

immigration experience should recognize the reality of nativism and xenophobia felt by newcomers and often treated with fear by the old-timer resident groups, who see their established order and lifestyle disrupted by outsiders. In sum, the volume tends to overemphasize the positive situation without introducing more negative variables that are part of the American immigration history and experiences.

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**Douglas Henry Daniels. *Pioneer Urbanites: A Social and Cultural History of Black San Francisco.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) 228 pp., \$13.00 paper.**

*Pioneer Urbanites* focuses on the quality of life and urban identity of Black residents of the San Francisco Bay area from 1850 to World War II. The author has organized the book topically, rather than chronologically. Because Daniels has chosen this organization, the reader has to keep historical chronology constantly in mind while reading in order to avoid confusion.

Using primary sources extremely well, Daniels argues that, although in the nineteenth century Blacks were discouraged to migrate to the cities of the West because of the racism of capitalists, unions, and white city dwellers, San Francisco had complex and culturally diverse neighborhoods which, in many ways, freed these areas from racial oppression. Such freedom enabled Black San Franciscans to have a rich social life and cultural heritage. Music and dance, coupled with San Francisco's liberal attitudes toward public pleasures, caused Blacks living there to be prominent in vaudeville, minstrel shows, and all other areas of the entertainment industry without encountering overwhelming prejudice and discrimination.

The early twentieth-century brought about more racism and separatism, but the ship building industry during World War II broke down many of these barriers and encouraged Black migration to the city. The gains older residents and migrants made during the war suggested their potential progress in a non-racist, peacetime society. In either situation, the San Francisco experience differed from the typical mid-twentieth-century preconceptions of eastern ghettos, suggesting either a western variant that is unique, or a need for closer comparison of older residents and new arrivals in other American sports, particularly baseball, in the race relations of the city during this time period. Additionally, he deals with labor unions rather unfairly and too briefly without considering the difficult struggle

## ***Explorations in Sights and Sounds***

As good as Daniel's analysis is, he does neglect the role of they were having in organizing and gaining recognition as bargaining agents.

Of course, the labor unions also played a role in preventing the urbanization of Afro-Americans. This is particularly apparent in San Francisco, which had one of the strongest labor movements in the nation. When an open shop prevailed in the 1920s, San Francisco's Black population (like Los Angeles's, where unions were particularly weak) increased enormously (42).

Daniels appears to be anti-labor, while he does indicate unions, along with the municipal political system and federal mandates, played a great role in increasing the number of Blacks hired in San Francisco just before and during World War II. Still, he should have emphasized that industrialists and business owners often preserved their supply of cheap labor by pitting ethnic groups against one another and by playing on prejudice.

Despite these problems, Daniels has written a very good book, which causes the reader, as Nathan Irvin Huggins writes in his foreword, to "rethink community formation in the United States" (xv). Daniels has proven that Black San Franciscans saw themselves as urban pioneers who shared in the building of the city while keeping their ethnic identity.

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**doris davenport. *Voodoo Chile - Slight Return: Poems.* (Cornelia, GA: Soque Street Press, 1991) 84 pp., \$10.00 paper.**

doris davenport's poetry collection, *Voodoo Chile - Slight Return*, firmly connects her to the southern African roots that she embraces. The poems speak from the perspective of a world-traveled feminist as well as a concerned humanist. davenport's poetry moves between being so caustic they singe, to an almost light-hearted, humorous tone. In both extremes, davenport's underlining motive seems to be to expose ills and ridicule contradictions inherent in the society.

Throughout this two-section collection of poems, davenport's integrity is evident. While there is no single poem that embodies her craft or particular perspective, the poem, "Interlude" aptly summarizes the poet's intent throughout this collection.

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