Fall 10-11-2015

Eighty-Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States, 1777-1865

Carol Walker Jordan

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol63/iss3/10

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Southeastern Librarian by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.
Catherine Seltzer introduces us to young Pat Conroy: As a high school student Conroy accompanies his teacher, Eugene Norris, to Thomas Wolfe’s home in Asheville, North Carolina. Seltzer recounts the story that Norris took an apple from one of the trees on the grounds and said, “Eat it boy.” (p.1) Reflecting on taking the first bite, Conroy said, “I was given the keys to go out and try to write.” Conroy’s explanation of Norris’ comment goes on to show how “from the very beginning I wrote to explain my own life to myself”. From uncovering Conroy’s tree of knowledge and his tree of life, Seltzer recounts the many ways in which Conroy has brought sensitive and intellectual inspirations to his writings.

Through five novels and five books, Seltzer says Conroy returns to his life experiences and says “Only rarely have I drifted far from the bed where I was conceived.” (p.2) His comments on his family life that appear in his writings includes this comment, “One of the greatest gifts you can get as a writer is to be born into an unhappy family I could not have been born into a better one.” (p.2)

Reading Seltzer’s book, I am reminded of the one bit of advice any student hears from a mentor or teacher, “write what you know about, write what you have experienced.” I don’t think many English teachers are so clever as to give an apple to a talented student but I thank Catherine Seltzer for recounting the tale.

For students and faculty who might want to recommend Seltzer’s book for a reference or for supplemental reading, the author provides Chapters 2-8 as an individual commentary on “The Water is Wide”, “The Great Santini”, “The Lords of Discipline”, “The Prince of Tides”, “Beach Music”, “My Losing Season”, and “South of Broad”. Notes, Bibliography and Index cover pages 119 to 135. Recommended for school and college libraries.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D
University of North Carolina Greensboro

Often a title will grab attention and produce a moment of disbelief. The recent book by Patrick Rael created that reaction from me. “Eighty Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States 1777-1865” by Rael seemed to be an overstatement to this reader who held only a sketchy knowledge of “slavery in the Atlantic world”. Supported by a grant that funded a year of research and writing, Rael’s contributions in this manuscript represent diligence, perseverance, and determination to help readers such as I, to begin to see why it took 88 years to move slavery in the Atlantic world to a place much changed and needed.

A particular piece of Rael’s research was fascinating to me—the establishment in March of 1863 of the Freedman’s Bureau and its place in attempts to provide funds and free lands to support former slaves. Though the 40 acre plots did not materialize (p. 301), the attempt was a government effort to provide assistance to former slaves. Rael’s research covers many topics that will be of interest to scholars and students: “half slave and half free”, “Atlantic slavery and abolition in the era of the early republic”, “caste and resistance in the age of Emancipation”, “antislavery militance and the collapse of party politics”, “the terrible war: secession, civil War and Emancipation”, “one hundred years of Reconstruction”, and “what peace among the Whites brought”. (pp. 62-321)
Author Douglas R. Egerton, asks us, “Why did it take so long to end slavery in the United States, and what did it mean that the nation existed eighty-eight years as a “house divided against itself,” as Abraham Lincoln put it?” (Back cover entry) Then Egerton goes on to say, “In no other nation was (slavery) so prolonged as in the United States…from 1777 when Vermont wrote slavery out of its state constitution, to 1865, when the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery nationwide.”

Egerton also points out that “African Americans played a central role in ending slavery in the US, “fueled by Revolutionary ideals of self-rule and universal equality, slaves and free blacks—both on their own and alongside abolitionists—slowly turned American opinion against the slave interests in the South.” (Back cover entry)

This intense work by Rael is highly recommended for scholars and students of history of the South and of the Atlantic region. Notes and Index run from page 331 to page 381. A number of black and white illustrations provide flavor to the text.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D
University of North Carolina Greensboro

Guidelines for Submissions and Author Instructions
The Southeastern Librarian

The Southeastern Librarian (SELn) is the official publication of the Southeastern Library Association (SELA). The quarterly publication seeks to publish articles, announcements, and news of professional interest to the library community in the southeast. The publication also represents a significant means for addressing the Association's research objective.

1. Articles need not be of a scholarly nature but should address professional concerns of the library community. SELn particularly seeks articles that have a broad southeastern scope and/or address topics identified as timely or important by SELA sections, round tables, or committees.
2. News releases, newsletters, clippings, and journals from libraries, state associations, and groups throughout the region may be used as sources of information.
3. Submissions should be directed to: Perry Bratcher, Editor SELn, 503A Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY 41099. Phone 859-572-6309, 859-572-6181 (fax). Email: bratcher@nku.edu.
4. Manuscripts must be submitted in electronic format as attachment to an email, preferably in MS Word or compatible format. Articles should be written in a grammatically correct, simple, readable style. The author is responsible for the accuracy of all statements in the article and should provide complete and accurate bibliographic citations. Although longer or shorter works may be considered, 2,000- to 5,000-word manuscripts are most suitable.
5. The Notes should appear at the end of the manuscript in a section titled "References." The editor will refer to the latest edition of APA for capitalization, punctuation, quotations, tables, captions, and elements of bibliographic style.
6. The name, position, and professional address of the author should appear in the bottom left-hand corner of a separate title page. The author's name should not appear anywhere else in the document.
7. Digital images should be sent as separate email attachments rather than in the body of the text.
8. No other publisher should be simultaneously considering a manuscript submitted to SELn until that manuscript is returned or the editor provides written permission.
9. Upon receipt, a manuscript will be acknowledged by the editor. Incoming manuscripts are added to a manuscript bank from which articles are selected for each issue. The editor assigns manuscripts to at least two reviewers who receive the manuscript with no direct information on the author or the author's affiliation. Following the review, a decision will be communicated to the writer. A definite publication date is given prior to publication. Publication can usually be expected within twelve months.
10. Beginning with Vol. 51, #3 (2003), The Southeastern Librarian has entered into an agreement to license electronic publishing rights to H. W. Wilson Company. Authors agree to assign copyright of manuscripts to The Southeastern Library Association, subject to certain limited licenses granted back to the author.
11. Advertisements may be purchased. The appearance of an ad does not imply endorsement or sponsorship by SELA. Contact the editor for further information.
12. Readers who wish to comment on articles in the journal should address the letters to the editor. Letters should be succinct, no longer than 200 words. Letters will be published on a space available basis. It is the author’s responsibility to obtain permission from the appropriate institutional review board regarding human subject research performed as part of focus groups, surveys, etc.