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Beyond Surrender:
Marian Sims, Francis B. Simkins,
and
Revisionism in Reconstruction South
Carolina

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In 1908, a reviewer wrote that Harper's just-completed *American Nation* series represented "the end of the old and not the beginning of the new history."¹ Perhaps some of the series authors were a bit behind the curve in terms of current scholarship, but William Archibald Dunning's *Reconstruction: Political and Economic* was state of the art. Few historians questioned his view that Reconstruction was a time when "vindictive Radical Republicans fastened black supremacy upon the defeated South, unleashing an orgy of corruption presided over by unscrupulous carpetbaggers, traitorous scalawags, and ignorant freedmen."²

In 1988, at the other end of the century, Harper & Row published the Reconstruction volume in its *New American Nation* series. Written by Eric Foner, the book could not have

been more different from its predecessor that Foner summarized in the sentence above. Rather than seeing Reconstruction as a tragedy that brought years of harm to the South, Foner viewed it as a beneficial effort that did not go far enough. Foner's book was peopled by noble northern reformers, resistant white southerners, and competent African Americans.³

For most of the years between the two volumes, though, the Dunning perspective ruled. It was, in the words of David Blight, "an article of faith in American historical understanding,"⁴ both pervasive and persistent, accepted not only by scholars but by the general public--seen, for example, in the wide popularity of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), a cinematic version of Dunning. In fact, the best selling book by a Dunningite, Claude Bowers's *The Tragic Era*, was not published until 1929.⁵ Only in the late 1940s and 1950s did Reconstruction historiography become, in Bernard Weisberger's phrase, a "dark and bloody ground."⁶

About the time that Bowers finished writing his *Tragic Era*, an Atlanta writer began an epic novel of southern society in the years before, during, and after the Civil War. There is a lot of history in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936), some of it better, some worse. When Robert May evaluated the book's historical accuracy in *Southern Quarterly*, he found the first section a bit off in its description of pre-war society; the middle section, he said, "does a competent job of describing the internal dynamics of the Confederacy"; but, he concludes "the novel arrives at its nadir when it focuses on Reconstruction." *Gone with the Wind* was a novelist's version of the Dunning history; in fact, May concluded that "Mitchell, if anything, went beyond Dunning and Bowers in her presentation of Reconstruction as an era of horrors."⁷

Margaret Mitchell was not unique in basing her book on the old historical model. Howard James Jones, in his analysis of Reconstruction fiction, began with Thomas Dixon, author of *The Leopard's Spots* (1902), *The Clansman* (1905), and *The Traitor* (1907), the novels that provided the storyline for *Birth of*

a Nation. Jones worked through Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, and George Washington Cable, showing how they represented the “conservative” view of Reconstruction, especially in their writings on the politics of the era. Of the writers who represented “the other fictional view of Reconstruction, which might be called the liberal or revisionist view,” Jones began with Albion W. Tourgée, who actually participated in Reconstruction as a member of the 1868 North Carolina Constitutional Convention and as a superior court judge. *A Fool’s Errand* (1879) and *Bricks without Straw* (1880) were revisionist before the Dunning school established the historiographical tradition to revise--although, as Tourgée himself recognized, his depictions of Reconstruction were already at odds with American readers, both North and South. In addition to Tourgée, Jones much more briefly discussed three other “liberal” writers: Howard Fast (*Freedom Road*, 1944), Frank Yerby (*The Vixens*, 1947), and Margaret Walker (*Jubilee*, 1966). Jones’s intention was not to give a comprehensive listing, but note that his earliest twentieth-century revisionist work was published in 1944.⁸

Other scholars have made the same point: that fictional depictions of Reconstruction followed current historiographical trends,⁹ which is what one might reasonably expect. This study adds to this discussion the name of a historian on the verge of being forgotten, and a novelist who is already there.

