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Matthew Hild, Arkansas's Gilded Age: The Rise, Decline, and Legacy of Populism and Working-Class Protest

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[See table of contents](#)

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the division between local grassroots activism (in for example the Women's Institutes) and more bureaucratic, centralized activism in the Environmental Action Centre (EAC). A moratorium on uranium mining in Nova Scotia lasted for years, but by then there were two distinct approaches to environmentalism.

Chapter 5 focuses on the divisions among environmentalists in the 1980s over issues including the cleanup of the Sydney tar ponds and the effort to save Kelly's Mountain. The defense of home places emerged often and consistently drove environmental issues in the 1970s and 80s in Nova Scotia. Although the radicals and modernists could unite around issues, by the end of the 1980s they tended to live in different regions and they had different priorities. They disagreed on what their relationship to government should be, and they did not succeed when they had to deal with legal infrastructure. Elsewhere environmentalists frequently did make gains through court cases and environmental law became an important new field. In Nova Scotia, environmentalism was a complex response to their own particular political culture and the government's economic strategies as well as to growing environmental pressures everywhere but there, local reactions to environmental challenges were strong and unique.

The book contains a foreword by Graeme Wynne, the general editor of UBC Press' environmental books. The "Forward" is 17 pages long and is an additional scholarly essay. Its portraits of several Maritime environmental activists are informative, but its detail upstages the author's analysis and the main thrust of the book.

Overall, Mark Leeming has produced a dense, well researched and well written scholarly monograph which includes considerable new research, particularly on nuclear issues. His work compliments

and adds to other similar work in Canada's diverse regions.

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Matthew Hild, *Arkansas's Gilded Age: The Rise, Decline, and Legacy of Populism and Working-Class Protest* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press 2018)

AMONG THE POOREST states in the United States, with a sparse population, Arkansas saw the passage of the first US "right to work" law during World War II. The anti-labour stance of president Bill Clinton in the 1990s can be traced back to his time as state governor a decade earlier. Thousands of poor Arkansans have lost Medicaid coverage under the current governor, Asa Hutchinson. Union rights are a dead letter among homegrown liberals.

In *Arkansas's Gilded Age*, Matthew Hild shows how a vibrant working-class movement reached its height there during the last third of the 19th century. He argues that activists from agricultural, transport, and extractive labour sectors embraced the ideology of "producerism" and mounted a "third-party challenge" against the Arkansas Democratic Party. (4) An often-tenuous coalition of farmers and skilled workers influenced later homegrown working-class movements.

In the 1870s, Democratic redeemers offered less to working-class Arkansans than did the reconstructionist regime established during the Civil War. Although claiming they wanted to cut spending, redeemers increased the state debt. The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry found support in 1872 for opposing the system of "anaconda mortgages" for small landowners; this version of the crop-lien system became prevalent when the Republicans dominated state

politics in the 1860s. The state Grange admitted white women yet also championed white supremacy. While Blacks played a "significant role" in the Greenback movement, many Greenbackers nevertheless supported Democrats' debt repudiation scheme. (14)

Discontented with Grange conservatism, the Agricultural Wheel and the Brothers of Freedom emerged in 1882. There was a generally racist membership of about 10,000 by 1885. The union acquired segregated locals in Texas, Alabama, Missouri, and the Indian Territory. The Agricultural Wheel merged into the Southern Farmers Alliance in 1885. With chapters operating cooperative stores, the Brothers of Freedom totaled 30,000 to 40,000 members.

The Knights of Labor had at least 202 assemblies in Arkansas between 1882 and 1899. Reflecting the national union's "rather egalitarian" commitments (and unlike the Agricultural Wheel and Brothers of Freedom), the Knights' local assembly in Hot Springs accepted women. (30) An all-female local assembly around Little Rock, the state capital, was composed of domestic workers, seamstresses, bookbinders, and retail service workers. All three unions were initially organized as secret societies and fielded third-party candidates at the state, county, and municipal levels in the election of 1884. Candidates emphasized structural issues, unlike Democrats. In this election, Arkansan Democrats began to use mob violence.

The national railway strikes of the mid-1880s signaled the "most inclusive and broad-based working-class revolt" in state history. (41) Organizing with the Knights began in shops of the Iron Mountain branch of the Missouri-Pacific Railway, several months after the fall 1884 collapse of the Southwestern Railway. Strike action began in mid-1885.

