and mutual friends." One can see how the relationship between the Hammers and Thomas Merton grew through the years.

Given their common interests, it seems kismet brought these three individuals together. Had they not met, their lives would have been a little less full. Merton referred to their letters as "spiritual tennis" (95) and it appears that the three each looked forward to serving and received the next serve. Like long stretching fingers, the friendship of these three individuals spread out to include friends and acquaintances of each other. Many of their letters include notes of anticipating of upcoming visits ("at noon, as usual") as well as "thank you"s for enjoyed camaraderie. When they could, they shared picnics at the monastery, and Merton was sometimes able to visit the Hammers in their home. Carolyn and Father Louis continued to write to each other following Victor Hammer's death in 1967. In 1968 Carolyn received a Wester Union telegram noting the death of "Father Thomas Merton" in Thailand.

The subtitle of the book—For the Greater Glory of God—offers the essence of the Merton/Hammer relationship. *The Letters of Thomas Merton and Victor and Carolyn Hammer* offers not only insight into Merton's day-to-day life in the monastery and with friends, but also one can hear Thomas Merton in "conversation" with like-minded friends regarding issues important to him in the 1950s and 1960s.

BRENDA GAYDOSH
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Timothy Kelly, Margaret Power, and Michael Cary. *Hope in Hard Times: Norvelt and the Struggle for Community during the Great Depression* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016.) Pp. 262. Illustrations, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, $79.95; paper, $29.95.

Kristin M. Szylvian. *The Mutual Housing Experiment: New Deal Communities for the Urban Middle Class* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015). Pp. 276. Illustrations, photographs, notes, index. Cloth, $79.50; paper, $29.95.

Among the understudied aspects of the New Deal are economic cooperatives, which some proponents saw as a middle ground between capitalism and communism. Two new books help to redress this oversight. Both focus on aspects of Franklin Roosevelt's administration's cooperative housing policy,

and both use their case studies to demonstrate larger strengths and weaknesses of New Deal policy. Timothy Kelly, Margaret Power, and Michael Cary have produced an elegantly written and historiographically engaged study of the "subsistence homestead" community of Norvelt, in Pennsylvania's hard-hit bituminous coal country. Kristin Szylvian addresses a wider geographical area in her exhaustively researched survey of "mutual housing" originally geared toward the needs of defense industry workers in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Her book, too, takes the mid-Atlantic as a focal point, paying special attention to housing for shipbuilders in Camden, New Jersey. Both programs, and both books, resonate with significance for recent events, too.

Norvelt, named for Eleanor Roosevelt after a 1937 visit by the First Lady to the Westmoreland County community, originated in the 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act, which authorized the establishment of model subsistence homestead developments to combat the intertwined crises of unemployment, foreclosures, and evictions. The theory was that families on two- to four-acre plots could subsist on their own agricultural production and cooperative stores while these communities attracted industry, with the government providing the initial capital for land and housing. Kelly, Power, and Cary devote two chapters to prior conditions in the region, when the coal and coke companies exercised virtual dictatorships over their employees in the mines and in company "patch" housing. Thus, when New Deal officials—prodded by Lorena Hickok, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the American Friends Service Committee's Clarence Pickett—helped to construct homes with adequate sunlight, electricity, indoor plumbing, and community decision-making, readers can practically feel the liberating experience of life in Norvelt.

However, the authors demonstrate continued tensions between "individualism" and "community" in the newly constructed town, with residents, for example, opting more for individual rather than communal agriculture, and ambivalent about cooperative businesses and even health insurance. Nevertheless, its inhabitants developed a fierce loyalty to Norvelt, and all of the families who lived there in 1944 bought their homes two years later when the US government transferred ownership from the cooperative to individuals.

