 7, 1966, Administrative Files of Governor George C. Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; J. C. Hopper to Lurleen Wallace, May 12, 1967, Administrative Files of Governor Lurleen Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; Lurleen Wallace to J. C. Hopper, May 31, 1967, Administrative Files of Governor Lurleen Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; Interview, Carlan.

<sup>15</sup>Bill Nichols to Chester Bowers, Director of Airport Services, Federal Aviation Administration, December 20, 1967, Bill Nichols Papers, ACC 85-1, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections, Auburn, Alabama; James Rogers, Federal Aviation Administration, to Bill Nichols, January 17, 1968, Bill Nichols Papers, ACC 85-1, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections; *Talladega Daily Home*, August 29, 1969.

<sup>16</sup>Paschal P. Vacca to Bill France, April 21, 1967, Administrative Files of Governor Lurleen Wallace, SG22450, ADAH; Bill France to Pat Vacker [sic], April 19, 1967, Administrative Files of Governor Lurleen Wallace, SG22450,

Archives and Special Collections; Talladega Ticket Brochure, undated in 1969, Bill Nichols Papers, ACC 85-1, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections.

<sup>31</sup>*Talladega Daily Home*, July 24, August 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1969; Dan Pierce, "The Most Southern Sport on Earth: NASCAR and the Unions," *Southern Cultures* 7, no. 2 (Summer, 2001): 22-24.

<sup>32</sup>*Talladega Daily Home*, August 16, 17, 19, 30, and September 20, 1969; "Thirty Years after Hurricane Camille: Lessons Learned, Lessons Lost," (<http://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/pielke/camille/>); Gene Granger, "The Boycott of Talladega," unpublished document, McCaig-Wellborn International Motor Sports Research Library, Talladega, Alabama.

<sup>33</sup>Granger, "The Boycott of Talladega," 1-2; Pierce, "The Most Southern Sport on Earth," 24-26; *Talladega Daily Home*, August 16, 19, and 22, 1969.

<sup>34</sup>"The Famed Wing Cars Dodge Daytona and Plymouth Superbirds," unpublished document, McCaig-Wellborn International Motor Sports Research Library; *Talladega Daily Home*, August 22, September 8, 1969.

<sup>35</sup>"The Famed Wing Cars Dodge Daytona and Plymouth Superbirds," unpublished document, McCaig-Wellborn International Motor Sports Research Library; *Talladega Daily Home*, August 22, 23, 26, 29, and 30, 1969.

<sup>36</sup>Granger, "The Boycott of Talladega," 1-2; Pierce, "The Most Southern Sport on Earth: NASCAR and the Unions," 15-18; *Birmingham News*, September 14, 1969.

<sup>37</sup>Granger, "The Boycott of Talladega," 3; *Talladega Daily Home*, February 25, 28, September 6, 8, and 11, 1969; *Birmingham News*, September 7 and 9, 1969.

<sup>38</sup>*Montgomery Advertiser*, September 11, 1969; *Birmingham News*, September 10, September 12, 1969; *Talladega Daily Home*, September 11, 12, and 20, 1969; Pierce, "The Most Southern Sport on Earth: NASCAR and the Unions," 24-25.

<sup>39</sup>*Montgomery Advertiser*, September 14, 1969; *Birmingham News*, September 13, September 14, 1969; *Talladega Daily Home*, September 13, 1969; Granger, "The Boycott of Talladega," 5-6; Pierce, "The Most Southern Sport on Earth: NASCAR and the Unions," 24-26.

<sup>40</sup>Pierce, "The Most Southern Sport on Earth: NASCAR and the Unions," 25-27; Granger, "The Boycott of Talladega," 6-7; *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 14, 1969; *Birmingham News*, September 14, 1969.

<sup>41</sup>*Birmingham News*, September 14, September 15, September 20, 1969; *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 14 and 15, 1969; Granger, "The Boycott of Talladega," 8; Pierce, "The Most Southern Sport on Earth: NASCAR and the Unions," 26-28.

<sup>42</sup>Granger, "The Boycott of Talladega," 9; Richard Brickhouse Personal Scrapbook, McCaig-Wellborn International Motor Sports Research Library.

<sup>43</sup>*Birmingham News*, September 15 and 16, 1969.

# “Race Riot,” “Midnight Melee,” and Other “Crimes” Reconsidered: African-American Soldiers’ Protests in 1898 Tampa

Dennis Halpin

## *The Negro Soldier*

We used to think the Negro didn’t count for very much—  
Light fingered in the melon patch and chicken yard and such;  
Much mixed in point of morals and absurd in point of dress,  
The butt of droll cartoonists and the target of the press;  
But we’ve got to reconstruct our views on color, more or less,  
Now we know about the Tenth at Las Guasimas!

—B. M. Channing<sup>1</sup>

B. M. Channing composed *The Negro Soldier* sometime after the battle at Las Guasimas that occurred on June 24, 1898. In many ways this poem embodied the contradictions of being a black soldier during the Spanish-American War. Channing’s appropriation of the derisive discourse of racism, “Light fingered in the melon patch and chicken yard and such; / Much mixed in point of morals and absurd in point of dress,” illustrated some of white America’s common constructions of African Americans in the late 1890s. In the next line, “The butt of droll cartoonists and the target of the press,” Channing demonstrated awareness of the role of the press in transmitting this discourse. On the one hand racist white society derided African Americans, regardless of status. Yet, the lines “But we’ve got to reconstruct our views on color, more or less, / Now we know about the Tenth at Las Guasimas,” spoke to black soldiers’ hopes that their sacrifices would overturn these negative constructions and lead to improvements in their lives.

Within this broad context veteran black and freshly recruited volunteer soldiers who comprised the Ninth and Tenth Cavalries, as well as the Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Fifth Infantries, arrived at Tampa between the months of May and August 1898. While the soldiers awaited embarkation to Cuba, hostile Anglos clung to their constructions of African Americans and used them to justify and maintain Jim Crow segregation. However, the visiting black troops refused to accept this racial order. From roughly May to July, African-American troops in the Tampa area fought political battles over racism and segregation. In some instances African-American soldiers utilized less directly confrontational forms of resistance to combat the discrimination they faced. For example, black soldiers used the power

of the pen to vent their frustrations and communicate instances of injustice to a wider audience. The very manner in which the troops carried themselves also became a less confrontational form of protest in that it belied racial stereotypes tightly clung to by southern whites. More surprisingly to Tampa's white population, the soldiers also directly challenged Jim Crow segregation. During their stay in Tampa the racial tensions inherent in the Jim Crow South exploded onto the public stage. Black troops shot out a barber shop's windows; destroyed bars and saloons during a "race riot" and with the help of sympathetic white troops, flagrantly violated Jim Crow mores. Upon the war's conclusion in August, African-American soldiers once again passed through Tampa on their way back north. Again confrontations occurred, but this time they differed in both the sites of political struggle and in intent. Rather than attacking segregated public spaces, African-American troops attempted (and often succeeded) at freeing fellow soldiers and citizens who they felt were unfairly imprisoned.

At the time, the white press in Tampa and throughout the nation classified the African-American troops' actions as "crimes." Scholars who have examined this period recognized these "crimes" as acts of resistance in defiance of Jim Crow segregation.<sup>2</sup> This article argues that these actions were more complex than simple "acts of resistance" and need to be understood as protests purposefully undertaken by black troops. In targeting their dissent against segregated spaces, "symbols of domination," and hostile whites, African-American soldiers articulated their opposition to Jim Crow society. Closer examination of the interplay between contested notions of citizenship, black troops' identities, and the actions of Tampa's white citizens shaped the protests of African-American soldiers. In recent years scholars have begun to reexamine the history of African-American protests. In 1994, historian Robin D. G. Kelley challenged scholars "to rewrite the political history of the Jim Crow South."<sup>3</sup> "For southern blacks in the age of Jim Crow," Kelley argued, "politics was not separate from lived experience or the imagined world of what is possible." While many of the black troops' protests in Tampa were more directly confrontational than the protests Kelley described, they should be seen as part of a deliberate pattern of concerted opposition. Moreover, by employing Kelley's suggestion to focus on questions surrounding "why" people participate in political struggles, it becomes clear that black troops' actions constituted one of "the many battles to roll back constraints, to exercise power over, or create space within the institutions and social relationships that dominated their lives."<sup>4</sup>

question, Lewis recalled that Collins verbally accosted the soldiers after they were refused service at Forbes Drug Store. Lewis contended that at one point Collins exclaimed, "You d—niggers better get out of here and that d—quick or I will kick you B—S—B—out." Collins, according to Lewis, then disappeared before reemerging with a gun. When he did so, the soldiers fired on him and shot out his windows.<sup>9</sup> The white commander of the troops stationed in Lakeland, John Bigelow Jr., supported Lewis's version of events. He blamed white merchants for the problems that occurred. "These proud Caucasians," Bigelow remarked, "cannot find it in themselves to say: 'We don't deal with colored people'; they have to say: 'We don't sell anything to damned niggers.'"<sup>10</sup>

These incidents in Ybor City and Lakeland served as the opening act in the drama unfolding in Tampa. Many of the black troops' early protests showed a high degree of deliberateness and forethought. In the incident at Forbes Drug Store the soldiers left the scene of the dispute only to return to again request service. Similarly, African-American soldiers returned on subsequent nights to bars that refused to serve them, prompting at least one of the bars to close on multiple nights.<sup>11</sup> Black troops' open and confrontational protests effectively interrupted white leisure activities and business as usual. They put white business owners in a quandary. As the *Tampa Morning Tribune* observed, "The saloon men know that if they begin selling drinks to negroes at the bars reserved for white persons they would soon lose all of their best customers." However, by refusing black soldiers service they risked the disruption and spectacle caused by the troops' protests.<sup>12</sup> Soon saloon owners were cursing the "howling success" African-American soldiers had "at closing up their resorts."<sup>13</sup> The public nature and success of these protests also dismayed editors of the *Tampa Morning Tribune*. Throughout 1898, the paper frequently touted the idea that the incoming soldiers would bring both "an influx of capital" and wealth of "perpetual recommendation to the city in the future."<sup>14</sup> African-American soldiers immediately found an effective way to exert a measure of power over the dominant white society.

