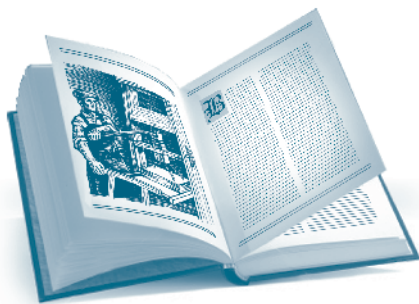


# BOOK REVIEWS



## **History of Andersonville Prison, Revised Edition**

By Ovid L. Futch with an introduction by Michael P. Gray

Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011

146 pp., \$19.95 paperback with index and illustrations

Reviewed by Tim Orr, assistant professor of history, Old Dominion University

squalor. Futch's book is a marvel for its brilliant simplicity of argument, its complexity of analysis, and its straightforwardness of opinion. Futch weighs-in on controversial issues: the poor organization of the camp, the inhuman treatment of the prisoners by the guards, the brutal depredations committed by the Raiders (and their eventual suppression), the haphazard regulation of sanitation measures, the lackluster medical care, and the farcical trial of prison commandant Captain Henry Wirz.

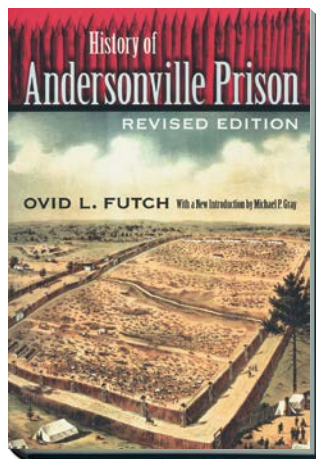
Still, Futch's book offers more than just a list of the sickening acts that occurred at Andersonville; it also gives a highly nuanced account of the atrocity, one that defined culpability in a discerning way. Futch makes it clear to readers that the dramatic death toll had little to do with Confederate cruelty, and Confederate authorities did not deliberately attempt to bring about the deaths of federal soldiers. However, Futch argues that this did not relieve Confederates of liability in the 12,900 prisoner deaths spaced across 14 agonizing months. Ultimately, "gross mismanagement" infested Confederate command at Andersonville, Futch claims, preventing Brigadier General John H. Winder (the camp commander) and Captain Wirz from providing the inmates with adequate sanitation, shelter, clothing, and medical care.

Futch admits that the number of deaths that came about due to the Confederacy's dwindling resources could never be easily differentiated from the numbers who died because of Winder's and Wirz's incompetence, but the evidence makes it all but certain that unconscionable negligence and lack of a proper system led to unnecessary suffering. The Confederate commanders wrongly believed they could handle the gargantuan task before them. In the end, for all the controversy, Confederacy authorities deserve to shoulder the blame. Futch concludes soberly, "Those

who revere the men who fought for southern independence should face the truth as did Eliza Frances Andrews, who wrote of Andersonville: 'it is horrible, and a blot on the fair name of our Confederacy.'"

Michael Gray's introduction offers an excellent historiographical survey, one likely to mirror Futch's book in terms of its longevity. Gray lauds Futch as the "Prison Micro-Monograph Pioneer." He also reminds readers that Futch's interpretation, which casts blame on the Confederacy, never received full recognition from the academy. Some critical reviewers did not appreciate Futch's casting of Wirz as a negligent administrator. "It was a sobering assessment," Gray concludes, "especially for Southern readers coming out of the Civil Rights era in the historic and vitriolic year of 1968."

In any event, if Futch's *History of Andersonville Prison* deserves another review, not much criticism can be found. Now in the 21st century, more research can certainly be done to unravel life inside this terrible camp, but it is doubtful that future scholarship can radically alter the significance of this dreadful moment of American inhumanity. ☼



Ovid L. Futch, a student of Civil War scholar Bell Wiley and a professor at Morehouse College, died suddenly in March 1967, but his dissertation, a finely crafted study of the prisoner of war camp at Andersonville, Georgia, lives on.

Futch's mentor pursued the publication of his student's dissertation, and in 1968, University Press of Florida introduced the first scholarly, single-volume analysis of Andersonville to the reading public. The Press reprinted it in 1999, and in 2011 it received its third iteration, a revised edition enhanced by a new introduction authored by Michael P. Gray.

