

Goldfield, David R. *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982. Pp. xiv, 232. Illustrations, maps, bibliographical essay. \$20.00 (U.S.)

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politicians who cultivated Black constituencies plus lawyers and businessmen who catered to an exclusively Black clientele. Nevertheless Milwaukee never developed a huge Black ghetto so characteristic of many American urban centres. In 1930 even in the two wards with the heaviest Black population density, Blacks represented only 22.2% and 13% of the total.

In matters of race relations St. Augustine boasted of its long tradition of harmonious accommodation. Blacks had to accept *de jure* segregation but since both peoples earned their living from tourism they consciously strove to foster a spirit of cordiality and cooperation for the sake of their mutual economic interests. St. Augustine escaped the violence which plagued much of the South in the late 19th Century and the city remained calm through the 1930s. Observers, Black and White, regarded race relations in St. Augustine as superior to those of most Southern cities.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in 1954 shattered the peace of St. Augustine. By ordering the desegregation of schools and by implication the integration of all other public facilities, this decision overturned the entire legal basis of the Southern social system. In Florida and in St. Augustine moderates soon vainly struggled to stem the rising anti-integration tide. In St. Augustine, White Citizens' Councils joined with the John Birch Society and office holding political allies to thwart the effects of the *Brown* judgement in every way possible. In response militant members of the Black middle class, appealing especially to Afro-American youth, intensified their fight to break down racial barriers. When local efforts proved inadequate St. Augustine's Black leadership invited Martin Luther King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to enter the fray. King mobilized his "nonviolent army" and the once tranquil Southern metropolis became the scene of marches, protests, sit-ins, wade-ins and demonstrations. This provoked an acceleration of violence which included the use of dogs, clubs, cattle prods and mass jailings. According to Colburn, King held only a passing interest in St. Augustine but he wanted to use the agitation as a weapon to pressure Congress into approving the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Once this legislation passed, King and SCLC quickly pulled out much to the anger of the local leadership. At the time many citizens of St. Augustine believed that race relations had worsened but in the long run Afro-Americans gained desegregated schools, equal access to public facilities, voting rights and the election of Blacks to office. Despite these advances, Colburn declares, Blacks still lived at a standard far below that of most Whites.

In Milwaukee racial tensions mounted during the Depression years when Afro-Americans suffered severe economic setbacks and were also pushed further into dilapidated ghettos. Yet when a series of race riots erupted in several cities across the country in the forties Milwaukee stayed free of turbulence. Establishment of the Milwaukee Race Rela-

tions Council and of the C10 backed Milwaukee Interracial Labor Relations Council helped to bridge the communications gap. Trotter's study ends in 1945 preventing a complete comparison with Colburn's analysis of St. Augustine during the more recent years.

Trotter has based his study on impressive research buttressed by statistical analyses and illustrative tables. Since he deals almost exclusively with socio-economic trends, forces, and movements his work pays little attention to the human personality. Colburn, for example, clearly shows the tremendous importance of the charismatic leadership of Martin Luther King which affected both the fate of St. Augustine and that of the civil rights movement nationally. In a sense, neither city can be considered as typical. Milwaukee with its tiny percentage of Blacks did not follow the same pattern as urban centres with far larger Black communities. St. Augustine, whose economy rested wholly on tourism, does not invite comparison with the more representative industrial centres. Both books, nevertheless, advance our knowledge and illuminate our understanding of the highly complex issues involved in urban race relations in America.

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Goldfield, David R. *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982. Pp. xiv, 232. Illustrations, maps, bibliographical essay. \$20.00 (U.S.).

David Goldfield's survey of urban development in the American South attacks head-on the common view of cities in this region as "islands" in an agrarian sea. He proposes instead that southern cities are distinctive precisely because they have been shaped by the South. The three features that distinguish the South historically from other regions of the United States — its rural culture and life-style, biracial society, and colonial economy — have also set southern cities off from other American cities. The impress of the region is visible physically and spatially — in the rural quality of urban landscaping and architecture — and temporally, the past weighing on the present.

Until the Great Depression, Goldfield argues, the marketing of staple products was the main economic activity of southern towns and cities. Staple agriculture accounts for the urbanization that did occur, but also its limits. In the colonial Chesapeake, where tobacco marketing did not require intermediaries, towns contained at most several hundred residents. At the other extreme, the rice, slave and lumber trades made Charleston the major southern colonial

urban centre, with 10,000 inhabitants by the Revolution. After independence, cotton underlay the growth of one major city, New Orleans with 300,000 planters in its hinterland, a few secondary seaports and many small communities. Although up to 1860 the urban population grew faster relative to total population in the South than it did in the North, the typical southern town on the eve of the Civil War had less than four thousand people, leading Goldfield to entitle his chapter on the antebellum era, "Urbanization without Cities."

