

undergraduates as well as graduates as a supplement to a course on the Revolution. It is a good general introduction to several scholars in the field, their views and contributions. It is also a good way to whet the appetite of a general reader who wishes to learn more about the historical significance of an event that many think they already know.

South Louisiana Community College

John H. Frederick

Timothy B. Tyson. *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams & the Roots of Black Power*. Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999. Pp. 402. Cloth, \$29.95; ISBN 0-8078-2502-6. Paper, \$16.95; ISBN 0-8078-4923-5.

Timothy Tyson frames his prize-winning first book with two images. In 1936 an eleven-year old African-American boy in Monroe, North Carolina, witnessed a white police officer, Jesse Helms, Sr., physically assault a black woman and then drag her, dress up over her head, along the pavement to the local jail. White bystanders laughed. African American men hung their heads and hurried away. Sixty years later Robert F. Williams, that black boy who became an advocate of "armed self-reliance," was laid to rest, his body carefully dressed in a gray suit given him by Mao Zedong, his coffin adorned with a red, black, and green pan-African flag, and his eulogy given by Rosa Parks, the embodiment of non-violent resistance. Tyson calls for a rethinking of the relationship of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. His thesis is that these vital movements "emerged from the same soil, confronted the same predicaments, and reflected the same quest for African American freedom," and that we need to question the periodization that sees the emergence of Black Power as a reversal of the freedom struggle. Rather, Tyson posits a revival of a tradition of armed resistance, particularly from World War II on.

This well-written narrative centers on the life of Robert Williams, who rose to national and international prominence during the infamous "kissing case" of 1958 in which African American boys, ten and under, were held for days without being able to see their parents or any lawyers for "assaulting" three white girls. From then on, Williams, president of the local NAACP, emerged as a forceful spokesman, and dueled in person and in the press with white leaders as well as with Roy Wilkins and the national leadership of the NAACP, and eventually with Martin Luther King, Jr., over his call for "meeting violence with violence." This well-researched biographical approach allows Tyson to entwine powerful stories with deep political analysis, elucidating how the Cold War setting of the African American fight for freedom caused the most local history to be writ large. Williams pragmatically built

networks with a wide range of Americans from white liberals and socialists to Harlem intellectuals and activists (including Malcolm X), from Trotskyites to Freedom Riders. Things came to a head in an astonishing showdown in Monroe in 1961 when Williams and family escaped and went into exile, first in Cuba, where he and his wife Mabel broadcast their "Radio Free Dixie" into the United States, and then in Vietnam and China. Williams returned to the U.S. in 1969 and largely chose to lead a quiet life in rural Michigan, finishing an unpublished autobiography just before his death.

The straightforward narrative, really more political history than biography, would appeal to undergraduates and through its powerful images and stories draw them into the larger questions the author seeks to illuminate. Tyson presupposes a knowledge of the Civil Rights movement, so it would need to be supplemented with other readings--and consideration of the level of students accordingly. Teachers will certainly find rich material here for lectures and lively discussions. Cogently argued, Tyson's work nevertheless leaves open questions about leadership strategies, gender issues, and the performative aspects of Black Power in the media-drenched 1960s. A comparative look at the SNCC experience would also be fruitful. A fine overview condensed by the authors is in *The Journal of American History* (September 1998).

Landmark College

Paul Gaffney

David Mayers. *Wars and Peace: The Future Americans Envisioned, 1861-1991.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. viii, 184. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-312-22770-1.

Between war and peace is a twilight land of aims, ideologies, dreams, and popular longings that the participants in the fighting hope to carry into the ensuing post-war period. People need these justifications to endure the sacrifices of lives and treasure and the compromise of ideals that are the necessary costs of war. The failure of post-war settlements to realize these aims often results in a general disenchantment at war's end.

In *Wars and Peace: The Future Americans Envisioned, 1861-1991*, David Mayers analyzes the ideas that Americans, across the political and social spectrum, have wanted to implement in the era that follows five major U.S. conflicts (or national security crises as Mayers categorizes them): the Civil War, the War of 1898, the First and Second World Wars, and the Cold War. *Wars and Peace* is a thoughtful and well-written reflection on the history of the ideas that failed to take hold after the end of each of these crises.