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C. Vann Woodward: Reinterpretation of Traditional Southern Historiographical Arguments

Cover Page Footnote

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C. Vann Woodward:

Reinterpretation of Traditional Southern Historiographical Arguments

The writings of historian C. Vann Woodward (1908-1999) challenged the widely-held misconceptions regarding Southern civil rights issues that developed after the American Civil War Reconstruction period. During the 1930s through the 1960s, Woodward reexamined the assumption that Southern history was free of class and racial conflict between the Reconstruction and World War I (1877-1913). The intent of the customary rendition of Southern history was to overcome racism in contemporary society. As a white Southerner and an ardent supporter of Martin Luther King, Jr., Woodward argued that segregation did not develop as result of slavery but was driven by white supremacy political and social agendas. King referred to Woodward's book *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, as the "historical bible of the Civil Rights Movement." This paper will demonstrate that Woodward's revolutionary historical interpretations significantly influenced Southern history ideology with respect to racial relations. Not only did Woodward illuminate misconceptions, misunderstandings and misinterpretations, he habitually highlighted possible logical solutions to the social issues that may have eased future racial maladies. To begin, this paper will outline the academic life of Woodward. It will then offer a comparison of his analysis of the South since Reconstruction as compared to more traditionalist Southern historians. To conclude, the article will offer a brief overview of other historians' opinions of Woodward's works, demonstrating his importance to Southern historiography.

C. Vann Woodward was born in Vanndale, Arkansas on November 13, 1908 to Hugh and Bess Woodward. His father was an educator and school superintendent in Morrilton, Arkansas, where Woodward spent his childhood and initiated his lifelong love of academics. Woodward, like many white Southerners (including the author of this paper) was a descendant of Southern

slave owners. His uncle, Comer Woodward, was a Methodist minister and a sociologist who was an adamant anti-racist, who passionately opposed segregation and the Ku Klux Klan, despite being a descendant of Southern slave owners. Comer introduced Woodward the younger to Southern social scientists Rupert B. Vance and Howard W. Odum, both of whom became role models for young Woodward.¹ During this time, Vance and Odum headed the most influential academic empires in the South, which included Henderson Brown College, Emory University and Chapel Hill, the “intellectual crossroads of the South.”²

In 1926 Woodward began at Henderson-Brown College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas then transferred to Emory University in Atlanta, where he received a bachelor’s degree in philosophy in 1930. While at Emory he found a circle of like-minded Southern liberals, including fellow future Pulitzer Prize winner in history David Morris Potter, and a group of young African Americans who were also strong proponents of racial equality and civil rights. Woodward became a professor of English Composition at the Georgia Institute of Technology. In 1933 he completed his Master’s degree in political science at Columbia University, where he befriended Langston Hughes and W.E.B. Du Bois, both of whom had a great influence on his future Southern historical endeavors.²

Coming of age in the 1930s Southern Progressive arena, Woodward decided to follow the career path of the historian rather than a social scientist like his Uncle Comer. In 1934 he received a grant for graduate studies at the University of North Carolina in American history. There he met Southern Progressives Robert Penn Warren and Howard K. Beale, who nurtured his views on racial and social issues, which prompted him to write his Ph.D. dissertation in 1937 titled *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel*. Southern Progressives argued that racism was a manifestation of legislated segregation and not a result of race relations during slavery.

Woodward's dissertation was published as a book and launched his career as a prominent Southern historian. During his time at Georgia Tech, he met African-American scholar J. Saunders Redding, who was influential in the defense of black communist Angelo Herndon when he was arrested for protesting against governmental cuts in welfare.³ While in Chapel Hill, Woodward gravitated toward intellectual civil rights activists such as Frank Graham, president of the University of North Carolina.⁴ C. Vann Woodward's personal experience growing up during the Great Depression afforded him intimate parallel experiences that greatly influenced his arguments about African American struggles during the period after the Civil War.

