The Price of Permanence: Nature and Business in the New South by William D. Bryan (review)

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violent public demonstrations of white supremacy. Kotch, however, shows that racist newspaper coverage of executions compensated for the public's loss of access to them. Satisfying the punitive desires of its white readers, for instance, the Raleigh *News and Observer* called Andrew Jackson—who was executed in 1920—"'a great, stupid, unlettered animal'" and informed readers that after the man's execution in the state's electric chair, his "'body was trundled away to do its first service to society in the hands of medical students'" (p. 79).

One stone remains unturned in Kotch's survey of the historical landscape of capital punishment in North Carolina. In *Furman v. Georgia* (1972), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state courts were imposing the death penalty in an unconstitutionally arbitrary manner. In an effort to appease the state and federal courts, the North Carolina legislature tried to solve the problem by making the death penalty mandatory for everyone convicted of first-degree murder and aggravated rape. Given the state's checkered history with a mandatory death penalty, though, such a decision is perplexing. Until the 1940s, the death penalty had been mandatory for those convicted of capital crimes. Such rigidity had unintended consequences, like compassionate juries who acquitted guilty defendants to avoid sentencing them to death. Given that experience, why did state legislators not embrace the approach of other southern states like Georgia—an approach ultimately approved by the Supreme Court—that balanced sentencing guidelines with the opportunity to grant mercy? Kotch's conjecture—that legislators thought a mandatory death penalty was the only way to satisfy the courts—is plausible, but more work is needed to understand how and why a state with a reputation for moderation among its southern counterparts opted for a draconian sentencing scheme that the Supreme Court found unpalatable in *Woodson v. North Carolina* (1976).

This quibble is ultimately a small one. *Lethal State* is an outstanding work of cultural, legal, and political history. As a state-specific study filled with compelling (and often harrowing) detail, Kotch's work meets an important need for a more granular historical approach to the American death penalty. At the same time, *Lethal State* brims with thematically rich insights that have much to offer scholars in the humanities and social sciences asking questions about race, violence, and modernity in the United States.

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The Price of Permanence: Nature and Business in the New South. By William D. Bryan. Environmental History and the American South. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018. Pp. xxvi, 226. $54.95, ISBN 978-0-8203-5339-5.)

In *The Price of Permanence: Nature and Business in the New South*, William D. Bryan reappraises the relationship between economics and the environment in the region from the end of the Civil War to the New Deal, emphasizing the contested and often overlooked goal of "permanence" as an engine of change (p. xv). Exploring the different approaches that southerners took to conserve resources for their long-term use, this well-researched work moves beyond stereotypical images of rapacious, short-sighted developers willing to pay any ecological cost in pursuit of economic growth to a more nuanced account. In the process, Bryan makes a significant contribution to both environmental and southern history.

After a preface that lays out the book's argument, that debates over how to achieve economic and environmental permanence shaped development in the New South, and situates the work in the historiography, the book is organized in thematic sections. Chapter 1, "Nature's Bounty," argues that southern promoters viewed economic development and the maintenance of abundant stocks of resources for long-term use as mutually beneficial goals, rather than competing impulses, believing that "[e]nvironmental permanence meant permanent profits" (p. 2). In industries from manufacturing to agriculture, Bryan provides evidence to sustain his contention that conservation, far from being "antithetical to the New South Creed," was actually "a key part of it" (p. 24).

The next chapter, "Cultivating Permanence," explores efforts to promote the long-term viability of southern agriculture. Reformers championed a variety of crops and cultivation techniques, ranging from the practical to the fanciful, but none had a widely transformative effect on the dominant staple crop regimes. Commercial fertilizers, however, emerged as a key innovation, "purchased permanence" that immediately increased yields while promising perpetual cultivation (p. 66). Bryan argues that the relative ease of adding commercial fertilizers to existing practices, compared with the difficulty of adopting new crops, helps explain the persistence of cash crop dependence. Throughout the book, the tendency to choose the easiest option that promised permanence emerges as an important theme unifying New South approaches to conservation.

