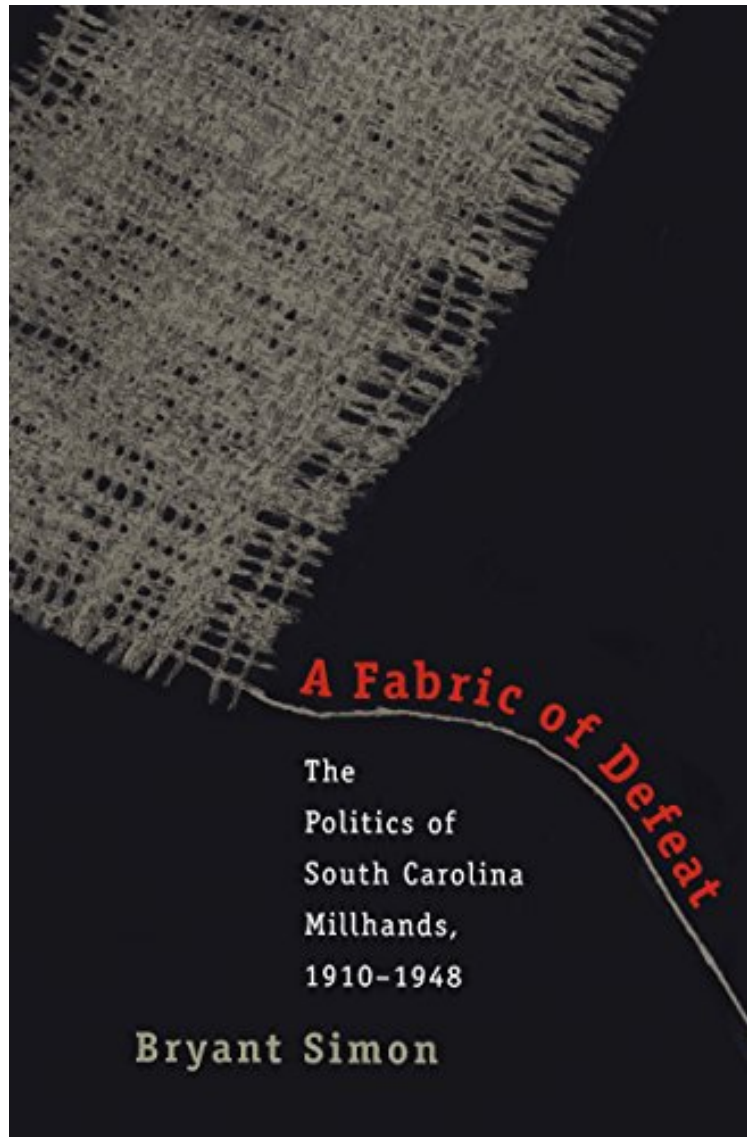


(Mobile book) A Fabric of Defeat: The Politics of South Carolina Millhands, 1910-1948

A Fabric of Defeat: The Politics of South Carolina Millhands, 1910-1948

Bryant Simon

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Bryant Simon : A Fabric of Defeat: The Politics of South Carolina Millhands, 1910-1948 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Fabric of Defeat: The Politics of South Carolina Millhands, 1910-1948:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Millville environmentBy LaurahLouBought the book for my husband. He understands the environment I grew up in more now.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A really good bookBy SchmergulsI wanted to read this book, which actually covers the subject from 1910 to 1948, rather

than as the title listed here indicates (1920-1948) because I wanted to know more about the flamboyant and racist Coleman Blease who in the early part of this century was such a prominent figure in South Carolina's politics. This book does tell a lot about Blease and his connection with the mill workers of South Carolina, but I found even more interesting the account of the career of Olin D. Johnston. Those who only watched his career in the U.S. Senate, once he finally got there, on his third attempt, in 1945, may not (as I did not) realize the extraordinary positions he took while Governor from 1935 to 1939--he took over the highway department by force, defying a Supreme Court ruling--and that he ran in 1938 against Cotton Ed Smith on a platform of 100% support for FDR. The racist climate of South Carolina got to him, however, and not till he became more anti-Negro was he finally elected. The book also relates the fascinating account of Peter Richard Moody, a student at Wofford College, and the poem he wrote in 1936 which led the Legislature to order a mental examination of Moody, and the funny account of the result of the mental exam. The book traces the efforts and hopes of the disadvantaged millhands, and amply justifies the title of the work. Anyone interested in Southern politics should read this enlightening and well-researched book. The bibliography alone runs 30 pages, and I found the book unique in its subject. A minor note: a footnote on page 291 says poet Moody became a professor at the U.S. Military Academy, whereas it appears that actually he was at the Air Force Academy.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. This is a wonderful book. By cxhaha@mail.wm.edu Fabric of Defeat's title sounds like a downer, but this is an wonderful book that is fun to read. Simon does a particularly good job of talking about race in an industry that was "lily white," as the saying goes. He manages to discuss racist white workers without either apologizing for them or indicting them. Rather he gives texture to their racial ideas, explaining how views of race and class changed in relation to each other as the New Deal broadened the political vision of South Carolina's millworkers. This is a book I would certainly assign to undergraduates.