Upon receiving his Ph.D., Woodward taught at a number of schools, becoming a professor at the University of Florida (1937-1939), the University of Virginia (1939-1940), followed by a tenured position at Scripps College (1940-1943), after which he became a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to the Naval Office of Public Information in Washington, D.C. While there he wrote *The Battle of Leyte Gulf*, detailing this decisive battle in the Pacific campaign. He then joined the history faculty at John Hopkins University, where he was able to continue his pursuit for the "truths" of Southern history, and shortly thereafter published one of his greatest works, *Origins of the New South: 1877-1913* (1951), which earned him Columbia University's Bancroft Prize.⁵ *Origins* demonstrated his commitment to his principles and his courage to reevaluate interpretations of Southern history, especially in the area of politics, addressing the question of *who* was in control and *what* were they after, which showed a Charles A. Beard-type influence of seeking underlying political motivations.⁶ He continued his reinterpretation of Southern political history with his next publication, *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction*, based upon the argument that white Southern leaders put President Rutherford B. Hayes in office for economic gains.⁷

In 1954 Woodward was invited to the University of Virginia, where he delivered the yearly James W. Richard Lectures. This provided the venue for his famous Jim Crow lectures that were published in 1955 as *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. This provocative dialogue is where he first espoused that Southern racial segregation was a post-Civil War occurrence and not a traditional Southern viewpoint, which expectedly drew much criticism.⁸ He next wrote *The Age of Reinterpretation* (1960), which was published in *The American Historical Review*. In this article he argued that the traditional view of America's geographical isolation, which initially afforded free security and independence, was no longer applicable alongside current attitudes of optimism, superiority, and invincibility.⁹

Woodward continued his quest for analyzing present realities against past elucidations, prompting him to reexamine and reinterpret Reconstruction. He concluded that the underlying foundations of Southern racism could be found in plans for Reconstruction. This is the exact opposite of the traditional non-racial analysis that had been interjected into the American history books that argue the motives for reconstruction were altruistic and nonracist. Passionate to correct the misaligned history of the South, he continued to write essays such as *The Burden of Southern History* (1960).¹⁰ He then joined the faculty as Sterling Professor of History at Yale University in 1961, and was named Professor Emeritus. He remained at Yale until his retirement in 1977. During his time at Yale he demonstrated his commitment to the Civil Rights movement by marching with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma, Alabama in 1965. Alongside Richard Hofstadter, Woodward co-edited the multi-volume narrative history *Oxford History of the United States*, a project he worked upon until his death in December 1999.¹¹

After his retirement Woodward set upon the task of editing a diary kept by Mary Chesnut, a white, well-to-do Southerner from South Carolina, who questioned traditional values

concerning slavery during the Civil War. The resulting effort was the Pulitzer Prize winning *Mary Chesnut's Civil War* (1981). This book provided an invaluable first-hand account of the Confederates and their war efforts, as well as a look at the challenges faced by insightful women challenged by a repressed society.¹² Woodward published his final work, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History* (1986) which reflected upon his career as a historian.¹³ C. Vann Woodward died on December 17, 1999 at the age of ninety-one in his home in Hamden, Connecticut. He was found sitting in his library surrounded by his books.

Growing up in the South during both the Great Depression and the New Deal influenced Woodward's sympathies with the less fortunate and the Progressive thinkers. His writings reflected his awareness of contemporary perspectives while addressing pertinent issues from the past with a keen sense for reinterpretation of traditional historiography, questioning continuity over reality with a fortified commitment to principles. Historian of the South, Ulrich Bonnell Phillips—a predecessor of Woodward—wrote several books in the beginning of the twentieth century including *Plantation and Frontier* (1909), *American Negro Slavery* (1918), and *The Life and Labor in the Old South* (1929). Later in the century Woodward wrote *Origins in the New South, 1877-1913* (1951), *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* (1951), and *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955). Both Woodward and Phillips were distinguished scholars of Southern history whose politics and interpretations were written from the perspectives of their own times. Phillips provided justification for white supremacy in the past, present, and future. Through his writings, Woodward dispelled Phillips' supposition of white unity in a classless society by providing an argument for a past between the time of the Civil War and segregation, that was more integrated and racially equitable.¹⁴ His scholarship was grounded in thoroughly researched evidence, meticulously avoiding bias. He