While it appears that the confrontations stemmed from the actions of Tampa's and Lakeland's white merchants, this does little to illuminate the reasons why African-American soldiers openly protested. After all, African-Americans possessed a number of options when confronted by racism. Indeed, at a time when blacks often could not openly express opposition without fear of physical harm, they often chose less confrontational means of resistance. In order to explain fully

promote African-American soldiers. Soon other black papers and community leaders utilized the impending war and the paper's slogan, "No Officers, No Fight," to advocate equitable treatment in the military. Many of the papers, both for and against black participation in the war, championed this cause.<sup>19</sup> More importantly, regardless of their respective positions on black enlistment or the absence of black officers, the papers articulated the myriad connections between the war and civil rights. Papers favoring black participation generally hoped that African-Americans' service could advance the civil rights cause. Newspapers opposed to the war noted that, "The uniform barbarity practiced upon law-abiding colored citizens in the South ought to be a strong reminder that at least in that section the colored brother has no reason to claim this as his country."<sup>20</sup> For many soldiers who already viewed enlistment in the military as a form of protest, these debates only further imbued their participation with political importance.

In fact, tensions had been steadily mounting by the time soldiers crossed the Mason-Dixon Line. A number of confrontations occurred between black troops and southern whites, most notably at Chickamauga Park, Georgia, and Key West, Florida, where soldiers were stationed prior to being redirected to the Tampa area.<sup>21</sup> Once in the Tampa area black soldiers encountered a white population that identified themselves philosophically as part of the Deep South. White Tampans' reproduced their racist worldview in the pages of the city's principal newspaper the *Tampa Morning Tribune*. For example, in 1896, the paper published a front page article entitled "The Cause and the Cure." The article placed the blame for "the rapid increase in crime" on the "colored race," tracing crime to the mixture of African Americans, "whisky and women." "When the thing is sifted right down to bottom facts," the editorial opined, "the saloon hells and devilish dives of the scrub [Tampa's largest black community] and Ft. Brooke are responsible for four fifths of these shooting scrapes."<sup>22</sup> White Floridians expected blacks to remain deferential in their daily interactions and often met open displays of resistance by African Americans with violence. While in Tampa John Bigelow Jr. observed that southern residents "knew the negro as a slave, as a menial servant, and as a vagrant, criminal, and pauper, but they did not seem to know him as a soldier."<sup>23</sup> The sight of proud, assertive black soldiers in military uniforms belied many of the racial constructions of the shift, deferential black man that permeated the region. In 1898 many Anglos interpreted the specter of armed, assertive, black men descending upon the South as a threat to their social hierarchy.

they became key factors in black soldiers' decisions to oppose white society's social order.

Although the debates occurring within black communities and the system of southern segregation provided common frameworks for soldiers and white Floridians to interpret events in Florida, the open confrontations that transpired between them were not inevitable. In fact, African-American soldiers evaded or resisted Jim Crow prejudice in a number of ways, many of them not always visible to Florida's white communities. Indeed, of the over four thousand black troops who came to the Tampa area, only a minority chose to openly defy Jim Crow regulations. Many soldiers probably avoided confrontations by opting to spend their off hours in one of the African-American communities, or ignored the insults delivered by Anglos.

Others utilized less confrontational methods of resistance. For instance, some soldiers may have protested segregation by withholding or redirecting their income away from hostile whites. One report in the *Tampa Morning Tribune* hinted at this possibility when it contrasted the spending habits of white and black soldiers. In a short article, the paper critically noted that "out of the whole regiment of negroes only four purchased money orders." Although speculative, it is not out of the realm of possibilities that black soldiers withheld their money to punish obstinate merchants. Soldiers also may have redirected their discretionary income to black-owned businesses or friendlier white merchants like Lakeland merchant W. T. Johns, whose amicable relations with black troops led him to write the *Tampa Morning Tribune* to contradict the paper's coverage of those soldiers.<sup>32</sup> These protests, often unorganized and undertaken on an individual basis are more difficult to penetrate. However, if such a strategies were followed, they (like the other, more open forms of resistance) empowered African Americans by enabling them to affect the flow of business and merchants' bottom line.

A number of soldiers and military personnel also registered their discontent with their pens, in letters written to hometown black newspapers. These reports served a number of important functions for black troops. The letters provided a forum for their authors to boast of their comrades' skill, relate their travel experiences, and most importantly vent their frustrations over their treatment in the South. In regards to the latter, letters functioned as a safer venue where troops voiced criticisms of Anglos in a language that would have likely endangered them in the repressive South. Soldiers and military personnel who did not openly protest segregation utilized these letters

the riot caused, the papers' reports (along with the number of bars affected) implied that the damage was significant.

Although it is certain that troops (both black and white) participated in the destruction of these businesses, many of the other details surrounding that night remain clouded. The surviving accounts provide no clues about which troops destroyed which of these public places. Furthermore, it is not certain whether white and black troops participated in the riot (in part or in whole) as adversaries or in concert.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps the most controversial aspect of this night remains the raiding of the brothel. As noted, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* maintained that the black troops raped the women in the brothel. The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* parroted these charges a few days later. The *Journal Constitution's* editorial castigated black troops' roles in the riot, but did so without mentioning the participation of white troops.<sup>42</sup> However, the veracity of these charges remain uncertain. It is quite likely that these two papers engaged in hyperbole designed to perpetuate constructions of the "hyper-sexualized" black male. A black newspaper, the *Cleveland Gazette* condemned the African-American troops' actions, but in three articles on the riot omitted mention of any incident at the brothel.

Further casting doubt on the rape charges are the actions, or lack thereof, of the white community following the riot. The *Tribune's* account of the riot stated, "while these women are the lowest type the law gives them protection, and the penalty is the same for outraging a woman of this kind, as though the victim was of high moral character."<sup>43</sup> It remains possible that the white community did not pursue the alleged offenders because of the women's occupation and class status. However, this would have not been in keeping with a society obsessed with zealously guarding the "sanctity of white womanhood."<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, after the initial accounts of the riot, the story disappeared from the pages of the press. There remains no account of any criminal procedures nor any calls by the *Tribune* for "justice."

In many ways the June 6 "riot" represented black troops' most dramatic manifestation of protest over public space, yet it was not the last.<sup>45</sup> By the middle of June most of the troops had embarked for Cuba and racial tensions quieted in the city. However, on July 23, black troops once again publicly protested segregation. Although not mentioned in previous accounts, the "Midnight Melee" at the Saratoga Saloon remains fascinating for a number of reasons. That night a group of black and white soldiers entered the Saratoga Saloon in Ybor City.

According to the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, "Two negroes belonging to the 9th cavalry entered the bar, with their pistols in their hands, ordered drinks for themselves and four white soldiers who were advocating social equality, putting their views into practice for the sake of a drink."<sup>46</sup> Apparently, one of the bar's white patrons attempted to subdue one of the soldiers when the soldier's gun "discharged." At that point the troops left the bar, but not before the white soldiers fired upon the man who had tried to tackle the black soldier. Before everything settled down, another man, apparently not directly involved in the incident, was wounded by a stray bullet.<sup>47</sup>

If the account from the *Tampa Morning Tribune* is to be believed then this incident represented the clearest example that black troops' intended their confrontations to act as protests.<sup>48</sup> Black soldiers, along with their white counterparts, purposely planned their actions to incite the bar's patrons. Interestingly, Robert Mugge (the owner of the Missing Link Saloon) also owned the Saratoga Saloon. Although the surviving evidence does not detail black troops' intentions, it remains possible that they targeted the Saratoga Saloon based either on their own earlier troubles with Mugge or the other soldiers' altercation at his Missing Link Saloon.<sup>49</sup> The biracial composition of the group also suggests that, at least in this incident, the soldiers' protests transcended racial lines. While the exact motivations of the white soldiers is unclear, it is certainly possible they empathized with conditions that black soldiers faced in the South. Furthermore, the participation of white troops made it more difficult for the *Tampa Morning Tribune* to place the blame for these "crimes" on the insolence of black troops.

The July 23 incident at the Saratoga Saloon apparently became the last protest black troops undertook against Tampa's segregated businesses. That confrontation, along with the earlier incidents at the various bars, Forbes Drug Store, and the Greater New York concert hall that transpired in May, evinced a number of important similarities. Undertaken during operating hours, the businesses' white clientele became the unwitting audience for the verbal harangues delivered by African-American soldiers, an historically important component of black resistance and protest. In each of these confrontations, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* noted that the black troops became "very abusive," "threatened to tear down that place," and "[swore] vengeance." In the case of the "Midnight Melee" at the Saratoga Saloon, the paper related that, "The coons accompanied their command [to be served] with language that was intended for an insult to every Southern man."<sup>50</sup> The spectacle of the protests indelibly shaped the experiences of their

audience and undoubtedly caused discomfort for those expecting a leisurely evening. As Robin D. G. Kelley perceptively noted, these “discursive strategies, which may seem more evasive, also carry tremendous dramatic appeal” since “black voices, especially the loud and profane, literally penetrated and occupied white spaces.” The public nature of this defiance also simultaneously acted as a theater where black troops articulated their opposition to a wider audience. Thanks to the efforts of black soldiers who wrote to various newspapers, and the unwitting assistance of the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, the audience did not remain confined to those who actually witnessed these altercations. Furthermore, by aiming their protests at segregated public spaces black troops took the kind of action that Kelley described as “open attacks on individuals, institutions, or symbols of domination.”<sup>51</sup>

When the Spanish-American War ended in August, African-American troops once again passed through Tampa where they renewed their opposition to Jim Crow segregation. The troops only stayed in Tampa for a few nights, yet during this time they escalated their protests. Rather than striking back at segregated businesses, these soldiers directly challenged the southern justice system. In the span of a week, black troops attempted (and succeeded) in freeing prisoners they felt were unfairly imprisoned on two occasions. The first incident occurred late in the evening of August 5. That night, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* later reported, “Negro ruffians and black brutes dressed in the uniforms of United States soldiers, marched to the county jail...and forced the jailer to surrender to them a negro prisoner.”<sup>52</sup> Like the “Midnight Melee” in July, both black and white troops worked together to protest Jim Crow’s regulations. Nevertheless, the *Tribune* reserved its more sensationalist headlines to describe the roles that black troops played, only noting that white troops allowed the action to take place.<sup>53</sup> However, in a letter published two weeks after the rescue, the county jailer claimed that “two white men in uniform” forced him at gunpoint to hand over the keys to the jail. He further maintained that the cavalry’s lieutenant (presumably white) forced the train to wait for the rescue party to return.<sup>54</sup>

In another interesting twist, the paper reported that the police originally arrested the rescued prisoner for “carrying a concealed weapon and raiding a bar room in St. Petersburg...” Perhaps the unnamed soldier, like the others before him, had decided to oppose Jim Crow mores by “raiding” a saloon. However, the nature of the prisoner’s “offenses” (and his intentions) remains unclear. It is also uncertain whether the soldier actually raided a bar or committed any

break, but instead only released the prisoner they targeted.<sup>60</sup> Even the relatively reserved black newspaper, the *Cleveland Gazette*, could not resist exalting that “The Ninth Got Their Man.”<sup>61</sup> The second incident exhibited a similar degree of restraint and discipline. Once the soldiers freed the intended prisoner, they quickly left the scene without further incident.<sup>62</sup> From the surviving accounts, it appeared that neither rescue involved death or serious injury.

