Paternalism in a Southern City: Race, Religion, and Gender in Augusta, Georgia

These essays look at southern social customs within a single city in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, the volume focuses on paternalism between masters and slaves, husbands and wives, elites and the masses, and industrialists and workers. How Augustas millworkers, homemakers, and others resisted, exploited, or endured the constraints of paternalism reveals the complex interplay between race, class, and gender. One essay looks at the subordinating effects of paternalism on women in the Old South--slave, free black, and white--and the coping strategies available to each group. Another focuses on the Knights of Labor union in Augusta. With their trappings of chivalry, the Knights are viewed as a response by Augustas white male millworkers to the emasculating paternalism to which they were subjected by their own wives and daughters and those of mill owners and managers. Millworkers are also the topic of a study of mission work in their communities, a study that gauges the extent to which religious outreach by elites was a means of social control rather than an outpouring of genuine concern for worker welfare. Other essays discuss Augustas aristocracy of color, who had to endure the same effronteries of segregation as the citys poorest blacks; the role of interracial cooperation in the founding of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church as a denomination, and of Augustas historic Trinity CME Church; and William Jefferson White, an African American minister, newspaper editor, and founder of Morehouse College. The varied and creative responses to paternalism discussed here open new ways to view relationships based on power and negotiated between men and women, blacks and whites, and the prosperous and the poor.

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