2019

Review of Extraordinary Racial Politics by Fred Lee

Robert L. Tsai

those who want to learn what a disabled perspective has to offer. In addition, this volume is an important acknowledgment from Oxford University Press of the achievements of a field that has been unjustly marginalized within the historical discipline.

The book is organized into five sections, four of which represent the topics disability historians have studied the most: work, institutions, representations, and movements and identities. Many of the essays show how a disabled perspective not only has shed light on an understudied topic and group of people but also has challenged established arguments coming from other historical subfields. For example, Michael Rembis's excellent essay on the history and historiography of eugenics shows how a disability perspective changes the way we define the scope of eugenics. Rather than the traditional narrative of eugenics being discredited by its use by the Nazis and then dying out over the next few decades, a disabled perspective has revealed how the "new eugenics" of selective abortion is alive and well today and is rooted in the same values and goals that characterized eugenics a century ago. Rembis's discussion of eugenics also demonstrates how disability history alters and adds to our understanding of the history of race.

For those unfamiliar with the field, *The Oxford Handbook of Disability History* will provoke the question of why such a vibrant and important endeavor remains marginalized within the discipline. Most historians who focus on race, gender, and sexuality, and who claim to embrace intersectionality, still ignore disability even as other humanities and social science fields embrace disability as a legitimate and important field of inquiry. While other disciplines have worked to institutionalize disability studies, historians have stubbornly refused to embrace it and have yet to advertise a single job specifically for a disability historian, even as the increasingly visible presence of disabled students on campuses could justify such a hire on a practical basis alone. This volume is a testament to what the mainstream of the discipline has been missing and why it needs to start paying attention to the significant role disability plays in American history. In this context of marginalization, it means a lot when Oxford University Press offers this kind of recognition to the body of work disability historians have created. If this publication marks a turning point toward a new acceptance of disability among historians, that will be the most significant achievement *The Oxford Handbook of Disability History* will have made.

Jeffrey A. Brune
Gallaudet University
Washington, D.C.

doi: 10.1093/jahist/jaz355

Extraordinary Racial Politics: Four Events in the Informal Constitution of the United States. By Fred Lee. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018. x, 229 pp. Paper, $27.95.)

The goal of Fred Lee in *Extraordinary Racial Politics* is to explicate a recurring form of political activity that is distinct from either revolutionary politics that convulse the entire polity or normal politics that yield formal laws and institutions. Between these phenomena, he describes a political experience that can be "unusual, episodic, intensive, decisive, and transformative" yet leaves its mark on a polity (p. 2). Lee is less concerned with the laws on the books than he is with an informal set of potent racial formations that are both sticky and generative: sometimes they are partly codified (as with legal segregation), at other times they are generally unseen but fill gaps in our formal understandings of the law (say, in treaties with native populations and policies demanding their removal), and sometimes they supplant them entirely over time (as with latent notions of citizenship).

Historians will not find any gems mined from freshly discovered archives, but they may be intrigued by the author's theoretical tools, which can be used to inform a story that is well told. Lee productively synthesizes work from political theory, sociology, and critical race studies. His fresh approach is sociological in that he follows Michael Omi and Howard Winant, who are concerned with racial ideologies and social structures. His theory is overtly political in that he strives to update and blend the insights of Hannah Arendt and Carl Schmitt on the sovereign's resort to exceptional power. And it is critical in that it incorporates the

deconstructive orientation of such commentators on race matters as Derrick Bell, Michelle Alexander, and Ian Haney López.

It is uncertain what Lee means when he criticizes the civil rights legacy for failing to "institutionalize local participation in the constitution" since his approach takes as its touchstone that formalities are not the sum total of political power and that history shows that people have organized themselves in robust fashion time and time again, regardless of legal obstacles (p. 68). His criticism of multicultural politics as a "counter-counter-hegemonic response to racial power"—while well taken as a description of the straightjacket qualities of liberal responses to radical movements—still leaves one wondering what room exists for transformative progressive politics at this historical moment (p. 182).

Nevertheless, Lee's application of his theory to past events yields several interesting insights. America's founding, he argues, integrated enslaved people (man's "natural enemy") economically with whites in an economic sense, even as the original Constitution permitted the continued usage of the friend-enemy distinction along social and political dimensions. The appropriation of native lands, which exemplified both "'integregationist' and 'segregationist' impulses," constituted a new racial order based tenuously on the liberal language of consent, paternalism, and productivity (p. 94).

Standout sections include chapter 2, which reads America's founding and subsequent struggle over slavery as exemplifying a sophisticated play on the friend-enemy distinction; chapter 3, which revisits the relocation of native populations to explore the interplay of exceptional spatial zones and extraordinary norms; and chapter 4, which analyzes how student-release and worker-release programs from Japanese American internment camps "spatially and racially reordered the United States" (p. 132).

Robert L. Tsai
American University Washington College of Law
Washington, D.C.

doi: 10.1093/jahist/jaz356

Arkansas Women: Their Lives and Times. Ed. by Cherisse Jones-Branch and Gary T. Edwards. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018. xii, 320 pp. Cloth, $89.95. Paper, $34.95.)

Arkansas Women is the most recent addition and represents the eleventh state featured in the remarkable University of Georgia Press series Southern Women: Their Lives and Times. It is extensive in scope, featuring fourteen chapters that include Native American and European women in frontier Arkansas, slave and slaveholding women, Civil War survivors, a Socialist activist, a U.S. senator, multiple civic leaders and artists, and civil rights activists. Among the chapter authors are Michael B. Dougan, Gary T. Edwards, Dianna Owens Fraley, Sarah Wilkerson Freeman, Rebecca A. Howard, Elizabeth Jacoway, Kelly Houston Jones, John A. Kirk, Marianne Leung, Loretta N. McGregor, Michael Pierce, Debra A. Reid, Rachel Reynolds, Yulonda Eadie Sano, and Sonia Toudji. Cherisse Jones-Branch and Edwards, as editors, provide the introduction.

Arkansas frontier history cannot be complete without women's narratives. The history of Caddo, Quapaw, and Osage women may be found in Spanish and French settlers' accounts. Native women's roles as cultivators and progenitors suggest a nurturing contrast to the regular warring between male European and Native American cultures. Still, among the Quapaw Indians, women's lives were full of work: from tilling the soil to dragging home the kill and dressing the skins. They "did all the work except hunting" (p. 13). Among European settlers, women were seen primarily as bearers of children since colonial life depended on populated settlements. In 1720, slave women were first introduced to Arkansas, and by 1860, they constituted nearly 45 percent slaves in the state (50,000 of 111,000). Their economic contributions were considerable. One slave, Lithia, picked 6,752 pounds of cotton in one month. Slaveholding women labored as well. Amanda Trulock lost a child and her husband but she continued management of the plantation before, during, and after the Civil War.

The late nineteenth and twentieth centuries fostered some of the most progressive women in the state's history. In 1916 Mary L. Ray