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Main content

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BRYANT SIMON, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. Pp.xvi + 345; illus.; maps; tables: appendix; bibliography. H/back ISBN 0 8078 2401 1, [pounds]37.95; p/back ISBN 0 8078 4704 6, [pounds]14.95).

Just as Britain has, in scholarship and folklore, a vivid imagination concerning regional working classes ('Red' Clydeside, Lancashire respectability, the sweated East End), so too does the United States, with Lowell's articulate mill 'Girls' or Pittsburgh and Detroit's dour, then militant, steel and auto workers. In the South, classic images of textile 'hands' interlace ties to the land and an effusive Protestantism with a virulent racism centred on white supremacy, which together with government and employer hostility curbed unionising efforts. Bryant Simon's fascinating analysis of business, politics, race and class in industrialising South Carolina reconfigures this standard vision, at least for a portion of the Great Depression decade. In the years surrounding former 'mill boy' Olin Johnston's governorship (1934-38), Simon argues,...

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These millhands' politics reflected their public and private thoughts about whiteness and blackness, war and the New Deal, democracy and justice, gender and sexuality, class relations and consumption. Ultimately, the people depicted here are neither romanticized nor dismissed as the stereotypically racist and uneducated "rednecks" found in many accounts of southern politics. The New Politics of Race, 1938-1948 Conclusion Appendix Notes Bibliography Index Illustrations A mill house in Graniteville in the mid-1930s An overview of a mill village in Newberry, ca. 1910 "The mill" in Graniteville, 1935 A lynching in the South Carolina upcountry before millhands, 1910-1948 / Bryant Simon. p. cm. Includes bibliographical references and index. The political participation of South Carolina workers their multilayered political in-ness challenges narrow conceptions of the meaning of politics. Politics, to some, is the study of politicians. To

others, politics begins and ends at the polling station, and political history entails careful examination of electoral behavior and coalitions. As revealing as these aspects of politics are, the actions of elites and voting returns are not the whole of politics, at least not as practiced by South Carolina workers. For these people, politics also involved the implementation and consequences of policy A fabric of defeat: The politics of South Carolina millhands, 1910–1948. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 67Google Scholar. 9. Burnside, R. D. (1964). Racism in the administrations of Governor Cole Blease. The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association, 50.Google Scholar. 11. Blocker, J. S. Jr. It is likely Tillman was describing the people of South Carolina as being the people of Bashan, with Blease being their Og. Article reference: Tillman and Blease. (August 30, 1914).