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David Goldfield. *Southern Histories: Public, Personal, and Sacred.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003. ix + 123 pp. $24.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8203-2561-3.

Reviewed by Martin Hardeman

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Southern Histories consists of three revised lectures by David Goldfield, Robert Lee Bailey Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, originally delivered at Georgia Southern University's twelfth annual Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt lecture series. The book's purpose is to make sense of the ongoing reinterpretation of the South and, at the same time attack a false, even pernicious dichotomy dividing academic and public history.

The first piece, "Whose Southern History is it Anyway: Reconciling a Fractured Past," begins with an entertaining discussion of an earlier work, *Still Fighting the Civil War: Southern History and the American South*. Apparently, his critics urged Goldfield to leave the South, demanded he write "facts" rather than "opinions" and accused him of a 1984-style of historical distortion. His correspondents saw his challenge to the "traditional" story of the Old South, the Civil War and Reconstruction as an assault on their identity.

In the decades after Appomattox and the collapse of Reconstruction, a mythological past had been created and taken the place of the real one. In the myth, all was moonlight and magnolias; all white men were honorable, benevolent, and brave while all white women as well as African Americans of both genders were virtually invisible. This myth was sustained by the real world power of white men in a patriarchical and racist Redeemed New South.

While the creed of the Lost Cause and the Old South always had critics, it only came under sustained attack in the 1950s. A new generation, both black and white, tempered by the fires of World War II challenged the verities of the past in the courts, schoolrooms, politics, and social arrangements. *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the subsequent Civil Rights movement continuously assaulted the foundations of segregation. Academics like C. Vann Woodward, Kenneth M. Stampp, and John Hope Franklin continuously probed the factual bases of the myth. Gradually, white women and African Americans took on solidity and were no longer invisible.

Yet, as Goldfield sees it, revolutionary times and revisionist scholarship have not created a new synthesis of the past, but rather competing

histories. The political struggle over the Confederate battle flag, the rise of neo-Confederate organizations and recently published books such as James Everett Kibler's ***Our Fathers' Fields: A Southern Story*** (1998), and Charles Adams's ***When in the Course of Human Events: Arguing the Case for Southern Secession*** (2000), illustrate the vitality of an identity myth.

In the second piece, "Faith of Our Fathers: Southern Religion in a Global Age," Goldfield explores the place of evangelical Protestantism in the creation and maintenance of the post-Civil War South. Confederate defeat, he concludes, melded veneration for the Lost Cause with a fundamentalist belief in an Old Testament God who had chastened his beloved people. Together they defined the white South as a community and this community possessed little tolerance for reformers, dissenters, or doubt. Religion undergirded Jim Crow and the state governments of the South tacitly supported a regional theocracy.

The theocracy, however, faced many of the same forces that confronted the traditional interpretation of Southern history in the post-World War II era. The Civil Rights Movement and Supreme Court decisions on prayer in school and the status of religion in the public square put the evangelical South on the defensive. In response, it declared a crusade and in the words of one proponent, the battle for righteousness called on "Bible-believing Christians to stop pornography and abortions, to fight feminism and homosexuality and get good 'God-Centered education' back in schools" (p. 58).

The achievement of these goals all required an actively interventionist national government committed to a sectarian orthodoxy. Southern evangelicalism's aggressive participation in partisan politics, therefore, came as no surprise to Goldfield. It is an attempt to restore the traditional partnership nationally that formerly dominated--and remains an ominous presence in the South. "There is much at stake here," he writes. "Without a progressive religion, there will be no progressive history for the South to call its own. And its talented people will not thrive in a context of orthodoxy" (p. 71).

"The Uses of Southern History: A Personal Memoir" is the final piece in this volume. It is also the most problematic. Goldfield's revised lecture focuses less on the South than the historical profession. The "uses" he refers to are the application of historical expertise to contemporary issues. He then asks a series of questions. Perhaps the most important of which are how does the profession view such applications and can applied history maintain the ethical standards of the profession.

His answer to the former is that the attitude of the profession remains condescending towards applied history. "Curating an exhibit, serving as an expert witness in a civil or criminal trial, and consulting for private and governmental agencies is a nice way to make a living, but it is not a road to a significant merit pay increase." Besides, he concludes, "you'd better be doing this stuff after you have received tenure and promotion" (pp. 74-75). Goldfield's response to the latter is that he hopes "we have our individual ethical compasses operating and that the products of our labors could pass muster among our academic peers as sound scholarship" (p. 75).

Southern Histories is not an important work. The first two revised lectures are highly derivative and add little that is new. The third raises interesting issues (the ethical uses of history and the ultimate responsibility of an historian), but they remain undeveloped. The majority of this essay is taken up by a self-congratulatory review of the author's own adventures in applied history. ***Southern Histories*** is, finally, a first draft. It reveals David Goldfield to be a generally thoughtful and very humane man. And, it is to be hoped that it is a harbinger of a much better book.

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