Following the Civil War and emancipation, the localization of cotton marketing resulting from share-cropping and the extension of railroad networks changed the geographical pattern of southern cities; country stores, storehouses and taverns built around rural depots formed the nuclei of towns "now strung out like baubles along the railroad tracks" (p. 89). Excepting Atlanta, a major transshipment point for cotton, and Birmingham with its iron and steel industry, new techniques for processing cotton sustained urban growth only to a limit of five to ten thousand inhabitants. Meanwhile the larger antebellum ports declined, leaving the South "relatively less urban and less prosperous" in 1920 than it had been in 1860 (p. 130-1).

The dependence of southern cities on staple-crop agriculture went hand in hand with subservience to a distant metropolis — England in the colonial era, the Northeast afterwards. The consequences were generally negative. Goldfield considers the outflow of capital at least partly responsible for the urban South's lag in manufacturing, inadequate sanitation and unpaved streets. At the same time, he points out the "South's complicity in its own economic subjugation" (p. 132), especially in the "new South" which he judges to be a misnomer.

Biracialism, or the separate and inferior status of the Black race, further restricted urbanization. Slavery and afterwards debt peonage prevented the movement of Blacks to cities. The low skills and wages of those Blacks who did dwell in cities, where they functioned as "surrogate immigrants" (p. 110), discouraged European immigration, reduced consumer demand and were a major reason southern cities failed to generate functions beyond the marketing of staples. Racism is but one element of a stultifying agrarian culture: "The rural condition, whatever it was — poverty, filth, disease, individualism, fatalism — became the urban condition" (p. 131). In Goldfield's pessimistic account, instead of being eroded by the forces of progress, traditional values have persisted and thwarted the process of modernization in the South.

In the last chapter, "A Kind of Sunlight," the point to this interpretation becomes clear. Although the South finally became an urban region in 1960, in the sense that more than half of its population lived in cities or towns, Goldfield systematically exposes the illusion behind the Sunbelt, revealing

how values from the past are aborting apparent progress in industrial diversification accruing from federal military spending during and following World War II and in civil rights. He describes the segregated neighbourhoods of contemporary southern cities, the illiteracy, high mortality and crime of Black neighbourhoods, the traditional industrial patterns that linger on in southern mill towns and the lamentable living and working conditions of the rural Whites who have migrated to them. He notes how the same tax advantages that have attracted corporations to the postwar South have also deprived cities of revenues for social service programs.

Until *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers* — the juxtaposition is deliberate — the only overview of urbanization in the South was an anthology of five essays edited by Blain Brownell and Goldfield himself (*The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South*, Kennikat Press, 1977). Provocative as several of the essays were in their own right, Goldfield's volume is a superior synthesis. Besides the coherence deriving from authorship by one person, Goldfield has transcended two major flaws in his contribution to the earlier study: in his zeal to rectify the neglect of Southern cities in histories of the region, he had overstated the similarity of southern to northern cities and he tended to take boosters at their word. In *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers*, the booster is described instead as "a rhetorical proponent of change, [who] is actually afraid of and opposed to change" (p. 160). Goldfield is now critical of the "New South Creed" and of "Sun Belt Sophistry" (p. 192); he no longer slights the violence, the lack of social services, the failure of a biracial society to use its human resources; and he does not hesitate to ask, "Has the growth ethic as espoused by civic leaders suckered and victimized the South again?" (p. 190).

The polemical intent of the book, unfortunately, leads to some inconsistency. For instance, to argue that urbanization in the antebellum South did not mean large cities, he claims that urban places with less than 4,000 people were more characteristic of the South in 1860 than of any other region (p. 32); but the analysis still deals principally with larger cities like New Orleans, Mobile, Charleston and Richmond; and later to support his contention that urban growth actually "moved backwards" in the period from 1860 to 1920, he claims that 68.7% of the urban population in the South lived in cities over 25,000 in 1850, compared to only 48.1% in 1900 (p. 89). In pursuing the theme of biracialism and the similarity of the urban to the rural South, he rejects the model of a three-caste society that may better describe interaction between Whites, free persons of colour and slaves in antebellum southern cities.

