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In the antebellum years, southern planters pondered the possibilities of using Chinese as plantation laborers. Without any pressing need for an alternate labor pool to replace blacks, planters waited until after the Civil War to carry out their plans. At the same time a number of large planters actively sought out Chinese laborers to replace or supplement newly emancipated blacks. The Chinese worked on railroads, in cotton mills, iron works and most frequently as agricultural laborers. Initially, many came from Cuba where they had been employed as contract laborers on the sugar plantation. Later, other Chinese were recruited from China, via Hong Kong, and California.

The contracts under which the Chinese worked stipulated carefully the responsibilities of both the Chinese workers and the white planters. Within the first few years the planters and the Chinese found the situation less than desirable. The expense of transportation to the southern states and the maintenance of the crews was acceptable at first for those white southerners who had recruited the Chinese. The aggressive posture of the Chinese laborers annoyed and frustrated plantation owners and labor contractors. The Chinese laborers insisted, sometimes violently, that contracts be observed to the letter. Far from turning out to be cheap and docile masses as the planters had hoped, the Chinese workers proved to be too expensive and too resistant. In response, white planters simply chose not to hire Chinese after the initial immigration through recruitment of several hundred Chinese in the late 1860s. Instead, planters turned to the growing system of tenant farming and sharecropping as a more favorable alternative.

Without a demand for their labor in the rural areas, many Chinese chose to move on to other, more economically rewarding areas. Many moved at least temporarily to local urban centers. For example, in 1880 New Orleans had 95 (19.4 percent) of Louisiana's 489 Chinese. Scattered and few in number, those who remained in the rural areas faced a difficult life. A few appear to have chosen suicide as a way out of their circumstances. Others opted to join existing ethnic and racial communities through intermarriage. As with most nineteenth century Chinese immigrants, those in the South were predominantly male. A good many were young and single as well.

The descendants of the marriages between the Chinese men and Creole, Indian and Black women took advantage of the ambiguity of their "official" racial classification. Some claimed to be white, some found advantages in passing as Mexican (a probable result of earlier work stints in Cuba by their fathers and grandfathers), while others affiliated with the black community.

As they disappeared into the other ethnic communities, their Chinese culture and heritage grew dimmer with the passing years. By 1900 "Chinese" as a recognizable ethnic group to outsiders was all but lost in the rural South. Only the few memories available in oral tradition have allowed scholars like Lucy M. Cohen to write of this "People without a History." Cohen effectively demonstrates the importance of understanding the Chinese experience in the South. Her discussion of racial relations through intermarriage provides evidence of interracial cooperation which appears not to have existed in the more often studied West Coast Chinese communities. Her evidence from the oral histories and manuscript census records also suggests that the Chinese did not inevitably form a middle group between black and white in the South as other authors have noted. In addition, her attention to Chinese workers' resistance at the work site is significant for a group too often treated by scholars as a cheap, docile, monolithic ethnic bloc. By combing the local newspapers, Cohen is able to dispel any doubts about the passivity of Chinese "coolies."

Although the book contains much valuable information, there are troublesome areas. Most evident among these are the coverage and organization of the book. Cohen spends nearly one quarter of the volume in the antebellum period detailing white perceptions of the Chinese as "remarkable curiosities" and the discussion by white plantation owners concerning the importation of Chinese labor. This concentration in itself would not be a problem had Cohen not set out her purpose as a discussion of the "processes through which the Chinese lost distinctive characteristics in a rural world" (p. xiii). Cohen does not get to the Chinese in the rural setting until nearly half-way through the book. This early material is necessary for a clear understanding of what followed for the Chinese in the South, but Cohen appears to have let her sources dictate her organization. She has uncovered a rich supply of primary sources. The material is well researched and well written, but does not merit the space which it is given. Cohen is at her best in the second half of the book with her discussion of labor and racial relations. Unfortunately, in comparison to the detailed treatment given the first half of the book, this second half is almost too brief. One would like to have seen more detail and a more careful historical analysis which places the Chinese within the larger context of southern race relations. With her stated goal in mind, the section on race relations is sketchy, and though highly suggestive, lacks the detailed research and analysis provided in earlier sections. Part of this problem is undoubtedly caused by the limitations of the source material, but Cohen's earlier creativity in the use of her sources leads readers to expect more.

As a final criticism, Cohen depends far too much on Gunther Barth (*Bitter Strength*, 1964). Although his name appears only two times in the body of the text, Cohen consistently cites Barth throughout the chapters in her footnotes. At the same time she fails to provide comparisons with other more

recent works on the Chinese in the South with the exception of a brief mention of these in her "Note on Sources" (pp. 187-188). Barth is important in the historiography of Chinese in the United States, but much good scholarship was produced in the twenty years between his publication and the present work. Some historiographical discussion and comparisons would only serve to strengthen her arguments for the importance of her study. True, Cohen's emphasis is on anthropological analysis, but her venture into history necessitates a few more concessions to historical methods.

Despite the minor criticisms offered above, Cohen's work does stand as a worthy contribution to the growing body of literature on the Chinese experience in the United States. Although brief, her book is highly suggestive of fruitful questions which other students need to broach in future studies. If for no other reason than this, *The Chinese in the Post-Civil War South* should be read. I look forward to any of Cohen's future publications and hope that these will include a more detailed discussion of the Chinese experience with special attention to labor and racial relations in the South.

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Archibald R. Lewis and Timothy J. Runyan. *European Naval and Maritime History, 300 - 1500*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. xiii + 192 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, and index.

Craig L. Symonds, Merrill Bartlett, et al., eds. *New Aspects of Naval History*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1981. xv + 398 pp. Illustrations and notes.

Geoffrey Vaughn Scammell. *The World Encompassed: The First European Maritime Empires, 800 - 1650*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981. xiv + 538 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, notes and index. \$35.00 (cloth).

With the numerous journals and the legion of monographs and studies published on maritime and naval history, especially during the past thirty years, one would think there exists enough material to provide a comprehensive study on the subject. However the curse of the historian remains that as more is discovered, there is more he wishes to learn and understand. In spite of the yeoman's work done on the subject there remain enormous gaps to be filled, and there are constantly new developments which demand from the researcher much time and energy just to keep abreast with the latest literature. The 1980s have witnessed the further proliferation of studies on medieval maritime history. The first of these was the excellent study by Richard Unger on the development of shipbuilding in medieval Europe, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy, 600 - 1600* (London, 1980).