

and Family Acres, a community established by graduate students at Notre Dame in 1947. Marlett places these attempts to transplant urban Catholics to the spiritually and physically fertile countryside within the history of American Catholic colonization projects, such as Archbishop John Ireland's Irish Catholic Colonization Association of the late nineteenth century.

Catholic agrarianism also promoted evangelization among Catholics already living in rural areas. As with attempts at colonization, the lofty goals of the agrarians were habitually left unrealized, mostly because of inability to translate an idealized vision to the harsh reality of rural life. Missionaries made their most significant contribution by cultivating a sense of Catholic identity among rural Catholics. Until the work of agrarians accentuated their religious distinctiveness, rural Catholics blended in so well that Marlett describes them as having been "part of the scenery."

The great success story of the Catholic rural life movement involved the "motor missions" that canvassed the American countryside from 1930 until the mid-1950s. Specifically targeting non-Catholics, the priests who manned these "trailer chapels" proclaimed the Catholic truth on the streets of small towns in rural parts of twenty-eight states. Calling the motor missions "the quintessentially American expression of Catholicism" (p. 134), Marlett argues that, unlike their urban counterparts, these missionaries seamlessly blended the pursuit of Catholicity (by preaching "undiluted" Catholicism) with the search for catholicity (by embracing non-Catholics).

Representing a "doomed assault against modernity," the Catholic rural life movement was largely defunct by the mid-1950s. But Marlett argues that aspects of Catholic agrarianism resurfaced in different manifestations in the 1960s: in environmental spirituality and in the liturgical changes that followed the Second Vatican Council. (Both the vernacular mass and altars facing the people had been common in rural areas since the 1930s). Conceding that his subjects never achieved the success they sought, Marlett argues they nevertheless contributed to "the dynamism and richness of American Catholicism" (p. 172). This claim is undoubtedly true, and Marlett has provided an engaging and worthwhile overview of an understudied subject.

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Horse Opera: The Strange History of the 1930s Singing Cowboy. By Peter Stanfield. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. Pp. x, 177. Illustrations, notes, index. Clothbound, \$37.50; paperbound, \$16.95.)

Those who enjoy the singing cowboy image will find much information in this book to support their enjoyment and possibly

stimulate their memories of earlier days. Peter Stanfield, a senior lecturer in media arts at the Southampton Institute in England, has written extensively about Hollywood and westerns. In his introduction he expresses his belief that the “horse opera” was made for the “economically disenfranchised” rural and urban working-class families of the Great Depression, and states that the singing cowboy was “one of the most important cultural figures” of the Depression years. He supports his theories throughout the text with historical, sociological, literary, folkloristic, and cinematic evidence.

Stanfield opens with a discussion of the cowboy and the singing cowboy images as depicted in dime novels and early works of western fiction, such as Owen Wister’s *The Virginian*, as well as in the romantic images created by Theodore Roosevelt and Frederick Remington. He brings in, as well, other literary works in which the singing cowboy is mentioned. (Oddly enough, at no time does he mention the 1932 Broadway play, *Green Grow the Lilacs*, by Lynn Riggs, in which cowboy songs sung by Tex Ritter were prominently featured. This play, titled after the popular song of the early trail drive days, had much to do with the cowboy image in the East in the early 1930s and was the foundation for Ritter’s career.) In the second chapter Stanfield explains that the early silent screen cowboys were not romantic or glamorous figures; they were not the Gary Cooper type as later seen in *High Noon*. Those silent movies were filmed in the East by people who knew little about the West and how cowboys looked, dressed, and behaved; when the industry moved westward, the image changed. Stanfield also sees in some of those early westerns evidence of a concern for depicting the “class struggle.” While he mentions a number of films and stars of the period, he misses the opportunity to point out that the singing cowboy—as exemplified in a quartet appearing in the 1925 silent film *Tumbleweeds*, starring William S. Hart—was portrayed even before talking films were introduced!

Stanfield devotes his third chapter to a discussion of cowboy songs and singers. Printed song texts were popularized and romanticized by John A. Lomax in his 1910 edition of *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, which became popular with working cowboys in the West. N. Howard “Jack” Thorp was the first collector of cowboy songs, and sheet music and song folios became more abundant as westerns and singers featured on the radio and on records grew in popularity. Left unmentioned is the impact of Mexican border radio stations, although they had numerous cowboy singers such as Jules Verne Allen in the 1930s and enjoyed a broad listening audience across the United States.

The genre of the singing cowboy western grew out of the popularity of Gene Autry, but Ken Maynard is generally considered to have been the first singing cowboy. Unfortunately, Maynard’s singing did not capture the imagination of the female audience. Other cowboy actors such as Bob Steele failed as singers. John Wayne had to have his

voice dubbed for his songs in his "Singing Sandy" series. In 1936, Bing Crosby was featured in *Rhythm on the Range*, and while a western song hit came from the movie, Crosby did not look comfortable in the saddle. It took Autry, with both a popular voice and the credible look of a westerner, to sell the public on the singing cowboy movie. Roy Rogers, Tex Ritter, Jimmy Wakely, Rex Allen, and others followed, and Stanfield discusses the popularity of the series that were developed around each star.

Most nations have a mythical hero, and the American cowboy, whether a real working cowboy or his romanticized fictional counterpart, is our mythical hero; this book gives credit to the 1930s singing cowboys for playing a strong role in perpetuating that heroic image.

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Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power. By Leonard N. Moore. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. Pp. [viii], 242. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City. Edited by David R. Colburn and Jeffrey S. Adler. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Pp. viii, 266. Tables, notes, index. \$32.50.)

Two recent histories of African Americans who became mayors of large cities immediately bring home the disparity between expectations and realities. In *Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power*, Leonard N. Moore portrays a man who sought his city's highest office to address the myriad inequalities African Americans experienced. His term in office, however, fell short of the mark because of economic reality, white hostility, and even opposition from some of his core constituency. This gap between expectations and reality is evident in the experiences of other black mayors: Maynard Jackson, Coleman Young, Richard Hatcher. Their stories and others are covered in a volume edited by David R. Colburn and Jeffrey S. Adler, *African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City*.

Both of these books make significant contributions to the study of black politics in U.S. cities. However, their concentration on white and black sometimes leaves out or downplays other salient factors that affect urban governance. The most successful aspect of these works is their portrayal of the strategies that led to these men's attainment of the city's highest office. The governing part is weaker. The stunning economic transformations of the latter half of the twentieth century made any mayor's task unenviable, particularly in the Midwest and Northeast. The migration of industries cost cities jobs and revenue. Businesses and residents turned to greener pastures in suburbs, the Sunbelt, or beyond. This significant movement had already begun when Carl Stokes and Richard Hatcher won the mayors' offices in