Francis Butler Simkins was born in Edgefield, South Carolina, in 1897. After graduating from the University of South Carolina, he went to New York’s Columbia University, where he received a Ph.D. in 1926. With the exception of a few scattered years, Simkins’s long teaching career was at Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia. The relatively light teaching demands at Longwood gave Simkins the opportunity to research and write, and over the years he produced, among other works, a book on “Pitchfork” Ben Tillman (a revision of his dissertation), a co-authored book on women in the Confederacy, and two textbooks (one, which went through several editions, on

the history of the South; another, co-authored, on the history of Virginia), plus a number of essays and articles.¹⁰

In 1932, the University of North Carolina Press published Simkins's most important work, *South Carolina during Reconstruction*, co-written with Robert H. Woody of Duke University. Published just three years after Bowers's *Tragic Era*, the book was remarkable in its new view of Reconstruction. "We forgo the temptation of following in the footsteps of historians who have interpreted the period as only a glamorous but tragic melodrama of political intrigue,"¹¹ Simkins and Woody wrote in their introduction. According to most reviewers, they were successful. "The authors picture honest, unselfish carpetbaggers, respectable, well-meaning scalawags, and Negroes with intelligence and political ability," said one, and another noted that Simkins and Woody "do not hesitate to reveal the villainy of white men nor do they belabor unduly the rascality of Negroes."¹² DuBois wrote that the book "does not hesitate to give a fair account of the Negroes and of some of their work."¹³ Simkins was no Eric Foner, but *South Carolina during Reconstruction* was one of the earliest revisionist studies to be widely read and accepted within the profession.¹⁴

Simkins continued his revisionist examination of Reconstruction in a 1939 essay in the *Journal of Southern History*, noting that "one of the accepted conventions of Reconstruction scholars is that the Carpetbaggers failed because their measures were excessively radical." He mentioned some of the things "Carpetbaggers" and others did not do, things that would have given them a chance for success--land confiscation and destruction of the South's caste system, for example--suggesting that Reconstruction failed, as Foner and other more recent historians have noted, because it was not radical enough.¹⁵

In that same essay, Simkins made another point to which historians would later return. "A biased interpretation of Reconstruction caused one of the most important political developments in the recent history of the South, the

disfranchisement of the black," he said. "The fraud and violence by which this objective was first obtained was justified in a single ground: the memory of the alleged horrors of Reconstruction." The argument that Southerners had misremembered their past was an important part of C. Vann Woodward's thesis in his classic and influential *Strange Career of Jim Crow*.¹⁶ In the 1930s, Simkins was a generation ahead of the mainstream in Reconstruction historiography.

There is a sequel to this story. At his death in 1966, an obituary attributed to Robert H. Woody, his former co-author, said:

As a young man . . . he seemed to be an emancipated critic of the old order. His study of Reconstruction in South Carolina . . . seemed to put him among the enlightened revisionists of that dark period. But more and more he came to stress the distinctive characteristics of "the everlasting South" and to question the validity of much that passed for progress in the modern South.¹⁷

As the twentieth century proceeded and brought great change to the South, Simkins found that there were limits to the changes he could accept. At the 1946 meeting of the Southern Historical Association, he delivered a paper titled "The Everlasting South," a sneak preview of some of the themes in his textbook, *The South, Old and New*, which was to be published the following year. "The Negroes," Simkins said in the paper, ". . . are as disinclined to sit by white people on busses as they are to enter such public carriers with their trousers off. The Negroes respect established conventions as readily as do white people."¹⁸

Simkins took this a step further in his 1954 presidential address to the Southern Historical Association (meeting, appropriately, in Columbia, South Carolina):

Much is written by our historians concerning the Negro's discontent with his caste status and concerning the progress he has made in changing his status. It cannot be denied that there is some reality in these assertions, but it is often forgotten that the white man has more often been discontented with the Negro than the Negro with the white man. Those of us who, through the years, have known Southern life intimately are familiar with the constant complaints leveled against the exasperating race. . . .

The historian of the South should accept the class and race distinctions of his region unless he wishes to deplore the region's existence. He should display a tolerant understanding of why in the South the Goddess of Justice has not always been blind, [and] why there have been lynchings and Jim Crow laws.¹⁹

This is a reversal that would have made Tom Watson proud. In the 1930s, Simkins was a respectable revisionist predecessor of Woodward, Foner, and others; in the 1940s and 1950s, he dramatically turned to a conservative defense of the traditional South. The reasons for this change are beyond the scope of this paper.²⁰ It was, however, the 1930s revisionist Simkins that influenced writer Marian McCamy Sims, who would be to Margaret Mitchell what Francis Butler Simkins was to William Archibald Dunning.

