Shahn from the Whitney into its American Wing catalogue just because it does not have a good one. But that is precisely what Davis and Mintz do here, and they justify the action as insuring "an accurate and coherent view of a given subject."

More than forty of the documents are from outside the GLC. Most of them are used to strengthen the pre-Revolutionary sections, where the GLC is especially weak. Even for the nineteenth century, which Davis concedes "constitutes the heart of the anthology," it is the outside documents that provide relief from the numbing cadence of elite male discourse that suffuses the volume. Here is Susan Huntington in 1815: "Dear children! I tremble for you, when I reflect how dangerous is the path in which you are to tread, and how difficult the task of directing you in safety." Here is Kale, one of the Amistad captives, writing in 1841: "If America give us free we glad, if they no give us free we sorry." Here is William Smith, an immigrant, writing in 1850 about the transatlantic voyage: "The passengers being sea sick, were vomiting in all parts of the vessel." Thus the inclusion of non-GLC documents in this volume ironically serves to highlight the lacunae of the Gilder Lehrman Collection itself.

With the incorporation of texts outside the GLC, the rationale for the volume disappears. Davis and Mintz want to provide an "interpretive anthology," but the holdings of the GLC, impressive as they are, cannot begin to encompass the diversity, complexity and cacophony of American history. The scattershot additional sources that Davis and Mintz import to the book are insufficient to bring this anthology anywhere close to the claims they make for it.

And even with those documents brought on board, there are curious elisions and omissions. Spellings are often silently modernized, and ellipses sometimes mangle the text. To take a specific example, a section on "Nat Turner's Insurrection," Samuel Warner's "Authentic and Impartial Narrative," owned by the GLC, is included, while Turner's own *Confessions*, apparently not in the GLC, is left out. There are other lost opportunities as well. Images from the GLC are dispersed throughout the volume but receive no commentary or interpretation at all. The Civil War section includes two photographs of African-Americans that help illuminate how the pressure for emancipation came from the "slaves themselves," as the editors suggest, but readers of the anthology will come away thinking that Lincoln alone steered the ship of state across a boisterous sea toward emancipation.

The deeper problem, however, is not what Davis and Mintz do with the documents; the problem is the kind of documents that are available to them in the GLC. If asked to provide an anthology of American history using a variety of collections, they would undoubtedly produce a volume that offered a multidimensional portrait of America. But that was not their assignment. It was risky enough for them to stow on board some forty outside documents; any more and the voyage might never have left drydock.

The Boisterous Sea of Liberty offers passage in first class only. Most social and cultural historians, however, prefer the close quarters of steerage. Fortunately, there are other boats worth boarding for a documentary journey through American history: Peter Nabokov's *Native American Testimony*, Linda Monk's *Ordinary Americans*, Al Young's *We the People* and Ira Berlin's *Free at Last*. There is also a seaworthy vessel commissioned twenty years ago: *Antebellum American Culture: An Interpretive Anthology*. One of the best primary-source readers ever constructed, it navigates the tensions and ambiguities of the decades before the Civil War. It was edited by David Brion Davis with Steven Mintz's help.

Gilder and Lehrman might also do some traveling in less-charted waters. If they surf the Net, they will find at www.bibliofind.com a first edition of Thomas Skidmore's radical treatise *The Rights of Man to Property*. Compared with the tens of thousands of dollars they paid for a letter from Lincoln, it is a steal at $200. ■

A Bend in the Color Line

GERARD FERGERSON

FROM SAVAGE TO NEGRO: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896–1954.
By Lee D. Baker.
California. 337 pp. $40. Paper $17.95.

Policy talk about a racialized "underclass" rests on social science research that often reproduces notions of racial difference, in an enormous tautology. *The Bell Curve*, with its layers of quantification regarding race, intelligence and academic achievement, evokes a history of racial difference in its implications for educational policy. Like many other neoconservative social science works that incorporate reductive ideas about cultural, environmental and biological factors (variously defined but all deemed unchangeable) to explain the social status of urban Americans, Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's tract exemplified how discussions of race and difference are linked with policy preferences. And such linkages are encoded even as references to race are erased—the debate over welfare policy is a prime example. (And this is not to mention the important role the media play as legitimizers of rumor as social science.)