In carrying out these rescues, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* noted that the soldiers temporarily inverted existing power structures. Without the slightest sense of shame, the paper commented that, “for the first time since the present jail was built a prisoner was turned over to a mob, but this mob was composed of negro soldiers, and they called their action rescuing a comrade from the white trash.”<sup>63</sup> The paper clearly recognized the double irony inherent in the black troops actions. Instead of white vigilantes storming a prison to lynch a prisoner, a “mob” of black troops assumed this role. However, rather than besieging the jail with the intention of extinguishing a life, African-American soldiers instead sought to free a prisoner they felt was falsely imprisoned.<sup>64</sup>

It appears that the troops’ rescues also provided inspiration and emboldened other African Americans in Tampa. A few days after the first rescue attempt, black teamsters traveling with the Army attempted to free fellow laborers imprisoned in Tampa. The *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported that the men sought (unsuccessfully) to extricate the imprisoned teamsters from the county jail.<sup>65</sup> Yet, the paper typically failed to note any extenuating circumstances. A few days later, the *Cleveland Gazette* provided details that the *Tribune* had not. According to the *Gazette*, the teamsters not only tried to free the imprisoned workers, but also sought to thwart their lynching. While the men failed to free the intended lynching victim, they apparently stopped a lynching from taking place. The *Cleveland Gazette* admiringly wrote, “The only way to put an end to lynching was followed successfully at Tampa, Fla. on Monday. The mob was fired into and a number killed and wounded. That settled the burning desire to lynch three Afro-American teamsters.”<sup>66</sup>

These actions provoked widespread consternation among white Tampanians. In their wake, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* printed articles and editorials that both condemned these actions and warned against future rescue attempts. One article warned African-American soldiers to refrain from any further rescues or else “there would be a lively fight and some of the negroes would have to be carried out of the

It should be noted that African-American troops' overt protests acted like a "double-edged sword," a point also mentioned by previous scholars. By openly expressing their opposition to Jim Crow segregation, the troops not only provoked violent reactions, but also furnished racist Anglos with the opportunity to engage freely in Jim Crow's racist discourse. The title which the *Tampa Morning Tribune* bestowed upon Blount's letter, "A Howling Mob," revealed the manner in which racist whites perpetuated this practice. White society interpreted the actions of black troops by characterizing African Americans as "Big Brutes;" "Negro Ruffians;" "black brutes;" and/or "black scoundrels."<sup>71</sup> At times, some of the black newspapers also voiced disapproval over the manner in which the African-American troops protested. Yet these papers qualified their criticisms by noting the extenuating circumstances surrounding the events.<sup>72</sup>

Still, despite their limitations, black troops' various protests in Tampa effectively communicated their opposition to segregation to a wider audience. Black soldiers' protests against local businesses served notice to area whites that segregated public spaces would be challenged. Later efforts to rescue African-American prisoners demonstrated the soldiers' frustration with the southern "justice" system. African-American newspapers further utilized these clashes to denounce segregation and criticize race relations in the South. The papers published condemnatory editorials along with the critical comments of black soldiers' who witnessed these events.<sup>73</sup> Even if they misinterpreted the actions of blacks, white newspapers like the *Tampa Morning Tribune* and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* also transmitted details of these protests to a larger audience. Moreover, the words of men like John Bigelow Jr., along with the actions of white troops during the "Midnight Melee" and prison rescues, showed that these protests could cross racial lines.

While local events provided the catalyst for resistance, the self-identities of African-American soldiers clearly shaped their opposition. Black soldiers came into Tampa amidst a charged political debate raging in the African-American community over the utility of black participation in the Spanish-American War. Once in Tampa, African-American soldiers confronted the "two-ness" of being both "American" and "black." Many African-American soldiers, effectively barred from legitimate channels to express their opposition to Jim Crow segregation, asserted their civil rights through their invasion of segregated public spaces, "riots," and prison rescues. Still, not all of the soldiers protested in the same fashion. A majority of the troops stationed in the Tampa

<sup>4</sup>For the best known and thorough treatment, see Willard B. Gatewood Jr., "Black Troops in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 48 (July 1970): 1-16, rpt. in *Tampa Bay History* 20.1 (Spring/Summer 1998).

<sup>3</sup>Robin D. G. Kelley "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *The Journal of American History* 80.1 (June 1993): 76. Kelley contends that "political struggles" occurred on a daily basis, but were designed to be subtle in form. In the article Kelley challenged scholars to uncover the "hidden transcripts" of black protest. For more on the idea of "hidden transcripts," see James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT, 1990).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 78. In uncovering hidden protests, Kelley suggested that scholars need to focus on "why," as opposed to "how," people participated in politics. Too often, Kelley contended, questions surrounding "how" people participated in politics privileged voting, "political parties," and "social movements;" all arenas where whites excluded or limited African-American participation. Instead, African Americans "participated" in political struggles throughout their daily lives.

<sup>5</sup>"The Negro Troops," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 12, 1898, 2:3.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:3.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:3 and A. E. Sholes, *Sholes City Directory*, 1899, 1:26.

<sup>8</sup>"Negro Murderers," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 18, 1898, 1:2. At times, the sources identify this man as "Joab Collins." The story in the *Tribune* refers to him both as "Jacob Collins" and "Joab Collins." For simplicity's sake, I simply refer to him as Jacob Collins.

<sup>9</sup>Willard B. Gatewood Jr., ed., *"Smoked Yankees" and the Struggle for Empire* (Chicago, 1971), 32.

<sup>10</sup>John Bigelow, Jr. *Reminiscences of the Santiago Campaign* (New York, 1899), 37.

<sup>11</sup>For the bar closure, see "Police Force Insufficient," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 12, 1898.

<sup>12</sup>The quotations are culled from "The Negro Troops," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 12, 1898.

<sup>13</sup>*Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 12, 1898.

<sup>14</sup>*Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 18, 1898, 2:1.

<sup>15</sup>To gain a sense of the wide-ranging debates in the black press leading up to the war see chapters two, three, and four of George P. Marks III, *The Black Press Views American Imperialism (1898-1900)* (New York, 1971). For a more thorough treatment of the ways African Americans viewed participation in the war as a way to gain respect at home, see Willard B. Gatewood Jr., *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden, 1898-1903* (Urbana, IL, 1975).

<sup>16</sup>For some declarations made by members of Congress, see "War Talk in the Senate," *New York Times*, Apr. 6, 1898, 3. The newspaper quote taken from: "Our Justification," *New York Times*, March 24, 1898, 6.

Robin D. G. Kelley's writings in *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1990) and "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South."

<sup>34</sup>See "Censorship in Tampa, *New York Times*, May 18, 1898, rpt. in William A. Lorenzen IV, "'The Rocking Chair War': Views of Tampa in the New York Press During 1898," *Tampa Bay History* 20.1 (Spring/Summer 1998). See also "Strict Censorship," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 18, 1898, 1.

<sup>35</sup>J. S. O'Higgins, "What I Saw in Tampa: From a Newspaper Correspondent's Pen and Camera," *The Canadian Magazine*, July 1898, 317.

<sup>36</sup>The accounts I consulted in reconstructing these events are as follows: "Soldiers Wreck Saloons," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 8, 1898, 3:1; "The Affair at Tampa," *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, June 12, 1898; and "Inhuman Brutes," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 8, 1898, 1:3. Interestingly, the title, "Inhuman Brutes," refers to the white soldiers. This is the only instance, to the best of my knowledge, that the *Tampa Morning Tribune* used such harsh language to castigate the white soldiers' actions.

<sup>37</sup>See "Soldiers Wreck Saloons," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 8, 1898, 3:2; "The Affair at Tampa," *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, June 12, 1898; and "Inhuman Brutes," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 8, 1898, 1:3. The *Tampa Morning Tribune* only reported that "several soldiers were wounded." The *Cleveland Gazette* reported "four soldiers" killed and at least "twenty-seven" wounded. See "Inhuman Brutes," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 8, 1898, 1:3 and "Untitled," *Cleveland Gazette*, July 2, 1898. See also "Toughs," *Tampa Weekly Tribune*, June 9, 1898, 4.

<sup>38</sup>"Soldiers Wreck Saloons," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 8, 1898, 3:2.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 3:2 and "Inhuman Brutes," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 8, 1898, 1:3. The *Cleveland Gazette* claims that the troops "looted nearly every saloon in town."

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 3:2. Although the beginning of the article does not specify the race of the soldiers who destroyed the brothel, it seems apparent that they spoke of black soldiers. The article ends by noting that "Only last year a negro was hung in Jacksonville...for outraging a colored prostitute."

<sup>41</sup>As later events will indicate, at least some of the troops bridged friendships across racial lines and enacted protests together.

<sup>42</sup>"The Affair at Tampa," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, June 12, 1898, 16:1-2.

<sup>43</sup>"Soldiers Wreck Saloons," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 8, 1898, 2:3.

<sup>44</sup>For a discussion on the "sanctity of white womanhood" and how this discourse operated in the South, refer to Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South: Tampa, 1882-1936*.

<sup>45</sup>It should also be noted that the Buffalo Soldiers possessed a history of targeted confrontation before arriving in Tampa. As early as 1877, soldiers from the Tenth cavalry protested discrimination and violence by striking back at mistreatment. While in Texas, a white gunman emerged from a bar, and for no apparent reason, fatally shot a soldier from the Tenth Cavalry. Later that evening, after an impromptu meeting, black soldiers responded by entering the bar en masse and opening fire.

