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*Mary Black's Family Quilts: Memory and Meaning in
Everyday Life*, by Laurel Horton

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at Gettysburg could stomach a deeper treatment of an entire state's war experience.

Unfortunately, there are additional problems. The manuscript clearly required at least one additional round of proofreading, and there are baffling gaffes throughout the book. Mistakes range from the egregious (the top picture caption opposite page 1 does not identify the subject of the picture) to the merely annoying (redundancies such as "a moderate Southern Senator from North Carolina" on page 28). A firmer editorial hand would have caught such mistakes, not to mention inconsistencies ("Sullivan's island" and "Morris island" on page 24, "Sullivan and Morris Islands" on page 33) and embarrassing, elementary spelling errors (page 112: "J. W. Reid ... represents the multitude of South Carolina Confederates who fought for the slaveholder's cause as if it was there own"). The sloppiness with which this book was put together constantly jars the reader and reflects poorly on both the author and the press.

As sympathetic as I am to Poole's attempt to write a one-volume account of South Carolina's Civil War experience, it will take another book, with better execution, to fully complete that task.

U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian

Aaron W. Marrs

Mary Black's Family Quilts: Memory and Meaning in Everyday Life. By Laurel Horton. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005. Pp. xxii, 184; \$19.95, paper.)

In *Mary Black's Family Quilts*, folklorist Laurel Horton has given us an exemplary piece of scholarship that can be enjoyed by a wide audience, even those with no more than a passing interest in quilts. One of the leading quilt scholars in the United States, Horton has written a book that celebrates both the folk nature of quilts and the quilt-making process. Unlike much of the previous scholarship, which approaches similar subject matter from a broad cultural perspective, Horton remains tightly focused on a single South Carolina family. The book presents a painstakingly in-depth analysis of sixteen quilts from the collection of Spartanburg County resident Mary Snoddy Black (1860–1927). Here lies the strength of the folkloristic approach—a targeted study of the influential role that individuals play in the dissemination, cultivation, and transformation of folk traditions.

While *Mary Black's Family Quilts* should be read intently by anyone who studies quilting traditions in earnest, it reveals much more than the composition of a family's quilt collection. While valuable as a quilt study in itself, Horton has also created a resource for those with a passion for genealogy,

family history, and applied historical research. As noted by Michael Owen Jones in the foreword, folklorists tend to base their study on "contemporary behavior," with the past (even the recent past) playing a "relatively minor role." Certainly folklorists are interested in historical context, but more often than not, those working in the public sector are focused on how people are crafting tradition today. What are the socioeconomic pressures that influence individuals or groups to change aspects of a tradition? How do these same forces strengthen traditional behavior?

Horton did not have the luxury of interviewing Mary Black. Her contemporary resources were limited to the analysis of voices buried in the historical record. By combining limited interviews with Mary Black's descendants and meticulous archival research, Horton creates a thorough, revealing, and poignant narrative that takes the reader into the parlors, fields, and barns of the Black family from the time of their arrival in rural Spartanburg County in the 1770s to their move to the city of Spartanburg in 1894. Horton does an effective job of placing six generations of the Black family into the larger contextual framework—they are one small part of a much larger story. She is quick to emphasize that no generalizations should be drawn from her work; quilts from another family in a different part of Spartanburg County will tell a completely different story.

These quilts do not stand alone as simply objects of the material-culture record. Less concerned with aesthetic presumptions, the author breaks each quilt down into its respective parts. Why this material? Why this design? What was the familial significance of the gifting of this quilt? Who made the quilt, when, and why? Like other forms of folk art, these sixteen quilts are the tangible expression of individual and family bonds, relationships, and aesthetic sensibilities. Complementing the thorough contextual analysis, Horton includes exceptional color plates that provide views of each quilt in its entirety and images that allow the reader to see details like stitch patterns and fabric textures.

The book revolves around the intimate nature of the subject matter. Chapter headings emphasize this approach: "I am doing the best I know how" (chapter 2), and "Let others live the rowdy life" (chapter 4). The reader is taken on a journey through two centuries of settlement in the South Carolina upcountry, and the sixteen quilts are the thread that holds the narrative together—a narrative that involves family dynamics, social history, economic turbulence, religious devotion, and personal struggle. As Horton explains, "The meanings of quilts are not inherent in their visual and physical presence but rather adherent in the accumulated associations of those who experience them." One would be hard pressed to find a publication concerning antique textiles that can be called poignant, but *Mary Black's Family Quilts* might be considered an example. This is a work of folklore

scholarship at its most effective—highly intimate, well researched, and tightly focused, while maintaining a clear sense of the larger whole.

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Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados.
By Russell R. Menard. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006. Pp. xvii, 181; \$39.50, cloth.)

One of the leading historians of the economic and social life of early Americans, Russell Menard has published a number of important books and articles, notably *The Economy of British America* (1985), which he coauthored with John J. McCusker. While not his best work, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* nonetheless adds to our understanding of the development of England's most valuable seventeenth-century colony.

Menard successfully challenges the longstanding sugar-revolution thesis about Barbados. Contrary to the work of many historians, he demonstrates that planters on the West Indian island had developed a diversified export economy—often making profits from the cultivation of tobacco, cotton, and indigo—and had begun to utilize slave labor prior to their full embrace of sugar cultivation in the late 1640s. Additionally, upon reading this book, no one should any longer be under the illusion that the Dutch fundamentally financed the planters' transition to sugar cultivation. Menard is particularly helpful in describing the critical financial role played by the Noell brothers. These London merchants invested heavily in Barbados in the late 1640s, providing much needed capital. I was able to make a similar argument in my *Englishmen Transplanted: The English Colonization of Barbados, 1627–1660* (2003), in part because Menard kindly permitted me to draw upon his unpublished research on this question.

There is an excellent chapter on the development of the increasingly efficient integrated sugar plantation and another on how Barbados influenced the development of several other colonies, both in the West Indies and on the North American mainland.

Yet this book is not without problems. Most of them have to do with Menard's use of sources. He explains that his "arguments are rooted in documents housed on the island," in contrast to most historians' use of "metropolitan sources" (p. 8). For this he should be commended. He skillfully used some volumes among the recopied deed record books (RB3/1, 2, and 3) in the island's archives. However, he neglected to use a critical volume that has deeds for the years 1655–1660 (RB3/5). Moreover, he neglected to use the recopied will record books, a source that would have