Lee Baker's *From Savage to Negro* explores how debates on race and culture have informed the positioning of anthropology as a social science discipline in the United States. He plumbs the period between 1896, when the Supreme Court sanctioned de jure segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and 1954, when the Court, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, appeared to overturn its 1896 decision with the declaration that segregation is unconstitutional. Baker is primarily interested in how anthropological formulations of racial and cultural difference influenced these decisions, as well as how the Court's actions in 1896 and 1954 were shaped by historically specific contexts.

Between 1896 and 1954, the rise of cultural anthropology in particular supplied legal theorists arguing *Brown* with an arsenal of theory and research about culture and race that challenged older ideas about racial difference. According to Baker, that fifty-eight-year period produced a "transition from an understanding of race embedded in evolutionist notions to a view grounded in concepts of racial equality and cultural relativity." Desegregation would become the objective for an interdisciplinary team of legal scholars and social scientists who embraced cultural-anthropological ideas that undermined belief in racial progress and hierarchy.

Along the way, Baker unmasks the

Gerard Fergerson, a social historian of science and medicine, teaches history and public policy at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University.

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theoretical underpinnings of race in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. By tying anthropological discourses about race and culture to specific policy contexts, he offers an assessment of how anthropology and other social sciences emerged as applied disciplines in public policy during the early twentieth century. Basically, anthropology schools legitimized ideas about racial difference and underscored the denial to blacks of rights that were prescribed in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments—of due process and equal protection under the law.

Baker delineates the social and political contexts in which an emergent, more professionalized school of American anthropology helped define US race relations and sanction segregation. A belief in the inferiority of blacks and other ethnic groups (many of whom were not yet "white," or were at least defined in ethnic formulations as "not black") pervaded public discourse on segregation. Public lynchings through the mid-twentieth century would also present blacks as evolutionary specimens not fit for inclusion in democratic processes.

As anthropologists developed evolutionary paradigms with detailed stages of civilization and racial progress for whites—stages that, many argued, blacks could never theoretically attain—state legislatures sanctioned segregation. Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, who spoke often of "uncivilized savages" and whom Baker describes as a "decipherer of science for the nation," represented the intersection between older scientific traditions that contributed to the increasing disciplinary unity and professionalization of anthropology and newer evolutionary studies shaped by a social Darwinism that stressed how racial, social and political hierarchy expressed the processes of natural selection and the "survival of the fittest." Shaler, a geographer, would later become a dean of the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard, where he would teach future President Theodore Roosevelt. A champion of American imperialism during the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt declared that "a perfectly stupid race can never rise to a very high plane." Such ideas no doubt provided the United States with a scientific rationale for the occupation of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Samoa, the Philippines and the annexation of Hawaii.

Anthropology's value for the legitimation of segregationist policies and American imperialism was a given in both popular and scholarly venues. Legislation covering segregation and exclusion of blacks, Chinese-Americans and Native-Americans in certain social and political contexts was extensive in the 1890s. The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 showcased what many anthropologists labeled "stages of civilization." In spite of protests from African-Americans and Native-Americans about the racialized imagery, the exposition inaugurated a new era in modern anthropology. Indeed, Daniel Brinton, among the more prominent of American anthropologists and president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science by 1894, had published *Races and Peoples* in 1890, a work that sought to define the "physical criteria of racial superiority."

Baker analyzes how Homer Adolph Plessy's claim of discrimination under the Fourteenth Amendment was dismissed by the High Court in 1896 as Justices "made a distinction between being equal and being equal before the law." The ruling rested on ideas about racial difference. Associate Justice Henry B. Brown, writing for the Court, stated that "if one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane." Plessy had challenged a Louisiana statute that enforced segregation in public accommodations, specifically on trains. The Court ordered racial categories as neatly as the racialized compartments on the train that precipitated his claim.