Marian McCamy was born in Dalton, Georgia, in 1899. She graduated from Agnes Scott College, taught history and French at Dalton High School for three years, then worked as a copy writer for an advertising firm. She married lawyer Frank Sims in 1927, and two years later they moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where she resided in swanky Myers Park. She

had not been in North Carolina long when one of her short stories won first prize in a contest sponsored by the Charlotte Writers Club. Over the next three decades, she published several dozen short stories in *Saturday Evening Post*, *McCall's*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Collier's*, and other magazines.²¹

A typewritten biographical sketch in the Marian Sims Papers at Dalton State College, probably written by Sims herself although told in the third person, explains why she started writing longer fiction:

Feeling that her own social stratum had been neglected in Southern fiction--that too much emphasis was being placed on share-croppers, Negroes, and backward-looking aristocrats--she turned, in 1934, to writing novels. "It seemed to me," she says, "that Southern novelists were presenting a distorted picture of the region, and that there was a need to round out the canvas. Not that the more prosperous and literate groups constituted the South (because the South has a thousand faces), but that they were certainly an integral part of the Southern pattern." [Her] novels have therefore dealt with the upper and upper middle class South, a [group] that has been almost completely neglected by other regional writers.²²

Sims's seven novels are set in the context of that "upper and upper middle class South." All were published by Philadelphia's J.B. Lippincott, and all were fully reviewed in the *New York Times*. As Sims is largely unknown to modern readers, a brief look at her novels might be in order.

The first was *Morning Star* (1934), the story of a young woman from Alabama who "attended a school which bore a striking resemblance to Agnes Scott" and who finally rebelled

against both an overbearing mother and the husband her mother had chosen for her years earlier. The book was "a popular romance of somewhat more than the usual depth," according to the *Times*.²³

The World with a Fence (1936) portrays a young woman who teaches high school history and French in a stifling small Georgia town, then moves to Atlanta where she works writing copy for an advertising agency and falls in love with her boss, who is handsome and unhappily married. Margaret Mitchell, ten days before her own book was published, wrote Sims about *The World with a Fence*. "I did like your book," Mitchell wrote. "I wanted to yell 'Hurray!' at a book about the South which dealt with normal people. And oh, how hard normal people are to write about! No wonder the cowards pick perverts! I've never tried a pervert as a character but it seems to me that it would be so easy."²⁴

Call It Freedom (1937) describes a year in the life of an attractive young divorcee in a North Carolina city. *Memo to Timothy Sheldon* (1938) concerns a woman who finds herself in love with two men: her husband, who is a good but nonintellectual man, and an English professor she meets by accident. She stays with her husband. After their lukewarm reception of her first novel, reviewers in the *Times* tended to like Sims. *Call It Freedom* "is pegs above most novels in its class," and in *Memo to Timothy Sheldon*, "both character and problems are treated with notable honesty and intelligence."²⁵

Sims's best work might have been *The City on the Hill* (1940), set in Medbury, North Carolina, a city that bore a striking resemblance to Charlotte. Steve Chandler, a respected lawyer, attempts to clean up the corruption he increasingly encounters in the city and reform the religious and moral bigotry of Medbury. Like *World with a Fence*, *City on the Hill* reflected an important part of Sims's personal life. She and her husband, Frank, had become "the leading local rebels" in Charlotte, campaigning against "'Bible belt' taboos" like Sunday blue laws. Their actions prompted a North Carolina newspaper editor

to write that she had "dared increasingly to confront the old Calvinism and question its moral attitudes and their effect upon the city." "Just how close the 'Medbury' people and events in *The City on the Hill* were to certain actual citizens and to well-known civic scandals in that city is speculative," wrote a North Carolina literary scholar, "but certain it was that church leaders and police officials were offended by the book, and everyone knew that the author's husband was a local judge well informed on the subject of public evils."²⁶

After *City on the Hill* came *Beyond Surrender* (1942) and *Storm before Daybreak* (1946), the latter on the personal problems of a returning veteran. The *Times* reviewer termed this, her last novel, a disappointment, a "slim bit of soap flake [that] holds few of the satisfactions one would expect from so practiced a hand as this author's."²⁷ *Beyond Surrender* was Sims's one attempt at historical fiction. The title can be read two ways: as the story of a relationship after one surrenders, physically or emotionally, to another; or as a story set after the Confederacy surrendered in 1865. Sims's book is both.