addressed his growing concern for economic injustice during the 1930s and 1940s and deliberated on the arrogance and complacency in the 1950s and 1960s with a conscious effort to relate the past to the present. Woodward was a proven and respected scholar and activist with an impressive resume including presidencies in the Southern Historical Association (1952), the Organization of American Historians (1968-1969), and the American Historical Association (1969). He was also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Philosophical Society. During his term as President for the Southern Historical Association, he and his good friend, African American and historian John Hope Franklin, attempted to integrate the association's 1952 convention. During Franklin's professorship at Howard University, Woodward invited Franklin to a seminar at Johns Hopkins University to talk about Franklin's research on race relations that forged their relationship. Franklin was requested by the United States Commission on Civil Rights to write the history of the civil rights movement which he completed in June 1962. Woodward was one of three consultants requested by Franklin to review his manuscript. Woodward was pleased with Franklin's work, indicating only minor edits. Woodward, Franklin, and other historians also joined the speeches made during Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama on March 7, 1965.¹⁵ While at Yale, Woodward headed a committee defending free speech during the Black Panther protests. Unrelated to his other work, Woodward was also an advisor on the Watergate Committee, was instrumental in extending the Voting Rights Act, and defended the preservation of the Civil War battleground near Manassas, Virginia.¹⁶

C. Vann Woodward's *Reunion and Reaction* (1947) demonstrated his ability to reinterpret and revise existing misunderstandings of the events that led to the end of the Reconstruction Era in 1877, which he referred to as the "Compromise of 1877." He took a

radical detour from the traditional understanding of post-Reconstruction South by proposing economic greed as the motivation for the Southern so-called “Redeemers.” The Redeemers were previously viewed as the patriotic, noble, white, ruling class who desired to emulate the North’s industrial model in the best interest of antebellum culture.¹⁷ Woodward reinterpreted Redemption as decay and abandonment rather than restoration, and utilized irony to emphasize his somewhat unconventional position. “Woodward successfully challenged the assumption of historical continuity across the Civil War, as well as the notion that American history functions within a consensus that is free of class conflict.”¹⁸

Woodard’s most influential and most controversial work, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, has stood the test of time through its five editions and three revisions. Standing alongside Martin Luther King, Jr. at the end of one of the Selma to Montgomery marches, King, with his book in hand, referred to it as the bible of the Civil Rights movement. Americans have a general misunderstanding about segregation based on unreliable, misleading, and false information that has been perpetuated by the academic historical community since the end of the Civil War. Woodward’s work went a long way in dispelling these misunderstandings. “The twilight zone that lies between living memory and written history is one of the favorite breeding places of mythology.”¹⁹

When *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* was written, segregation was viewed as a recent concept developed from past ideas and attitudes. Woodward explained that segregation is yet another attempt by white society to keep “the Negro” in his appropriate subjugated status, a dynamic which has been perpetuated since the meeting of the two races. “...it is based upon the old proslavery argument and has remote roots in the slavery period.”²⁰ When Federal troops withdrew from the South in 1877, the status of the African American was developing under