From Savage to Negro charts the major influence of Franz Boas, W.E.B. Du Bois and others in the fight to topple oppressive racial constructions and public policies. Boas, who served as an assistant to the organizer of the anthropology exhibit at the Columbian Exposition, the Harvard naturalist Frederic Ward Putnam, brought a sensitivity to cultural anthropology that was shaped by experiences of discrimination as a Jew in Bismarck's Germany. With a Ph.D. in physics and a minor in geography, Boas studied the growth patterns of US immigrants. He also worked in conjunction with Theodore Roosevelt's Dillingham Commission, which studied new Eastern European immigrants. Boas's conclusions challenged nativist and anthropometric views that these new arrivals were inferior biologically and culturally to native-born Americans. However, in a challenge to the traditional lauding of Boas as a savior in cultural anthropology, Baker shows that Boas's ideas about race were not without older historical tensions regarding racial hierarchy.

Baker establishes as well how Du Bois, a Harvard-trained sociologist, challenged scientific ideas that blacks were inferior. He publicly criticized Frederick Hoffman,

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a statistician at Prudential Life Insurance Company, on his 1896 work detailing "race traits," calling into question physical anthropology's basic tenets about anatomical difference. Du Bois's critiques of prevailing social science theory and research were also exhibited in a series of conferences that began at Atlanta University in the mid-1890s. In 1905 he communicated with Boas for the first time and issued an invitation to contest ideas about "the negro physique" in Atlanta. Boas accepted and launched a critique that, Baker contends, expressed Boas's kinship with Du Bois on the issues of integration and black equality.

Baker asserts that Boas's and Du Bois's concepts about race and racial hierarchy cannot be analyzed in terms of simple historical characterizations of paradigmatic unity. There were obvious conflicts in their work between older and newer ideas, which is largely why Baker labels the two as reformers. Gathering the views they challenged under the single rubric of social Darwinism, however, tends to hide the lack of theoretical unity in the shifting base of early twentieth-century science. This was certainly true of the increasingly hereditarian views that Du Bois and Boas were responding to as activists and scholars. For example, the eugenics movement, which advocated selective breeding and sterilization, in some cases, to preserve "favored" races, drew upon the new authority in science established by genetics and statistics. Many eugenicists shunned the influence of environment altogether and argued against any possibility of "racial progress" in their more rigid constructions of racial difference. These tensions would influence as well the distinctions between ethnicity (defined in more cultural formulations with respect to the "new immigrants" of the twenties and thirties) and race (which was still tenacious in its attachment to blacks as a signifier of biological difference).

Studies in cultural anthropology during the twenties and thirties offered a new terrain on which to challenge concepts of racial difference and legally sanctioned segregation. In opposition to Charles Davenport, an ardent eugenicist who invoked genetics to define racial inferiority, Boas and others presented culture as fluid and altered perspectives on it, race and progress. Boas's antiwar work—views he presented in *The Nation* in December 1919—also made him the target of attacks by those who, for example, did not share his indictment of American imperialism and by colleagues who worked as spies.

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The work of this period, Baker details, also paralleled and intersected with the New Negro and Harlem Renaissance movements, which produced ethnographies, arts and literature that expressed the complexity of culture. Baker notes that among a new, anthropologically trained black vanguard, Zora Neale Hurston, a Boas student at Columbia, used folklore to demonstrate "the fact that writing ethnography presupposed contributions from one's own creative processes." Hurston bolstered efforts to advance black cultural contributions as unique and historically specific.