<sup>61</sup>"The Ninth Got Their Man," *Cleveland Gazette*, Aug. 13, 1898, 1:2.

<sup>62</sup>"Negro Ruffians," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 10, 1898, 3:1.

<sup>63</sup>"An Outrage," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 7, 1898, 1.

<sup>64</sup>Interestingly, just as African-American troops protested against segregated spaces prior to coming to Tampa, members of the Ninth cavalry previously partook in actions strikingly similar to their Tampa rescues. In 1893, black soldiers stationed in Fort Robinson, Nebraska, defended the rights of an African-American arrested on "flimsy and ex parte testimony." After the local court dismissed unspecified charges against the man (only identified as Diggs), a mob of white residents attempted to lynch him. However, Diggs escaped and the Ninth cavalry offered him sanctuary at their "post." Although the Nebraska incident did not involve troops forcibly rescuing a prisoner, the extenuating circumstances remained similar to events that precipitated the Tampa rescues. Members of the Ninth cavalry not only doubted Diggs's guilt, but also noted the widespread physical abuse of black soldiers in Nebraska. In response, members of the Ninth cavalry produced a broadside that implored their fellow soldiers to defend the rights of African-American citizens and soldiers. The broadside, signed by "500 Men With the Bullet or the Torch," ended with an ominous warning that read in part: "You lynch, you torture, and you burn Negroes in the South, but WE SWEAR BY ALL THAT IS GOOD AND HOLY that you shall not outrage us and our people here under the shadow of 'Old Glory,' while we have shot and shell and if you persist, we will repeat the horrors of San Domingo—we will reduce your homes and firesides to ashes and send your guilty souls to—HELL." [Emphasis in original]. See: "Attention!" Broadside April 28, 1893, rpt. in *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier: Records, Reports, and Recollections of Military Life and Service in the West*, ed. Schubert, 179. Interestingly, the broadside also advocated boycotting local saloons because they had "given support and sanction [*sic*] to some recent would-be lynchers of our people." At the same time, it advocated that soldiers patronize the bars of two men who refused to take part in the attempted lynching.

<sup>65</sup>"Imitated the Negroes," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 9, 1898, 1:3.

<sup>66</sup>"Untitled," *Cleveland Gazette*, Aug. 13, 1898, 2:1. The other reports from the *Tampa Morning Tribune* do not mention any casualties. It is impossible to verify the veracity of the *Cleveland Gazette's* claim.

<sup>67</sup>"Negro Soldiers," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 12, 1898.

<sup>68</sup>Two articles mention these alleged threats: "Negro Soldiers," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 12, 1898 and "Big Brutes," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 18, 1898, 1:2.

<sup>69</sup>"A Howling Mob," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 18, 1898, 4:4.

<sup>70</sup>John E. Lewis, "Untitled Letter," in *"Smoked Yankees" and the Struggle for Empire*, ed. Willard B. Gatewood Jr., 32.

<sup>71</sup>Descriptions are taken from a variety of headlines and stories appearing in the 1898 *Tampa Morning Tribune*. See "A Howling Mob," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 18, 1898, 4:4; "Big Brutes," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 18, 1898, 1:2; "An Outrage," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Aug. 7, 1898, 1.

<sup>72</sup>See, for example: "Untitled," *Baltimore Ledger*, Aug. 20, 1898, 2:2.

# A More Deadly Enemy: The Tenth Cavalry in the South, 1898-1899

David Work

The Spanish-American War began in April 1898 when the United States declared war on its Iberian antagonist. Even before this declaration, the U.S. army had begun to assemble its regiments at Chickamauga Park in northern Georgia, anticipating a conflict in the Caribbean. Among these troops was the Tenth U.S. Cavalry, one of the four black regular army regiments commanded by white officers collectively known as the Buffalo Soldiers. The Tenth Cavalry spent the next ten months, with the exception of two months in Cuba, quartered in the Deep South. This was not a happy time for the regiment, as it was subjected not only to Jim Crow segregation but, when the African-American soldiers resisted, violence from local whites. In many respects, the African-American troopers found a far more dangerous enemy in the southern United States than the one they faced in Cuba.

The possibility of an interracial confrontation between southern whites and the black soldiers of the Tenth Cavalry was great. Over the previous decade, white men in Dixie had imposed the system of segregation in the South. It strictly segregated the races, creating separate railroad cars, restrooms, restaurants, parks and other public facilities that firmly placed blacks at the bottom of society where they could be controlled by whites. Every southern state used the law to enforce the new racial order; and, in 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court gave its approval with the case of *Plessey v. Ferguson*. Whites, however, did not rely solely on legal means to implement Jim Crow. Mob violence, often in the form of lynchings, was frequently applied in order to remind blacks of their place in society. Any African American, but especially black males, faced the threat of summary punishment at the hands of a violent, enraged mob of whites.

The African-American soldiers of the Tenth Cavalry had not faced this racial system at the isolated Montana forts to which they had been assigned in the 1890s. This assignment allowed them to live relatively free from prejudice, as there were no recorded racial incidents between the black troopers and local whites. Although many recruits knew the Jim Crow laws from first hand experience, the regiment contained a large body of veteran soldiers, with over a decade in the ranks, who had yet to fully encounter the racial system that now

existed in the South. Indeed, army life provided black men with far more freedom and opportunity than they could expect in civilian life. Therefore, they were not going to accept southern racism passively.

In fact, the soldiers were determined to defy the Jim Crow laws. They were not going to stand aside and, as Private John Lewis wrote, "permit a white to kick and knock...[us] around." Lewis expressed the feelings of many troopers when he wrote, "We are men and demand to have that treatment, and will have it as long as we remain in this section." Another soldier commented, "Our fellows think its h—to have to fight in defense of a people who are so prejudiced against them. The men are determined to make these crackers 'walk Spanish' while here or else be treated as men." In taking such a stand, both of these soldiers exhibited a defiance of authority that almost guaranteed a confrontation between them and southern whites.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, southern whites loathed black soldiers. They viewed African-American regulars as a threat to the social order, as a menace to Jim Crow segregation, because they were assertive, armed black men who had the power to resist the racial prejudice they encountered. This unprecedented resistance only infuriated whites, who became determined, as the editor of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* wrote, to cure black troops of their "arrogance" by "the introduction of summary disciplinary methods." Such methods were necessary, the editor continued, to remind blacks that service in the army did not change their "social condition." Any black soldier, the editor concluded, who "forgets himself...will be reminded of this delinquency in a convincing manner."<sup>2</sup>

These attitudes led to several confrontations between the soldiers of the Tenth Cavalry and southern whites in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas both before and after the Spanish-American War. The patriotism among whites evoked by the declaration of war against Spain did not cross the color line, as they had not abandoned their commitment to Jim Crow. Racial prejudice and violence flared up wherever the African-American soldiers of the Tenth Cavalry went throughout the South, regardless of their performance in battle.

In the 1890s, the Tenth Cavalry's regimental headquarters were located at Fort Assiniboine, Montana. The army assigned the regiment to Montana in 1892 after twenty-five years of arduous service in the deserts of the southwest United States. Here, near the Canadian border, the regiment performed garrison duties, policed the Indian reservations, protected the railroads during strikes, and generally lived a peaceful existence until the troubles over Cuba began with Spain. On April 16,

In Georgia and Tennessee, racism was a serious problem for the Tenth Cavalry, and several confrontations occurred between black troopers and white Southerners. In Chattanooga, one African-American soldier tried to buy a drink at a local bar and was refused because of his color. As he was leaving, the bartender yelled at him, "I don't see what they put you damned niggers in the army for, anyhow—you won't fight!" The soldier promptly turned around and hit the bartender between the eyes. In another incident, a black trooper was jailed for disorderly conduct. His comrades felt that he was imprisoned unjustly and were about to storm the jail when a detachment of the provost guard arrived and stopped them. At Camp Thomas a rumor spread about a colonel in a white regiment who believed that the black soldiers should be removed to another camp because "their presence was degrading or humiliating."<sup>6</sup>

Conversely, relations between white and black soldiers were cordial. In fact, throughout the war with Spain, the races coexisted in relative peace; the only disturbances were several "rough and tumble" fights, which were equally common among white troops. According to several Tenth Cavalry troopers, southern whites "tried to raise enmity between the white and colored soldiers." These efforts, however, failed. The patriotism and unifying spirit of the war temporarily eased the racial tensions that existed between the black and white enlisted men. On several occasions, white soldiers attacked white Southerners who attempted to cause problems between black and white enlisted men. Displaying military loyalty, white soldiers generally "resented any insult" cast at the black troopers. Sergeant Carter Smith, Tenth Cavalry, said that generally "they got along nicely" with white soldiers and regretted that it could not be this way all of the time.<sup>7</sup>

On May 14, all the regiments at Camp Thomas were transferred to Lakeland, Florida, to prepare for embarkation to Cuba. Racial problems were often a problem, as one Tenth Cavalry trooper described Florida, in "the hotbed of the rebels." Sergeant Horace Bivins commented that white Floridians did not treat the black soldiers "with much courtesy." Another African-American soldier complained that "prejudice reigns supreme here against the colored troops. Every little thing that's done by our boys is chronicled as Negro brazenness, outlawry, etc. An ordinary drunk brings forth great scare heads in the dailies." One white supposedly told another that if any black soldiers gave him trouble, he could yell and "[we] will come a'runin' an' take keer o' *him*." The troopers of the Tenth were not allowed to bathe in the local lake during the day to avoid offending the "chaste

people to deal with." Another trooper declared, "one man, was killed—white—the store demolished and southern customs upturned." The soldiers also believed that this act of defiance changed the attitude of the local people toward the Tenth Cavalry. According to Private Lewis, whites no longer refused service to the troopers and began to "intimate that they are glad" to serve the African-American soldiers.<sup>11</sup>