The novel begins late in June 1865, as war-weary Denis Warden arrives home to Brook Haven, the family plantation in Fairfax County, South Carolina. (The county is fictional, but seems to correspond pretty closely to Fairfield County, in the northern Piedmont section of the state.) He has to deal with salvaging both Brook Haven and his personal life, all in the context of Reconstruction.

The publisher's advertisement for the book shows that the folks at Lippincott understood the dual nature of the book--it was both historical and fictional--but it is obvious which of those aspects stood foremost in the publisher's mind. The ad describes the main characters:

Denis Warden was forced to concede
the South had been defeated at war--but war
could never alter the rights and privileges to

which he had been born. No! Not even if he had to go out and fight all over again.

Dolly [Helms, daughter of the merchant with whom Denis had to deal] knew about such rights and privileges only through hearsay, but she wanted them just as fiercely as Denis. And she could offer him the thing his body needed most.

Sharon [Long] should have married Denis. Theirs was a common background, a common tradition. And the war had given her a realistic approach to life which would have been a stabilizing influence on him.

Sara Warden [Denis's mother] was a woman of acumen and intelligence--two things a lady was not supposed to have. It was she who kept Brook Haven from ruin during the four long years of war. Without her, Denis would have been irretrievably lost.

John Jernigan [a lawyer], who was to love Sara all his life, had not gone to war because he was a cripple. He knew how and why the war was lost--and how the peace might be lost as well. Had the South numbered more of his kind, Reconstruction might have been a very different story.²⁸

There were other characters, of course: Luke, a former Brook Haven slave, who showed a surprising intelligence and willingness to work after the war; and Bart Lester, the Yankee-born manager of a neighboring plantation (who has a relationship with Dolly). While Lippincott was aware of the significance of the history, it is obvious that the publisher saw this mainly as popular fiction that would deal with human relationships, as had Sims's previous books. One Lippincott editor wrote to Sims concerning the first draft of the novel: "I

think the reader is going to expect a certain amount of adultery to take place. It is all very well for Denis and Sharon to be ladies and gentlemen all the time, but what about Dolly and Bart?"²⁹

Drama rather than setting drove *Beyond Surrender*. The characters and their relationships in this and Sims's other novels were almost interchangeable: the veteran returning home, conflicts between people of different economic backgrounds, even clashes on various social issues. For example, when Denis manages to convince a tee-totaling acquaintance to have a drink, the man soon says he needs to leave "while I'm able. I'm not accustomed to intoxicants, as you know." Denis's thoughts:

If you were . . . you'd be a different and more likable human being. It was not, he realized suddenly, the fact of drinking or abstaining in themselves that made the difference; it was the fact that a strong moral prejudice against decent drinking seemed always to be accompanied by an intolerant and inflexible approach to life.³⁰

That last sentence could have come from *City on the Hill*.

But in this work of historical fiction, the fiction does, of course, play out in a historical setting, and the setting was closer to the revisionist Francis B. Simkins than to the Dunning school that influenced Margaret Mitchell. Simkins wrote: "In the history of education there has perhaps never been a people more willing to receive its benefits than the South Carolina Negroes"; "The [U.S.] troops stationed in the state [in 1867] were regulars under excellent discipline"; "The interests of both races would have been better served had there never been a 'black code'"; and "The positive contributions of Reconstruction to the permanent life of the state were considerable."³¹ And Sims echoed: "Hordes of eager Negroes [were] trooping into the crude new temples of learning . . . ; there was pathos in the universal craving for 'book learnin'' as a key that would unlock

all the mysteries and benefits of a new universe." The occupying U.S. troops "have been pretty fair to both sides. Some of the commanding officers are brutes and fools, but a lot of 'em are decent." The freedmen were "victims of circumstance--poor devils." When asked if he would give black men the right to vote, John said "yes. And if I was all powerful I'd try to educate 'em a little and give it to the best ones anyhow, even without being forced to do it."³²