Nor does Goldfield supply the definitions or make the kinds of systematic comparison that might permit impartial verification of just how distinctive were southern cities. Data on the interdependence of cities within the southern region relative to connections with the North might have been used

to test generalizations about colonial dependence and to ascertain whether the cities in the South differed from those in the West in this respect. Since strong family ties are among those rural values said to persist in southern urban populations, these should be reflected in sex ratios, age data, and patterns of intermarriage.

On the positive side, Goldfield's synthesis is likely to stimulate such studies. It is based on current research on the urban South, discussed in an excellent bibliographical essay. It is original both in its "regional" emphasis and in its effort to demonstrate the influence of the countryside on the city rather than to define one milieu by opposition to the other. Finally, it is itself, in the tradition of Wilbur Cash's *Mind of the South*, an example of the literate introspection by liberal southerners on the nature and the flaws of their civilization, the counterpart, incidentally, to the traditional, constrictive culture criticized in the book.

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Foley, William E. and C. David Rice. *The First Chouteaus: River Barons of Early St. Louis*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983. Pp. xii, 241. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index.

The Chouteau family played important roles as Empire Builders in the Mississippi and Missouri river valleys. *The First Chouteaus: River Barons of Early St. Louis*, by William E. Foley and C. David Rice, both professors of history at Central Missouri State University, analyzes the careers and accomplishments of two leading members of a North American economic dynasty family. For over half a century, Auguste Chouteau (1749-1829) and his half brother Pierre Chouteau (1758-1849) acted as merchants, Indian traders, bankers, land speculators, government advisers, public officials, community leaders, and fur traders. Operating out of St. Louis, a city they helped to found and raise up, the two Chouteaus prospered under French, Spanish, and United States rule. In addition, they fostered close relations with the Indians, especially the Osages in Missouri. No matter what the government or tribe, the two suave and diplomatic Frenchmen quickly gained acceptance and influence, always advancing their commercial fortunes at the same time.

Accommodation was the two Chouteaus hallmarks of strength. They were as comfortable with the rich and famous, including Marquis de Lafayette, as with Indians and French *coureurs de bois*. While they never mastered a language other than French, the basic integrity, negotiating skills, and busi-

ness acume of the two Chouteaus overcame many obstacles. According to Foley and Rice, "By combining a facility for dealing with people from differing social and cultural backgrounds with shrewd judgment, sound business practices, and a unique understanding of frontier mercantile operations, the Chouteau brothers earned for themselves personal fortunes as well as lasting places in the history of disparate societies experiencing a fateful rendezvous in the heartland of the North American wilderness at the turn of the nineteenth century" (p. xi).

The far-flung activities of the two Chouteaus involved Canada. Business realities more than their French antecedents were the primary consideration. Whether under Spanish or United States rule, French voyagers continued to trade in the upper portions of the upper Louisiana Territory. The two Chouteaus not only dealt with them, but shipped large quantities of furs north via the Montreal route to Europe. This cost less and resulted in less spoilage than sending furs through New Orleans. Sometimes, the northern arrangement had its drawbacks; at the start of the War of 1812 United States' authorities confiscated a large consignment of furs at Michilimackinac, an exchange point for the northern fur trade. The two Chouteaus closely followed events in Europe, particularly the impact of the Napoleonic Wars on the fur trade. However, they cared little about the plight of the French in Lower Canada. What concerned the two Chouteaus was, first and foremost, their vast trading empire. Foley and Rice note: "Through decades and political change and through years of enduring the fragile economic fortunes of a dangerous frontier, the Chouteaus had mastered not only the skills of the survivor, but they had developed an intuition about the marketplace which led them to be alternately aggressive and cautious. Usually this acquired reflex served them well. By their old age, they had become consummate practitioners of the art of American politics and business, capable of holding their own with the best of their hard-driving Yankee fellow countrymen" (p. 181). The two brothers were true international businessmen.

Foley and Rice have done an excellent job of researching a very difficult topic. The two Chouteaus frequently operated in very circumspect ways. Their entrepreneurial activities were such that untangling them obviously required skill and patience. Moreover, the family had complicated roots. A genealogical table in the back of the book is of major help. In the course of the research, Foley and Rice used a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, including the Chouteau Collection at the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis.

While the narrative in *The First Chouteaus* is sometimes hard to follow, perhaps, reflecting the problem involved in piecing the story together, the content and analysis overcome any literary shortcomings. This fine contribution should be