There were several developments in 1886. The Brothers of Freedom merged into the Agricultural Wheel. Knights organized a strike among sharecroppers in Pulaski County, crushed within days by a sheriff's posse. The great railway strike spreading throughout the American Southwest and the Trans-Mississippi stalled trains around Little Rock for several weeks. There was closer collaboration between Arkansan farmers and railway workers. Delegates to joint Wheeler-Knights meetings made an electoral ticket. Although the interstate strike was a crushing defeat for the Knights, Arkansas membership continued to grow, particularly among Blacks.

Hild then focuses on the Union Labor Party (ULP), active in the 1888 and 1890 elections, alone or in fusion with Republicans. Held after the establishment of the national ULP in Ohio, the state ULP's first convention had over 50 delegates; "three or four" were Pulaski County Blacks. (72) The three delegates selected to go to the national convention included two Wheelers, Confederate veteran Reuben Carl Lee and Little Rock saw mill owner Charles E. Cunningham, and a Knight, P.M.E. Thompson, a Black police captain from Little Rock. Charles M. Norwood, Confederate veteran, large landowner, Greenbacker, and former state senator, became ULP gubernatorial nominee. In the presidential election, Cunningham ran next to Alson J. Streeter of Illinois. Norwood's defeat by several thousand votes to Democrat James T. Eagle was "undoubtedly" due to election fraud. (83) Norwood demanded a recount. A General Assembly resolution stipulated Norwood first pay \$40,000; there was no recount. Incumbent Democratic governor Simon P. Hughes wrote the one election killing (of Republican John Clayton, brother of radical reconstructionist governor Powell Clayton) was accidental.

The Farmers Alliance, Knights, and ULP participated in forming the People's Party. Formed in 1891, the Arkansas branch had a weak following if only because disenfranchisement was already law. Established third-party leaders were active through the decade, though. To the list of Populist grievances, they added opposition to convict leasing and the recently-passed Election Law. The national crisis triggered in May 1893 came as no surprise in Arkansas. Since the beginning of the decade, crop prices were falling and tension between farm workers and land-owners was rising (a strike by cotton pickers in Lee County, assisted by the Colored Farmers Alliance, was swiftly and violently crushed). Coal miners and railway workers dominated most strikes in the 1890s. Governor William Fishback sent militia units to Little Rock and Fort Smith, a furniture manufacturing centre. Meanwhile, President Grover Cleveland sent federal marshals to the state.

Despite "frustrations and failures," there would be important impacts on subsequent state reforms and subaltern movements. (127) United Mine Workers' locals became active in the 1890s. The Arkansas Socialist Party and a few Industrial Workers of the World locals were suppressed during World War I. The destruction of the Progressive Farmers and Household Union in the 1919 Elaine Massacre notwithstanding, Black Arkansans carried on practices of resistance from the 19th century. The Socialist-oriented Southern Tenant Farmers Union was formed in 1934.

Hild has consulted salient historiography for *Arkansas's Gilded Age*. It complements a new essay collection on themes in southern labour history (Matthew Hild and Keri Leigh Merritt, eds. *Reconsidering Southern Labor History: Race, Class, and Power* [Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018]). Addressing conflicts about electoral politics, Hild notes that

reality was more complicated than doctrinal arguments. He also deals with voter suppression and violence against newly elected officials and Blacks. He explains that the term Great Upheaval entailed the railway uprising of 1877 as well as strikes of the mid-1880s and 1894. Hild substantiates his arguments with census records, papers of contemporary labour leaders, and meeting minutes. The text is supplemented with primary documents and a map.

While Hild's institutional emphasis perhaps cannot be helped given a possible dearth of resources in which to reconstruct the daily lives of common labourers, a few words of criticism are in order. Hild does not directly address how the Civil War affected perceptions Arkansas workers had of each other. Was the turbulent relationship between craft unionists and industrial workers in other regions of the country a defining issue in Arkansas' working-class revolt? On balance, Hild's monograph lends to a deeper understanding of the radical tradition among working people in Arkansas. It must also be remembered that this "tradition" arose in the not-too-distant past.

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Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2016)

JEFFERSON COWIE has always published books with persistent influence. His earlier efforts, *Capital Moves* (New York: New Press, 2001) and *Stayin' Alive* (New York: New Press, 2011), offered incisive commentary on the systemic inequities of 20th-century capitalism and challenges to working-class solidarity. At first glance, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics*