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## The Uplift Generation: Cooperation Across the Color Line in Early Twentieth-Century Virginia

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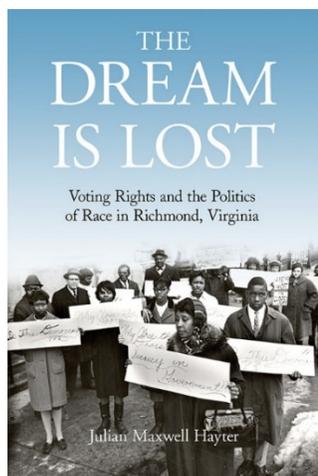
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**The Dream Is Lost: Voting Rights and the Politics of Race in Richmond, Virginia.** Julian Maxwell Hayter, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 2017. ISBN 978-0-8131-6948-4 (hardback). 346 p. \$60.



In the Chapter, “The Dream Is Lost”, author Julian Maxwell Hayter, an accomplished historian and university professor, quoted Atlanta mayor Maynard Jackson, who said, “The politics of Richmond are now controlled by Afro-Americans (but its) economics (are) still controlled by white Americans. It is a question now of whether there will be a standoff or a standing up together.” (p.151). Maynard Jackson’s challenge was foresighted.

Julian Maxwell Hayter in his well-documented writing of the legal and political history of Richmond shows us that African Americans in Richmond learned to seek and gain legal rights for voter participation, legal rights to own and operate businesses, and legal rights that allowed them to command majority seats on boards, councils and committees. Yet acceptance by whites and the white business community floundered. President of a brokerage firm and a city councilman, Henry Valentine “openly expressed that blacks were incapable of running the City” (p.161).

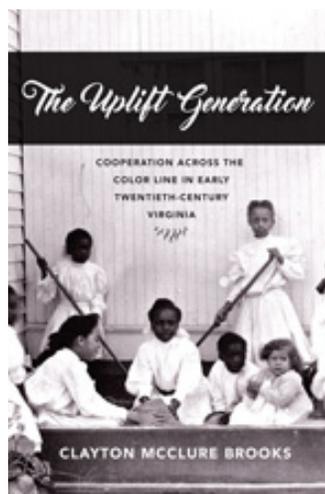
Hayter speaks to social conditions in Richmond today when he writes, “Richmond’s recent revitalization has been bittersweet. Poverty, residential segregation, and underperforming public schools have been an unfortunate yet constant feature of African American life in Richmond”. (p.243)

Contrasting the Richmond that is hailed as “a nationally recognized dining scene” (p.243), Hayter reminds us that there exists “glaring inequalities in education and wealth” (p.243). He says that the Richmond of today and its recent past are still intertwined. Housing, social programs of all types, and educational opportunities are vital to the growth of “standing up together”. A denial of renewed efforts to admit and address these woefully unaddressed conditions, might be said to remind us of Maynard Jackson’s challenge: will we stand up together or have a standoff?

This 338 page book is recommended for academic and public libraries. See its photographs and illustrations inserted after page 166, the Conclusion, p. 239 to 245, Appendix, p. 248 to 256, Acknowledgements, p.257 to 262, Notes, p. 263 to 308, Bibliography, p 309 to 322, and Index, p. 323 to 338.

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**The Uplift Generation: Cooperation Across the Color Line in Early Twentieth-Century Virginia.** Clayton McClure Brooks. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017. 978-0-8139-3950-6 (ebook); 978-0-8139-3949-0 (cloth). 288 p. \$45.



Reading “The Uplift Generation: Cooperation Across the Color Line in Early Twentieth-Century Virginia”, I was reminded of times in my life when I felt someone was patronizing me, not taking me seriously on an issue that was important to me. Even hearing a comment that sounded as if I were being encouraged to accept the unacceptable only stirred my rebelliousness. Clayton McClure Brooks points out to us that African Americans in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Virginia did not exhibit my rebelliousness toward white Americans who encouraged them to accept the unacceptable.

