from within his adopted family added to the miseries of regional depression and unemployment. Following Hattie’s death (for which they sometimes blamed Gonzales), many of the Elliotts sought to cut him off from his children, two of whom they even rechristened with less Cuban names. Though possessed of a Micawberish perennial optimism, Gonzales had an uncanny knack for falling victim to historical misfortunes, moving to Cuba just as the Ten Years’ War (1868–1878) broke out, and obtaining a job on Wall Street only to lose it in the Panic of 1873.

The book’s shortcomings must also be noted. First, it is often difficult to grasp the general setting and background for events that are recited in profuse detail. The comings and goings of annexationist conspirators are recorded painstakingly, but we learn little of the changing views and motivations of the participants in these gatherings. This volume also records what must be all of Gonzales’s recommendations for placement, upgrading, or abandonment of every Confederate artillery piece in the Charleston area during the Civil War, but scant indication is provided of the tactical or strategic criteria underlying these decisions.

Second, readers may well differ with de la Cova’s overall assessment of Gonzales’s motives, which bear considerably on the colonel’s historical significance. The author approvingly quotes Jefferson Davis’s assessment of Gonzales (p. xvi) as “a soldier under two flags but one cause; that of community independence.” Yet one might observe with equal justification that in both Cuba and South Carolina, Gonzales served the cause of slaveholding, although he did not personally own slaves. Separation from Spain (which was feared to be planning to liberalize or abolish slavery in Cuba) was, for many annexationists, simply a means to an end. Both Cuban annexation and Confederate secession failed. Although true Cuban independence was ultimately achieved, Ambrosio Gonzales’s commitment to that cause during the 1840s and 1850s is, at the least, quite debatable.

Christopher Mitchell
New York University


Gettysburg exerts a powerful hold on the American imagination. Widely perceived to be the moment when Confederate fortunes turned inexorably toward Appomattox, the battle offers a number of famous and intensely dramatic moments, among them the defense of Little Round Top by Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and the Twentieth Maine Infantry and the massive rebel assault known as Pickett’s Charge. A scene from Michael Shaara’s novel The Killer Angels (1974), which the film Gettysburg (1993) translated to the screen, conveys the commonly accepted centrality of the battle. As the Army of the Potomac marches toward Gettysburg, Colonel Chamberlain leaves no doubt about the impending action: “I think if we lose this fight the war will be over.”

Thomas A. Desjardin’s book should be required reading for anyone captivated by the often heavily romanticized story of the battle. “American mythology has established Gettysburg as the greatest, biggest, most important, most heroic, most savage, bloodiest battle the nation ever fought,” observes Desjardin. “Without surviving Gettysburg, legend has it, the United States would not have survived, and with its death would have fallen the idea of global democracy” (pp. 6–7). Desjardin resists the notion that a “true” narrative of Gettysburg can somehow be recovered. Instead, he efficiently examines some ways in which the battle has become encrusted with myth and exaggeration. He explores how Union veterans (most notably Chamberlain), Shaara, and filmmakers Ken Burns and Ronald F. Maxwell shaped public understanding of the fighting on Little Round Top; how Lost Cause writers such as Jubal A. Early helped establish the framework within which Gettysburg would be studied; and how John B. Bachelder, who worked tirelessly to establish and then protect his reputation as the battle’s preeminent authority, sought to implant in the public mind that Gettysburg was the war’s great turning point—a belief Desjardin places at the core of Gettysburg mythology. Bachelder highlighted the climax of Pickett’s Charge, which functioned as a dramatic resolution to three days of savage combat. “The thought of naming the copse of trees the ‘High Water Mark of the Rebellion,’” he noted proudly, “and the idea of perpetuating its memory by a monument, was mine” (p. 96). “Copse” almost never appears in non-Gettysburg contexts, remarks Desjardin; Bachelder shrewdly chose a seldom-used word people would associate directly with Gettysburg.

Gettysburg’s vast collection of monuments, which dominate the modern battlefield, provides much grist for Desjardin’s interpretive mill. Although visitors often assume that regimental monuments mark a unit’s key position, Desjardin shows how the politics of memory could intervene in determining a location. For example, members of the Seventy-second Pennsylvania Infantry, which held a supporting position during Pickett’s Charge on July 3, successfully sued to have their monument placed along the main Union line on Cemetery Ridge. Similarly, when it came time to mark the spot at which Lewis A. Armistead fell wounded while leading a Confederate brigade in Pickett’s Charge, veterans from Virginia and Pennsylvania supported its placement too far inside Union lines, a decision calculated to pay equal tribute to the valor of southern infantrymen who breached the line and to northern reinforcements who beat back an attack that had come so close to surrendering the nation.

