Book Review - Signposts: New Directions in Southern Legal History

Pamela C. Brannon
Georgia State University, pbrannon@gsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol53/iss2/19

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Georgia Library Quarterly by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.
The study of Southern legal history was in its infancy in 1984 when Ambivalent Legacy: A Legal History of the South was published. Thirty years later, the study of legal history in the South has flourished, helped in no small part by the founding of the Journal of Southern Legal History. It is fitting, then, that a book “intended as a long-delayed successor to Ambivalent Legacy” seeks not only to celebrate the strides made in the field of Southern legal history but also to inspire future scholars to explore relatively untrodden paths.

The essays in Signposts illustrate the potential for diversity in Southern legal history by ranging across the length and breadth of the South. The earliest essays address the colonial period while the latest reach the latter half of the twentieth century and beyond. Equally expansive is the book’s geographical coverage, which includes Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina, and Kentucky, and highlights the South’s cultural diversity. A chapter on manumission in New Orleans, for example, shows the difference made by transition from French to Spanish rule in that city. A later chapter provides a character study of Elisha Chester, a lawyer involved in the fight over Cherokee removal.

In the introduction to Signposts, Hadden and Minter set out to “demonstrate [Southern legal history’s] dynamism and diversity.” The essays they have chosen do just that. Hopefully they will also inspire others to continue to study the legal history of the South from new angles and directions.

Pamela C. Brannon is Coordinator of Faculty Services at Georgia State University, Law Library