Legal scholars and social scientists working at Howard University from the twenties on recognized the power to transform legal strategies through evolving definitions of culture in anthropology and sociology. Charles Hamilton Houston, dean of Howard Law School, and Thurgood Marshall, who would win state-level desegregation cases before the *Brown* victory and his later appointments as Solicitor General and Supreme Court Justice, recognized the potential value of research on culture in their legal strategy for desegregation. Baker's chronicle of the work at Howard is important for two reasons: First, he demonstrates the influence of competing ideas about race and culture among advocates of integration; second, he analyzes the negotiations that took place over the decision to go before the Court with an assimilationist model of black culture that stressed "pathology." Baker contends that the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDEF), the lobbying arm that litigated *Brown*, "selectively appropriated anthropology to debunk notions of racial inferiority and selectively appropriated sociology to demonstrate the values of assimilation." Many Howard researchers, such as E. Franklin Frazier, as well as other sociologists at the University of Chicago, seemed genuinely to believe that blacks expressed cultural traits that were pathological deviations from a normative white standard of American culture. Others, like Boas and Du Bois, stressed that cultures were historical and relative. Baker's meticulous research demonstrates as well how other scholars offered socioeconomic critiques of biological research on race. For example, W. Montague Cobb, a Howard faculty member in the anthropology and anatomy departments and an MD, showed that health differentials were a result of inadequate access to healthcare, not deviant cultural behaviors.

Baker notes the obviously important role that Gunnar Myrdal's work *An American Dilemma* (cited in the Court's *Brown* decision) exerted on the decision to stress assimilationist values in the words of expert witnesses, such as the social psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark. In its incorporation of Myrdal's focus on deviance, LDEF's strategy did not not offer a rationale for black inclusion based on the Boasian concept that cultures are "historical or fictional, adaptive or cognitive." The *Brown* case rested on the problematic pronouncement that black children in public schools were being harmed by not being educated next to white children. Somewhat ironically, then, the 1954 Supreme Court appeared to rely on a model of racial progress as it advanced integration. In the final analysis, Baker contends that *Brown* "did change the way the state imposed racial categories."

On the heels of recent Supreme Court rulings that largely assert that we live in a color-blind society where barriers to social mobility do not hinge on perceptions of racial difference and racism, Baker's study forges new intellectual and political ground. It enables us to critique the historical relation between race and applied social science. We might also note that segregation of schools and racial segregation in general (discrimination in healthcare delivery, workplace patterns, redlining, etc.) remain as chronic as belief in the power of racial categorization to explain differential patterns of educational achievement and health outcomes. Through its interrogation of anthropological and political discourses about race and racial formation, *From Savage to Negro* topples historical myths about the nation's legacy of state-sanctioned segregation and racial difference. ■

FILMS

Revenge of the Pod People

STUART KLAWANS

VIRUS • THE FACULTY

Nobody asked me to spend my weekend watching movies about alien invasions—so for all I know, I might have been acting on promptings from an otherworldly force. From which part of the galaxy did it emanate? Maybe the Senate chamber.

An openly extra-senatorial creature had taken possession of that body only days before my glut began, materializing in the form of a "Mr. Hyde." (Even the name was borrowed from a sci-fi source.) Speaking in strangely robotic cadences, "Mr. Hyde" declared it a grave offense for officials to lie about nongovernmental matters—in contrast to cover-ups of state crimes (such as the illegal prosecution of a war in Central America), which ought to be excused. This assertion was eerie enough, but then came an echoing of news commentators, hypnotically repeating (in robotic cadences of their own) that the Extra-Senatorial had made "a powerful case."

Clearly, rays of hideous mind control were rippling outward from the Capitol. But then arose evidence of a second transmitter. It was located in a personage who loudly assured us he was human, all too human. Yet when asked where he had come from, this "President" claimed to have arrived from "Hope"—everywhere and nowhere.

As mysterious as the figure's point of origin was the source of his popularity, which was said (by news commentators) to approach the universal. Such near-unanimity seemed to me suspect, especially when I considered how this "Man from Hope" had received unthinking endorsement for his program of turning Iraq into a firing range. For certain creatures with verifiable origins on Earth, the consequences were painful. According to Reuters, the December bombings had destroyed an agricultural school, damaged at least a dozen other schools and hospitals, blown up a storehouse holding 2,600 tons of rice and left 300,000 people in Baghdad without water. Yet who (other than the Iraqis) had complained of this devastation?

Strange to say, one of the few protests I heard (outside the pages of this magazine) was registered through a network of filmoids. The Reuters report came to my atten-

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