

for the American chemical industry but misses the opportunity to analyze exactly how important. Perhaps chemical engineering was not such an advantage as typically claimed, or perhaps more “basic” organic chemistry was crucial, or perhaps the American context was such that both could be effectively combined, etc.

To some extent, Steen crosses the inorganic-organic divide; Du Pont, for instance, got heavily involved in dyestuffs but was, of course, also a major producer of explosives, a branch of the chemical industry not easily put in either the organic or the inorganic branch. Steen also refers repeatedly to that other important technology of World War I of the inorganic sort: ammonia synthesis, developed by BASF, one of the major German dyestuffs producers. Intriguingly, some of the American companies involved in the organic branch of war chemistry were also involved with ammonia in this period. Moreover, in the historical literature on ammonia synthesis, claims are made to the importance of this technology for war. It is a pity that the interaction between these two fields was not analyzed and, particularly, that the claims in relation to ammonia synthesis were not reviewed in light of the huge amount of research done for this book; perhaps those claims are simply overblown, or perhaps the organic and inorganic branches were complementary.

Even so, these issues testify to the strength and contribution of this book. It does an excellent job documenting and analyzing how an indigenous synthetic organic chemicals industry took root in the United States, eloquently makes the case that this is an important story, and, crucially, raises important questions.

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Richard Follett, Sven Beckert, Peter Coclanis, and Barbara Hahn. *Plantation Kingdom: The American South and Its Global Commodities*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016. 165 pp. ISBN 978-1-4214-1939-8 \$49.95 (cloth); 978-1-4214-1940-4, \$19.95 (paper).

Plantation Kingdom, an ambitious book that sets out to trace the rise and fall of four plantation kingdoms in the United States, succeeds on multiple levels. It focuses on the four commodity crops that were at the center of distinct plantation sectors in the southern United States;

it identifies their key characteristics with respect to labor, technology, and innovation; and it recognizes the important commonalities even as it avoids overgeneralizing. The authors argue that the four commodities—sugar, cotton, rice, and tobacco—each played an important role in the development of southern and global capitalism. Although the cultivation of these crops arose separately and not always in tandem, they had similar trajectories and they experienced comparable successes and crises because of the vagaries of the global marketplace, changes in national and international trade policies, and the emergence of tariff regulations that sometimes helped and sometimes hindered them. Richard Follett, Sven Beckert, Peter Coclanis, and Barbara Hahn previously authored important studies of the four commodities and bring a wealth of knowledge and insight into the making of this slim but valuable monograph.

Coclanis opens the volume with an essay on rice, arguing that it was a commercially successful crop by the early eighteenth century along coastal South Carolina, but that over the course of the next century and a half, the enterprise moved from a “putative staple Eden to commodity hell” (23). The control of African American slave labor and the ownership of land served as the foundation of rice cultivation—just as it did for the cotton, sugar, and tobacco planters—but technological issues and innovations, the development of demand for rice, and favorable trade policies provided the basis for its success. Coclanis challenges a common paradigm that prevailed until the late 1980s, however, concerning the collapse of the rice industry, one that identified the impact of the Civil War as the watershed moment. Coclanis reframes the narrative and examines longer-term issues that plagued the industry, particularly global market integration and, coincidentally (or not), the rise of “formidable new competitors” (35).

Beckert suggests that the Civil War was rather more important to the dethronement of “king cotton.” Cotton developed much later than rice and moved into the southern frontier rapidly. Rice was geographically limited in range because of certain peculiarities, but short staple cotton was able to free itself of such an impediment, particularly after the invention of the cotton gin. While Beckert rather famously claims that cotton served as the basis of the development of global capitalism, he acknowledges that the southern cotton planters suffered from the vagaries of the marketplace even as they benefitted from the British Industrial Revolution and the growing demand for the staple. By the eve of the Civil War, “a full 77 percent of the 800 million pounds [of cotton] processed in Britain” was produced on southern plantations and “60 percent of all US exports consisted of cotton” (40). The Civil War dealt the cotton planters a devastating blow by making it necessary for the British to develop, successfully,

alternative sources of cotton, and when southern planters returned to production after the war, they faced powerful new competitors.

Richard Follett's essay traces the development of an unlikely sugar industry, which emerged after the revolution in Saint-Domingue created a significant demand. By 1803 "a sugar plantation complex emerged under the command of leading Francophone and Creole families" (65) in the lower Mississippi River valley, in part because of the development of innovative processes. The industry spread, in part, because of federal protection and periodic drops in cotton prices. The growing world demand for sugar seemed to promise a bright future, but there were limits to growth (climate, geography, etc.). Ultimately, the acquisition of Hawaii, a major competitor, and favorable trade policies with Cuban producers depressed prices for lower Mississippi River valley producers.

Barbara Hahn expertly traces the growth and development of tobacco from the early seventeenth century through the mid-twentieth century. She focuses on the growing scientific understanding of varietal types of tobacco, the influence of regulations and favorable or unfavorable trade policies, and the influence of fluctuating prices in both the colonial and postcolonial period. The Civil War's influence on the tobacco industry was transformative and, ultimately, the war became the captive of all big business.

Knowledgeable scholars on southern agriculture will find this volume useful, even though it does not introduce any challenging new ideas. This is not meant as a criticism. The book will not only serve as a most expedient source for information but it will also likely be assigned to classes in agricultural and southern history.

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David Koistinen. *Confronting Decline: The Political Economy of Deindustrialization in Twentieth-Century New England*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. xii + 331 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-4907-6, \$74.95 (cloth); 978-0-8130-5408-7, \$29.95 (paper).

Confronting Decline is an ambitious book seeking to explain the public and private sector responses to deindustrialization over the