As the last quotation above indicates--and as the publisher's ad showed--John was often the voice of reason in the novel. But he was perhaps more. One could argue that Denis represents the older historiographical tradition, while John stands in for the newer revisionist approach. As the novel comes to an end with the aftermath of the contested presidential election of 1876, John and Denis talk about the freedmen's future. "I was thinking," John says, "of education and a decent chance to be decent, useful citizens." Denis is unconvinced. "You've done a big job in the face of big obstacles," John concludes, "and I'm proud of you. I'm just trying to show you some things you wouldn't be apt to see for yourself."³³

Francis Simkins certainly saw *Beyond Surrender* as revisionist. In 1941, as Sims began writing the novel, she applied for a Guggenheim fellowship. Simkins wrote a letter on her behalf, describing her skills as a novelist and the research she had done ("I have advised her on the historical details, led her to the documents, and read the first pages of her narrative") and explaining her perspective: "She has adopted the so-called revisionist view of the Reconstruction period. This means that she avoids the rabid Southernism of Thomas Dixon Jr. . . . and the rod of the historian Claude Bowers." He urged the foundation to "give Mrs. Sims a chance," but she did not receive a fellowship.³⁴ She had, however, won a fellowship to the Breadloaf Conference a year earlier.³⁵

Sims understood her debt to Simkins. She gave him the novel's lengthiest note of acknowledgement, which ended: "Without his help, I would have hesitated to release my first

venture into the field of historical fiction." Sims and Simkins continued their correspondence for some time after the book was published, writing about Southern society as well as personal matters. In December 1942, Simkins speculated that "interest in *Beyond Surrender* will make a few sales of *S.C. during Reconstruction*," his own book, and urged Sims to read Shields McIlwaine's recent study of literary depictions of southern poor whites. "McIlwaine asserts that the rise of the common man . . . has scarcely been touched by the novelists," Simkins wrote, and then added a note praising Sims work: "What a contrast with *Civil War & Reconstruction*, my dear pioneer!"³⁶

Finally, Sims herself saw the book as showing a new perspective. Shortly after the novel was published, she was invited to address the Women's Club of Columbia, South Carolina. "I expected the study to be drudgery," she said of the research that supported the book,

and perhaps it would have been if I had found only what I expected to find. Since I didn't, it proved to be a fascinating voyage of discovery, a sort of paper-chase after truth, through the jungles of legend. . . .

I believe that Rec[onstruction] is the most generally misunderstood and misinterpreted era in American history. . . .

I began research with a belief which is held by a vast majority of Southerners: that the war was . . . a picnic compared to Reconstruction, and further, that the North was directly responsible for all our suffering.³⁷

Francis B. Simkins was no Eric Foner, and by the same token, Marian Sims was no Margaret Walker (*Jubilee*)--or Alice Randall (who recently wrote *The Wind Done Gone*, the "black" version of *Gone with the Wind*).³⁸ Nonetheless, *Beyond Surrender* is a considerable step up from previous

Reconstruction fiction, and may well be the first twentieth-century revisionist Reconstruction novel.

As with Francis Simkins, we must add a footnote to our discussion of Marian Sims. In 1943, she wrote a review of Ellen Glasgow's *A Certain Measure*:

Ellen Glasgow was the first of the Southern realists. . . . Even as a young girl she rebelled against the pallid sentimentality which continued to perpetuate in fiction--or to attempt without success to perpetuate--a tradition which existed only as a nostalgic concept in the minds of its survivors. Even as a girl she could smile when a Virginia lady urged her to write novels proving that the Confederacy was right, or when an elderly kinsman insisted severely that no well-brought-up Southern girl should even know what a bastard was.