political and economic pressures which were not to their advantage. The inception of Jim Crow laws that appeared one to two decades after the Redemption period verified the inferior status of the African American and replaced the less harsh black codes of the early South. Woodward illuminated the misconception that segregation had always been normal in Southern racial relations before the Reconstruction period when, in fact, segregation was not necessary under slavery. He refers to segregation, Jim Crowism, and disfranchisement as the “new order.”²¹ It is interesting to note that it was more than a decade after Redemption that Jim Crow laws were official on the law books in any Southern state, and yet another decade passed before the laws were adopted in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. In 1878, Northern journalist and well-known abolitionist, Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson went to the South to investigate Northern suspicions of Southern mistreatment of African Americans and found out they were being well treated and Northern suspicions were ungrounded. Others, such as Parliament member Sir George Campbell and Black activist newspaper journalist T. McCants Stewart from Boston (native of South Carolina), were both pleasantly surprised with the equality displayed between the Blacks and Whites, especially in the public facilities. Stewart felt he was treated with more dignity in the South than the North and went on to say “I think whites in the South are really less afraid to have contact with colored people than the whites in the North.”²² Woodward included the following passage from Stewart to verify without question that the state of racial relations in the South was contrary to the general consensus, again demonstrating the need for reinterpretation. In April 1885, Stewart declared “Indeed, the Palmetto State [South Carolina] leads the South in some things. May she go on advancing in liberal practices and prospering throughout her borders, and may she be like leaven to the South; like a star unto ‘The Land of Flowers,’ leading our blessed section on and on into the way of liberty, justice, truth, and

righteousness.”²³ This shows significant conflicting conceptions of race relations described by previous historical narratives.

The 1880s was a turbulent decade characterized by racial conflict and violence, including a record number of lynchings. Southern segregationist attitudes were emerging dominant. Conservative philosophy, Southern radicals, and the liberal philosophy of race relations all failed in their attempts to reject extreme racism. The conservatives found themselves centered between the “Negrophile” on the left and “Negrophobe” on the right, while attempting to espouse White superiority without African American degradation and humiliation and maintaining distinctions of class over distinctions of race.²⁴ The leftist feigned friendship for selfish political and personal reasons. The Negrophobes of the Southern right wanted an all-white rule that stripped African Americans of all human rights and dignity.²⁵ The Populists were another alternative to extreme racism. They tended to be less patronizing and tried to give the African American a sense of belonging without being paternalistic. Their leader, Tom Watson, stated their credo, “Gratitude may fail; so may sympathy, and friendship, and generosity, and patriotism, but, in the long run, self-interest always controls. Let it once appear plainly that it is to the interest of a colored man to vote with the white man and he will do it ...”²⁶ The Populists wanted extreme equality for the African Americans. “Woodward argued that populism was stronger and more radical in the South than in the West and that Southern Populists made a sincere, though doomed, effort to effect a political alliance with Blacks on the basis of economic self-interest.”²⁷

Woodward took the opportunity to reveal his purpose in writing *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* to indicate that race relations have not always been the same, adding the realization that at a time when slavery and reconstruction were still fresh, racial politics were not as harsh as

they would become in the future. He stated, “The policies of proscription, segregation, and disfranchisement that are often described as the immutable ‘folkways’ of the South, impervious alike to legislative reform and armed intervention, are of a more recent origin. The effort to justify them as a consequence of Reconstruction and a necessity of the times is embarrassed by the fact that they did not originate in those times. And the belief that they are immutable and unchangeable is not supported by history.”²⁸

By the late 1800s all the states had capitulated to incorporating the Jim Crow laws. The forces of Northern liberalism, Southern conservatism, and Southern radicalism were no longer effective in fighting extreme racism. Several United States Supreme Court decisions fueled extreme racism between 1873 and 1898, one of which utilized the Fourteenth amendment for the restraint of states, not individuals, from acts of racial discrimination and segregation. White superiority doctrines were being emphasized and the separate but equal rule was initiated.²⁹

