

porters, but were primarily concerned with expanding their own land holdings and functioning, as the author says, as a “well-knit family power bloc.”

This outlook led some Lees into land-acruing marriages with families from the feudalist faction—the Ludwells and Carters, for example. Richard Henry Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee (for whom Leesburg is named) were both delegates to the Continental Congress and signers of the Declaration of Independence. In fact, it was Richard Henry who introduced the motion in Congress for American independence.

Yet, when their brothers William and Arthur were recalled from service in Europe when they accused Silas Deane of being a British agent, Richard Henry and Francis resigned from the Continental Congress. They did so because of the “affront” to the Lee family, but what they perceived as a family insult was actually a conscious British gambit to split the American delegation in Paris, and create factions on this side of the Atlantic.

Instead of saying, “The world seems crazy” and retiring to his home, it would have better befitted the talented Francis Lightfoot Lee to have stayed in Congress and continued the battle for American sovereignty.

Richard Henry, fortunately, did return to Congress later and became its president, presiding over the passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The settlement of the Midwest had been planned by George Washington and his officers of the Continental Army during the long winters at Valley Forge, Morristown, and Newburgh, and was concretized when Revolutionary War veterans formed the Ohio Company of Massachusetts. When news of the passage of the Northwest Ordinance reached the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, with the immediate prospect of a group of organized settlers leaving for Ohio, the deadlock which had paralyzed the Convention was broken, and the Constitution was swiftly passed.

Reverses and scandals

After the Revolution, the Lees suffered a series of reverses and scandals which greatly saddened the family. The brilliant but erratic military commander, “Light-horse Harry” Lee, plunged his estate into ruin through wild speculation, and brought down with him his brother Richard Bland Lee, who lost his large Sully Plantation to pay off his creditors. Then Light-horse Harry’s son Henry seduced his ward, who was also his sister-in-law, and squandered her fortune. Henry’s half-brother, son of Light-horse Harry’s second wife, Ann Carter, was Robert E. Lee.

Although Robert grew up in comparative poverty, due to his father’s speculative mania, he maintained the Lee tradition of paramount devotion to family and perhaps, judging from his stated intention of purchasing Stratford, the family’s ancestral mansion, a longing for the “good old days.”

But having served with distinction in the U.S. Army

and as Superintendent of West Point, Robert was actually opposed to secession. When he was asked to assume command of the Union forces and turned it down, Robert E. Lee must have known that even if the Confederacy were victorious its dependency on raw materials production would make it a client state of the British Empire, and a base for further operations against the diminished United States.

Although some Lees did stay with the Union, Robert declared that he could not fight against his family and friends, and turned his back on the American development policies for which generations of Lees had battled the British. This does raise the question of what family Robert was fighting for—the patriot Lees or the feudal Ludwells and Carters—as commander of “the Army of Northern Virginia.”

In the book’s last chapter, the author adds an interesting insight about the growth of the myth of Robert E. Lee. Although Lee was much admired in the South after the Civil War, the North had basically ignored him until the 1905-07 period, when two admirers of the British Empire, Henry James and Charles Francis Adams II, began eulogizing him as a paragon of patient and noble suffering, worthy of national emulation.

Considering the suffering and subversion that the Teddy Roosevelt administration had already begun to unleash on behalf of British looting operations worldwide, it is not surprising that America’s enduring enemy would cynically choose a tragic figure as a model for what they hoped would be a “kinder, gentler” and more submissive America.

The dream of decent black education

by Denise Henderson

Initiative, Paternalism, and Race Relations: Charleston’s Avery Normal Institute

by Edmund L. Drago

University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1990
402 pages, hardbound, \$45

Dr. Edmund Drago’s history of the Avery Normal Institute, a secondary school for African-Americans established in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1865, begins in a promising manner. Dr. Drago quotes the racist secessionist John C.

Calhoun, who said, "Show me a negro who knows Greek syntax and I will believe that he is a human being and he should be treated like a man." "Avery produced such persons," ironically points out Dr. Drago.

Thus, it is unfortunate that Dr. Drago's book does not quite live up to its potential. He does catalogue the "facts" of history (some of which are themselves questionable); but in the manner of the value-free historian, he makes no distinction between the noble ideals of Avery's first principal, Francis L. Cardozo, who founded Avery with the classical curriculum of Wilhelm von Humboldt, and the later Pestalozzi- and John Dewey-oriented curriculum of the American Missionary Association.

'Knowledge is power'

Cardozo bluntly stated on the floor of the South Carolina Constitutional Convention following the Civil War, that for blacks, "knowledge is power." But the later American Missionary Association curriculum kept blacks "in their place," giving them mechanical or "vocational skills," but not the knowledge of Greek syntax, and the intellectual power that represented, and which Francis Cardozo himself had mastered.

Nor is any distinction made between those who fought for a classical music tradition (in 1942, Avery students performed "opera, grand and light," and Handel's "Hallelujah, Amen!" and Schubert's "Ave Maria,") and the fact that teachers invited students to their homes to play jazz.

Put simply, the story of this book is how Charleston's black community fought tooth and nail to make Avery Normal Institute a school which could do two things: First, during the Reconstruction years, Avery graduates became teachers in many outlying areas of South Carolina, under extremely difficult conditions. Over the decades, as Avery continued its tradition of providing teachers to the rural areas and the islands of South Carolina, a second goal was met: preparing Avery graduates for a college education.

This occurred despite the Jim Crow segregation laws, despite the desire of the American Missionary Association to downgrade the school into an "industrial school," and despite the racism of Southern society.

Core of modern civil rights movement

What makes this a powerful story is that the dream of Francis L. Cardozo was so strong it could not die, or be killed. Avery Normal Institute lives on today, in the form of the civil rights movement: Avery graduates and Avery teachers were part of the core group of the 1960s' civil rights movement.

The weakness in Dr. Drago's telling of the story is that he decided to proceed from the false historical premise that history is relative; that the education which was acceptable in one age, might not be in the next; and that Avery, because of its insistence on a standard of education which was *univer-*

sal in character, should be classified as an "elitist" institution. It was elitist, but only in the sense that it produced the elite that founded the civil rights movement.

Initiative, Paternalism, and Race Relations provided this reader with useful background on the fact that the fight for the idea that all men are created equal was continued from one generation to the next. For that reason, I recommend this book. But readers should read between the lines, and realize that the destruction of classical education in the United States was a conscious effort directed by many of those whom Dr. Drago implicates in his study; and that their efforts were directed against both black and white, as Francis Cardozo had warned they would be.

Books Received

General of the Army, George C. Marshall, Soldier and Statesman, by Ed Cray, W.W. Norton, New York, 1990, 847 pages, hardbound, \$35.

Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf, by Judith Miller and Laurie Mylroie, Random House, New York, 1990, 268 pages, paperback, \$5.95.

Our Man in Panama: How General Noriega Fooled the United States and Made Millions in Drugs and Arms, by John Dinges, Random House, New York, 1990, 416 pages, \$21.95.

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Against the Grain: An Autobiography by Boris Yeltsin, trans. by Michael Glenny, Summit, New York, 1990, 263 pages, hardbound, \$19.95.