Sims could almost be talking about herself here. There follows: "And as a pioneer in the field of realism, she is quick to disclaim kinship with the later school which, unjustifiably, adopted the designation as its own."³⁹

This "later school" of realists infuriated Sims. She directed much of her anger toward Lillian Smith, whose 1944 novel *Strange Fruit* included interracial love and lynching. "She [Lillian Smith] has the best picture of a small Georgia town I've ever read," Sims wrote to a friend in Dalton, but "she's spoiled a really fine piece of Americana with . . . lurid bilge . . . swallowed whole [by] people who have never lived here. . . . I'm so damned bored with liberal Southerners whose guilt complex leads them to a groveling acceptance of the outsiders' opinion of us," she continued. "We've got plenty to be guilty about, God knows, and in the eyes of most Southerners I'm a

dangerous radical in my views, but I resent red herrings. . . . I wouldn't be surprised if in the last decade there haven't been more Negroes lynched in fiction than in fact."⁴⁰

At the publication of *Strange Fruit*, Lillian Smith wrote to Edwin Embree, head of the Rosenwald Fund: "The novel is getting a generous amount of praise. To my amazement, the South is taking it quite well. . . . It is going to get a bad review in the *Atlanta Journal Sunday* but that is because Marian Sims is doing it."⁴¹

In a talk delivered in Atlanta in 1947, Sims reminded her audience that, in 1944, the year of *Strange Fruit's* publication, she had written an article praising the South's manners. "There are so many things wrong with us," she said,

and we have admitted them so freely and published them so widely, that I thought it was high time somebody pointed out at least one thing that was comparatively right with us.

Three years later, I feel even more strongly about coming to the defense of my section. The trend of self-abasement has continued to a degree which borders on neurosis; Southern writers still strew ashes on their heads and shout that ours is the blame alone, while the rest of the country agrees loudly and gleefully.⁴²

The similarities between this and Francis Simkins's later writings are notable.

Two writers, the historian and the novelist, each dealing with a new look at Reconstruction in South Carolina. For Simkins, the work was a correction of previous historical scholarship while for Sims, it was the setting for another novel of human drama. Both might be seen as pioneers, breaking the old mold, blazing new trails. Pioneers they certainly were; but at

the same time, both showed that there were limits on how far they were willing to criticize their South.

Notes

1. Max Farrand, Review of *The American Nation: A History*, ed. by Albert Bushnell Hart, 27 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904-1908), in *American Historical Review* 13 (April 1908): 595.

2. Eric Foner, "Reconstruction Revisited," *Reviews in American History* 10 (Dec. 1982): 82. This was the special issue of *RAH* that was published as Stanley I. Kutler and Stanley N. Katz, ed., *The Promise of American History: Progress and Prospects* (Baltimore, 1982).

3. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, 1988).

4. David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, 2001), 358.

5. Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era: The Revolution after Lincoln* (Cambridge, 1929). Carl Degler suggested that Bowers's work had "probably done more than any other book to delineate the view now so commonly accepted regarding the enormities of Reconstruction." Degler, *Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America* (1959), 440, quoted in *Writing Southern History: Essays in Historiography in Honor of Fletcher M. Green*, ed. by Arthur S. Link and Rembert W. Patrick (Baton Rouge, 1965), 313.

Dunning's volume in the *American Nation* series featured a frontispiece portrait of Thaddeus Stevens, one of those Radical Republicans who engineered the "horrors" of Reconstruction. The original owner of my copy of the book wrote under that portrait: "This must be, truly, the veriest bastard and son of a bitch that ever was."

6. Bernard A. Weisberger, "The Dark and Bloody Ground of Reconstruction Historiography," *Journal of Southern History* 25 (Nov. 1959): 427-47.

