

Southern Migrants, Northern Exiles, by Chad Berry. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000. xiii, 236 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$44.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

Reviewer Wilson J. Warren is associate professor of history at Indiana State University. He is the author of *Struggling with "Iowa's Pride": Labor Relations, Unionism, and Politics in the Rural Midwest since 1877* (2000).

More than five million white upland southerners from West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Arkansas moved to the Midwest between the 1920s and 1970. Many midwesterners are aware of this great southern influx yet associate it primarily with "poor white trash" from Appalachia. Chad Berry's book provides an excellent rejoinder to this stereotypical view. Based primarily on oral histories, Berry argues that most upland southerners found economic success in the North even if they did not wholly adjust to life there.

Berry's book begins by explaining that upland southerners started migrating north during World War I. Contrary to the prevailing view that out-migration began after World War II, many upland southerners had actually started working part-time in coal mines and lumber mills following the Civil War. They were then drawn to northern factories during World War I, but often returned home for the winter months. Berry notes the persistence of seasonal migrations between the Midwest and South for many upland southerners even after World War II. Such migrations have parallels with other groups in American history, such as Mexican laborers today who work in northern factories and return to Mexico on a regular basis.

During the first half of the Great Depression, migration slowed considerably because of fewer job openings in the North. Berry explains that some upland southerners were able to secure agricultural jobs in the Midwest, such as in Indiana's rural canneries or the onion fields of Ohio's Scioto and Hog Creek marshes. Contrary to contemporary stereotypes, upland southerners who were hired during the labor struggles of the 1930s as "union blockers" (45-46) actually became strong unionists and even union leaders.

New Deal programs loosened southern residents' ties to the land, which in turn helped to renew migration north between 1935 and 1940. The federal government then intentionally encouraged migration to spur wartime production. Berry quotes one southern migrant, Jim Hammittee, who argues that during the war northerners were more prejudiced against southerners than vice versa, and that northerners disliked African Americans more than southerners did. Although these are intriguing observations, Berry's reliance on this one interview underscores both the great strength and the fundamental

weakness of oral history. It offers the possibility of important and interesting insights, which often only interviews can reveal. Yet, especially when based on a single or very few responses, it is difficult to know how safely one can generalize from them.

The last half of the book focuses on the post-World War II migration through 1970. During the postwar years, southern migrants were not simply hill people; southerners from throughout the upland South left for the Midwest. Berry points out, for instance, that during the 1950s more people actually left western Kentucky and Tennessee than the eastern parts of the two states. The total number of these migrants was quite large. Between 1940 and 1960, 201 counties of the Tennessee Valley lost more than 1.3 million people. The southern Appalachian region alone lost 3.2 million people between 1940 and 1970. Migrants typically brought kin with them. Once transplanted, migrants often found good jobs. Berry illustrates his points on kinship migration and economic success by referring to northern industries, such as Ball-Band in Mishawaka, Indiana, that relied heavily on upland southerners. In a separate chapter, he also takes issue with the stereotype of the indigent hillbilly that emerged in the 1960s social science literature.

Berry uses oral history testimony creatively to provide insights on how transplanted southerners changed northern industrial communities following World War II. He argues that southerners retained much of their culture when they moved to the Midwest. For instance, they remained politically inactive, as they had been in the South. They valued their honor and were well known for defending it, especially in taverns, which, Berry claims, became social substitutes for churches. Nativism and racism were evident in their dislike of Poles and African Americans. They scorned public assistance and preferred to move back to the South if they were unemployed. Organized religion was less important in their lives in the North compared to the South, yet Southern Baptist churches proliferated in the Midwest after the war. Country and western music, originally called hillbilly music, likewise spread throughout the Midwest.

Although most of the book's evidence comes from oral histories, Berry makes superb use of quantitative data, primarily census and other government records, to bolster his argument. The upland southerners whose history Berry recounts primarily moved to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. One wonders how transplanted southerners affected other parts of the Midwest, including Iowa, whose industrial cities also received influxes of upland southerners. Berry's study, though not concerned with Iowa, offers a useful model for exploring the issue.

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