

Freedom Rights

New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement

Edited by Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer

(Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011. Pp. x, 392. Illustrations, notes, index. \$40.00.)

Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer have brought together some of the best of recent civil rights movement scholarship in this volume dedicated to Rutgers University historian Steven Lawson, a leader in the field who advised half of the contributors to this collection. In his lead essay, Lawson himself takes on an important historiographical issue: periodization and the civil rights movement. The idea of a Long Civil Rights Movement, laid out by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall in her 2004 Organization of American Historians presidential address (*Journal of American History* 91, 2005), pushes back the beginning of the movement to the civil rights unionism and Popular Front politics of the 1930s and moves its terminus forward to include the Black Power movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Lawson's cogent critique of the Long Movement argues that extending the chronological boundaries of the movement minimizes the "many things . . . that made the 1954-1968 era distinct" (p. 26).

Interestingly, despite Lawson's persuasive argument, more than half of the dozen essays cover events that took place either before or after his "distinct" period—a fact that suggests that much fluidity yet remains for scholars staking out the boundaries of the movement. Pippa Holloway

connects the current concern over criminal disenfranchisement laws and their impact on black voting to three African American challenges to such laws, initiated in Tennessee and Missouri between 1914 and 1916. At the latter end of the Long Movement, Brian Ward examines the idea of postracialism associated with Barack Obama's 2008 election.

Other discussions of the pre-1954 era include Justin T. Lorts's examination of the NAACP's efforts in the 1930s and 1940s to change the demeaning black stereotypes in Hollywood films and Abigail Sara Lewis's exploration of how the YWCA's wartime outreach to Japanese Americans shaped their postwar program of "multiracial activism." Sara Rzesutek Haviland's and Krystal D. Frazier's essays on the 1950s address, respectively, the role of African American Communist leadership in the Freedom Movement and the impact of the Emmett Till murder on transregional families, particularly its politicization of what Frazier terms the "Till Generation." Stacy Braukman's study of the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee explores the links that lawmakers made between homosexual "subversion" and civil rights activists in the mid-1960s.

Jacqueline Castledine limns the international dimensions of the Free-

dom Movement during the Cold War by examining the connections of South African and American female jazz artists, including Miriam Makeba and Nina Simone. Daniele McGuire's essay on Joan Little connects the civil rights movement with second-wave feminism in the 1970s, and reinforces McGuire's argument that black women played a major role in the civil rights movement by speaking out against the sexual abuse they endured in the Jim Crow era and afterwards.

In "EEOC Politics and the Limits on Reagan's Civil Rights Legacy," Emily Zuckerman reminds us that one of the obstacles to that president's expected "dismantling of the civil rights enforcement machinery of the country" (p. 259) was its conservative chairman and future Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas. While President Reagan and his adminis-

tration were trying to roll back civil rights accomplishments in the 1980s, African American politicians in the Alabama black belt were divided over what kind of politics they should practice. George Derek Musgrove and Hasan Kwame Jeffries describe what happens when a black belt community abandons "freedom politics" for traditional politics.

No short review can do justice to this rich array of recent scholarship in one of the most exciting areas of American history research, and that's the long and short of it.

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Enacting History

Edited by Scott Magelssen and Rhona Justice-Malloy

(Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011. Pp. vi, 230. Illustrations, notes. Paperbound, \$24.95.)

Enacting History is a collection of essays that explores "performative representations of the past," including battle reenactment, living history, historical plays, pageants, a Renaissance festival, and second-person interpretation, in which visitors participate in the performance (p.1). The collection brings together scholars and practitioners—most with a background in theater—who share the conviction that performance has the potential

to be an "accessible," "efficacious," and "authentic" way to engage with the past (p. 6). As Scott Magelssen has discussed elsewhere, historians may be wary of the concept of performance because they associate it with fictional, inauthentic presentations of the past (Magelssen, *Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance*, 2007). Aili McGill, one of the contributors to this collection, experienced this when she brought