Deborah Beckel deftly explores the racial politics in North Carolina during the forty years following the Civil War in *Radical Reform: Interracial Politics in Post-Emancipation North Carolina*. Part of University of Virginia Press’ notable *American South Series*, the book is a detailed scholarly monograph expanded from Beckel’s 1998 Emory University dissertation.

Beckel places the era into an historical context and cites prominent historians to establish the interpretative framework. As *Radical Reform* proceeds, Beckel advances her divergent argument that in the years following the Civil War an interracially-led, pro-democratic Republican Party grew to significant power in North Carolina by creating a coalition across race and class lines that predated the Populist Fusion of the 1890s.

She cogently demonstrates that interracial leadership and support allowed state Republicans to win elections and to pursue their legislative agendas with some success. Thorough coverage is given to the political machinations of both the Republican Party and the Conservative Party (later the Democratic Party). Third parties are described as having formed as the two major parties struggled to realign themselves in response to the growing labor, temperance, populist, and progressive movements. Beckel presents the tensions between ideals and political expediency that escalated due to sectional, racial, and economic differences. The influence of race and class on numerous issues, including jury service, public schools, fence laws, labor unions, alcohol prohibition, and tax reform, is explored. She demonstrates the significant role that partisan newspapers, labor unions, church organizations and ministers, women’s temperance societies, and business leaders had during the period.

The race-based fear and hatred that were used effectively to motivate the base of the Democratic Party of the late 1800s are made palpable through numerous quotations from newspapers and archival collections. Beckel recounts how the Klu Klux Klan and other white supremacists used violence to intimidate and punish opponents and how they used mass voter fraud to defeat some Republican candidates. The condescension and paternalism toward African Americans expressed by some in the Republican Party as a means to placate moderate whites within their coalition are presented, as is the fact that relatively few African Americans were appointed to government posts after Republican electoral wins. As the result of persecution, high unemployment, and later disenfranchisement, African American emigration from the state soared.

Well written and engaging, *Radical Reform* provides a timely historical prism that we may use to understand better both our past and present, but it is not a popular history text; it is a solid academic monograph most appropriate for college and university libraries. With nearly a quarter of its length devoted to annotated endnotes and bibliography, future researchers will find it to be a fertile guide to their studies. Public libraries and high school libraries with patron interest in scholarly histories of North Carolina or the Reconstruction Era will also benefit from this acquisition.

C. William Gee  
East Carolina University