



The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction, Edward L. Ayers, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2007, 0195326873, 9780195326871, 579 pages. At a public picnic in the South in the 1890s, a young man paid five cents for his first chance to hear the revolutionary Edison talking machine. He eagerly listened as the soundman placed the needle down, only to find that through the tubes he held to his ears came the chilling sounds of a lynching. In this story, with its blend of new technology and old hatreds, genteel picnics and mob violence, Edward Ayers captures the history of the South in the years between Reconstruction and the turn of the century - a combination of progress and reaction that defined the contradictory promise of the New South. Ranging from the Georgia coast to the Tennessee mountains, from the power brokers to tenant farmers, Ayers depicts a land of startling contrasts - a time of progress and repression, of new industries and old ways. Ayers takes us from remote Southern towns, revolutionized by the spread of the railroads, to the statehouses where Democratic "Redeemers" swept away the legacy of Reconstruction; from the small farmers, trapped into growing nothing but cotton, to the new industries of Birmingham; from abuse and intimacy in the family to tumultuous public meetings of the prohibitionists. He explores every aspect of society, politics, and the economy, detailing the importance of each in the emerging New South. Here is the local Baptist congregation, the country store, the tobacco-stained second-class railroad car, the rise of Populism: the teeming, nineteenth-century South comes to life in these pages. And central to the entire story is the role of race relations, from alliances and friendships between blacks and whites to the spread of Jim Crow laws and disenfranchisement. Ayers weaves all these details into the contradictory story of the New South, showing how the region developed the patterns it was to follow for the next fifty years. When Edward Ayers published *Vengeance & Justice*, a landmark study of crime and punishment in the nineteenth-century South, he received universal acclaim. Now he provides an unforgettable account of the New South - a land with one foot in the future and the other in the past..

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Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913, Gaines M. Foster, Nov 24, 1988, History, 306 pages. Examines how white southerners adjusted to the Confederacy's defeat in the Civil War, arguing that the southerners were realistic in accepting their defeat and eager to embrace

The American South: A History, William James Cooper, Tom E. Terrill, 1991, History, 835 pages. Looks at the growth of the South from the English background of the 1607 settlement of Jamestown, to the political disintegration of the "solid South," to the economic

The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877, Volume 8, Ellis Merton Coulter, 1947, History, 426 pages. Describes all facets of life in the South immediately following the Civil War, with stress on the economic, racial, and cultural developments.

The Burden of Southern History, Comer Vann Woodward, 2008, History, 304 pages. C. Vann Woodward's *The Burden of Southern History* remains one of the essential history texts of our time. In it Woodward brilliantly addresses the interrelated themes of

American Nightmare The History of Jim Crow, Jerrold M. Packard, Feb 12, 2002, History, 291 pages. Chronicles the history of the laws enacted following the conclusion of the Civil War that segregated the South into white and non-white segments, discussing how they were

Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 , Comer Vann Woodward, 1971, History, 654 pages. Reviews the economic, political, and social evolution of the South from the end of Reconstruction to the beginning of World War I.

Ben Tillman & the Reconstruction of White Supremacy , Stephen David Kantrowitz, 2000, Biography & Autobiography, 422 pages. "This book traces the history of white male supremacy and its discontents from the era of plantation slavery to the age of Jim Crow. Friend and foe alike and generations of

American Passages A History of the U.S., Edward L. Ayers, Jul 1, 1999, , 167 pages. To accomplish your course goals, use this study guide to enhance your understanding of the text content and to be better prepared for quizzes and tests. This convenient manual

Slaves without masters; the free Negro in the antebellum South , Ira Berlin, 1975, History, 423 pages. Describes the lives and socio-cultural patterns of free blacks in the antebellum South and their interaction with whites as determined largely by white attitudes, institutions

Southern crossing a history of the American South, 1877-1906, Edward L. Ayers, Jan 12, 1995, History, 288 pages. .

