In *Stinking Stones and Rocks of Gold*, Shepard W. McKinley argues that the years from 1865 to 1884 are key to understanding the growth and the importance of fertilizer production in the American South, despite the drop in the relative standing of South Carolina phosphates as a source of this product following that period. However, McKinley does not limit his study to phosphate mining and fertilizer manufactures in the South Carolina low county. He also tackles the question of how freed people and former masters of slaves navigated the development of an industrial labor force during Reconstruction. As such, this work is equal parts history of science, business history, industrial history, labor history, and the history of race relations, all done as a case study geographically centered on Charleston, the Charleston Neck, and the Ashley River. McKinley’s research of these topics is thorough, and his analysis of that research is convincing.

McKinley starts his exploration of postbellum industrial behavior in Charleston by explicating the intersection of the scientific and business interests of the city’s antebellum intellectual and merchant elite with fertilizer as an agricultural improvement. While Peruvian guano provided the basis of northern fertilizer manufacturing as early as 1840, its power to replenish the soil’s nutrients was not well understood in the scientific community. Charleston’s “gentlemen-scientists” entered the discussion about fertilizer because of their concern over soil exhaustion in the southern states, but they were not particularly successful in gaining new insights until the eve of the Civil War. In the late antebellum period, Francis Simmons Holmes and St. Julien Ravenel laid the foundation for developing phosphate mining and fertilizer manufactures in postbellum South Carolina when they focused their research on bone phosphate of lime (BPL) as the source of soil nutrients. Michael Tuomey and Charles U. Shepard then extended the research on the phosphate wealth of local geology in the low country and started plans to extract and market this natural resource. During the Civil War, South Carolina naturalists aided the Confederate Nitre and Mining Bureau with their phosphate background, introducing Christopher G. Memminger and George A. Trenholm to the potential commercial profitability of phosphate mining and fertilizer production.

The next two chapters of this book focus on the development of phosphate mining, first under the land and later under the water of rivers and marshes. Starting in 1865, nearly as soon as both the Confederacy and the institution of slavery met their demise, Charlestonians began forming alliances, both entrepreneurial and political, to exploit the mineral deposits
that could be extracted through strip mining. The rocks were then shipped north or to Europe. Raising capital initially proved difficult. Different business alliances found the money needed to purchase or lease land and build transportation facilities by organizing either groups of small-scale local investors or large inputs of northern capital hidden behind façades of local leadership. River mining proved equally problematic since the river bottoms belonged to the state, which expected large royalties for allowing dredging for the minerals. The discussion heated even more over mining marshlands as a means of avoiding state regulation of river mining. Like elsewhere in Gilded Age America, both Republicans and Democrats sought to enrich themselves through control of the governmental process. Even the famous harbor pilot-turned-Reconstruction politician Robert Smalls helped form a largely African American corporation to democratize river mining of phosphate rocks.

South Carolina entrepreneurs soon created their own fertilizer factories for processing the ore and learned to market their product to skeptical consumers. Most of Charleston’s fertilizer manufacturers purchased local rock rather than mining it themselves. Central to the manufacturing process was the use of sulfuric acid. After aggravating neighbors in the city with the environmental hazards of fertilizer production, a number of manufacturers constructed factories and transportation networks upriver from Charleston, leading to the industrialization of a largely uninhabited area known as the Charleston Neck.

McKinley argues that the convergence of river and land mining along with the manufacture and marketing of fertilizer impacted southern farmers well beyond what we previously believed. The combination of the proximity of a home-grown industry and a successful marketing strategy convinced farmers to purchase fertilizers with the goal of producing more cotton, notwithstanding the dwindling profits of the fiber amid the worldwide glut that resulted from southern overproduction.

Although McKinley analyzes events that often seem to run on parallel rather than convergent lines, one still gets a full sense of the story of industrial development in Reconstruction Charleston. His descriptions of how Conservative businessmen recruited, retained, and used the labor of freedmen are the book’s most interesting moments. African Americans working in phosphates and fertilizer failed to show up in the census records due to the nature of how they chose to participate in the industry. Transient labor supplemented agricultural activities with industrial wages. Workers came and went at their own convenience as the rhythms of farm life ebbed and flowed. When they felt that their labor was being unfairly exploited, instead of confronting management, their resistance generally amounted to removing themselves from the workforce.
With a historiographically rich introduction and conclusion, McKinley’s work supports the growing body of scholarship on modernization in the antebellum South. Even though most of his research is postbellum, McKinley contends that everything important takes place before the 1880s, when one usually thinks of the advent of the New South. He argues that the phosphate and fertilizer industry of South Carolina was largely conceived of and managed by southerners, with northern control coming later. Of special note are the nineteen illustrations that populate the book’s pages. The University Press of Florida is to be congratulated for publishing them, and other publishers should be encouraged to follow their lead.

Georgia Gwinnett College


A dear friend of mine used to say about fellow historians that “the easiest way to say something new is to say something wrong.” With his latest offering, Mark R. Cheathem, professor of history at Cumberland University, has broken the old cynic’s heart. In Andrew Jackson, Southerner, Cheathem tackles Jackson the westerner and finds that in fact, Old Hickory was a southern man whose nationalism trumped the myopia of most of his adversaries.

Cheathem examines Jackson as a southerner impacted and influenced by the same things that his fellow southerners considered significant at the time. His family history, Revolutionary War experiences, westward migration, and evolvement as a Nashville gentleman all shaped the talented, but restless, Jackson into the kind of upwardly mobile individual that money and political connections made in the early-nineteenth-century South. When he embarked on his political career, Jackson exhibited an innate understanding of politics and human nature rivaling that of the more traditional eastern politicians, but he carried with it the intimidating reputation of a frontiersman and Indian fighter.

Readers searching for Cheathem’s treatment of the relationship between Jackson and John C. Calhoun will not be disappointed. The author gives significant attention to Calhoun’s role as secretary of war and the various controversies that arose between him and Jackson, a commander in the First Seminole War. Calhoun led nearly all of James Monroe’s cabinet in an effort to have Jackson censured, while John Quincy Adams, the secretary of state, stood behind the Tennessean in the storm. Whether directly connected to Calhoun or not, Congress lined up in similar opposition seeking political