The housing projects Szylvian surveys were actually built in the early 1940s, under the auspices of the Mutual Ownership Defense Housing Division of the Federal Works Agency, as military orders skyrocketed and the inadequacy of housing around defense plants threatened to interfere with

production. The new Congress of Industrial Organizations played a key role in pressing for such noncommercial housing. Camden-based John Green, president of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers, took the lead, with the Auto Workers and Steel Workers following closely behind in Michigan, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. The low-density, clustered urban housing, some designed by such prominent modernists as Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, featured green space and some communal buildings. Aside from its amenities, advocates posited that cooperative housing would best suit war workers, as an abrupt end to production would likely force those with mortgages into foreclosure. Unions believed that government financing for workers' housing was entirely justified, given the lavish subsidies to businesses to construct or retrofit defense plants themselves. As in Norvelt, many residents remained for decades.

Neither Kelly et al., nor Szylvian shies away from problems and controversies associated with these programs. Not only did congressional conservatives and elements of the press denounce both programs as socialist and even totalitarian, and place major restrictions on financing, but even some New Deal administrators failed to fully embrace them. In Norvelt, Eleanor Roosevelt even had to overcome opposition by Interior Secretary Harold Ickes to ensure that all homes had indoor plumbing! Szylvian laments that FDR, while supportive of defense housing in late 1941, did not *order* certain projects to be built, and so bureaucratic obstacles prevented or delayed construction. But controversies also arose from within: complaints by Norvelt residents about wage rates in building their homes and about co-op rules, and charges of shoddy construction in the defense housing communities. The CIO-sponsored mutual housing even ran afoul of building trades unions, as these federally funded projects often used Works Progress Administration laborers.

Perhaps most important, the authors point to the racism that too often accompanied these progressive initiatives. Only one African American family was admitted to Norvelt during the 1930s, and the community was lily-white for much of its existence. Kelly et al sensitively explain that the "struggle for community" could result in exclusion as well as inclusion. Shipbuilding Union president Green favored integrated housing, but following government precedent most of these cooperatives remained "white only" for decades: "mutual housing," Szylvian notes, did not mean "fair housing" (138).

Both books highlight themes that deserve greater attention in treatments of the New Deal era. Szylvian points to the transnational nature of reforms,

from Green's formative experiences as a Socialist in his native Scotland during the volatile World War I years to a 1949 congressional fact-finding mission to northern Europe to view model co-ops. She details the support of modernist architects—many with European backgrounds—for new models of organizing urban space that bolstered the New Deal ethos. Her descriptions of the role of the Shipbuilding Union and the UAW remind us that CIO unions in the 1940s were far more than workplace institutions, but integral to politics and community organization. Kelly et al. point to the continued importance of the Social Gospel and of pacifists' focus on economic reform in the 1930s, as not only Pickett but Quakers David Day and Homer Morris were essential to Norvelt and its sister communities. *Hope in Hard Times* also reminds us that the agrarian ideal revived during the Depression, as immortalized by Gary Cooper in Frank Capra's *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936). Both books also address the increasingly popular theme of memory and public commemoration of New Deal programs and legacies.

Both books, moreover, are quite timely. Kelly et al. take aim at the historiographical backlash against the New Deal exemplified by Amity Shlaes's *The Forgotten Man* (2007); the authors bitingly note that such revisionism reached its height just as the Great Recession proved once again the folly of rugged individualism. They argue instead that Norvelt, which "has not only survived but thrived" for eight decades, "offers tangible proof that federal intervention, when combined with a receptive, eager, and hardworking population, can succeed" (2).

However, the authors also dissect the growing receptiveness of Norvelt residents, along with other whites in small-town western Pennsylvania, to the Republican Party, whose ideology and practice are at odds with the ethos that created Norvelt. Kelly et al. hypothesize that Norvelt residents today see their parents and grandparents who first settled there as part of the "deserving poor," in contrast to the undeserving poor (usually interpreted through racially tinted lenses) who supposedly utilize government services today. While over 85 percent of Norvelt voters chose FDR in 1940, 55 percent picked John McCain over Barack Obama in 2008. *Hope in Hard Times* appeared before the 2016 election, in which Donald Trump won two-to-one over Hillary Clinton in Westmoreland County, rendering the authors' efforts to explain the long-term shift in nonurban white votes even more important.

