

them to be a rich repository of social history. One can only applaud instructors who make a practice of asking students to write life histories.

A final word should be said concerning Wooden's conclusions which are both convincing and devoid of an overabundance of social science jargon. They seem consistent with the informal impressions that one gets from having lived in Hawaii. While one might quibble about an inadequate bibliography and some rather glaring grammatical errors, this book must be lauded for increasing our understanding of a culture in transition attempting to maintain its own form of "nationalism" against considerable pressure.

—Wayne Patterson  
Saint Norbert College

Randall Bennett Woods. *A Black Odyssey: John Lewis Waller and the Promise of American Life, 1878-1900*. (Lawrence, KS: Regents Press of Kansas, 1981) xviii, 254 pp., \$20.00.

This book, whose author is an associate professor at the University of Arkansas, is an important contribution to Afro-American and diplomatic history. Its subject was, as the author notes, a "second echelon member of the national Negro leadership" at the turn of the nineteenth century. Mature biographies of such figures are few but are vital if the contours of black history are to be filled.

Sources for such biographies are scattered and incomplete, but the bibliography testifies to long digging in manuscript collections. The examination of secondary works was less complete; notable is the almost complete absence of the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois and a few others. On the whole, however, Waller is placed convincingly within his milieu.

Waller, born a slave in Missouri (probably in 1851) forged a remarkable career as barber, lawyer, editor, politician, U.S. Consul to Madagascar and, finally, a captain in an all-black regiment in the Spanish-American War. His active life was spent in Iowa and, especially, in the Kansas of the Exodus period. In the latter state, having significant influence upon an important black electorate, he held those political offices then possible to a black man and finally, under Benjamin Harrison, was awarded the post of Consul in

Madagascar. There he performed his duties well and undertook, also, to accumulate a large estate upon which he hoped to realize his dream of a successful all-black commercial enterprise, devoid of racist insult.

The latter effort was thwarted because France began the conquest of Madagascar at this precise period in the 1890s. The story is a complex one, well told in this book. Its conclusion was Waller's arrest as a "spy," Washington's early energetic protests to Paris and then, following the completion of the French conquest, Waller's release, obtained after ten months of jail and the loss of eighty pounds, only because President Cleveland agreed to that conquest and falsely attributed malfeasance and worse to Waller.

After the brief service in Cuba, Waller's last seven years (he died in Yonkers, N.Y. in 1907) seem quite obscure; the author gives them less than a page.

New information on blacks in Iowa and Kansas in the post-Civil War generation is offered. In particular there is exciting evidence of some black-white unity and notable black militancy, as in the threat of organized force to prevent lynchings in 1872 and 1879.

The author feels the alternatives open to black people have been two: integration or separation. There is a third—*radical transformation* of a racist society into a fully egalitarian one. He describes Booker T. Washington as "an outspoken antiimperialist" which is certainly erroneous. But he presents the black community as supportive of U.S. expansionism in the 1890s; part of it was, but another part was quite hostile to such activity.

All those interested in post-Civil War history will find a reading of this book definitely worthwhile.

—Herbert Aptheker  
University of Santa Clara