Futch's *History of Andersonville Prison* stands out as one of the most readable of the several histories of this notorious prison camp. His chapters, arranged thematically, capture the powerful human drama that encircled the camp's 45,000 inmates, held tight on 25 acres of

## **"We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less": The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction**

By Hugh Davis

Cornell University Press, 2011

232 pp., \$45 hardcover

Reviewed by Samuel W. Black, director of African American Programs, Heinz History Center

When 145 delegates to the National Convention of Colored Men met in Syracuse, New York, in October 1864, a dual emotional state encompassed the room. Those present felt optimistic, emboldened by the Emancipation

## "We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less"

*The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction*



Hugh Davis

Proclamation and the enlistment of black troops into the Civil War, but also concern that Lincoln could lose as the Republican Party candidate for a second term. A victory for Democrat George McClellan would signal the upholding of the Dred Scott decision, and the revocation of the Emancipation Proclamation. The anxiety over McClellan's support of slavery made for urgent politicking among these conventioners.

This tenuous circumstance captures the context and spirit of Hugh Davis's *"We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less": The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction*. Davis sets the stage of his Reconstruction discussion by reviewing the previous works on the subject that relied almost exclusively on Reconstruction issues in the South. However, Davis points out that Reconstruction was planned and executed by Northern blacks well before the Civil War began, and the activism in areas of equal rights, education, voting rights, civil rights, and the ultimate Republican retreat with the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876 is presented in five well-researched and contextualized chapters.

In "Launching of the Equal Rights Movement," Davis recounts the 1864 meeting that began the National Equal Rights League, the forerunner of the modern NAACP. He reminds the reader of the debate about the structure of the new organization and the activist spirit carried on by former abolitionists as they fought against slavery and developed a political strategy to gain the ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments in the northern states. Davis clearly lets the reader know and understand that African Americans were not spectators


to the movement to ratify the rights to citizenship and voting privileges for African American men. He introduces the fragile relationship between African Americans and the Republican Party. He notes that not all Republican office holders championed

the 14th and 15th Amendments, fearing that their constituents' backlash would signal an end to their political careers, which they were not willing to risk for African Americans.

Democrats in the North continued to be a thorn in the side of African Americans. Chapter three discusses the activism around public education and the private and public attempts to obtain equality for the black masses. At each turn in northern states, Democratic policy makers would strengthen their support for exclusionary or segregated and sub-standard public education for African Americans. In chapter four Davis recalls the efforts to ratify the 15th Amendment and the attack against Black Codes in the North. Not until the election of African American state assemblymen did a threat to the Black Codes arise. Likewise the debate around the 15th Amendment strategized the position of those who were once African American allies: white women such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton broke with the Republican Party over the petition for black male suffrage and not white female suffrage. Davis argues that this issue revealed the racism harbored by these women and their allies in the white women's movement. They even turned on their longtime ally Frederick Douglass.

Davis's work demonstrates that African Americans, even after the Civil War, had a fragile free existence. American political whims were always a threat to that freedom.

African American activists had to challenge Lincoln's reconstruction plan to send them to the Caribbean; Andrew Johnson's disrespect and acquiescence to Southern sympathies and the overall reality that whether Republican or Democrat, Northerner or Southerner, in many cases of equality whiteness was the determining factor.

Davis's study is a top-down look at the activism of Africans Americans during the Reconstruction period. His study often overlooks the argument he mentions by Henry Highland Garnett that the Equal Rights League was devising an organization that financially restricted poorer blacks. Davis's study to a degree follows that pattern. However the overall message is clear: *We Will be Satisfied With Nothing Less* is a study of determination for equality. 

## Glasshouses & Glass Manufacturers of the Pittsburgh Region, 1795-1910

By Jay W. Hawkins

New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2009

584 pp., softcover \$49.95; hardcover \$59.00

Reviewed by Royce E. Walters, Department of History, retired, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Jay Hawkins' monumental study covers all of southwest Pennsylvania, extending from the West Virginia-Ohio borders north to Indiana County. Hawkins lists all the glass works that he could locate, including those manufacturing outside this area but having offices in Pittsburgh. He lists over 600 firms, cross-referenced when the firm's name changed. Organized alphabetically, listings provide a thumbnail sketch of each firm, followed by advertisements, contemporary published references, marks when known, patterns made, and the type of glass produced. Hawkins also includes photographs of marks, advertisements, site maps, ephemera, and parts of catalogues.