This incident, and similar ones that occurred with the other three black regiments, gave the Tenth Cavalry and the other Buffalo Soldiers a bad reputation. The *Tampa Morning Tribune*, which ignored similar altercations by white soldiers, characterized the black soldiers as "ruffians in uniform" and demanded more police protection from their "criminal proclivities." White Southerners began to question the use of African-American soldiers, claiming that enlisting blacks in the army made them forget their place in society. Moreover, whites charged that discipline seemed to have no effect on black soldiers. The real problem was identified by the editor of the *Southern Evangelist*, an African-American newspaper. The editor contended that the cause of the trouble was the "hatred and prejudice" of southern whites and the "delight" they take in trying "to insult and humiliate blacks." This was something "the negro soldier resents, hence the rows and encounters." Whites refused to acknowledge this and continued to blame the African-American troopers for all the confrontations, fights, and other troubles occurring between the races.<sup>12</sup>

In June, the army loaded onto transports at Tampa Bay, preparing to embark for Cuba. Only two-thirds of the regiment went to Tampa, as one-third of the Tenth remained at Lakeland to look after the regiment's horses. Even while boarding their ship, the Tenth Cavalry was subjected to racism. The army provided rail transportation to the dock, but failed to distribute food to the soldiers. On the pier at Tampa, one of the regiment's white officers went to a local restaurant to buy food for his troop and was refused because, as the owner told him, to serve black men "would ruin her business." Fortunately, the men were able to buy food from peddlers on the pier. Petty encounters such as this, as well as the more violent ones, led Private Lewis to write, "I...will be glad to bid adieu to this section of the country, and I hope never to have cause to visit Florida again." Most of his comrades undoubtedly felt the same.<sup>13</sup>

In June and July, the Tenth Cavalry participated in the fighting in Cuba, charging up Kettle and San Juan Hills and garnering great praise for its gallant service. Theodore Roosevelt wrote that he wished "no better men beside me in battle than these colored troops." One of

Roosevelt's Rough Riders, who admitted he was a Southerner and did not like blacks, commented, "Now I know what they are made of. I respect them.... [F]or all of the men that I saw fighting, there was none to beat the Tenth Cavalry." The editor of the *New York Mail and Express* wrote, "All honors to the black troopers of the gallant Tenth! No more striking example of bravery and coolness has been shown...than by the colored veterans of the Tenth Cavalry." For their service, the army awarded the Tenth Cavalry five Medals of Honor and eleven Certificates of Merit and commissioned six enlisted men in the black volunteer regiments. In August, basking in the glow of this adulation, the regiment returned to the United States and encamped at Montauk Point, New York.<sup>14</sup>

In late August, the regiment's Third Squadron, which had remained in Florida throughout the summer, was subjected to another racial incident. Shortly before they left the state, some Tenth Cavalry soldiers were waiting at the railroad depot when a white sheriff took a prisoner onto a waiting train. Several white soldiers from the First Cavalry forced the sheriff to give them the prisoner, but the sheriff blamed the incident on the black troopers of the Tenth Cavalry, claiming that twenty-five or thirty African-American soldiers with drawn revolvers freed the prisoner. The entire Third Squadron was ordered to line up so the sheriff could inspect them and find the culprits. He did not recognize anyone and left, having never bothered to search the camp of the First Cavalry.<sup>15</sup>

In mid-October, the Tenth Cavalry left Montauk and went to Huntsville, Alabama, a change of station that the black troopers regretted because, as one soldier testified, they "have very little protection" in the South. Another soldier wrote that "the boys all dread that section of Uncle Sam's domains" because they feared the "conditions will be the same as when we went South last April." Their fears were soon realized and the next five months were the worst the regiment ever experienced. The army failed to protect the black soldiers from southern racism and in several instances attempted to enforce segregation or refused to treat the black troopers as the equals of white soldiers. As before, the African-American soldiers refused to back down; they demanded that Southerners and the military "treat us right," as one soldier put it, and adopted a siege mentality as they struggled against the institutionalized racism that plagued them throughout their tour in the Deep South.<sup>16</sup>

On the day of their arrival, October 10, several troopers went to Huntsville's red-light district and discovered that, due to Jim Crow

complained about the "annoying and imposing" attitude of the provost guard toward the men of the regiment. The captain then addressed the issue of racism, demanding that provost guards "be selected who are without prejudice." His letter was endorsed by Lieutenant Colonel T. A. Baldwin, Tenth Cavalry, who pointed out that the men "are regular soldiers and wearing the uniform of the United States and are entitled to the same treatment and privileges as other soldiers."<sup>20</sup>

These complaints fell on deaf ears, as the adjutant general demanded that Woodward explain why his "men had authority to wear" pistols. Accompanying this letter was a report by the commander of the provost guard, Captain S. W. Dunning, that claimed the guard found three pistols on the black soldiers. Woodward answered that the men were not issued pistols and that no pistols were missing from the regiment. The one soldier on whom a pistol was found testified that he discovered it in the back of a wagon; several reliable non-commissioned officers verified his story. Woodward further accused the military police of singling out the Tenth Cavalry for searches, a charge denied by Dunning, and argued that the rowdy conduct of white soldiers, some of whom recently rode through Huntsville drunk, fell off their horses, and vomited in the streets, did not bring the same scrutiny or punishment. In the end, no disciplinary action was taken against anyone and the matter was dropped.<sup>21</sup>

Even in their camp at Huntsville, the army mistreated the Tenth Cavalry. The regiment was stationed at Camp A. G. Forse, a poorly situated camp located just outside the city. The weather was cold and it rained frequently. Unlike other regiments, the Tenth was assigned to an encampment that offered no protection from the wind, which seemed to blow all the time. The men continued to suffer from chills, rheumatism, biliousness and other ailments that they had contracted in Cuba. They slept three men to a tent, which provided just enough room to lie down and contained no stoves. Moreover, the quartermaster failed to provide the regiment with enough lumber for officers' quarters, kitchens, and, most importantly, latrines. Other regiments, however, did have enough building materials. For nearly a month, the Tenth's officers requested that wood be supplied "for the health and comfort of the troops." The army refused to provide the lumber, even after one of the regiment's latrines blew down in a gale, leaving the regiment with only two to service twelve hundred officers and men (proper sanitation required one for every one hundred men).<sup>22</sup>

At first, the Tenth's requests for lumber were polite, but as no lumber was provided they became more insistent and sarcastic. In mid-November, the Adjutant General sent an inspector to investigate the

regiment's complaints, but the sole purpose of his visit was to determine whether the camp tents had floors, which they did. This led Captain Woodward to complain sarcastically that the regiment "supposed that the Quartermaster's Department was sufficiently skilled in the knowledge of what material was required to construct" latrines. "I believe," Woodward concluded, "the Quartermaster Department have some duties in this regard." The regiment still did not receive the necessary lumber, forcing the regiment's new commanding officer, Colonel S. M. Whiteside, to send yet another request. He feared that typhoid fever might break out if proper latrines were not built. This stirred the quartermaster department out of its lethargy and it provided the requested lumber at the end of November. The wood supplied, according to Colonel Whiteside, was "the most unsatisfactory I have ever seen issued." Despite this complaint, the regiment received no more lumber and was forced to make do.<sup>23</sup>

The Tenth Cavalry also faced problems with local white civilians. One soldier complained that whites were continually "making threats against us" and feared that the disarmed men "were at the mercy of any set of thugs." This soldier's fears were not misplaced. The day after the regiment arrived, an unknown person fired upon several troopers. Fortunately, no one was hurt.<sup>24</sup>

A far worse event occurred in November. One night in mid-November, Private John R. Brooks and Corporal Daniel Garrett were returning to camp after visiting friends in town when unknown assailants fired upon them. Private Brooks died instantly while Corporal Garrett died a few days later. The police arrested a black man, "Horse" Douglas, near camp with a pistol. Apparently, he was waiting to shoot any black soldier who appeared because an unknown white man had put a reward out for every Tenth Cavalry soldier that was killed. A second black man also attempted to collect this bounty, but when he tried to draw his pistol on some troopers the cylinder became loose and several cartridges fell to the ground. He was apprehended by the soldiers and taken to an officer. The officer confiscated the pistol, but let the man go.<sup>25</sup>

These incidents both angered and disillusioned the African-American troopers. They found it hard to believe, as one soldier wrote, that after their service in Cuba they would be subjected to "a more deadly enemy" in the United States: an assassin of their own race, paid by whites, who "lays and waits for you at night."<sup>26</sup>

The last two months the Tenth Cavalry spent in Huntsville were mercifully uneventful and at the end of January 1899 the regiment left for Texas. Amazingly, the town gave the regiment a rousing send-off,

of the Tenth Cavalry had almost the same reaction. Lieutenant Colonel T. A. Baldwin spoke for most of the shocked men when he complained to the War Department that the regiment was not able "to pass through the country they are sworn to protect without danger from hidden assassins."<sup>31</sup>

The larger contingent of the Tenth Cavalry also met racial hostility as it journeyed west. On January 31, near Iuka, Mississippi, snipers fired upon the train and set fire to the ammunition car, causing the car to explode and killing three women following the train and injuring a dozen men. The men found no relief when they arrived at Texarkana, Texas. The regiment only stopped here for a short break, but during this interlude a major race riot was only narrowly averted. The events that occurred here bore a resemblance to similar confrontations in Florida and Huntsville, both in what happened and the very different interpretation of events put forward by white witnesses and the African-American soldiers.<sup>32</sup>

Witnesses of both races agreed on the basic sequence of events. The Tenth stopped in Texarkana for a three-hour rest and several black troopers patronized the Belmont House in the city's red light district. The house was for whites only and the troopers were ordered to leave as soon as they arrived. An altercation of some kind occurred and a distraught white woman ran to the local court house seeking aid from the police. By the time the police arrived, the black soldiers had left the house and returned to their train. At this point, a police officer attempted to arrest a black trooper near the train, several other African-American soldiers intervened and freed this trooper, and then both races leveled weapons at one another. Before anything could happen, the regiment's officers and non-commissioned officers managed to restrain their men and local authorities gained control of the crowd threatening the train. After a search failed to find the men who went to the Belmont House, the regiment was allowed to proceed on its way.<sup>33</sup>

White accounts of this episode portrayed the black soldiers as undisciplined thugs deliberately disturbing the peace. According to the version written by Horace Vaughan, a local attorney, the troopers broke into the Belmont House and threatened to kill the white women "if they did not go to bed with them." After they left the house and were nearing their train, the troopers were overtaken by Constable J. F. Rochelle, who attempted to apprehend one of the soldiers. A scuffle ensued in which Rochelle tried to defend himself against several other African-American troopers trying to free the detained trooper. They managed to free the detained soldier and he escaped into the train.