The Mutual Housing Experiment, which began as a dissertation three decades ago, asserts its relevance to the housing crisis that precipitated the 2008 Great Recession. The author sees cooperative housing, in the end,

as "a road not taken in federal housing policy" (7), given the onerous restrictions it faced from the outset. Postwar policy instead subsidized suburban sprawl, and this focus on individual mortgages left millions under water, financially, when the bubble burst. Increased openness to cooperative housing, Szylvian suggests, would not only smooth out boom-and-bust extremes in the housing market, but could have stabilized urban housing and reduced white flight from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Szylvian's level of detail may overwhelm all but the most dedicated readers, and her epilogue needed stronger proofreading, but her argument and exposition are sound. Nevertheless, one may question the choice of subtitles, as Szylvian shows that the defense housing cooperatives were more a product of World War II, with all of the compromises and contradictions that wartime mobilization entailed, than of the New Deal as such. Indeed, one of Szylvian's main contributions is her attention to what was, in essence, the dismantling during Truman's presidency of wartime social welfare.

Hope in Hard Times, which features an abundance of interviews with and other recollections by current and former residents of Norvelt, along with wonderful photographs and drawings, will appeal to a wider audience. Professors could assign it not only in Pennsylvania history classes but any recent US history course, as students will easily connect local experiences to national policy and will be encouraged to consider the legacy of federal social programs. The book is not without flaws. Aside from minor errors, such as multiple references to a nonexistent branch campus of the University of Pennsylvania, the authors' otherwise extensive research overlooked potential union sources, which might reveal another side of Norvelt's significance to the region in the late 1930s. They also missed the chance to contextualize this work in the still-limited historiography of economic cooperatives. More significantly, *Hope in Hard Times* merely glances toward the impact of World War II and the postwar boom on employment for Norvelt residents. Finally, their own evidence does not always sustain Kelly et al.'s explanation of voting trends in Norvelt—more residents voted Republican in 1960 than in 1968, for example (186–87).

These books on co-op housing in the 1930s and its aftermath will not fundamentally change our understanding of the New Deal. I suspect that all four authors would agree with historian David Kennedy's judgment in *Freedom from Fear* (1999) that despite "experimentation with government-built model communities," FDR essentially followed Herbert Hoover's lead in encouraging individual home ownership. Nevertheless, *Hope in Hard Times*

and *The Mutual Housing Experiment* demonstrate the achievements and the problems associated with cooperative policies that tested the limits of the New Deal and which remain embedded in the landscape of Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

ROBERT SHAFFER
Shippensburg University

Restricting Black Mobility as a Key Function of Racial Control in Post-Emancipation Societies

Lucy Maddox. *The Parker Sisters: A Border Kidnapping* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016). Pp. 256. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography. Cloth, $28.50.

Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor. *Colored Travelers: Mobility and the Fight for Citizenship before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016). Pp. 240. Illustrations, notes, bibliography. Cloth, $34.95.

Colson Whitehead. *The Underground Railroad* (New York: Doubleday, 2016). Pp. 320. Cloth $15.95; paper $15.16.

Reconstruction is still with us. Recent events such as the NAACP's travel advisory warning black Americans to be cautious in Missouri and the events that erupted in Charlottesville, Virginia, have clearly shown that the United States has yet to face reconstruction over 150 years after the Civil War outlawed race-based slavery." For historians, "Reconstruction" refers to the United States in the years following the Civil War. What if, however, the term "reconstruction" were to be unhooked from that specific time period and instead used to describe a society in flux after the end of slavery? It could then mean something less temporally specific but more thematically unified—the period of confusion and chaos that followed in the wake of American emancipation. It would go from a capital *R* time period to a lower-case *r* descriptor of promises of freedom yet to be fulfilled throughout the United States. Instead of focusing on both regions from 1866 to 1877, then, studies of reconstruction would start in the northern states in the early to mid-1800s as gradual emancipation slowly took hold and in the southern states after slavery abruptly ended in the wake of the Civil War.