Similar patterns characterized the industries that "promised conservation through development," described in chapter 3, "Utilizing Southern Wastes" (p. 95). Pulp and paper manufacturers that transformed wood chips into valuable products exemplified the strategy of utilizing previously wasted resources, but the trend also encompassed rationalizing mineral extraction, chemical products like rayon, and the furniture industry. Yet, as Bryan notes, the southern waste industries' view of environmental permanence as "simply . . . maintaining stocks of profitable resources" contributed to a host of growing ecological problems (p. 110).

These problems are at the heart of "The Costs of Permanence," a valuable chapter that uses water as a lens to view the effects of industrial pollution. While local protests or lawsuits sometimes improved access to drinking water or mitigated the most egregious pollution, they never challenged the fundamental logic of development. The costs, including polluted water, chemical waste, flooding, and waterborne diseases, fell most heavily on those with the least power, particularly black southerners barred from the legal system. The higher price imposed on black southerners, who were also least likely to benefit from permanence, stands out as another central theme in the book, from the ways black labor was naturalized as a feature of regional abundance to the exclusion of African Americans from white tourist facilities.

Finally, "Tourism's New Path" explores "how tourism's perceived environmental footprint" led boosters to cast tourism as "the quintessential permanent industry" (p. 143). With the Great Smoky Mountains National Park as a prominent exception, the account emphasizes the private status of most tourist development as a distinguishing feature of the region, characterizing operations from health and golf resorts to massive hunting reserves. As Bryan notes, this characteristic typified the small role that government played in New South

conservation generally, as most of the impetus toward permanence came from private industry, which stood in contrast to other regions. Drawing similar contrasts in sharper relief throughout the work would have enhanced the book's broader significance, but distinguishing southern conservation from national trends is nonetheless a valuable contribution.

The Price of Permanence ends by contemplating parallels between ideas of permanence in the New South and the contemporary vogue for sustainable development. The history of New South developers who embraced permanence as an aspiration, yet nonetheless touched off a series of ecological calamities, suggests the need to critically engage modern claims of sustainability to ensure the aspiration connects to concrete behaviors to support "environmental quality in the broadest possible terms" (p. 182). Yet this parallel also highlights a concern for Bryan's interpretation: how does one distinguish between the rhetoric and the practice of permanence? In this otherwise very valuable corrective to a tendency in scholarship to ignore both, Bryan sometimes fails to distinguish between them and can leave the reader with a misleading impression of the prominence of permanence as driving behavior.

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Hattiesburg: An American City in Black and White. By William Sturkey. (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. [x], 442. $29.95, ISBN 978-0-674-97635-1.)

In his book *Hattiesburg: An American City in Black and White*, William Sturkey joins the historiographical trend of community studies that inform our interpretations of broader historical forces and their impact on the world. Through meticulous research and diverse sources, Sturkey shows how a place like Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and its people, both black and white, can help readers reinterpret the causes and effects of well-worn topics like Jim Crow and the modern civil rights movement.

From the start, Sturkey establishes that *Hattiesburg* will be a biracial study. He alternates white and black narratives chapter by chapter, beginning with the era of Reconstruction and the rise of Jim Crow. In this setting, Hattiesburg was founded as a New South city, undergirded by railroads and the timber industry and informed by the hegemony of white supremacy. Yet Sturkey is not interested in rehashing traditional stories about Mississippi's racist political, economic, and social power structure. Instead, he shows the complexity of Jim Crow. That includes the power of African Americans in a period when it has been assumed that black Mississippians had little to no say over their lives, and it involves the unforeseen manner in which white southerners laid the groundwork for the modern civil rights movement.

Although Sturkey recognizes the ubiquitous violence and frequent tragedy that marred the black experience in the Hattiesburg area, he points to "three primary factors" that enabled black communities to flourish (p. 7). First, the broad forces of modernization, industrialization, and urbanization, despite their often brutal nature, created more power for African Americans whose access to wage labor and to the railroad spelled the capacity to leave the South altogether through the Great Migration. Second, white southerners, in their