A chapter titled “Where’s Buster Kilrain Buried?” illuminates how modern media influence understanding of the battle. Desjardin took the title from visitors who seek the grave of a fictional character in Shaara’s novel. Those impressed by Shaara’s positive treatment

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of Confederate corps commander James Longstreet can visit the equestrian statue, dedicated in July 1998, that more closely resembles actor Tom Berenger, who played Longstreet in the film Gettysburg, than the real general (Desjardin could have mentioned as well the Gettysburg paintings of Mort Künstler, whose renderings of various historical actors resemble their cinematic counterparts). Readers familiar with the work of historians such as Carol Reardon, Richard A. Sauer, and James P. Weeks will find few surprises in this book. Some scholars will wish that Desjardin had done more with the reconciliation movement’s use of Gettysburg, high points of which came when Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke at the fiftieth and seventy-fifth anniversaries respectively. Others will note that the editorial process could have been more careful. But most readers drawn to the Civil War will profit from Desjardin’s admonition that “Gettysburg has become as much a laboratory as it is a national historic landmark. Here one can study the ways in which people learn about the past and how they pass it along to others in an endless chain that is more often flawed than accurate” (p. 206).

GARY W. GALLAGHER
University of Virginia


W. Scott Poole has given us a detailed and careful account of Reconstruction and its aftermath in South Carolina. Not surprisingly, Reconstruction was a turgid and deeply controversial period, an extension of the Civil War itself. Poole’s book concentrates on the state’s upcountry, but this reviewer found that the attitudes and experiences of the upcountry people did not seem to be unique among South Carolina’s postwar population.

At the bottom of things during the period lay a virulent racism and the state’s bitter sense of defeat by the nefarious Yankees. The southern myth of the Lost Cause was widespread and vigorous, masking the reality of the war and its end in a cloud of misrepresentation and defense of slavery and Confederate conduct. According to Poole, “Southern conservatives flourished in South Carolina through the medium of the Lost Cause, an aesthetic representation of memory and yearning. Confederate memory provided southerners with an ideology of historical declension, the fact of Confederate loss meant the triumph of materialism, irreligion and social anarchy” (p. 17). Sternly rejecting modernity, South Carolinians “sought to create the imagined glories of the past...” The state’s political leadership was committed to such regressive activities as Black Codes and the reinstatement of slavery’s social relations. Racial violence developed and “attempts to display Confederate manhhood were marked by rituals of violence and consumption” (p. 26). The term “consumption” was a polite term for liquor drinking.

Featured characters in this account of Reconstruction include William King Easley, Maxey Gregg, and, most prominently, Wade Hampton—all celebrated Confederate military veterans. Evangelical Protestantism dominated Confederate religious life. Poole finds that the centrality of the doctrine of human depravity dovetailed nicely with the theories of the Lost Cause and the themes associated with Confederate memorializing.

At all times, conflict between the races appeared, frequently involving labor contract disputes and, after 1868, Lost Cause observances as a result of the 1867 Act of Reconstruction. The Ku Klux Klan brought on a further era of racial and sexual violence because of conflict with the Union Leagues. Violence typically affected political activity. The Democratic rifle clubs also threatened the freedom of the ballot.

In 1876, Hampton was reelected governor by the votes of white and black constituents, but the political situation was deteriorating. The Southern Farmers’ Alliance was directed toward the masses of plain voters politically in conflict with the old white bourbon classes of the state. Pitchfork Ben Tillman appeared on the political scene in reaction to gentility. He was an advocate of violence and provoked intense anti-black attitudes. The United Confederate Veterans, in a popular publication of the same name, preached sectional reconciliation late in the century, and that spirit found root in South Carolina.

Americans today have witnessed the rise of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and black political power. In South Carolina, the NAACP has recently been victorious in arguing against the displaying of the Confederate battle flag, at least on publicly supported premises. Poole’s book provides a context for such contemporary South Carolina controversies.

ALAN T. NOLAN
Indiana Historical Society


David Quigley’s contention in this compact volume is that during the Reconstruction era New York City played a central role in a “second founding” of American democracy that was as fundamental as the first founding of 1787, thus contributing to the emergence of a new political order and the beginning of modern American politics.

Political crosscurrents made the years from 1865 to 1877 a contentious period in New York City’s history. Initially, interventionist-minded Republicans wanted to create an interracial democracy by giving the vote to black males. Rebuffed at the state level in 1867 by a