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Review

Reviewed Work(s): THE NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN CULTURE, Volume 16—Sports and Recreation by Harvey H. Jackson

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issues, the authors barely mention the numerous and important studies done on the black underclass, in particular the work of William Julius Wilson, an advisor to the Clinton administration. Similarly, the progress of black politicians is limited. Finally, and perhaps this is my own bias, but women, barring the mention of Coretta Scott King, are almost invisible. Aside from these few criticisms, this work is a significant addition to the ever-expanding literature on the post-civil rights era and one that would work extremely well in a survey of African American history in the twentieth century.

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THE NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN CULTURE, *Volume 16—Sports and Recreation*. Edited by Harvey H. Jackson III. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. xx, 383 pp. General introduction, introduction, contributors, index. Paper \$22.95, ISBN 978-0-8078-7173-7).

The sixteenth volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* frames its entries on southern sports and recreation by reprising the grand paradox of the effort the South has historically expended in the pursuit of leisure. That effort, whether denounced as a scarlet letter or celebrated as a defiant badge of honor, has if nothing else helped "reveal the cultural values, the class and racial similarities and differences, and the historical perspectives of those participating in whatever is going on, wherever it is being done." (p. 16) To draw the contours of that effort-to-avoid-effort, the editors have divided their encyclopedia into two sections, one detailing broad topics, the other emphasizing specific individuals, places, and festivals. Accidents of alphabetizing allow the reader to move seamlessly from the older blood sports of cockfighting and bear baiting to their cultural descendant boxing. Or from marching bands to Mardi Gras. Or square dancing to stepping.

There lies within such entries a wealth of interesting information—William Faulkner, for example, often played golf at a nine-hole course at Ole Miss and helped organize local tournaments. And that information is relatively well contextualized. The golf entry describes the slow development of southern golf, its class associations, and the growing influence of Georgia's

Augusta National. It spends less time on the racism of the golfing community, particularly the southern golfing community, but it does devote space to black caddies and black courses in and around larger urban areas. Most entries work to tie the past and present and to find those elements of continuity that develop a distinctive line of "southernness" through the ages. The blood sport entry, for example, is careful to note that the historic roots of southern dog fighting have remained deep in many communities, flowering to influence another southern sacred cow—football—when Michael Vick was convicted for his 2007 role in a modern reprisal of the sport.

But this is a volume encompassing both sports and recreation. Readers can learn about Appalachian clogging, debutante balls, holiday traditions, theme parks, and fairs. Charles Reagan Wilson, the *Encyclopedia's* general editor, even manages to construct an esoteric but simultaneously ingratiating essay on "passing the time." In one of the book's strongest and most interesting entries, Wilson argues that enjoying downtime is a fundamentally creative act. And in the South, it is an act that reflects "regional concerns of race, religion, gender, rurality, and other aspects of southern culture." (p. 161)

There are, however, problems with the work. It doesn't take a significant logical jump to argue that supporting a sports team, for example, is a glorified version of "passing the time," but the nature of sports and the nature of recreation are substantially different. Sports, for example, is an item of cultural significance for two reasons: 1) the massive, near-religious loyalty it can generate in those devoted to the outcomes of its contests, and 2) the reality that it is one of the only self-replicating texts in the world (whether categorized as culture, science, or art) where the outcome remains in doubt. Clogging evinces a significant aspect of southern culture, but you will never find 90,000 people painting their bodies and convulsing in religious ecstasy over the dances, and the outcome will always be the same. The South would not be what it is without roadhouses, juke joints, and old-timers contemplatively whittling on porches and in front of gas stations. Sports, however, is something inherently different from these activities and deserves a pride of place in the series that "passing the time" may not. Music, for example, is a form of southern recreation. So is folk art. So is food. So is literature. But these elements of southern culture merit their own independent volumes. Sports should, too.

This criticism is more than just an excuse to defend the validity of sport, particularly sport in service of southern culture. The full place of sports in southern society isn't fully represented because after the recreation entries have run their course, page space has vanished to fully draw the contours of southern sport. There are only two sentences on the Negro Southern League, for example—one of the most successful black business ventures in the history of the American South—and no mention of the fact that organized black league baseball was founded in Jacksonville, Florida. Bear Bryant merits an entry, but John Vaught was just as important to Mississippi as Bryant was to Alabama. So was Vince Dooley. So was Frank Broyles. And there is no mention of Bryant's rival on the plains, Sugg Jordan. Herschel Walker rightly merits an entry as the first black icon of SEC football, but there is no mention of Lester McClain, Tennessee's first black football player and the first in the conference to see any really significant playing time.

Make no mistake: the volume is very successful at what it does. But it needs to do more. No one should ever enter any reading experience with the expectation of comprehensiveness, but encyclopedias should at least be making an effort in that direction. The South would be something fundamentally different without sports. Sports would be something fundamentally different without the South. We will continue to understand that more and more when the cultural history of sport is given the same pride of place as music, art, and literature. It may take a while, as we move at our own slow, southern, leisurely pace. Soon, however, we will have no choice but to stop "passing the time."

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THE NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN CULTURE: *Volume 19—Violence*. Edited by Amy Louise Wood. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. xviii, 299 pp. General introduction, introduction, contributors, index. Paper \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-8078-7216-1).

The reason southerners are so polite is due to their propensity for violence. Or perhaps it's the other way around: southerners are so violent because of their propensity for politeness. Either