

Like a Family: the Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World

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of the operating and nonoperating employees in the railroad industry. Often he is able to include shopmen, brakemen, switchmen, and other railroad workers, but at critical points he chooses just the men working in the cab.

These criticisms, however, should not be seen as weakening the overall contribution of *A Generation of Boomers*. Stromquist's perspective provides important comparisons for the work other historians are doing in the same period. In tying the different threads into a unified whole, Stromquist has added a new dimension to how we must view the history of the American worker and the labor movement, the history of Iowa, and late nineteenth-century American history in general.

Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World, by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly. Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987. xxii, 468 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY JOHN HERBERT ROPER, EMORY AND HENRY COLLEGE

Like a Family is a carefully wrought book which succeeds in creatively unifying a number of disparate, and sometimes even conflicting, subfields of modern social history. Above all else, it accomplishes the virtually impossible by having a committee produce a narrative and an interpretation, both of which are provocative in the best sense of the word. Readers of the *Annals of Iowa* will recognize by the subtitle that the study's subject is southern, even subregional within a belt of the Carolinas Piedmont; but the relevance to national economic policy is obvious, and there are fascinating implications for the ways and means of tracing out the patterns of labor relations and community identity in any area.

In recent years business historians have grown increasingly sophisticated and accomplished in explaining the management policies of the industrial capitalist story after the Panic of 1873. Usually cast in terms of a response by industrial capitalism to a series of disruptions, this interpretation emphasizes creative managerial answers to a collapse of international markets, a failure of the British pound in international exchange, and a drying-up of credit even for well-managed small firms. The result is said to be organizational capitalism, a recognition by certain entrepreneurs that large corporate structures, especially in the context of a new imperialism, could provide an

internal line of credit and, where necessary, stabilize international currency exchange. "Managerial revolution," "response to industrialism," "search for order," "the visible hand" are some of the symbols business historians use to describe changes in western industrialized nations between 1873 and 1920. All of this Jacquelyn Dowd Hall and her coworkers know perfectly well, as shown by their pulsing narrative and selected bibliography.

The general patterns of business history, however, are warped by the particularities of southern history in at least three ways: the managerial change begins late, arguably after the 1920 end date for the rest of the United States; there are unique continuities of highly personalized ("like a family") relationships of power and responsibility involving a myriad of enduring rural and land-based values for all classes and both races; and, withal, an inescapable sense of the tragic in the abuse of women, blacks, and the young and the old as well as in the genuine, but often very quiet and extremely private and personal, resistance to those abuses by a class of workers who are legitimately treated here as heroes. This other side of the same story of economic development is apprehended by equally sophisticated labor historians, but labor historians and business historians only seldom, and then ineffectively, talk with each other. Whatever else this superb volume does, its intelligent synthesis of business history and labor history is epochal; and its provocative nature—what Mortimer J. Adler usefully calls the pertinence of the impertinent question—should force communication between these subfields while also bringing cultural historians into the discussions.

To catch some of the book's spirit, note the description of the conditions of life and labor for millworkers: "The threat to a worker's health could be as sudden and violent as the snapping of a bone or as insidious as the relentless clouding of a lung" (81). Yet the authors also depict the no less real independence of the human spirit: "Viewed from the outside, mill villages seemed to deny workers the most basic forms of self-expression. But in muddy streets and cramped cottages mill people managed to shape a way of life beyond their employers' grasp. Millhands' habits and beliefs were more than remnants of a rural past; they were instruments of power and protection, survival and self-respect, molded into a distinctive mill village culture" (179–80).

This is a story of people, with a fair sense of their many dimensions. Contemporaneous photographs, especially those by the incomparable Lewis Hine, go a long way to give a believable face to the story, while judicious quotes from the mill villagers provide a sense of the soul. For Hall's team, the spinner and winder Icy Norman of

Burlington and the minister George "Preacher" Swinney of Glen Hope are as fully engaging as the brilliant and not insensitive Burlington Mills entrepreneur, James Spencer Love; and all of them are here for us to listen to, to look at, to laugh with, to argue with. To learn from.

"Teach us our recollections," the poet W. H. Auden prays in "Homage to Clio." For one who spent three formative years, 1948-1951, in the cotton mill village of Lyman, South Carolina, there are many, many recollections to be taught by these scholars, each of whom here earns the honored titles poet and millhand.

Immigrants on the Hill: Italian-Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982, by Gary Ross Mormino. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986. xi, 289 pp. Illustrations, notes, tables, bibliography, index. \$21.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY SUZANNE O'DEA SCHENKEN, WEST DES MOINES, IOWA

Among the "Little Italys" established by Italian immigrants in several American cities, one—St. Louis's Hill—has been especially vital. Based on more than one hundred interviews of the Hill's residents and research in Cuggiono, Italy, Gary Mormino describes the characteristics that have allowed the neighborhood to retain its distinctive features for a century. Mormino found that stability and continuity among the residents separate it from other ethnic neighborhoods that have lost their identities. The Italians who provided the Hill with its stability defined success in different terms than many other immigrants who sought economic prosperity. St. Louis Hill Italians sank deep and tenacious roots into the homes they owned, the church they supported, and the family and community life they sustained. Isolated by geographic barriers, but more by their wish to remain separate, Hill Italians were immune to the temptations and encroachment of urban and suburban life.

Believing that the immigrant story begins in the native country, Mormino describes the reasons for emigration from Italy. He focuses primarily on emigrants from Cuggiono in Lombard, the source of an important portion of the Hill's residents. He follows the chain of migration from Cuggiono to St. Louis and relates the continuing connections between the two communities.

Lombards and Sicilians came to America with few skills adaptable to an urban environment. The clay mines under St. Louis and the brick factories that used the clay were important sources for employment, but the jobs offered low pay and few chances for advancement.

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