The Texarkana affair quickly became a political issue. Vaughan wrote to Texas Governor Joseph D. Sayers and complained that the black troopers "were very insulting" and nearly started a riot. He asked the governor to demand that the War Department conduct an investigation. Sayers did this, sending telegrams to both of Texas' senators and to Secretary of War Russell A. Alger. Alger responded by complaining to the governor about the sniper incidents and asked both Sayers and the Governor of Mississippi to investigate. He also sent an army officer to look into the Texarkana affair. In the end, the investigator was unable to discover which soldiers had caused the problems in Texarkana, as both the officers and the enlisted men of the regiment denied any knowledge. The investigations of the sniper incidents also turned up nothing.<sup>38</sup>

Ironically, the following March, Sayers was forced to ask for the Tenth Cavalry's assistance after a smallpox epidemic occurred in Laredo. A quarantine was imposed on the city, but infected residents refused to leave their homes and go to a pesthouse. An angry crowd gathered to protect the ill. The Texas Rangers were unable to disperse the crowd, so Sayers asked for help from the Tenth Cavalry. Thirty-five men from Fort McIntosh, armed with a gatling gun, were sent and helped to break up the crowd and enforce the quarantine. The city's mayor praised them for their success.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, the enlisted men of the Tenth Cavalry were eager to leave Texas and the South. On May 1, the regiment embarked on transports for Cuba, where they were sent as an occupation force. After their experiences in Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas, Cuba seemed like a paradise, and many black soldiers would remember their service in Cuba as the finest they ever experienced.<sup>40</sup>

The ten months the regiment spent in the Deep South demonstrated the strength of southern racism and the determination of the African-American soldiers to defy this prejudice. Their time in the South illustrated to the black troopers that regardless of their accomplishments, white Southerners refused to accept them as soldiers. The fact that they had fought a war to protect American interests offered the men of the Tenth Cavalry no protection from the racism of their own society. But the African-Americans troopers refused to back down and submit to this racism. Their defiance led them into frequent, often deadly confrontations with white racists, confrontations the black soldiers looked on with pride because they proved that the Tenth Cavalry could defend itself. As Private John L. Lewis wrote, "I am glad that we have men who have enough manhood to resent any

<sup>12</sup>*Tampa Morning Tribune* quoted in Gatewood, *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden*, 48, 54; *Southern Evangelist* quoted in *Afro-American* (Baltimore), November 19, 1898.

<sup>13</sup>Bigelow, *Reminiscences of the Santiago Campaign*, 50; *Illinois Record*, June 25, 1898, quoted in Gatewood, "Smoked Yankees," 36.

<sup>14</sup>Roosevelt quoted in Cashin, *Under Fire*, 147; Rough Rider quoted in Edward A. Johnson, *History of Negro Soldiers in the Spanish American War, and Other Items of Interest* (Raleigh, NC, 1899), 68; *New York Mail and Express* quoted in *ibid.*, 74.

<sup>15</sup>*Illinois Record*, August 20, 1898, quoted in Gatewood, "Smoked Yankees," 64.

<sup>16</sup>*Illinois Record*, October 15, 1898, quoted in *ibid.*, 85; *Illinois Record*, October 8, 1898, quoted in *ibid.*, 79.

<sup>17</sup>S. W. Dunning to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, October 17, 1898, Adjutant General Office File 2046322, Record Group 94, National Archives (hereafter cited as AGO, RG, and NA); Garna L. Christian, *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917* (College Station, 1995), 3; *Army and Navy Journal*, December 17, 1898.

<sup>18</sup>S. W. Dunning to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, October 17, 1898, AGO File 2046322, RG 94, NA; *Illinois Record*, November 5, 1898, quoted in Gatewood, "Smoked Yankees," 86.

<sup>19</sup>S. L. Woodward to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, October 26, 1898, AGO File 2046322, RG 94, NA; S. L. Woodward to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, November 8, 1898, Tenth Cavalry Regimental Letters Sent, 1889-1904, RG 391, NA.

<sup>20</sup>S. L. Woodward to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, October 26, 1898, AGO 2046322, RG 94, NA; T. A. Baldwin to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, October 28, 1898, *ibid.* The fact that Baldwin spoke in defense of the regiment would have surprised the black troopers, who had little respect for this officer. According to Private Lewis, before the invasion of Cuba, Baldwin stated "that the 10<sup>th</sup> should be mustered out; they were nothing but a set of cowards." Apparently, the regiment's performance in Cuba changed Baldwin's opinion of his men; see, *Illinois Record*, September 10, 1898, quoted in Gatewood, "Smoked Yankees," 73.

<sup>21</sup>Assistant Adjutant General to Commanding Officer, 10th Cavalry, November 8, 1898, Tenth Cavalry Regimental Letters Sent, 1889-1904, RG 391, NA.; S. W. Dunning to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, November 3, 1898, *ibid.*; S. L. Woodward to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, November 8, 1898, *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>Bigelow, *Reminiscences of the Santiago Campaign*, 162; *Army and Navy Journal*, October 29, 1898; S. L. Woodward to Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, October 30, 1898, Tenth Cavalry Regimental Letters Sent, 1889-1904, RG 391, NA; S. L. Woodward to Dr. Thomason, November 8, 1898, *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>S. L. Woodward to Assistant Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, November 15, 1898, *ibid.*; S. M. Whiteside to Assistant Adjutant General, Fourth Army Corps, November 23, 28, 1898, *ibid.*

## Book Reviews

Gavin James Campbell. *Music and the Making of a New South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004, 240 pp. Cloth, \$55.00, ISBN 0-8078-2846-7; Paper, \$19.95, ISBN 0-8078-5517-0.

One thing you will not learn about from Campbell's *Music and the Making of a New South* is anything about music. Instead, Campbell uses the occasion of three yearly music festivals in turn-of-the-century Atlanta to examine race, class and gender issues. Organized around the occasion of the Metropolitan Opera season, the Colored Music Festival, and the Georgia Old-Time Fiddlers' Convention between 1909 and 1925, this study examines how middle- and upper-class Atlantans, both white and black crafted a musical culture that "gave voice to their notions of who they were and who they wished to be." His socio-cultural approach is based on the premise that the civic acclaim granted to these three events over, for example, blues, ragtime, or gospel music proves that the real interest in these genres was political rather than aesthetic. This reductionist dichotomy ignores the fact that civic events tend to be framed by printed programs and ushers, and this intrinsic need for formality tends to exclude music that is spontaneous, improvisational and created for dances or worship services. It also ignores the fact that jazz, blues and gospel have had a profound and lasting influence on the shaping of the South and that opera, classically arranged spirituals and Appalachian fiddling have been marginal factors at best. However, as a cultural study of the middle class in urban Atlanta, Campbell's book is interesting and well written.

The author uses the occasion of the Metropolitan Opera to highlight the utter exclusion of blacks (tickets were completely unavailable to them) and, most interestingly, the crisis of masculinity among newly urbanized and civilized men. With many enlightening and humorous newspaper quotations, he establishes that cultural leaders were anxious about the feminization of society and that men had a love/hate relationship with opera. On the one hand, the occasion proved their economic dominance and provided an opulent stage for the display of their wives in all their virtuous glory. On the other hand, the perception that classical music seemed to "sap masculine prowess," encouraged them to "take their seats in the concert hall with an almost prideful ignorance of the evening's entertainment."

Reverend Henry Hugh Proctor created the Colored Music Festival to "celebrate the musical, financial and social accomplishments of

David L. Chappell. *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004, xii, 344 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 0-8078-2819-X.

David L. Chappell's *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* signals the continued maturation of civil rights history. Over the last several decades, a voluminous body of literature has documented the countless acts of resistance and moral fortitude demonstrated by participants in the black freedom struggle of the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, Chappell suggests, civil rights studies to date have failed to satisfactorily illuminate the specific ideas and belief systems that prompted thousands of ordinary black Southerners to abandon their "normal, private lives" and become "targets of abuse and sometimes bullets." Chappell's careful comparison of the animating ideologies of black civil rights leaders, northern white liberals, and southern segregationists yields not only an explanation of why black activists ultimately were triumphant in the fight against legal segregation, but also why northern liberals and conservative southern whites were unable to muster movements of comparable strength and durability.

Although northern liberals typically were sympathetic to racial reform, Chappell maintains that the campaign against white supremacy owed little to American liberalism. The book's first section reveals the sharp divergence between the intellectual orientation of key black civil rights leaders and the prevailing mindset of mid-century white northern liberals. Liberal leaders such as John Dewey, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and Gunnar Myrdal expressed great confidence in the ability of human reason, education, and spreading economic prosperity to gradually ameliorate social ills, including racial inequality. Key civil rights leaders emphatically rejected the liberals' sanguine faith in progress, as Chappell's intellectual profiles of Martin Luther King Jr., Bayard Rustin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Bob Moses, and Modjeska Simkins reveal. Instead, many black activists were nourished by a transcendent, decidedly illiberal worldview—a prophetic tradition of belief that regarded human society as corruptible and inherently sinful. For most of the civil rights leaders Chappell considers, the prophetic ideology had a deeply religious tint, although it also appeared in secular forms. In either case, the prophetic view of human nature was utterly incompatible with gradualist approach to race relations favored by many northern liberals. Furthermore, liberalism's abiding optimism, epitomized by Myrdal's 1944 *An American Dilemma*, proved inadequate

Nevertheless, *A Stone of Hope* is a remarkable book. It is written with grace and clarity; its core arguments are presented succinctly yet forcefully. Extensive bibliographic essays and thoughtful footnotes further enrich the book's value to historians. Past scholars have highlighted the profound religiosity of many civil rights protestors, but *A Stone of Hope* delivers a sweeping reinterpretation of the significance of faith to the black freedom struggle. An interpretative breakthrough, Chappell's work is certain to reshape the landscape of civil rights historiography. Moreover, it impels scholars to take seriously the significance of religion in twentieth-century American society.

Ann K. Ziker

Rice University

Paul A. Gilje. *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, xiv, 344 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-8122-3756-0.

University of Oklahoma historian Paul A. Gilje presents a vivid depiction of sailors' concept of liberty, their participation in the age of revolution (1750-1850), and their lasting impact on American sense of individual rights. Using lively and detailed accounts of sailors' experiences on board ship and in port towns, Gilje reveals that daily dangers and choices shaped and altered Jack Tar's individual concept of freedom more so than any ideological motivations. Moreover, this depiction of seamen's complex and multiple understandings of liberty provides an important comparison between the philosophies of the early founders and the everyday realities confronting most Americans.