Alabama the history of a Deep South state, William Warren Rogers, 1994, History, 735 pages. Once the home of aboriginal inhabitants, Alabama was claimed and occupied by European nations, later to become a permanent part of the United States. A cotton and slave state

Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest Louisiana Politics, 1877-1900, William Ivy Hair, 1975, History, 328 pages. .

The New South Creed A Study in Southern Mythmaking, Paul M. Gaston, Oct 15, 2012, History, 307 pages. First published in 1970, The New South Creed has lost none of its usefulness to anyone examining the dream of a new South -- prosperous, powerful, racially harmonious -- that

In the Presence of Mine Enemies War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863, Edward L. Ayers, 2004, History, 472 pages. Reassessing the history of the Civil War, a leading historian chronicles the path to war in the Great Valley spanning Pennsylvania and Virginia, capturing the experience of war

Vengeance and Justice Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century American South, Edward L. Ayers, 1984, History, 353 pages. Exploring the major elements of southern crime and punishment at a time that saw the formation of the fundamental patterns of class and race, Ayers studies the inner workings

The Washington Senators, 1901-1971 , Tom Deveaux, Jan 1, 2005, Sports & Recreation, 282 pages. The Washington Senators have a special place in baseball history as one of the most unsuccessful teams ever to play the game. The Nats (as headline writers had dubbed them by

Debating Southern History Ideas and Action in the Twentieth Century, Bruce Clayton, John A. Salmond, Jan 1, 1999, History, 197 pages. Noted historians Bruce Clayton and John Salmond explore the mind of the "new South", from the pivotal 1920s to the tempestuous '60s..

At a public picnic in the South in the 1890s, a young man paid five cents for his first chance to hear the revolutionary Edison talking machine. He eagerly listened as the soundman placed the needle down, only to find that through the tubes he held to his ears came the chilling sounds of a lynching.

In this story, with its blend of new technology and old hatreds, genteel picnics and mob violence, Edward Ayers captures the history of the South in the years between Reconstruction and the turn of the century.

Ranging from the Georgia coast to the Tennessee mountains, from the power brokers to tenant farmers, Ayers depicts a land of startling contrasts. Ayers takes us from remote Southern towns, revolutionized by the spread of the railroads, to the statehouses where Democratic Redeemers swept away the legacy of Reconstruction; from the small farmers, trapped into growing nothing but cotton, to the new industries of Birmingham; from abuse and intimacy in the family to tumultuous public meetings of the prohibitionists. He explores every aspect of society, politics, and the economy, detailing the importance of each in the emerging New South. Central to the entire story is the role of race relations, from alliances and friendships between blacks and whites to the spread of Jim Crow laws and disfranchisement. The teeming nineteenth-century South comes to life in these pages.

When this book first appeared in 1992, it won a broad array of prizes and was a finalist for both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. The citation for the National Book Award declared *Promise of the New South* a vivid and masterfully detailed picture of the evolution of a new society. The Atlantic called it "one of the broadest and most original interpretations of southern history of the past twenty years."

Edward Ayers had his work cut out for him as he attempted to create a synthesis of the South after Reconstruction. C. Vann Woodward's "Origins of the New South" ranked as one of the most lasting texts of the 20th century. Yet in his work, Ayers is able to carve out his own niche and leave a strong impression. This is not history from the top-down and political historians would do better to look at Woodward. But Ayers does offer an excellent look at your everyday people in the region and traces the growth of the New South through the railroads. This book is readable and interesting and offers new perspectives on an important historical period. Ayers could have done more on culture and Woodward is much better on the various literary figures of the New South. Despite this minor quibble, "The Promise of the New South" holds up well and, in his introduction to the 15th anniversary edition, even Ayers seems surprised at how good a book he had on his hands.

