

than in earlier years—coarser, grosser, and more violent” (p. 202).

One can find differences and similarities between the subculture of automakers and steelworkers. Based for the most part on archival records of grievance proceedings rather than on oral testimony, Meyer’s findings on hazing and horseplay differ in tone from the humorous steelworker tales recorded by Hoosier folklorist Richard Dorson in *Land of the Millrats* (1981). Yet the pranks Dorson found directed at symbols of managerial authority find a parallel in attempts to cut off neckties at the General Motors Fleetwood plant after corporate honchos required foremen to wear white shirts as signs of authority. Like workers at Bendix Products brake shop, Local 1066 rank-and-file militants at East Chicago’s Inland Steel Company carried out numerous wildcat strikes until the most outspoken were purged during the Red Scare. And as Mary Margaret Fonow documented in *Union Women: Forging Feminism in the United Steelworkers of America* (2003), when significant numbers of women were

hired in at Northwest Indiana steel mills after a 1974 consent decree, they fought back against demeaning practices by forming women’s caucuses. Like their sisters in the auto industry, Fonow’s steelworkers appealed to union leaders and governmental institutions until the situation improved somewhat by the mid-1980s. Meyer fails to mention the harassment of those perceived to be effeminate or gay, a situation union and management turned a blind eye to until Anne Balay’s *Steel Closets: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers* (2014) exposed the shameful problem. As was the case a generation before with the UAW’s stand against the harassment of women, once United Steel Workers (USW) leaders condemned abusive behavior, things improved.

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Reverend Addie Wyatt: Faith and the Fight for Labor, Gender, and Racial Equality

By Marcia Walker-McWilliams

(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016. Pp. 320. Illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index. Cloth, \$95.00; paper, \$28.00.)

In this compelling, well-written, definitive biography, Marcia Walker-

McWilliams explores the life of African American activist Rev. Addie Wyatt.

“Not always the loudest voice,” the author argues, “hers was the most persistent and consistent voice for greater inclusion and representation across the organized labor, civil rights, women’s rights, and religious movements of the twentieth century” (p. 217). Although the book never defines “religious movement,” it provides enough evidence of Wyatt’s multi-pronged activism to back up the author’s claim, and it draws from extensive archival research as well as oral histories.

Walker-McWilliams uses Wyatt’s story as a window into broader developments in U.S. history, showing how she influenced and was influenced by her political and social context. For example, Wyatt supported the Montgomery bus boycott and later campaigned for Harold Washington, Chicago’s first black mayor who was also part of the rise of black public officials nationally between 1967 and 1990.

Chicago figures as a character in the book. Wyatt was born in Jim Crow-era Brookhaven, Mississippi, where she lived until the age of six, when her family migrated to Chicago. Aside from an apparently brief period living and working in Washington, D.C., because of her union activism, Wyatt remained in the Chicago area until her death at age eighty-eight in 2012.

Wyatt’s activism centered on the organized labor movement, which she saw as inextricably linked to women’s rights and civil rights. She advocated for the advancement of women and minorities in important positions in organized labor,

and she became one of the highest ranking black women in the labor movement. Wyatt’s Christian faith infused her activism and belief in equality. At a time in which many scholars focus on the Religious Right, Walker-McWilliams provides an important portrayal of an activist of the Christian Left.

Wyatt first became involved in union activism during World War II, when she worked in the meat-packing industry and joined the Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee (which became the United Packinghouse Workers of America). Her organized labor activism continued and grew until her retirement at age sixty in 1984, although she remained an inspiration and advisor to a younger generation of workers and engaged in political campaigns. In 1968, she became an ordained minister in the Church of God.

Walker-McWilliams comprehensively covers Wyatt’s leadership positions, including membership on President John F. Kennedy’s Commission on the Status of Women; acting as the first female president of Local 56 of the United Packinghouse Workers of America and then as its international field representative; working with the Negro American Labor Council, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and Coalition of Labor Union Women; and directing the Women’s Affairs Department of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Women of North America, for which she also served as international vice president to its executive board.

In short, this biography of Addie Wyatt is a valuable treatment of an activist who should be better known and whose life provides an important window into the organized labor, feminist, and civil rights movements. The book would be an excellent choice for teaching purposes.

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Calculated Risk: The Supersonic Life and Times of Gus Grissom

By George Leopold

(West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2016. Pp. 378. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.99.)

Virgil I. (Gus) Grissom (1926–1967) lived a short, eventful life, arising from the hills of southern Indiana and the engineering program at Purdue University to become an Air Force combat pilot, test pilot, astronaut, the second American to reach space, and the commander of the first Gemini mission in 1965. He died young, not yet 41, in the Apollo 1 fire on January 27, 1967, along with two fellow astronauts.

Calculated Risk does a reasonable job discussing Grissom's career as a U.S. Air Force combat pilot in Korea and a test pilot flying the highest performing fighters of the 1950s. In 1959, when NASA selected him as one of the first seven astronauts, Grissom and his colleagues instantly became household names. Grissom loved the celebrity and took full advantage of the perquisites that came with it, sometimes engaging

in what the astronauts called “extra-curricular activities.”

Grissom flew the second Mercury capsule on its suborbital mission, launched on July 21, 1961. Upon splashdown, the hatch blew off prematurely from the *Liberty Bell 7* capsule, and sank into the Atlantic Ocean before it could be recovered. Grissom nearly drowned before being hoisted to safety in a helicopter. The accident did not cool NASA leaders on Grissom's capabilities, and he commanded the first operational mission of the Gemini program on March 23, 1965.

Grissom would have commanded the first mission of Project Apollo as well, had he not died in a horrific capsule fire along with crewmates Ed White and Roger Chaffee on January 27, 1967. The astronauts were conducting simulation tests on the launch pad at Kennedy Space Center when, at