7. Robert E. May, "Gone with the Wind as Southern History: A Reappraisal," *Southern Quarterly* 17 (1978): 57, 60-61. Darden Asbury Pyron makes a similar point in *Southern Daughter: The Life of Margaret Mitchell* (New York, 1991), 310-11. Most Americans are probably more familiar with the 1939 film version of *Gone with the Wind* than with Mitchell's novel. The movie offered a somewhat sanitized version of the novel, removing, for example, the word "nigger" and some of the worse examples of racial stereotyping. As offensive as most will find the movie's images of African Americans, the book was considerably worse. Leonard J. Leff, "David Selznick's *Gone with the Wind*: 'The Negro Problem,'" *Georgia Review* 38 (1984): 146-64. For a discussion of the novel's racist depictions, see Dieter Meindl, "A Reappraisal of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*," *Mississippi Quarterly* 34 (1981): 414-34.

8. Howard James Jones, "Images of State Legislative Participants in Fiction," *Journal of Negro History* 67 (1982): 318-27.

9. See, for example, E. Stanly Godbold, "A Battleground Revisited: Reconstruction in Southern Fiction, 1895-1905," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 73 (1974): 99-116, and Theodore L. Gross, "The Negro in the Literature of Reconstruction," *Phylon* 22 (1961): 5-14.

10. Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman*, *South Carolinian* (Baton Rouge, 1944); Simkins and James Welch Patton, *The Women of the Confederacy* (Richmond, 1936); Simkins, *The South, Old and New: A History, 1820-1947* (New York, 1947); Simkins, Spotswood Hunnicutt, and Sidman P. Poole, *Virginia: History, Government, Geography* (New York, 1957).

11. Simkins and Robert Hilliard Woody, *South Carolina*

during *Reconstruction* (1932; rep., Gloucester, MA, 1966), viii. According to a recent Simkins biographer, Woody wrote the economic and political chapters, and Simkins did those on presidential and congressional Reconstruction and social matters. John Scott Humphries, "South Carolina Rustic: Historian Francis Butler Simkins, A Life" (Ph.D. diss., Mississippi State University, 2005), 280.

12. Howard K. Beale, in *American Historical Review*, 38 (1933): 345; Rayford W. Logan, in *Journal of Negro History*, 17 (1932): 497. For a contrary view, see "A.C.C.," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 20 (1933): 129-30: "The work maintains a high level of historical objectivity, albeit the authors often reveal themselves as 'true' southerners, satisfied of the soundness of white supremacy and of Negro inferiority" (129).

13. W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (1935; rpt., New York, 1998), 720.

14. Hyman Rubin III implicitly questions the "revisionist" label for the Simkins/Woody book, pointing out that the authors did not hold to a modern (2006) notion of southern Republicans. But Rubin does agree that the book was quite different than previous histories. Rubin, *South Carolina Scalawags* (Columbia, SC, 2006), xvii. Thomas Holt is harsher, calling *South Carolina during Reconstruction* a "patronizingly racist study." Holt, *Black over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina during Reconstruction* (Urbana, IL, 1979), 2.

Alruthus A. Taylor wrote a revisionist study of African-Americans in Reconstruction South Carolina, but as no university press would publish it, the study appeared serially in the *Journal of Negro History* (1924). DuBois faced similar neglect from the white-dominated historical profession; the *American Historical Review* never considered his *Black Reconstruction*, published three years after Simkins/Woody's work, worthy of review. John Hope Franklin provides an overview of these matters in "Mirror for Americans: A

Century of Reconstruction History," *American Historical Review* 85 (Feb. 1980): 1-14. A recent Simkins biographer noted that DuBois cited Simkins and Woody seventeen times and Taylor only twice in his *Black Reconstruction*. Humphries, "South Carolina Rustic," 313-14.

15. Simkins, "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History* 5 (1939): 55-56. By 1939, of course, Simkins had the benefit of reading the work of other revisionist pioneers.

16. *Ibid.*, 50; C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1955).

17. *Journal of American History* 53 (1966): 439. The attribution to Woody is in the entry on Simkins, written by Orville Vernon Burton, in *American National Biography* (New York, 1999), vol. 19, 944.

