

Soil. Hedrick again left the state in search of employment. As the conflict over slavery escalated, he became a leader of southern Unionists in exile. After the war he styled himself a centrist Conservative Republican. Embittered toward and distrustful of Governor William Woods Holden yet too radical for state Democrats and the Ku Klux Klan, Hendrick eventually found it impossible to return home. After working as an examiner for the United States Patent Office in Washington for twenty-five years, he died in exile in Georgetown in 1886.

Smith places Hedrick's dissenting voice squarely within the context of antebellum political and economic debates over the expansion of slavery, utilizing rich, if also previously well mined, sources. Further, he ferrets out rarer sources that delineate Hedrick's thinking on what he considered vital matters of his day: scientific farming and the future of non-slaveholding white southern farmers. Though some readers may find his approach a bit old-fashioned, Smith focuses on the strong tension between antebellum southern politics and agricultural reform, which helps explain why Hedrick shifted political allegiance from the Democratic Party to the Free Soil movement. He contends that Hedrick's level of political conviction is best measured by the personal cost of dissent, his exile from the Old North State.

Like Hinton Rowan Helper, who befriended him, Hedrick sacrificed his status and place in state and section by expressing his belief that slavery was squeezing the vitality and industry out of the land and people he loved. Thus he could see eye to eye with Free Soil Republicans concerning the economic limits and hardships imposed on white yeomen by the close proximity of slavery. Yet, as Smith notes, Hedrick continued to identify himself as a North Carolinian and a southerner, apparently failing to see any contradiction in such a complex identity. Smith has rescued Hedrick's story of dissent and its consequences from reconciliationist-imposed obscurity and from the oversimplifications of earlier historians. He has also left ample room to explore further the culture of dissent that gave birth to and surely nurtured Hedrick, Helper, and other southern dissenters from the Piedmont.

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Cuban Confederate Colonel: The Life of Ambrosio José Gonzales. By Antonio Rafael de la Cova. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, c. 2003. Pp. xxx, 537. \$59.95, ISBN 1-57003-496-6.)

One hopes that Ambrosio José Gonzales (1818–1893), a contemporary of Robert Browning, was familiar with the British poet's consoling lines, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?" Certainly Gonzales's ambitions outstripped his goals throughout a remarkably diverse career. Biographer Antonio Rafael de la Cova provides a detailed account of a most unusual life. Some might say too detailed, but the research is so thorough that it would be unfortunate not to make full use of the material.

A native of Cuba and holder of a law degree from Havana University, Gonzales was also educated in part in a school in New York City, where the teachers were nostalgic remnants of Napoleon's army and P. G. T. Beauregard was a classmate. Gonzales's command of English made him invaluable to the self-proclaimed general Narciso López in his efforts to recruit Americans for

an expedition to free Cuba from Spain. While participating with López in the Cárdenas fiasco of 1850 it was Gonzales's good fortune to be wounded—"the first native to shed his blood for Cuban independence" (p. 54). Gonzales's involvement in a second misguided landing on Cuba in 1851 firmly cut his ties to Cuba. By then a United States citizen, he was prosecuted for violating United States laws against filibustering. Support for Gonzales by fellow Masons at that time gives a rare look at the importance of the Masonic network in the United States. Although during the 1850s Gonzales fruitlessly sought diplomatic posts, he succeeded in winning the heart of the daughter of one of South Carolina's most prominent and wealthy families. Connections to southern interests through marriage drew him into the Confederate cause when war erupted.

Gonzales's relationship with Jefferson Davis is curious. The two first met in 1850 when López tried to induce Davis, then a U.S. senator, to lead a filibustering expedition. Subsequently Davis recommended Gonzales for government positions. But as president of the Confederacy, Davis declined Gonzales's request for promotion to general six times. The author asserts that Davis possessed a "contempt for those who disagreed with him" and that Davis's "spiteful character" deprived a deserving Gonzales of general's rank because he had served under P. G. T. Beauregard, whom Davis disliked (pp. xxii, 250). This may be true. But it must also be noted that Gonzales's experience with Cuban filibusters was no recommendation for command, nor were his contentious relationships with Confederate officers in Richmond. However, it is good to record that Davis and Gonzales met in Cuba in 1868, reunited and reconciled.

The postwar years of Gonzales's life offer yet another view of the Reconstruction period. Gonzales faced not only financial loss but also sorrows over the death of his wife and his sister-in-law's successful efforts to poison the relationships between Gonzales and his children. It is a sad story, but it recounts so well little-known periods of our history that it demands attention.

The Papers of Jefferson Davis

MARY SEATON DIX

A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration. By Steven Hahn. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003. Pp. x, 610. \$35.00, ISBN 0-674-01169-4.)

Awarded the Pulitzer, Bancroft, and Merle Curti prizes in history, this elegant account will introduce a wide readership to a quarter century of revisionist scholarship on slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Hahn adds to that scholarship an emphasis on continuity between those three periods and a focus on the rural South, both of which lead him to novel interpretations and a few less-than-convincing critiques of existing literature. The result is a work that will be valuable for graduate and undergraduate courses in American, southern, and African American history but that does little to push scholarship in new directions.

Hahn's most important contribution, and one that makes the book invaluable for teaching the history of emancipation, lies in his rooting the history of