

ingness to speak candidly, and a writer's gift. Thus he flatly rejects the Lost Cause myth: that the Confederacy was noble, the war romantic, and that slavery was not the underlying cause of the war. Believing that the war was about freedom, Beecham was contemptuous of the southern cause for which "Davis planned, Lee fought and Jackson prayed" (p. xiv). He rejected the national glorification of Lee, "a man who deserted the nation that educated him in the art wherein he was gifted, and turned the strength of his genius against the sword of God and the might of his truth" (p. xiv). Beecham believed wholeheartedly in "the universal brotherhood of the human race" and was an admirer of the black soldier who "came forward cheerfully and volunteered his strength, brawn, and his heart's blood to save the honor of the flag that to his race had been a symbol of every dishonor" (p. xvi). He regarded the black soldiers of his regiment as "the bravest and best soldiers that ever lived" (p. 168).

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River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley. By Joe William Trotter, Jr. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998. Pp. xvi, 200. Maps, tables, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$29.00; paperbound, \$17.00.)

In *River Jordan*, the eighth in an ongoing series of books published by the University Press of Kentucky that is a legacy of the early 1990s project, *Always a River: The Ohio River and the American Experience*, Joe William Trotter, Jr., summarizes most of the existing scholarship on four African American cities: Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville, and Evansville. He argues that "though class, gender, and cultural issues require much more research, the existing scholarship [on African American urban history] provides the intellectual foundation for a new African American urban synthesis. The Ohio valley is an excellent place to start because it holds great symbolic significance in African American history" (p. xiii). The Ohio divided slave and free labor and later the Jim Crow South from the North. It was a "river Jordan" promising passage to a better life.

This work comprises three subdivisions of about fifty pages each—the expansion of commercial and early industrial capitalism (1790–1860); emancipation, race, and industrialization (1861–1914); and the industrial age (1914–1945). Trotter covers late twentieth-century experiences in just ten pages. His previous research on Pittsburgh and the relatively large amount of scholarship on black Cincinnati help explain why he treats those two cities more extensively than the other two.

Trotter underscores the role of black workers in the transformation of black urban life, documents the emergence of the black middle

class, shows the development of interracial alliances, and offers comparisons and contrasts in the social history of these varied cities. Black communities diverged in their experiences with racial violence and discrimination and “along temporal, spatial, color, class, and gender lines” (p. xiv). Trotter concludes, though, that several unifying themes emerged. While blacks “faced racial hostility from whites and class, color, and social cleavages among themselves,” they also built “bridges across such social chasms and creat[ed] new communities . . .” At “the forefront . . . was the transformation of southern agricultural workers into a new urban working class” (p. xv).

Trotter offers thoughtful comparisons of four black communities along a common waterway. Some gaps appear, though. Trotter rarely mentions racial violence after 1861. Whites’ roles in ameliorating racism need more attention, as do differing population trends. For example, Evansville’s black population, like that of all lower Ohio towns except Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, declined between 1900 and 1910 and remained flat until World War II. The book’s chief limitation, however, is not the author’s fault. There are relatively few historical studies of African American life in the Ohio valley.

This book should be a catalyst for further research on urban experiences since 1945, smaller cities and towns, and the dynamics of race and community-building on either side of the river. Also Trotter’s “proletarianization” thesis needs more careful scrutiny. If Evansville is a case in point, many African Americans had been employed in Kentucky tobacco factories and distilleries before migrating after 1863. Trotter has offered a solid beginning for that quest.

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Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864–97. By Richard Schneirov. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998. Pp. viii, 390. Notes, illustrations, index. Clothbound, \$49.95; paperbound, \$21.95.)

Richard Schneirov’s *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864–97* stands as another recent example of the skill and insight that labor historians bring to considerations of the history of the United States. As a title in the University of Illinois Press’s Working Class in American History series, Schneirov’s book offers a history of labor and workers in Gilded Age Chicago and presents an important argument about the development of modern liberalism in the United States. In his own words, Schneirov contends that “class formation among late nineteenth-century workers had a profound and transformative impact