Through her research, Brooks explains that an “uplift generation” supported social progressivism in the state of Virginia in the days of Jim Crow. The uplift they chose to provide to downhearted and segregated people reminded me of “now, now, don’t worry everything will be alright”. Their patronizing behavior was an oppressive yet powerful way to keep the status quo and never really address the social issues. Keeping the peace, some might say, was the generation’s goal.

Between 1910 and 1920, Brooks recounts that white women encouraged black women to believe that

paternalism and segregation were the best ways to keep the peace. Separate accommodations sadly became the rallying cry of the white women--and black women along with them. \*(see below)

Yet, by the summer of 1920 when the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote, the tables would turn as Brooks points out black women's right to vote meant no longer were segregation and paternalism appealing to these women. Brooks reminds us that women could go to the polls and vote for a candidate whom they believed would eliminate or greatly alter the Jim Crow laws.

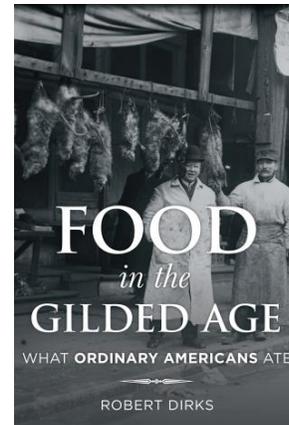
Brooks gives many examples of the women and men who struggled through the years of 1910 to 1930 to understand Jim Crow laws and to reject "separatism" and lack of social voice in Virginia. With interviews and archival sources, Brooks recounts the struggles in the State of Virginia for the progressive social goals that were first hoped might be achieved.

A good resource for academic libraries, women's studies faculty and students and archival collections on Jim Crow laws. I recommend this 213 page text with its 20 black and white illustrations and portraits, Notes 215 to 247, Bibliography 247 to 263 and Index 263 to 271.

\*FYI: In Virginia, the South, and some northern states, *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)*, both confirmed the status quo and gave impetus to even more rigid segregation laws. Blacks had to sit at the back of streetcars or stand if there were not enough seats for whites. They were made to sit at separate sections of theaters, libraries, and train stations. They could not use water fountains, bathrooms, beaches or swimming pools used by whites. They could only order takeout food from restaurants that served whites. They attended separate, usually ramshackle schools. Social life and everything from sports teams to funeral parlors were segregated. [www.virginiahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.virginiahistoricalsociety.org)

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**Food in the Gilded Age: What Ordinary Americans Ate.** Robert Dirks. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. ISBN 978-1-4422-4513-6 (hardcover), 978-1-4422-4514-3 (ebook). 209 pages. \$38.00 (hardcover), \$37.99 (ebook).



The Gilded Age is best known for the deep divide between the rich and the poor, a time when the rich became richer and conspicuous consumption reached new peaks. Interest in the era has grown in recent years, much of it centered on the era's heiresses and their social lives. Less attention is given to the rest of the country, particularly the millions of people living in poverty. Poor and working-class people, unlike industrialists, did not leave a lasting legacy, and are often remembered only through the works of Jacob Riis, Upton Sinclair, and other muckrakers.

In *Food in the Gilded Age*, Dirks mostly ignores the upper-classes to focus on the poor, both immigrant and native-born, and the rising middle classes, studying their lives through the food they ate. By using studies conducted by chemists for the USDA's Office of Experiment Stations, Dirks gives us an intriguing meta-analysis of what items were eaten, and how often. Dirks and his predecessors in the OES are less concerned with how a food was eaten, leaving that to the culinary historians, but focuses on the frequency with which food items were consumed by different groups across the country. Modern readers are able to get a better sense of the seasonality of food (chapter 4), as well as the limited food options for all classes.

*Food in the Gilded Age* differs from other studies of the era with each chapter focusing on different regions and ethnic groups across the country, nearly all of them poor. Dirks studies the dietaries of Mexican Americans in New Mexico, African Americans across the country, European immigrants in the Midwest and Chinese immigrants in California, and the Scotch-Irish in Appalachia. Whenever possible, he compares different economic classes within ethnic groups, as in chapter 2 when he contrasts African Americans living in Alabama on tenant farms, in Northeastern metropolitan areas, and attending college in