

twentieth century to suggest that the new emotionality of that era restrained rather than liberated them.

Other essays, such as David Shumway's on marital-advice books and John C. Spurlock's on marital satisfaction for middle-class women in the twentieth century, shed little new light on their subjects. Michael Barton's study of disaster reporting in the *New York Times* draws from a narrow research base.

Some of the essays appear to be recycled from previous work, with the subject of emotions simply appended to it. Blewett's fine essay on the textile industry deals only with the anger expressed in public union behavior, avoiding other emotions, such as fear, which may have mitigated or extended public anger. Moreover, were Griffiths' pentacostal women ever angry or depressed? Are the official church records she uses necessarily silent on that score?

Nonetheless, this is a rich and broad collection. Since most of the authors appear to have read their companion authors' work, the essays are often effectively linked together. Stearns and Lewis have written an excellent introduction, in which they survey the state of the field of "emotionology" and suggest its importance for the history of the United States. But emotions are often slippery and evanescent: To capture their content in the final analysis may require the art of a poet as well as that of a historian.

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African American Midwifery in the South: Dialogues of Birth, Race, and Memory. By Gertrude Jacinta Fraser (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1998) 287 pp. \$39.95

In recent years, a plethora of autobiographical accounts, oral histories, and novels have attempted to capture the experiences and "mother wit" of the aging African-American and Chicana midwives of the South and Southwest. Historians have tended to focus more on the struggles to regulate and remove midwives from the birthing chamber, or to recalibrate their successes against the obstetricians who fought to regulate and replace them. Fraser brings together the reflexive voice of a Jamaican-born "outsider," historical data, a critical understanding of how race plays out in Southern daily life, and carefully crafted fieldwork. The result provides us with more insight into how, as she subtitles her book, "dialogues of birth, race and memory" are created in a Virginia African-American community rather than merely adding another monograph on the twentieth-century midwife struggle to the existing historiography.

Fraser begins by making the midwife experience central to southern black life by focusing on one community. She interviewed those who

remembered midwife birthing as well as former midwives. She also uses historical data for a sophisticated re-reading of the state medical journals and the larger context of public health efforts to survey, control, and care for the black community. She places her fieldwork data within a nuanced understanding of how silences are used in African-American communities, while public memories are both constructed, and “stigmatized traditions and experiences” are hidden (7).

Fraser weaves rich methodological discussions about public memory and race relations into her narratives. Her multilayered approach circles the question of midwifery by presenting a history of the early twentieth-century mechanisms for midwife control and an examination of “three prevailing historical narratives: the ‘great’ men, the midwife on the rebound, and the suppressed midwifery narratives of southern midwifery history” (35). Further, she applies the anthropological frames that explore the human body in its physical, cultural, and social contexts, providing superb understandings of the “cosmologies of the body” developed in a black community (218).

Fraser portrays midwives as liminal figures, circulating as links to the surveillance power of state officials and protectors of black community autonomy and secrets. She thoroughly discusses how trained midwives with the new birthing “science” could become the agents that obscured the economic reasons for the high black infant and maternal mortality rates and reinforced records of racial purity demanded by racist state law. But her careful interviewing and analysis demonstrate how communities came to understand and remember this power. Fraser banishes forever the naive view of midwives merely as community heroines, state agents, or dangerous amateurs. Specialists may find familiar some of the reworkings of the midwife control debates. But thoughtful new insights and critiques of the existing historiography are abundant.

This book is an excellent contribution to the growing literature on the inexorable intertwining of race, gender, science, and medicine. It is a terrific example of how reflexive anthropology and historical analysis can be enriched in the hands of a thoughtful and sophisticated scholar.

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The Evolution of Retirement: An American Economic History, 1880–1990. By Dora L. Costa (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998) 234 pp. \$40.00

The Evolution of Retirement is an economist’s effort to explain why the labor-force participation rates (LFPRs) of elderly men have been declining steadily since 1880. Just to ask the question is to minimize the role of Social Security Old Age Insurance, which did not begin paying benefits