After reading this book I was surprised to look at the title and not see a word about African-Americans in it. This is surprising because almost everything in the book has something to do with them. The author took a little understood part of history and watered it down with the plight of blacks. Don't get me wrong there are tons of great civil rights books out there, but this book is supposed to be examining the South as a whole and not just the plight of poor southern blacks. I bought the book in hopes of getting a feel, both as a white and African American citizen living in a place that was once called "the most closed off place in America" because almost no news came out of the region, and outsiders were looked upon with suspicion and you seldom went unaccompanied by someone local until the Spanish American war cracked the door, then the TVA swung it wide open. I think the author of the book missed a goldmine of forgotten information. The South's ability to re-build and prosper after the Civil War is a testament to its people of all races. If you're looking for a civil rights book you may find this one an ok read, but if you're looking for a book that is informative and insisive about the South you may want to pick-up another book, like the PBS documentary called something like "The Ghosts of Reconstruction"?. To sum it up this book isn't sure if it's a civil rights book or a history of the South. It's not a bad book, but it's not great either.

agricultural Alabama Alliance Alliancemen American Arkansas Atlanta Baptist Baton Rouge became began Black Belt century Chapel Hill Chopin church Clive Metcalfe colored con-ict convention cotton counties crop Democrats diary disfranchisement diss early economic election Ellen Glasgow farm farmers fields ight ind irst ove Georgia Gilded Age government History industry influence John Kate Chopin Kentucky labor land leaders lived Louisiana LSU Press lynching merchants mill Mississippi mountains movement Negro newspaper North Carolina Northern office officials organization Oxford Univ Papers party percent Ph.D Piedmont plantation planters political Polk population Populist protest quoted race relations racial railroad reform region Republicans return rural seemed segregation Social songs South Southern Southern story Tennessee Texas

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A terrific, engaging look at the South just after Reconstruction ended. The book encompasses diverse subjects (books, singing, mining, politics, alliances, race, women, catalogs, logging, country life, town life, general stores, farming, trains...the list is exhaustive) and is bound to teach even the strongest of Southern scholars a thing or two about the region. It tells its story using clips from newspapers and journals, zeroing in upon the human element to depict the struggles and concerns of...more A terrific, engaging look at the South just after Reconstruction ended. The book encompasses diverse subjects (books, singing, mining, politics, alliances, race, women, catalogs, logging, country life, town life, general stores, farming, trains...the list is exhaustive) and is bound to teach even the strongest of Southern scholars a thing or two about the region. It tells its story using clips from newspapers and journals, zeroing in upon the human element to depict the struggles and concerns of the people at the time. The 15th anniversary update includes a note from the author which help to frame the time period in which he worked on it, and helps the reader to get a general understanding of how he wrote it.(less)

Magnificent history of a forgotten period and region, the South from the end of Reconstruction after the 1876 presidential election until the early Twentieth Century, when democracy (both for blacks and poor whites) was basically ground out of existence through brutality and state terrorism. Some great revelations about the Populist Party, it's threat to the existing social order, and the methods used to crush it.

The best book on the post-Reconstruction South that is out there. It shows that there was not one "New South" evolving in a linear fashion, but many "souths," changing in fits and starts, in a far more complicated way than previous studies have presented. And for music fans, there is a great chapter on the music of the era, which examines the origins of the musical forms that became country, jazz, and blues.

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This is a comprehensive history of the American South from the end of Reconstruction to the Progressive era in the early 20th century. It focuses on previously neglected groups such as women, lower class whites and African Americans, as well as literature, music and evangelical religion. The text also explores the clash of North-South hatreds and the movement towards democracy and industry that set the foundation for both the problems and achievements of the New South.

Wow, am I really the first person to review this book? Where to begin. I guess I'll keep it simple. This book is something of a response to C. Vann Woodward, and a much less biased review of the Reconstruction South. Ayers has done a lovely cultural history here, without the psychological baggage of Woodward. He's something of a "dates and statistics" man, so the narrative is frequently punctuated with such things. And like Starr's HUGE history of California, there's a particular emphasis on the history of institutions and biographical background.

THE LATE 19th-century South lacks a salient historical identity, for it followed the tumultuous period of Reconstruction and preceded the stifling era of triumphant white supremacy. In 1941 W. J. Cash in *The Mind of the South* treated this period as an extension of Reconstruction, during which the region supposedly continued under an awful Yankee domination. In 1951 C. Vann Woodward's *Origins of the New South* gave the period a name. Now Edward Ayers recasts the era, pulling it away from the issues of Reconstruction (black civil rights and race in general and aligning it towards the agrarian revolt that the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party embodied. With narrative history as only half his concern, Ayers fissures his South, but no longer along the usual fault line of race.

The great divide in *The Promise of the New South* separates country folk from townspeople, a contrast that takes race into account without becoming its prisoner. This reorientation assumes that Southerners were a heterogeneous people riven by conflict and pulls Southern history together across lines of race, class, and gender. In this regard, *The Promise of the New South*, a nominee for the National Book Award, marks a major advance in the desegregation of Southern history.

In the 45 years since John Hope Franklin and C. Vann Woodward broke the color bar in the Southern Historical Association, Southern historians have been locked in a genteel struggle that has been all the more intense for the seeming agreement over its outcome. Almost any Southern historian will acknowledge that our field needs to study Southerners who were black and/or female and/or poor and/or unpopular in their time, not just the rich white men who exercised power. But the historians's ways of conceding the need to recognize these groups have tended to preserve the South for those who ran it. For the most part, Southern history has been multiplying sub-fields more than adjusting generalizations about the South as a whole. Now we have *Southern Confederacy* and that Southerners equal Confederate supporters.

One part of the problem, as Woodward surmised in the 1930s, was a Southern distaste for conflict. The other part of the problem has been the difficulty of drawing conclusions, once the existence of conflict among Southerners was acknowledged. If Southerners who were not white supremacists are to be counted as Southerners, what can a historian present as the Southern position on, say, the disenfranchisement of black voters, an issue that surged in the period that Edward Ayers addresses?

Woodward's *Origins of the New South* defined that particular period and, for Southern history as a whole, took many of the first steps away from monolithic characterizations of the South. Woodward's chapters chronicled disagreement among Southern whites and laid out the devastating effect on poor whites of policies ostensibly aimed only at blacks. Although Woodward was not able fully to integrate black Southerners into his analysis, *Origins of the New South* remains among the rare histories that at age 40 still reward readers. Thanks to its extraordinary vitality, *Origins of the New South* is the monument that towers behind Edward Ayers's *Promise of the New South*; it is also a monument that Ayers's exciting new book is bound to replace. Here, at

EVEN THOUGH Southern history, as a field, has tended stubbornly to resist the post-modernist influence of literary theory that is reshaping other historical fields (such as women's history and African-American studies), Ayers takes theory in stride. Recognizing his intellectual debts to thinkers such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Pierre Bourdieu and Raymond Williams, Ayers writes purposefully and effectively from more than one perspective.

Ambiguity, surprise, and gender analysis characterize *The Promise of the New South*, which bristles with unexpected insights: Charles Macune, a leader of the anti-plutocrat Farmers' Alliance, borrows \$2,000 from a railroad-lawyer descendant of John C. Calhoun, the very image of the southern plutocracy; the chapter entitled "Faith" discusses southern religion but ends with two disconcerting images: W.E.B. Du Bois's anguish over his child's death, then a young man committing suicide. Gender pervades the discussion of segregation; sectional reconciliation begins with baseball; white resentment of well-educated, assertive young black Southerners has political consequences. In a synthesis that captures the late 19th-century South in its bewildering complexity, Ayers does get the New South right.

These Southerners are not a flawed or damaged people, and they are far more than just the sum of their problems, as enormous and multifarious as those problems were. The key to Ayers's approach and the means by which he draws so subtle and unerring a portrait is his command of the sources: He builds his analysis from the bottom up, preserving the complexity within groups that usually appear as monoliths and recognizing ironies with a surer touch -- but not more grace of style -- than C. Vann Woodward.

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