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By DAVID R. GOLDFIELD. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982; Pp. xiv+ 232. Bibliographical essay, index, illustrations. \$20.00.

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with the best interests of Mexico at heart, the impression is that Díaz was more interested in regaining his privileged position.

There are still questions that arise about the revolution that need to be addressed, especially when dealing with a figure as important as Felix Díaz and his alleged complicity in the assassination of Francisco Madero. The information presented offers nothing new or sufficiently convincing to suggest that Diaz was not deeply involved. Although Díaz maintained a military posture against Huerta and Carranza, was it because of wide spread support or was it because of the rampant confusion characterizing the general anarchy throughout Mexico? The evidence presented by Henderson suggests the latter and at best is ambivalent. The Mexican Revolution is an important event that stretched for more than a decade and had wide-ranging implications beyond its borders and the time period in which it occurred. It is important that the revolution continue to be studied. Unfortunately, this well-documented traditional historical approach does not elucidate the major questions that still remain.

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Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980

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David R. Goldfield's *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers* is a broadly interpretive work tracing urbanization in the South from its colonial beginnings to present. The South Goldfield explores is geographically limited to the eleven states of the Confederacy plus Kentucky. Urbanization, however, is less neatly defined, for the "urban" areas considered range in size from small farm towns to bustling Atlanta and sprawling Houston. Goldfield's purpose is to place southern cities in what he feels is their most appropriate context: they are southern first, cities second. He accomplishes his goal by discussing those factors and forces common to southern cities which have made them different from cities elsewhere: a single-product economy, traditional rural values, and a biracial society.

In colonial times the single-product economy was apparent in southern dependence on staple crop agriculture. Southern towns were closely tied to their surrounding countryside from the very

beginning, and the shifting fortunes of agriculture took their toll. Initially, the towns grew up as way-stations for cotton and tobacco on their journeys to northern or European markets and also served as market towns for the distribution of goods manufactured elsewhere. Close ties to agriculture resulted in fluctuating population levels for the towns. From planting to harvest there were few people in the cities. In the antebellum period this limited attempts at industrial development as the labor force available for manufacturing increased only after the harvest or during poor crop years. Although the Civil War changed the formal organization of southern labor, the economy remained tied to agriculture well into the twentieth century. The South was poor in capital but rich in land, and the system of sharecropping and debt peonage that grew up led to a revival of the cotton culture. The cities still served primarily as market places to a regionally dispersed population.

The second major force shaping southern cities also reflected the close relationship between town and country. This was the prevalence of traditional rural values in the towns—especially those values concerning family and religion. Tracing the various forms of these values over almost three centuries, Goldfield makes present-day southern conservatism understandable. The rural values were those of the merchant planters who ruled both countryside and town in the early days. They remained firmly entrenched since the towns and cities stayed small and self-contained. Being market towns and lacking a manufacturing employment base, the southern cities did not attract large numbers of immigrants who would have brought different values and cultural traditions. In later years, those urban citizens who had the most contact with people outside the South were the same individuals in the cities' power structures who had an interest in maintaining conservatism.

The final major influence in the development of southern cities was the biracial nature of their society. The agricultural system of colonial times required complete dominance of the black labor force by whites. In the towns, slave blacks also served white masters while the relatively few free blacks were confined to either very menial jobs or occupations that primarily served other blacks.

Parallel societies—one black, one white—persisted in post-Civil War cities. In those situations where interaction was necessary, the form of that interaction ensured continued white dominance. Whites controlled the granting of credit, the provision of public services and schools, and the political process. Goldfield concludes his discussion of the southern racial situation by tracing the process of school desegregation at federal insistence and the growth of black political

power in the last two decades. The bonds of two centuries of racial subjugation have been difficult to break.

Focusing on these three factors, Goldfield illustrates how southern cities have been inextricably tied to the southern region. He makes occasional comparisons between a specific southern city and its northern counterpart as market town, port, or rail center, but this work is not really a comparative history. Goldfield is not contrasting southern cities with cities elsewhere so much as revealing how closely they have been tied to their region. They are the urban version of "the South."

Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers is primarily a work of synthesis, an "extended hypothesis, a lengthy essay" (preface). An extensive bibliographical essay (almost one-seventh of the book) indicates the wide range of source material Goldfield used in his study. Besides the literature of southern, urban, social, and economic history, he used the work of geographers, political scientists, sociologists, city planners, and others. Even as extensive a bibliographical essay as this one, however, is not an adequate substitute for page-specific footnotes and references. It is sometimes difficult to separate Goldfield's ideas from those of his sources, and the reader wishing to explore some questions in greater depth would have a difficult time knowing where to look for specific information.

Goldfield's somewhat informal writing style captures the feeling of past times and places, as his well-chosen, descriptive words recreate the old South. It is not a book for research or reference, but rather one that will aid in comprehension of the overall phenomenon of southern urbanization. As such, it can help the southern reader to understand his past, the environment from which he comes. At the same time, it may make others more tolerant of the South and more appreciative of its problems.

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