In this book, Bryant Simon brings to life the politics of white South Carolina millhands during the first half of the twentieth century. His revealing and moving account explores how this group of southern laborers thought about and participated in politics and public power. Taking a broad view of politics, Simon looks at laborers as they engaged in political activity in many venues--at the polling station, on front porches, and on the shop floor--and examines their political involvement at the local, state, and national levels. He describes the campaign styles and rhetoric of such politicians as Coleman Blease and Olin Johnston (himself a former millhand), who eagerly sought the workers' votes. He draws a detailed picture of mill workers casting ballots, carrying placards, marching on the state capital, writing to lawmakers, and picketing factories. These millhands' politics reflected their public and private thoughts about whiteness and blackness, war and the New Deal, democracy and justice, gender and sexuality, class relations and consumption. Ultimately, the people depicted here are neither romanticized nor dismissed as the stereotypically racist and uneducated "rednecks" found in many accounts of southern politics. Southern workers understood the political and social forces that shaped their lives, argues Simon, and they developed complex political strategies to deal with those forces.

A significant addition to the new scholarship on southern working-class whites. "The Journal of Southern History" This deeply researched and well-written volume stands as a rigorous study that fills a real need. "Journal of Social History" [P]rovides an unusually engaging perspective on twentieth-century southern working-class history. "The Journal of American History" An interesting and valuable contribution to our understanding of twentieth-century white southern legal culture. "American Historical Association" Provides an unusually engaging perspective on twentieth-century southern working-class history. "The Journal of American History" Represents essential reading for those who seek a deeper understanding of the American south's tortured course in the twentieth century. "Business History" Represents essential reading for those who seek a deeper understanding of the American south's tortured course in the twentieth century.--Business History An excellent study of the politics of South Carolina textile workers, from the Progressive era through the New Deal and World War II. It is, first and foremost, an artful blending of the subfields of labor, political, and southern history, but the book will be of interest to political scientists and to students of cultural studies as well. Simon's exploration of the limits of New Deal reform is superb, and his analysis of the multiple dimensions of millworkers' identities is insightful, and often provocative.--Journal of Interdisciplinary History This beautifully written study of the South's classic industrial population offers a provocative new interpretation of how white working-class identity and politics shifted over the first half of the twentieth century. Even those who dispute some claims will find themselves captivated by Simon's powerful rendering of the promise and tragedy of this story. Southern historians and labor historians will have to read this book; others will want to.--Nancy MacLean, Northwestern University A significant addition to the new scholarship on southern working-class whites.--Journal of Southern History A distinctive, original study that adds to the growing list of important studies in southern labor history.--Journal of American History Bryant Simon's elegantly written book is both a rigorous examination of white working-class politics in the New South and a poignant recreation of a culture that has largely disappeared. It is a story about great possibilities and ultimate failure, about the struggle for economic democracy in a society deeply committed to white privilege and racial segregation. Sympathetic to his subjects, yet true to history, Simon takes us

into the homes, factories, and voting booths of South Carolina mill workers who fought to better their lives through a political process they could never hope to control.--David M. Oshinsky, Rutgers UniversityAn exhaustively-researched and finely-written account of the ways politics shaped the lives of South Carolina's mill workers even as they shaped politics.--South Carolina Historical MagazinePerceptive in analysis and engaging in style, Bryant Simon's impressive volume provides a masterly investigation of the political life of white South Carolina millhands during the first half of the twentieth century. . . . This deeply researched and well-written volume stands as a rigorous study that fills a real need--a major exploration of the working class politics of southern millhands in the modern period. This is a significant effort.--Journal of Social HistoryRecovers the often overlooked and even more often misunderstood history of the modern South's white working class with verve, insight, and style. In this perceptive and pioneering monograph, Simon explores the complicated interplay of race and class and labor in segregation-era South Carolina, describing in evocative fashion the ultimately futile effort to the state's textile workers to use the power of their numbers at the ballot box and the political wiles of their champion, Olin D. Johnston, to wrest control of state policy away from the traditional Palmetto state elite composed of large landowners and business leaders who preferred a cheap and politically impotent labor supply.--Lacy K. Ford Jr., University of South CarolinaAn interesting and valuable contribution to our understanding of twentieth-century white southern legal culture.--American Historical This well-written book. . . provides an unusually engaging perspective on twentieth-century southern working-class history.--The Journal of American HistoryFrom the Inside FlapBrings to life the politics of white South Carolina millhands from 1920 to 1945. Examines laborers as they engaged in political activity and shows how their politics reflected their public and private opinions.