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Teresa S. Moyer, Paul A. Shackel. *The Making of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park: A Devil, Two Rivers, and a Dream.* Lanham: Altamira Press, 2007. xxi + 235 pp. $80.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7591-1065-6; $27.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-7591-1066-3.

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The Creation of Harpers Ferry

Not long ago I visited Harpers Ferry with some acquaintances. On the drive there, one person asked me what I wrote about, and, for some reason, instead of my stock response of "legal history," I said "the law of monuments." That response elicited something like a chuckle and an insightful (if skeptical) follow-up question: "how often does that come up?" Well, as we found out later that afternoon while visiting Harpers Ferry, it comes up with some frequency and especially in the places where we try to reconcile our nation's past struggles with violence and our future. Teresa S. Moyer and Paul A. Shackel's comprehensive and important book, *The Making of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park*, uses Harpers Ferry to demonstrate the interactions among considerations of politics, law, and morality that are involved in the preservation of our nation's history.

The book resembles a biography, in this case of a historic site rather than a person. It begins with the early eighteenth century when Peter Stevens acquired a patent for a ferry at the confluence of the Susquehanna and Potomac rivers, which was soon sold to Robert Harper, who operated the ferry and gave his name to the site. It covers the antebellum era when it was important as a manufacturing and railroad center; John Brown's raid that made it famous; and the Civil War when the site changed hands between U.S. and Confederate control several times. The book includes a discussion of the era of Reconstruction when an African American school, Storer College, was established on the hill above Harpers Ferry. The authors also examine the early twentieth century when African Americans and Confederate memorial groups, like the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), drew rather different interpretations of the site. Finally, the book turns to the 1940s when–amid a growing interest in our nation's history–the federal government took an increased interest in the site and helped create a national park; and to today when telecommunications companies want to put up cell phone towers, even as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the UDC continue to disagree about how the site should be presented to the public. In short, Moyer and Shackel are dealing with a lot of variables, across several hundred years of history. The book pays important dividends to readers, for it is a lovingly told story, or really a set of stories. Each story (from the raid to the post-Civil War story of Brown's "fort" and to the campaign for preservation) illustrates conflicting ideas behind the attempt to preserve.

The book is useful because it tells several neglected stories. For example, it contains the account of the founding of Storer College in 1867 (named after its benefactor John Storer of Maine who contributed ten thousand dollars to the founding of a trade school for recently freed slaves). Storer students and faculty had tense relations with the Harpers Ferry community, in part because Storer housed African Americans who visited Harpers Ferry to see the railroad engine house where Brown fought. The "fort," as it was called, was a tourist destination–almost a shrine–for African Americans in the late nineteenth century. And, over the years, it was moved, first to Chicago for the 1893 Columbian Exposition, then back to a farm a few miles from Harpers Ferry, then in 1909 to Storer College's campus.

It was local public-spirited people seeking to preserve their local history who agitated for the creation of a national historical park at Harpers Ferry. They worked with Jennings Randolph, who represented West Virginia's second district in the U.S. House of Representatives. They worked together toward a common purpose and in 1944 secured the passage of federal legislation for turning Harpers Ferry into a national park, but funding had to wait until the World War II was over. Funding was not the only controversial issue. Among locals, although the national park promised tourists and money, it also dis-

rupted their way of life. In 1952, the National Park Service forced some owners to sell their property to the park and in the process displaced some people whose families had lived there for decades. Over the several years it took to complete the purchases and relocation of residents, about one hundred people lost their homes. J. William Coleman, superintendent of Gettysburg battlefield, spoke with residents about the relocation, and then reported back to the park service: "'nearly all are in a low income bracket.... The attitude of all the people with whom we talked was friendly and reasonable. Despite their very unprepossessing appearance, they are probably for the most part decent folks"' (p. 55). After expressions of concern, though, the park service proceeded with evictions when residents did not leave voluntarily.

Running parallel to the politics of funding and conflicts over land ownership were issues of interpretation. The West Virginia Women's Clubs wanted to use the "Harper House," built in the late eighteenth century, to illustrative upper-middle-class life. The National Park Service's research indicated that it had been used more as a boarding house. The essence of the dispute was that "the Garden Council wanted a historical house setting to decorate, [but] the park needed it to present a substantive statement about social customs and stratification" (p. 80).

That conflict pales by comparison to the controversies over how to present Brown–the "devil" of the book's subtitle. (The "dream" of the subtitle is the dream of creating a national park.) In 1936, when there was talk of a park, a West Virginia paper reminded readers that Brown was an insurrectionist: "'John Brown's attempt to start an insurrection was just as much armed rebellion against the United States as the attack on Fort Sumter was two years later"' (p. 86). The controversy came to a head in 1931 when the UDC and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) placed a stone monument to Hayward Shepard, the first person killed in Brown's raid and a free black person. They placed the monument in town with the support of, among others, Henry McDonald, president of Storer College. The monument praises Shepherd for "exemplifying the character and faithfulness of thousands of negroes who, under many temptations through subsequent years of war so conducted themselves that no stain was left upon a record which is the peculiar heritage of the American people, and an everlasting tribute to the best in both races" (p. 155). W. E. B. Du Bois proposed a counter-monument to the Shepard monument in 1932, which expressed gratitude to Brown.

The conflicts continued. In 1968, the fort was brought back to Harpers Ferry from Storer College. Moyer and Shackel suggest that in removing the fort from the grounds of the (then closed) historically black college to the grounds near where the fort was made famous might have stripped the fort of some of its meaning. The movement of the fort is one of many choices the park made that were freighted with meaning. It reminds us how much parks interpret and affect their histories, even as they seek fidelity to the past.

Then, in 1976, the Shepard monument was taken off display during construction at the park. The local chapter of the NAACP did not want the monument returned. The response by a UDC member was "'Why should the NAACP be opposed to this? It is a monument to one of their people.... There were 40,000 slaves in Maryland, and none of them came to [Brown's] support. They were loyal to their people"' (p. 166). In the wake of a request to have the monument returned to the UDC and SCV in the early 1990s (a claim with dubious legal basis), the Shepard monument was redisplayed in 1995, along with a tablet explaining the controversy surrounding it. Such is the process of historical memory, forgetting, and remembering, that a monument so controversial in the 1930s was removed in our nation's bicentennial year, then brought back to attention in an even better context so recently.

Moyer and Shackel also address the problems of interpreting working-class history at Harpers Ferry, and they help us understand the choices that the park has made about depicting the various stages of Harpers Ferry, from antebellum armory and railroad industries to Civil War battles and postbellum factories. The layers of history are tied together by Brown, but the lines of interpretation go out in many different directions. The controversies continue. Now telecommunications companies want to place cell phone towers near the park. So, even as the disputes over how we remember and interpret the past continue, there are also disputes between the past and present.

Moyer and Shackel present a fine study of how politics, morality, and law come together to shape a park. The interaction is complex; strange coalitions emerge and groups pull for their own interpretation. That is why the job of the National Park Service is so difficult and why we are so indebted to those guardians of our nation's memory for their careful work.

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