During the agrarian depression of the 1880s and 1890s the conservatives were losing ground to the Populists, who sought every means possible to maintain control taking advantage of their dominance, using the African American vote to further white supremacy. The harmony that was once the Populist movement was slowly deteriorating toward bitterness, resentment, and apathy. This led to aggression towards African Americans, creating frustration, social tensions, and white supremacy without reservation, which resulted in complete disfranchisement. The implementation of poll taxes, literacy and property qualifications, ensured disfranchisement, white supremacy, Negrophobia, and race chauvinism propaganda.³⁰ Negative press exaggerated any African American crimes and helped fuel the fire of the growing hatred, which often led to blatant anarchy by mob rule. Progressivism and Negrophobia became the way of the new Southern era.³¹ By the turn of the century racism was spreading nationwide. The Republican

Conservatives in power were riddled with financial scandals, racial politics, and failing economic policies and alliances. Woodward noted blatant historical omissions regarding the Southern progressive movement, especially in discussing white solidarity as a way to keep “the Negro in his place.”³²

There was little intervention from Northern states which were also becoming increasingly racist and discriminating.³³ During the last half of 1919, approximately twenty-five race riots ignited all over America. John H. Franklin called it “the greatest period of interracial strife the nation had ever witnessed.” The First World War elevated hope for equality and respect. Many African Americans migrated to the North in search of employment and higher wages stimulated by war industrialization. Unfortunately, extreme hatred and violence led to mob rule resulting in all types of atrocities imaginable including seventy lynchings, some even involving attacks on veterans in uniform.³⁴ Jim Crow laws continued to expand after the Depression affecting segregated attendance in parks, recreation, and sports.³⁵

The Great Depression and the New Deal afforded new opportunities for African Americans, lessening interracial tensions. However, the 1940s harbored new tension created in the North, with African Americans demanding an end to segregation, for which the South began to yield, but with questionable motives. The establishment of organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, the National Negro Congress, and other civil rights groups helped the movement toward the second emancipation. The Democratic Party showed support, with both President Franklin Roosevelt and President Harry Truman securing civil rights and desegregation with the creation of federal committees such as the Fair Employment Practices, the Commission on Higher Education, and the committee on Civil Rights.³⁶ Desegregation of higher education, along with Truman’s

executive order desegregating the American armed forces, proved to be extremely successful and positive and improved race relations although equal employment was still an issue.³⁷

Woodward ended his discussion in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* by placing it in historical perspective, seeing hope for a promising future in spite of resistance and setbacks for the Second Reconstruction.³⁸ Throughout his chronicle he demonstrated that “segregation would have been impractical under slavery... and the circumstances that later gave rise to the segregation code did not exist as long as the Negro was enslaved.”³⁹ This book is still considered a path-breaking and innovative narrative for the understanding of the roots of segregation.

Woodard’s thesis was simple. “...first, that racial segregation in the South in the rigid and universal form it had taken did not appear with the end of slavery, and second, that before it appeared in this form there transpired an era of experiment and variety in race relations of the South in which segregation was not the invariable rule.”⁴⁰ In contrast, Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, another Southern historian teaching at Yale, wrote about the first part of the nineteenth century, justifying white supremacy for the entire nation in which Woodward responded with his *Origins of the New South* (1951) where he “...gave lie to the myth of white unity in a classless society, and then he gave to black and white southerners a useable past, a time between the Civil War and segregation when their forebears had lived in a more racially just—and more integrated—world.”⁴¹ In the early 1900s, William A. Dunning— a Columbia University historian— developed the first generation of academic historians to interpret Reconstruction known as the Dunning School. The Dunning School generated scholarly narratives written by Dunning’s grad students who were mostly Southerners who were biased toward Confederate ideologies. However, their writings reflected the understanding that slavery was the underlying cause of Southern rebellion and that racial differences influenced Reconstruction politics. Although the

Dunning School was known for their academic integrity, their narratives were fundamentally flawed due to racist attitudes which offered legitimate reasons for the disenfranchisement of Southern African Americans. Dunning influenced his students to believe “that the Civil War had been a tragic misunderstanding and that Reconstruction had been a scurrilous punishment foisted upon helpless white Southerners by arrogant Yankees who exploited African Americans by giving them citizenship rights.”⁴² These ideas dominated Southern history for several years.