18. Francis B. Simkins, "The Everlasting South," *Journal of Southern History* 13 (1947): 319.

19. Francis B. Simkins, "Tolerating the South's Past," *Journal of Southern History* 21 (1955): 6-7.

20. "The post-war rise of the Civil Rights movement pushed Simkins towards a reactionary stance on race relations in the South, although his change in thought was not as great as it might appear. On race matters, Simkins never committed a *volte face*. It was liberalism that had changed." Humphries, "South Carolina Rustic," 536. Humphries, however, seems to contradict himself a few pages later by suggesting that an undiagnosed stroke in the early 1950s might have affected Simkins's attitudes and behaviors (539). Orville Vernon Burton also had trouble understanding Simkins: "He sustained a lifelong cognitive dissonance," Burton writes, implying that Simkins held these very different views at the same time. Burton, "Introduction," in Francis Butler Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman: South Carolinian* (1944; Columbia, 2002),

xxxiii.

21. Biographical information from "Oakland, Cal. 1944," an otherwise unidentified typescript, in the Marian Sims Papers, Dalton State College, Dalton, Georgia (hereafter cited as "Sims Papers"); Sims's obituary, in *New York Times*, 10 July 1961, A21; Mary Kratt, *New South Women: Twentieth-Century Women of Charlotte, North Carolina* (Charlotte, 2001), 58-60; and Thad G. Stem, Jr., "Marian Sims: Novelist of the New South," *Southern Literary Messenger* 5 (May-June 1943): 162-64. Quotation in Kratt, 59. The "Oakland" paragraph also appears in Harry R. Warfel, *American Novelists of Today* (New York, 1951), 387.

22. Sims, "Oakland, Cal. 1944."

23. *Ibid.*; *New York Times*, 31 Oct. 1934.

24. Margaret Mitchell to Sims, 20 June 1936, Sims Paper. The book's main character certainly reflects many aspects of Sims's life, but the romantic part of the story was, as far as I know, fiction.

25. *New York Times*, 30 May 1937, 16 Oct. 1938.

26. Samuel Lubell, *The Future of American Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1956), 152; Jonathan Daniels, *Tar Heels: A Portrait of North Carolina* (New York, 1941), 198; Richard Walser, *Literary North Carolina: A Historical Survey, Revised and Enlarged* (Raleigh, 1986), 81. Daniels was editor of the *Raleigh News & Observer*.

27. *New York Times*, 19 January 1947.

28. *New York Times*, 31 Jan. 1943.

29. George Stevens to Sims, 9 June 1942, Sims Papers. For *Call It Freedom*, editor Bert Lippincott suggested several titles, including "Single Bed" and "Desperate Divorcee." The

book might have been "pegs above other novels in its class," to return to the *New York Times* review cited earlier, but Lippincott understood how many readers saw these novels. Lippincott to Sims, 31 December 1936, Sims Papers.

30. Marian Sims, *Beyond Surrender* (Philadelphia, 1942), 236.

31. Simkins and Woody, *South Carolina during Reconstruction*, 426, 66, 51, 561.

32. Sims, *Beyond Surrender*, 264, 208, 221.

33. *Ibid.*, 491-2.

34. Francis Butler Simkins to Henry Allen Moe, 26 Sept. 1941, Sims Papers.

35. *New York Times*, 11 August 1940.

36. Simkins to Sims, 1 December 1942, Sims Papers; Shields McIlwaine, *The Southern Poor-White from Lubberland to Tobacco Road* (Norman, OK, 1939).

37. Marian Sims, "Address before the Columbia (S.C.) Women's Club, 1942 (November)," Sims Papers.

38. Alice Randall, *The Wind Done Gone* (Boston, 2001).

39. Marian Sims, "Ellen Glasgow's Appraisal," *Atlanta Journal*, 17 October 1943, quoted in *Ellen Glasgow: The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. by Dorothy McInnis Scura (Cambridge, 1992), 456.

40. Sims to Blanche Gardner, n.d., Sims Papers. Perhaps something along these lines prompted Margaret Mitchell's mention of "perverts" in the letter cited earlier.

41. Lillian Smith to Edwin R. Embree, Feb 24, 1944, in *How Am I to Be Heard?: Letters of Lillian Smith*, ed. by Margaret Rose Gladney (Chapel Hill, 1996), 80.

42. Unidentified typescript, Marian Sims Papers. Internal evidence strongly suggests that this was a talk delivered in Atlanta in 1947.

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