

then reverse course within a year by framing Germany as a threat to democracy—as a problem for Americans to be solved by its government’s deployment of military power.

The Paradox of Power will hopefully find a readership among all those studying the growth of American government as more than a story of its presidents, Congress, and the large events they navigated, but as a story best viewed from the local and state as well as the federal levels.

The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century, edited by Jim Casey, P. Gabrielle Foreman, and Sarah Lynn Patterson. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021. Images, charts, notes, digital companions. 363 pp. \$29.95 paperback.

Reviewer Mila Kaut is a Ph.D. student in history at Northwestern University and a co-organizer of the Iowa Colored Conventions Digital Project. Her current research examines the genealogical and historical work of white women’s hereditary organizations in Iowa.

The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century traces seven decades of Black activism for political, social, and economic justice. Spanning outward from Cincinnati’s 1830 convention to encompass over 400 conventions across the country, the movement included at least 17 conventions in Iowa. Editors Jim Casey, P. Gabrielle Foreman, and Sarah Lynn Patterson frame the collection as a set of entry points for further study on Black political thought and culture. Their work provides a corrective to the literature on antislavery that casts white abolitionists as progenitors and erases Black autonomy. Drawing upon a decade of collective work by the Colored Convention Project (CCP), the volume’s four-part structure probes the origins of these omissions and offers ethical imperatives and methodological strategies for recovering the rich history of Black organizing.

Essays in the first section reveal how expanding our spatial and temporal definitions of where conventions began and ended enables us to recover the outsized yet overlooked contributions of Black women. Psyche Williams-Forsen shows how centering the labor and words of women leads us to locate boarding houses, foodways, and other spaces outside of official convention proceedings as wellsprings for activist cultures. The second section follows the outward flow of political consciousness from conventions. Dispelling claims that locate abolitionism’s origins in the white abolitionist movement, authors show how Black activist communities worked in and beyond the avenues of mainstream politics. Derrick Spires’ essay on collaborative authorship and

Erica Ball's essay on convention rites and rituals place collectivity at the center of Black political consciousness.

The third section identifies intersections between conventioners' antislavery activism and their efforts to build Black political power. Examining activists' traversal of hidden and public worlds of activism, Cheryl LaRoche negates Underground Railroad lore that foregrounds white heroes. Essays by Sarah Patterson and others explore the interplay between antislavery and civil rights organizing. The fourth section pursues the expansive activations of this interplay. Tracing activism outside of the North, authors emphasize the movement's endurance after emancipation. Andre E. Johnson shows the unsettled character of calls for reparations and Black emigration after the war. Daina Ramey Berry and Jermaine Thibodeaux's essay on the 1883 Austin convention frames patriarchy as a continuous constraint on the terms by which delegates laid claim to rights. Underscoring the pertinence of the convention movement's demands and practices, the final section invites us to contemplate its resonances.

The problems of omission and erasure addressed in this volume are akin to those in the literature on antislavery politics in the Midwest. Paired with the CCP's digital exhibits, records, and pedagogical tools, this volume might guide midwestern scholars through a similar process of recovery. Engaging P. Gabrielle Foreman's concept of "Black parallel politics" (29), scholars might recompose the genesis, arc, and scope of abolitionist and civil rights organizing in the Midwest. Scholars might begin by reading Cheryl LaRoche's strategies for recovering the roles of Black abolitionists in the Underground Railroad as a roadmap for reconsidering the people and institutions that formed Iowa's abolitionist movement.

Birthing the West: Mothers and Midwives in the Rockies and Plains, by Jennifer J. Hill. Lincoln: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 2022. 320 pp. Photographs, illustrations, map, index. \$24.95 paperback.

Reviewer Megan Birk is Professor of History at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She is the author of *The Fundamental Institution: Poverty, Social Welfare, and Agriculture in American Poor Farms* (2022) and *Fostering on the Farm: Child Placement in the Rural Midwest* (2015).

In this examination of rural women, childbirth, and the intimate networks that provided women with assistance and expertise, Jennifer J. Hill offers content relevant to rural life. With case studies of specific mothers and midwives and the records from the Children's Bureau,