Another contemporary scholar, Joel Williamson, argued with Woodward’s view that segregation is a recent phenomenon, acknowledging that formalized segregation was initiated in the late 1800s, insisting that there was separation following Emancipation even though most scholars agree that formalized segregation occurred in the 1890s.⁴³ T. Harry Williams declared that Woodward gave an incorrect description of Redeemer politics as one of race and tradition, denying issues of economics and self-interest.⁴⁴ Other scholars, such as David Potter, are more positive with their comments. “Woodward’s greatest significance to historical studies may lie in the fact that he has made himself the foremost practitioner of a concept of history which hold that the experience of the past can find its highest relevance in the guidance which it offers in living with the problems of the past.”⁴⁵ Woodward was unable to write history that did not relate to the present.

Woodward had a great respect for his many critics and welcomed their views crediting the longevity of *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* to their persistence. He was able to revise and edit due to the flaws they discovered which he graciously appreciated.⁴⁶ He wrote about controversial subjects for which he never apologized unless he was found to be in error, which would cause him to promptly edit and correct his work. He felt justified in giving an account that had been previously omitted or neglected even if it disrupted continuity. If a critic discovered an

error in his writings, Woodward perceived it as a common opportunity for the search for the absolute truth or a better explanation. He states the tasks of the historian is "...to explain how certain things and ideas came about, and what became of them. It is one of the most common tasks of the historian to fill in the antecedents, the environment, the spirit of the times, the prevailing ideas, prejudices, and patterns of thought surrounding the event he is recounting or explaining."⁴⁷ This tradition was exacerbated by strong emotions, prejudice and personal and social agendas. Woodward's motive was to enlighten with factual information about how "Jim Crowism" began and evolved into its current status.⁴⁸ As with all his writings, he apologized for any shortcomings and is open to critical analysis for the sake of the truth about such a sensitive and sometimes volatile subject.

Woodward's unyielding search and understanding for the absolute truth was grounded by his intellectual integrity and honesty. He was consciously aware of his audience, which leaned toward the academic but read well with a popular audience. He reminded them that his main focus was primarily to expose the true origins of segregation in the South, and he went to great lengths to avoid misinterpretation with precise use of irrefutable evidence. He encouraged the comparative study of emancipation. His academic and scholarly research led him to the discovery of diversity and discontinuity which fundamentally changed traditional views of an entire era.⁴⁹ He argued endorsing change over continuity and emphatically claimed white supremacy was not continuous since the past, but strongly emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, reinterpreting traditional Southern historiographical arguments stressing the fact that before a subject can have a historiography, it must be acknowledged to have a history and race relations had a history.⁵⁰ "He argued for the use of history to help understand the present and asserted the essential discontinuity of southern history."⁵¹ He rewrote history to include

neglected and omitted subjects, questioning the treatment of traditional consensus. Open to innovative historical techniques and aware of ever changing circumstances he continuously revised and edited to keep up with the present perspectives. “No one before or since has ever had better command of his resources or a keener sense of irony for the complexity of Southern history.”⁵²

ENDNOTES

¹ During his college years, Woodward associated with libertarians Rupert Vance, Howard Odum and Weill Alexander. Woodward was greatly influenced by these open-minded avant-garde intellectuals who advocated racial tolerance. Ann T. Keene, 2013 “C. Vann Woodward,” American National Biography Online, Retrieved from <http://www.anb.org/articles/14/14-01155-print.html>.

² C. Vann Woodward, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 18.