*Liberty on the Waterfront* explores seamen's everyday existence to illustrate their various concepts of liberty at sea and on land. Aboard ship, seamen faced strict hierarchal structure that demanded submission to authoritative captains. Sailors on merchantman, warships, or whalers confronted weather, tides, and press gangs, which frequently disrupted voyages. Tumultuous sea life often left Jack Tar nostalgic for a more stable life on land, whereas cities provided sailors a reprieve from sea rules. Although freedom from ship regulations led to rowdy and womanizing behavior, Gilje refutes the stereotype that all seamen were lewd and licentious. Though admitting that sailors acted disorderly on land, this work reveals a more stable aspect of maritime society; it illustrates Jack Tar's familial connections with wives, mothers, and children. Nevertheless, sailors yearned to be at sea where they could

moos. This book expands upon these earlier investigations by providing a comprehensive study of individual sailors, their culture, their relationships, and their everyday experiences, which provides insight into their ideas and notions of liberty. Not only does Gilje show how seamen fit into the larger national and historical perspectives, he also illustrates how the changing national identity altered sailors' lives. As such, this work presents a valuable account of Jack Tar's life and evolving sense of liberty in a period of revolutionary ferment and is one that students of early American and maritime history should own.

Mary L. Fehler

Texas Christian University

Tona J. Hangen. *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, 232 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$39.95, ISBN 0-8078-2752-5; Paper, \$18.95, ISBN 0-8078-5420-4.

To the uninitiated observer it may seem strange that modern evangelicals—the self-avowed gatekeepers of old time morality—so readily adopt the latest technology to spread the good news. Indeed, twentieth-century evangelicals and fundamentalists seldom thought it odd at all that their message of moral decline, the ravages of secularism, and the pitfalls of modernism was broadcast via radio waves and then satellite, using the most sophisticated technologies of the century. Trinity Broadcasting Network, the hyper-kitsch, pentecostal rococo television conglomerate, regularly rhapsodizes the power of its “Devil-Bustin’ Satellite,” without the faintest hint of irony. Such fusing of the “primitive” and the “pragmatic,” as historian Grant Wacker suggests, perfectly embodies the creative genius of evangelicalism.

Tona J. Hangen's *Redeeming the Dial: Religion Radio, & Popular Culture in America* expertly examines the roots of early twentieth-century evangelicals' savvy use of the modern medium of radio. “[I]t seems high time that we acknowledge that without the institutions of modern mass culture,” argues Hangen, “religious fundamentalism could not have taken its present shape—and that mass culture, in turn, owes something to religion's aggressive advance in the twentieth century.” Like scholars R. Laurence Moore and Colleen McDannell, Hangen reveals that evangelicals and their fiery religious kin, fundamentalists, were quick to embrace modern technology and mass culture. The great commission, “to go and make disciples,” was

broaccasts gave listeners the vital sense that they were not alone in their fight against theological liberalism and in their expectation that Jesus would appear in the clouds to draw his saints into heaven. It was a message, says Hangen, calculated to appeal to as broad a spectrum of evangelicals as possible.

To reach the masses required a great deal of finesse. The most successful radio evangelists—including Charles Fuller and to a lesser extent Aimee Semple McPherson—peddled a somewhat cautious, non-sectarian fundamentalism, free from avowed political and theological dogmatism. The best learned from the mistakes of others. According to Hangen, the ranting anti-Semite, Father Charles Coughlin, “became the symbol of all that was wrong with commercial religious broadcasting.” Coughlin’s poisonous harangues and mixing of politics and religion lost him the support of the broadcasting community and eventually the favor of his listeners. Unfortunately for evangelicals, as a result of the acrimony generated by Coughlin, radio networks in the late thirties began to associate conservative religious broadcasting with controversy. Conservatives went on the defensive. During the nineteen thirties and forties the liberal Protestant Federal Council of Churches battled with a coalition of conservatives represented variously by the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Religious Broadcasters for control of the dial. Hangen skillfully shows how this struggle helped define the modern liberal/conservative polarization.

Hangen’s greatest contribution may be in revealing how critical mass culture was to the growth and viability of early twentieth-century evangelicalism. Decades ago the religious historian Sidney Mead claimed that intense competition between denominations was one of the defining features of American Christianity. Hangen suggests that the competition between conservative and liberal Protestants for the nation’s airwaves “may have been the first issue of national import around which evangelicals and fundamentalists rallied in the postwar era....” Did their skill at using mass culture serve as an entrée into the world of public discourse and politics? Judging from Hangen’s account, it seems quite possible. Evangelicals and fundamentalists would later enter the public sphere with full force, taking on legalized abortion, gay rights, and secularization with an unimaginable fury. Indeed, the oft-cited religious right of today owes much to the radio preachers of yesterday.

perhaps I am overly cautious about using ethnographic analogies and generalizing evolutionary schemes to capture the flavor of peoples that have left only fragmentary evidence of their existence. Thus, I am eager for Hutchinson to re-examine conventional archaeological typologies. For example, when archaeologists divide Southeastern prehistory into Paleoindian, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian periods, they are using labels that were established for the Ohio Valley in the 1930s. The terms imply a linear evolutionary sequence which Hutchinson acknowledges but does not adequately critique. Hutchinson writes, "Regional cultures are readily distinguishable in Florida after 500 B.C., differentiated principally on the basis of archaeological assemblages." Hutchinson may be writing primarily for an audience who will understand the shortcomings of "archeological shorthand," but even Southeastern archeologists have acknowledged their own tendency to overlook the contributions of processual and post-processual archeology and the more recent critiques from postmodernists. Problematic as well is the use of the term "chiefdom" to describe Gulf Coast peoples when archaeologists David Anderson and Robert Mainfort in their edited volume, *The Woodland Southeast* (2002) have recently questioned whether the term has a place at all in describing Southeastern prehistory. Are these categories, established in the late 1950s, masking some important insights? Would it be more productive to look at time intervals rather than trying to squeeze data into an existing but limiting organizational scheme? Certainly Southeastern archeologists recognize the ecological diversity of an area that extends from Florida to Arkansas. Perhaps period and phase labels serve as ideal types from which local adaptations can be studied. Nonetheless, we must ask whether or not the term "Mississippian" helps us to understand or mislead us when Hutchinson writes, "For most of Florida, however, the Mississippian emergence never occurred."

Although life tables constructed from living populations are often used to reconstruct the population structure of archaeological populations, it is troubling that the Yanomamo and the !Kung are the populations to which the skeletal remains from the Palmer site are compared. Hutchinson justifies the selection of the Yanomamo and the !Kung by saying, "They are not coastal foragers, but there is little ethnographic data regarding coastal foragers; they therefore represent the best model available." That may be. The Yanomamo who live in lush tropical forests in the Parima highlands on the border of Venezuela and Brazil are known for chronic, endemic warfare that is responsible for killing a staggering 30 percent of the adult male population. As Hutchinson writes, "Evidence of violent death is not common in Florida

as this volume shows in essay after essay, have more in common with Richard Wright than with John Crowe Ransom and company. Paul Lyons writes on Larry Brown's *Joe*, Matthew Guinn on the sportswriter novels of Richard Ford, Robert McRuer on Randall Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits*, and Martyn Bone on *A Man in Full* by Tom Wolfe. These four novelists all present protagonists who are at best rendered disaffected by their rootlessness (Ford's Frank Bascombe and Wolfe's Charlie Croker) and at worst violently haunted by their homelands (Kenan's Horace Cross is driven to suicide by his homophobic community, and Brown's Joe Ransom lashes out against rural Mississippi by poisoning its trees). These four essays convincingly show that the tradition establishing "sense of place" (in the Agrarian parlance) as the defining attribute of southern literature is currently being called into question by some of the region's best writers.

The second Agrarian demon, the exclusion of non-whites from southernness, is exorcised in a series of essays that begins with Suzanne W. Jones's wryly titled "I'll Take My Land." Jones observes that, while the Twelve Southerners were infected by what she calls "the segregated agrarian ideal," the work of contemporary white neo-agrarian southern novelists Madison Smartt Bell and Ellen Douglas reflect a "desire both to conserve southern rural landscapes and to create new, more racially inclusive southern communities." Another Jones, Carolyn M., treats Albert Murray (whose *South to a Very Old Place* the collection's title parodies), arguing that this African-American writer was astonishingly prescient in his recognition and celebration of southern hybridity. The hybridity that Murray hinted at more than three decades ago is thoroughly explored here in essays that expand the category of "southern literature" to include, as authors, genres, and subjects, Native Americans (Linda Hogan in an essay by Eric Gary Anderson), African American non-southerners (in Wes Berry's "Toni Morrison's Revisionary 'Nature Writing'"), rock music (in Jon Smith's "Southern Culture on the Skids"), and, most relevant to Gulf South interests, the Vietnamese refugees living in such cities as Galveston, Lake Charles, and Biloxi (in Maureen Ryan's "Outsiders with Inside Information").

The volume's central premise—that, because "the South" as it is commonly understood is not an objective reality but rather was *invented* by an influential group of thinkers according to their own values and interests, it can therefore be *reinvented* according to a new set of values and interests—is a promising one. However, the postmodernist approach taken here has the potential of becoming a slippery slope, something well illustrated by one of the book's most interesting yet

longer history in the region that eventually became Mississippi than Sydnor might have allowed but also that the institution underwent constant evolution and change before it ever reached its oft-stereotyped maturity in the antebellum era.

Libby begins his story among the eighteenth-century Natchez Indians, whose territory in the Mississippi Valley the French believed offered attractive possibilities for military outposts, trade depots, and plantation agriculture. Both the Natchez and the neighboring Choctaw recognized slavery as part of their societies, as did the Africans the French forced into labor, but none understood slavery in the racial and chattel terms that Europeans did. Varying understandings of the meaning of slavery hardly marked the only failures to communicate in the region, and a series of wars involving Indians, settlers, and slaves resulted in the obliteration of the Natchez Indians and in the failure of the French to make what would become the town of Natchez much more than a small, miserable, backwater military installation.

