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Mothers and Strangers: Essays on Motherhood From the New South

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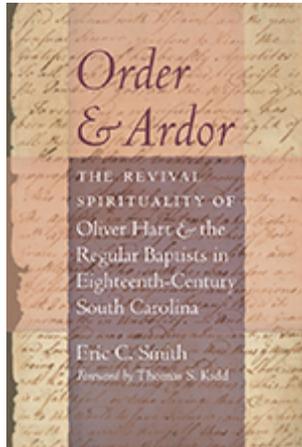
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Order and Ardor: The Revival Spirituality of Oliver Hart and the Regular Baptists in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina. Eric C. Smith. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-61117-878-4 (Hard); 978-1-1117-879-1 (Ebook). Both formats \$44.99. 168 p.



To tell a person's life story, one must have a passion for the life that was lived. There must have been a value of the person to history and to the future of society. Dr. Eric Smith found that passion in a class in his graduate school days.

Eric Smith says of his selection of Oliver Hart to be the focus of his dissertation, "I realized how little attention had been paid to the man who seemed to stand at the headwaters of Baptist life in the South". (Preface)

Smith's research reviews Hart's call to serve. Defined as an evangelical revivalist Oliver Hart brought life into the Baptist congregations across the South in the mid-1700s. Called to be pastor of The First Baptist Church of Charleston (Regular Baptists), Hart eventually created the Charleston Baptist Association, which in later years became the Southern Baptist Association.

Smith tell us that Oliver Hart realized differences existed between the Regular and Separate Baptists of the day. Yet, his determination to blend and merge differing opinions regarding church order and love of Christian principles was highly successful.

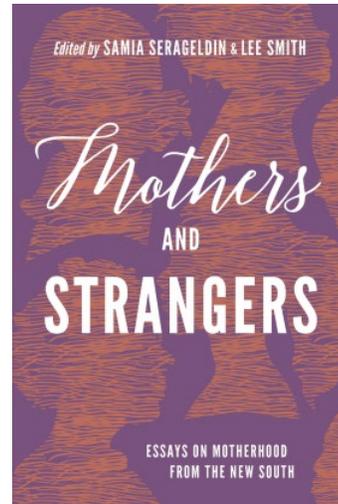
Smith's research into the life of Oliver Hart expands into Hart's life story beyond Charleston and his return to his New Jersey home and roots. Here also, we learn Hart became involved in building a second association of Baptist congregations.

Eric Smith's research is filled with valuable and enlightening narrative histories of the awakening of the Baptist faith by the footsteps of Oliver Hart in the 18th century. This book is recommended for public, church, and academic libraries. There are no illustrations, but a good

set of Notes on Page 121, a Bibliography on page 133 and an Index on page 143.

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Mothers and Strangers: Essays On Motherhood From The New South. Samia Serageldin and Lee Smith, eds. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-4696-5767-5 (pbk: \$22); 978-1-4696-5168-2 (EBook: \$16.99). 264 p.



"An anthology of creative nonfiction, twenty-eight writers set out to discover what they know, and don't know about the person they call 'mother'. Celebrated writers Samia Serageldin and Lee Smith have curated a diverse and insightful collection that challenges stereotypes about mothers and expands our notions of motherhood in the South". (back cover leaf).

The recurring theme for me, from the beginning to the end of the 239 pages of revelations about the mothers of famous men and women writers, was "what I didn't know about my mother, i.e., the Stranger". Each of the writers was given a group of questions to ponder as they crafted their essay. Some examples were "what do we not know about these most intimate of strangers, the women who raised us? What do we see when we look at them not through the familiar lens of filial relationship but as individuals in their own right and products of their time and place? How did they fit in, or stand out, or evolve in the context of their era?" (p. 1). The writers were also challenged to guard against their own subjectivity of memory and unreliable recollections they may have to share.

Allow me to challenge you: As you read and reflect upon your Mother, you will gain insights as I did about my Mother. Born into a mill village house in a small town in the South, put to work in the cotton mill at age 8, eloped with my Dad at age 16, lived in the home of her husband's parents when I was born and then spent the rest of her life

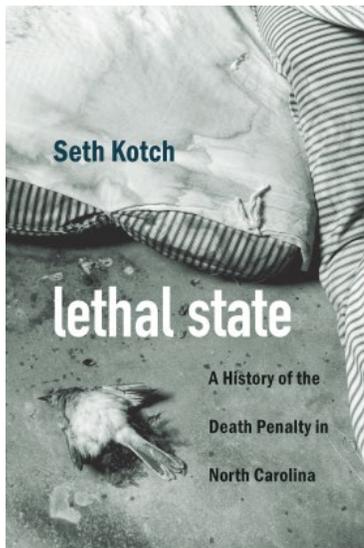
as a wife and mother of three children, until in her 70s she died of Alzheimer's disease.

I ask myself if I might be able to take the questions given to our writers and create an essay about my Mother, the Stranger. Might it be inspiring? I feel incapable of the task. I am sure Samia and Lee's book will be an inspiration to you as it is to me.

Highly recommended for public libraries, academic libraries, seminary libraries, and church libraries. In the end of the book, there is an excellent list of the contributing writers with good biographical information on each, pgs. 241 to 246. Also very helpful is the opening Contents where you will find assembling of the essays into topics such as Angels, Career Women, Manners and Mores...Enjoy and recommend to others.

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Lethal State: A History of the Death Penalty in North Carolina. Seth Kotch. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-4696-4987-0 (pbk: \$27.95); ISBN 978-1-4696-4986-3 (Hard: \$90); ISBN 978-1-4696-4988-7 (EBook: \$21.99). 320 p.



Gina Mahalek, Editor of The University of North Carolina Press, writes in her promotional essay, "For years, American states have tinkered with the machinery of death, seeking to align capital punishment with evolving social

standards and public will. North Carolina has long stood out as a prolific executioner with harsh mandatory sentencing statutes. But as the state sought to remake its image as modern and business-progressive in the early twentieth century, the question of execution preoccupied lawmakers, reformers and state boosters alike."

While Seth Kotch reviews and explains the hesitancy of North Carolinians to conduct executions, he also documents that due to citizens' harsh and determined attitudes about punishment, they called for executions. Even when the Supreme Court called for executions being illegal, North Carolinians declared that executions were required to keep its citizens safe.

We learn from Kotch a history of public lynchings and executions (pgs. 180-239). According to Kotch, North Carolinians continued the call for these types of punishments for crimes both simple and complex. From well-founded research, all white juries and biased legislatures demanded the option of execution for simple crimes. It was revealed that the majority of men executed and or lynched were black, indicating overt racism.

Koch's research is thorough and complete as he reveals the history of lynchings and executions (pages 191-239). He helps us to understand that North Carolina professes to be against capital punishments yet will not take a firm stand nor endorse the Supreme Court directive that execution is not legal. Additionally he provides evidence that there are those who decry lynchings and executions but see North Carolina as a state that approves the option of execution for some crimes.

This book is recommended for public and academic libraries. The excellent data revealed in Appendix A, B, C, plus the Notes section, the Bibliography and the Index give many opportunities for in-depth research. See pages 189 to 295.

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