³ Angelo Herndon was a Communist Party organizer and civil rights activist. On July 11, 1932, while organizing block committees to crusade for the unemployed in Atlanta, Georgia, he was arrested for the possession of communist publications. Herndon was charged with sedition and found guilty by an all-white jury. The U.S. Supreme Court refused his case but eventually reversed the decision in April 1937. He continued communist and civil rights activism until 1944 when he left the Communist Party. Keene, “C. Vann Woodward, 1-2. See also “Angelo Hendon papers: 1932-1940,” The New York Public Library Archives & Manuscripts, Retrieved from <http://archives.nypl.org/scm/21900>.

⁴ Frank Porter Graham (1886-1972) was a Southern Liberal and ardent civil rights activist. He was graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and was president of the university from 1930-1932. Graham was a vehement supporter of Martin Luther King Jr. and was appointed by President Harry Truman to the President’s Committee on Civil Rights in 1946. He later served as a United Nations mediator (1951-1967). Sheldon Hackney, “C. Vann Woodward,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 145, no. 2 (2001): 235. See also Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Freedom Struggle, 1972, “Graham, Frank Porter (1886-1072),”, Retrieved from http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_graham_frank_porter_1886_1972/.

⁵ Keene, “C. Vann Woodward,” 2.

⁶ Charles A. Beard was a Progressive historian who focused on class and interest conflicts using comparisons. He compared agrarians and industrialists, personal and real property owners, debtors and creditors, labor and capital, and radicals and conservatives. Beard viewed the American Civil War as the final victory of Northern capitalism against the agrarian economy of the South in which slavery was not the main issue. He believed that the development of America was based on a transformation from an agrarian to an industrial society. Hackney, “Origins of the

New South in Retrospect,” *Journal of Southern History* 38, no. 2 (1972): 196. See also C. Vann Woodward, ed., *The Comparative Approach to American History*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), 10,146,188-9.

⁷ Keene, “C. Vann Woodward,” 2.

⁸ Although Woodward’s arguments were reinforced by impeccable academic scholarship, his critics argued that he generalized the political situation in the South and disagreed with his radical view that segregation was an economic-interest political campaign that did not develop from slavery. Keene, “C. Vann Woodward,” 2.

⁹ C. Vann Woodward, “The Age of Reinterpretation,” *The American Historical Review* LXVI, no. 1 (1960): 6.

¹⁰ *The Burden on Southern History* is an essential text on Southern history that is comprised of essays addressing the contrast between the Northern and Southern experiences during the time of Civil War to the Civil Rights movement. The book focuses on the Southern concerns including guarding against radical or unorthodox ideas, imposing censorship and freedom of expression, and support of an iniquitous convention. Woodward, *Thinking Back*, 111.

¹¹ Keene, “C. Vann Woodward,” 3.

¹² C. Vann Woodward, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1981), 29.

¹³ Keene, “C. Vann Woodward,” 3-4.

¹⁴ Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, “Which Southerners? Which Southern Historians?: A Century of Teaching Southern History at Yale,” *The Yale Review* 99 (2011): 56-7.

¹⁵ John Hope Franklin, *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 130, 197, 238-59.

¹⁶ Hackney, “C. Vann Woodward,” 234-5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁹ The Strange Career of Jim Crow was highly regarded by Martin Luther King Jr., because of Woodward’s thesis that the rigid racial segregation in the South during the 1950s did not emerge with the end of slavery but just before the end of the century and thereafter. Woodward wanted to reinforce the argument that race relations had a significant history that needed to be brought to light. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.), viii. See also Woodward, *Thinking Back*, 82-83.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xii.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

²² *Ibid.*, 21.

²³ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁴ Woodward argued that Southern conservatives of that time believed in a regulated society with class distinctions—each with its corresponding responsibilities and obligations with guaranteed status and protected rights. The conservatives believed although African Americans were inferior and subservient, yet did not support segregation and should be afforded civil rights that would encourage obedience and self-respect. *Ibid.*, 28-30.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁷ Sheldon Hackney, “Origins of the New South in Retrospect,” *Journal of Southern History* 38, no. 2 (1972): 195.