Thanks in part to the French decimation of the native population, however, the British had a much easier time establishing slave-based plantation agriculture in the Natchez district after they made the region part of the province of West Florida in 1763. By the 1770s, migrants from seaboard British colonies had already carved out sizeable plantations worked by large numbers of slaves. But the British occupation of Mississippi was fraught with difficulties as well. Slaves resisted their enslavement, and Spanish control of New Orleans entailed trade restrictions that reduced British planters primarily to producing barrel staves rather than tobacco and indigo, which were potentially far more profitable as exports. Economic prospects for the planters improved somewhat when the Spanish used their support for the patriot cause during the American Revolution as a pretext to snatch West Florida from the British. However, neither tobacco nor indigo proved the sustainable windfall planters hoped they would be. By the 1790s, the economy of the Natchez district was nearly on the verge of collapse and the Spanish ceded control of the territory to the United States in mid-decade.

If Mississippi planters saw an uncertain economic future in the early 1790s, the path to profits was clear by the end of the decade. Climate, soil, the demands of the early industrial revolution, and the invention of the cotton gin combined to transform Mississippi from an obscure frontier into an attractive destination filled with promise for aspiring planters who possessed seemingly boundless greed. For the slaves whose labor made such potential riches possible, however, the

meanwhile, the precise connections among French, British, Spanish, and American slave regimes and questions of continuity or discontinuity over the course of the eighteenth century seem underdeveloped. In the broadest sense, Libby not infrequently draws conclusions and offers generalizations that, while perfectly plausible, might have benefitted from greater elaboration and more detailed use of evidence. Still, on the whole the book is nicely done, and offers a long-overdue corrective to the popular impression that Mississippi's past is so stagnant as to be hardly worth studying at all.

Joshua D. Rothman

University of Alabama

Robert E. May. *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, xviii, 426 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$45.00. ISBN 0-8078-2703-7.

Few historians have written book-length studies about pre-Civil War filibustering, but Robert E. May's work fills this historiographical void. Filibustering defined by the author represented any private military expedition that either planned to invade or invaded foreign countries at peace with the United States. In May's *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*, the author explores the lives of Americans who participated in these various expeditions.

May maintains that William Walker represented one of the most famous filibusters in antebellum America. Walker not only conquered Nicaragua, but he also established a coalition government to rule it between 1856 and 1857. Aside from Walker's expedition, other filibustering activities included the invasion of Mexico, Honduras, and Cuba during the nineteenth century. Although the United States government attempted to prevent individuals from engaging in filibustering expeditions because these ventures violated the Neutrality Act of 1818, the American public viewed the filibusters as individuals who epitomized an age of Manifest Destiny.

A majority of Americans neither participated in a filibuster nor supported these expeditions. Nevertheless, filibustering penetrated the daily lives of most Americans throughout the nineteenth century. For example, newspapers and pamphlets informed readers of upcoming events relating to filibustering activities. Additionally, the American public became aware of filibusters through theatrical productions. For example, the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans presented "The Filibuster, or Adventure in Cuba." Furthermore, publishers encouraged

The author concludes his work by examining how the various filibusters that occurred during the mid-nineteenth century resulted in a legacy of anti-Americanism among the citizens of Mexico and other Latin American countries. For example, between 1856 and 1857 Guatemala and Costa Rica strengthened their military establishments following Walker's expeditions in an effort to repulse additional American filibusters. Additionally, Daniel Ortega, who represented Nicaragua's ruling elite in the 1980s, recalled Walker's filibuster when confronted by President Ronald Reagan's efforts to topple the regime. He maintained that if the United States attempted to intervene in his country, the people of Nicaragua would defeat the military troops as they had done William Walker's forces. Even though filibusters in the mid-nineteenth century believed that their actives would advance the territorial ambitions of the United States and improve the nation's commercial relations abroad, the various expeditions actually hindered the United States' expansion and tarnished the nation's image among the foreign countries.

The book is well written and thoroughly researched. Additionally, May's work serves as a valuable resource for anyone examining the various filibustering expeditions that occurred during the years preceding the American Civil War.

Kevin M. Brady

Texas Christian University

Mary Ann Sternberg. *Along the River Road: Past and Present on Louisiana's Byway*. Revised and expanded edition. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001, xv, 355 pp. Cloth, \$39.95, ISBN 0-8071-2730-2; Paper, \$19.95, ISBN 0-8071-2731-0.

The Louisiana plantation country between New Orleans and Baton Rouge possesses a rich history, diverse culture, and unique geography that combine to give the region its distinctive character. The area is bisected by the Mississippi River as well as by a series of roadways on both its east and west banks that are known collectively as the River Road and which lend their name to the entire region. In 1995 Mary Ann Sternberg sought to share the area's distinctiveness through preparation of a layman's guide to River Road that would appeal to both local residents steeped in its lore and to tourists seeking

showcasing sites of both past and present activity and by cataloguing a host of changes in plantation ownership and property boundaries, the evolutionary nature of agriculture and industry, and even the continuing migration of the river's channel, the book highlights the pivotal role that change has played on the physical and cultural landscape of the River Road. Indeed, the virtual inventory of alterations in the area reminds one that change is the only constant on the River Road. Rather than being a quaint picture of antebellum life frozen in time, this district is an entity whose nature and identity is vibrant and evolutionary. This is, without a doubt, the greatest contribution of this volume. Additionally, the author illuminates the fact that the human landscape here is multi-ethnic in nature, a mixture of European, African, Caribbean, and Native-American peoples. Nowhere is this cultural melding more noticeable than in the River Road's cuisine, the subject of a surprising and delightful aside imbedded in the tour text. Finally, virtually every page of the volume illustrates that the struggle of man against his environment is at the center of the area's story. The effort of man to tame the land and the river, and his successes and failures in that regard, explain both the past and present on the River Road. Here, to a degree perhaps equaled in few other locations, the power of nature has dramatically shaped the history of the region.

Despite some shortcomings, Mary Ann Sternberg's work provides a valuable overview of and insight into the complex River Road. Those seeking to visit and to understand this unique region should read this volume.

Keith A. Hardison

Louisiana State Museum

Gregory J. W. Urwin, ed. *Black Flag Over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 336 pp. \$45.00. ISBN 0-8-93-2564-2.

In the introduction, Dr. Urwin explains how he came to put this collection of essays together. He describes his run-ins with Confederate/southern heritage groups in Arkansas, who attempted to have him fired for trying to have historical errors on interpretive markers at a state park corrected. Urwin was found guilty and cited as a "heritage violator" by the Sons of Confederate Veterans. He moved to the north and quickly discovered that Civil War buffs north of the Mason-Dixon line were no more inclined to include racial problems in their Civil War worldview than were those in Arkansas. This is not

Perhaps the best essay is Mark Grimsley's "A Very Long Shadow." Dr. Grimsley takes a short look at racism in America and how we got to where we are today. It is perhaps, the most disturbing and thought-provoking piece in the book. Grimsley looks the problem square in the face and leaves the reader hoping that someday we can come to grips with our phobias. He bids us remember, "The United States has cradled some of humanity's highest ideals. But it has also cast a very long shadow. And until the shadow is accepted and understood, its power to harm everyone—the nation included—is vast."

Joseph E. Brent

Versailles, KY

Kathryn Ziewitz and June Wiaz. *Green Empire: The St. Joe Company and the Remaking of Florida's Panhandle*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004, 363 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 0-8130-2697-0.

In many ways this volume is a groundbreaker in Florida's environmental history. It is very detailed on the personnel that make up the past and current management team that dominates the state's most powerful corporation and gives their vision of the future of a unique set of environments that make up the Florida Panhandle. Much of the team that gave us Disney's "Celebration" community come into play as part of the revised corporation. Detailed planning, smooth advertising and political clout combine to give this venture one of the most appealing and, at the same time, frightening transformations of a rural environment. Ziewitz and Wiaz give us the details on the planned regional airport near Panama City, Florida, and why this is both needed, from the company's viewpoint, and opposed by many local inhabitants and environmentalists. The authors take us on an historical tour of the company's past anchored by the intrepid and unflinching Ed Ball and into its possible future. They demonstrate that there is a great continuity in the thinking of this most important commercial giant.

The company has its roots in the marriage of Alfred I. duPont and Jessie Ball, the sister of Ed Ball. The authors explain how the two men in this family became close friends and how, in the end, the all important sister was left totally out of the corporate picture. Under Ball's leadership the St. Joe Paper Company (the predecessor of the St. Joe Company) amassed its vast land holdings in the Florida Panhandle and elsewhere. From its headquarters in Jacksonville, the

in Port St. Joe. Other forms of environmental contamination, including PCBs, have also shown up in unsafe amounts. Ziewitz and Wiaz note that the St. Joe Paper plant in Port St. Joe is typical of many such paper mills throughout the nation, except that the environmental record of this corporation was somewhat less than that of its competitors. The firm was supposed to discharge its waste products into a publicly-owned waste treatment plant but more commonly dumped their effluent into a nearby canal. The Federal EPA noted that the paper company's arrangement was a way of "shielding [itself] from compliance" with federal pollution standards. Self regulation was tried and apparently failed miserably. The State's Department of Environmental Protection is charged with failure to enforce its own regulations and downplaying the amount and types of pollution found on site. This controversy has yet to find its conclusion and the authors wisely refrain from chastising only the company for the environmental damage. They do note, however, that one of the major reasons for keeping the controversy under wraps was to allow the St. Joe Company to develop a nearby marina and home site, part of which will sit on top of some of the allegedly toxic fill.

This book is a story of the growth and development of one of the largest and most important companies in the South. It is relatively balanced and shows that the philosophy of the firm is similar to other large corporations. Basically, this is one that directs everything to the bottom line. As the authors state it: "The cold reality was that for St. Joe, as with most businesses, environmental stewardship comes about largely due to either regulation or compensation." This mentality has many supporters and as many detractors. Reading this book one finds that the authors are seriously questioning whether this philosophy is best suited for the fragile ecosystems that exist throughout the Panhandle. Many of these rare and delicate environments are endangered by development. To its credit, the book does discuss in detail the company's willingness to sell many of these sensitive ecosystems in large parcels. Most of these have been purchased through the state or the Nature Conservancy which has close ties to the management of St. Joe Company. Although this reader found some of the chapters a bit confusing because of organization and its early history of the Panhandle to be weak, this is an important volume and one that should be on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the history and future of development in Florida and elsewhere.

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