²⁸ Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 47.

²⁹ Ibid., 53-4.

³⁰ Although it had been over thirty years, propaganda that revived emotions from the Reconstruction period were impressed on a new generation of Southerners. Symbols, paraphernalia, and histories were rekindled including the Ku Klux Klan, the Knights of the White Camelia and Southern heroes who fought for the cause. Ibid., 69.

³¹ Ibid., 60-74.

³² Woodward claimed that African Americans were glaringly omitted from the Southern progressive record in the wake of obvious racism. Progressive reformers came to power during Woodrow Wilson's presidential campaign in the South using a strategy of disenfranchisement of African Americans along with white supremacy which fueled racism. Southern educator, Thomas P. Bailey alleges that progressivism was responsible for racial prohibition in the South and states, "disfranchisement of the negroes has been concomitant with the growth of political solidarity among the whites." Ibid., 75-6.

³³ The Northern states showed little opposition to Southern progressive racial policies. In 1914 Thomas P. Bailey published *Race Orthodoxy in the South* in which he questioned whether the South was being encouraged to disenfranchise the African Americans due to increasing social and economic discrimination in the North. Bailey observed a growing trend in the North as well as the far West, of the "adoption of the Southern Way as the American Way." This trend became increasingly visible immediately following World War I. Ibid., 99-100.

³⁴ During World War I, many African Americans migrated from the rural South to several cities in the North. After the war, servicemen returned to find they had been replaced in the workplace by Southern blacks which provoked racial tensions. At the same time, African American servicemen who had been fighting to preserve the rights and freedom of all Americans returned to face discrimination of the rights they had risked their lives to preserve. Growing racial anxiety and agitation grew on both sides that culminated into violence. The Ku Klux Klan were responsible for 147 lynchings between 1918-1919. In 1919, race riots were prevalent in Washington, D.C.; Knoxville, Tennessee; Longview, Texas; Phillips County, Arkansas; Omaha, Nebraska and Chicago, Illinois. Racial tensions in Chicago were extreme due to job competition. History.com, 1909, "Chicago Race Riot of 1919," Retrieved from <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/chicago-race-riot-of-1919>.

³⁵ Ibid., 100-3.

³⁶ Ibid., 105-17.

³⁷ Ibid., 137.

³⁸ Ibid., 174-9.

³⁹ Lori Schuyler, 2013 "Post Reconstruction through 1920," A Guide to Primary Resources for US History: Virginia Center for Digital History, Retrieved from <http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/solguide/VUS08/essay08c.html>.

⁴⁰ C. Vann Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 237.

⁴¹ Gilmore, "Which Southerners?," 57.

⁴² John David Smith and J. Vincent Lowery, eds., *The Dunning School: Historians, Race, and the Meaning of Reconstruction* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2013), ix-2.

⁴³ Schuyler, "Post Reconstruction through 1920," 2.

⁴⁴ Frank Otto Gatell and Allen Weinstein, eds., *American Themes: Essays in Historiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968) 319.

⁴⁵ Paul M. Gaston, 1983, "C. Vann Woodward, Southern Historian," *Virginian Quarterly Review*, Retrieved from <http://www.vqronline.org/articles/1983/spring/gaston-c-vann-woodward/>.

⁴⁶ C. Vann Woodward, *The Future of the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 295.

⁴⁷ Woodward, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History*, 6-7.

⁴⁸ Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, ix.

⁴⁹ David Thelen, "Perspectives: The Strange Career of Jim Crow," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 3 (1988): 841.

⁵⁰ Woodward, "Strange Career Critics: Long May They Persevere," 860.

⁵¹ Howard N. Rabinowitz, "More Than the Woodward Thesis: Assessing the Strange Career of Jim Crow," *The Journal of American History* 75, no.3 (1988): 843.

⁵²Paul M. Gaston, "C. Vann Woodward, Southern Historian," 2.