

The world the slaves made.

No Sambo for Genovese

by Larry Shore
DTH Critic

"Roll Jordan, Roll" by Eugene Genovese, Pantheon Books, \$7.94.

Editor's note: Roll, Jordan, Roll was nominated for the 1975 National Book Award in History. Yesterday it was announced in New York that The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson, a biographical study by Harvard professor Bernard Bailyn, had won the award.

Historians usually find what they want to find. Historical scholarship concerning slavery in the Old South is a perfect example of this rule. U. B. Phillips, a racist, depicted slavery as a benevolent, unprofitable institution maintained for the benefit of the slaves. Kenneth Stampp's neoabolitionist tendencies pervade his work and bind him to

In contrast, Genovese presents a perceptive analysis of the quality of life of slaves and masters, which largely defies measurement. Utilizing diaries, plantation records, WPA interviews of former slaves, economic data and an incredible number of primary and secondary sources, Genovese convincingly destroys innumerable myths and stereotypes. Sambo, in particular, is crushed and replaced by a strong, self-assertive slave male, who is supported by strong slave women, and utilizes "weapons of cultural defense" in order to maintain his humanity under a regime that severely minimized the possibilities of "frontal assault." And, Genovese asserts the primacy of religion as a weapon of defense: "The slaves' religion developed into the organizing center of their resistance within

from it on some important levels." This argument is weakened because Genovese fails to discuss black culture after emancipation.

Roll, Jordan, Roll, is by no means (and Genovese admits as much) the definitive work on slavery. The book does not contain a narrative line, and Genovese's focus is on the 1830-1860 period; as a result, the reader has no sense of the evolution of a system. All too often Genovese generalizes about "most slaves," and the diversity of the institution is thereby blurred. His statements concerning the distinctiveness of "black religion" are questioned by scholars such as David Donald and Grady McWhiney. Furthermore, in pushing the ideology of black self-assertion Genovese approaches inverse racism. McWhiney is correct when he asserts that the book "is overburdened with unsupported hypotheses and pretentious philosophizing" (e.g. Genovese's statements concerning the white South as a "guilt culture" and the black South as a "shame culture").

Despite these significant flaws, Roll, Jordan, Roll is an important contribution to slave historiography and should be read. Genovese treats slaves as human beings instead of capitalist robots. His work, especially on religion, deserves careful scrutiny by both scholars and laymen. And, if Genovese's rhetoric occasionally catapults him into untenable positions, the essential contribution of his scholarship—the illumination of the double-edged sword of paternalism—should not be overlooked.

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the development of a distinctive Afro-American culture during and after the slave regime. Stanley Elkins, (in Slavery), was strongly influenced by the concentration camps of Hitlerite Germany, and determined that the North American slave institution infantilized its victims, creating the Sambo figure.

In 1974 two important new studies of slavery were published, Fogel & Engelman's Time of the Cross and Eugene Genovese's Roll, Jordan, Roll. Both books promote the ideology of black self-assertion, but Time on the Cross is a deeply flawed work, while Genovese's product despite significant flaws, is a masterpiece of historical scholarship. Fogel and Engelman are climetricians; they use sophisticated mathematical models and computer techniques to "prove" that slaves internalized the Protestant work ethic and that the spirit of capitalism prevailed the slave institution. The eminent C. Vann Woodward was dazzled by the nifty coefficients; however, recent reviewers such as Herbert Gutman and David Brion Davis have exposed Time on the Cross for the pretentious failure that it is.

acommodation; it reflected the hegemony of the master class but also set firm limits to that hegemony."

Genovese's achievement lies not so much in examining new sources, but in looking at old sources from a new perspective—that of the slaves. This perspective enables Genovese to depict the slave community in all of its complexities. The central thesis of Roll, Jordan, Roll is that paternalism, the mode of social relations on which the slave institution was based, "implicitly recognized the slaves' humanity" through its "insistence upon mutual obligations." Genovese contends that the slaves accommodation to paternalism did not constitute an acceptance of slavery; "By developing a sense of moral worth and by asserting rights, the slaves transformed their acquiescence in paternalism into a rejection of slavery itself, although their masters assumed acquiescence in the one to demonstrate acquiescence in the other." Thus, the slave holder's regime was sustained "despite the deep antagonisms it engendered."

Genovese's interpretation of the slave institution depends greatly upon his discussion of slave religion. Genovese argues that the development of a distinctive "black" Christianity ("a religion within a religion") in the slave community was an essential element in the development of a "protonational identification" among blacks ("a nation within a nation"). Genovese argues that because of the nature of their resistance to slavery, Afro-Americans are not merely another "ethnic component in a variegated American nationality," but that they contribute to and absorb American national culture while remaining "apart

No kids, please

The Carolina Choir and Women's Glee Club will present "Testament of Freedom," a program anticipating the bicentennial celebration, today at 8 p.m. in Hill Hall auditorium. Admission is free.

Because the program will be recorded for a commemorative album, Dr. Lara G. Hoggard, director of the Carolina Choir, has requested that parents leave young children at home. Past concerts have had to compete with infants crying, children in the aisles and children locking themselves out of the auditorium, Hoggard told the DTH Monday.

"Because the concert will be commercially recorded, small children will not be admitted," Hoggard said.



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Hang gliding at Jockeys Ridge

Photo by Mark Armstrong

Hang gliders defy supersonic age

by Liz Skillew
Staff Writer

Wings slap the air and suddenly the hot sand is no longer beneath your feet. You're up and free to soar with the seagulls. Most gliders, however, won't keep company with an 18-foot glider.

In these supersonic days, some men and women still seek to grow wings and sail smoothly through the air. Mark Armstrong, a senior Geology major, is one of them. "When I was a kid," he said, "I always

wanted to fly like a bird. Hang gliding is the closest thing to it."

In January, Armstrong, after one lesson, went up for the first time. It wasn't too long until he had his own glider. Then friend and fraternity brother Tom Cox got interested. "I've been up 40 times," Cox said. "It's great." Cox, a sophomore, now has his own glider, and on nice weekends the two of them take off for the nearest head wind.

Hang gliding isn't a difficult sport, but it does require a general knowledge of wind directions and speeds, as well as proper body positions during flight. Takeoff speed, for instance, is 20 mph, which is usually achieved by running down a hill or sand dune. Flight time is limited and the average gliding speed is only 25 mph, but flyers can soar as high as they wish.

The record time at Jockey's Ridge is 13 minutes and 20 seconds. "The longest I've ever been up is about one minute," Armstrong said.

"That doesn't sound like a very long time,"

Cox explained, "but when you're up there, it sure doesn't seem short."

Gliding requires little equipment—just a helmet, harness and kite. The price of a Rogallo-design glider, however, demands dedication. "They run about five to seven hundred dollars," Armstrong said. "The best thing is to get a used one." Mark's kite was the first one to fly off Grandfather Mountain.

Which brings to mind the question of safety. How dangerous is hang gliding? "It's relatively safe," Armstrong explained, "if you think about safety—make sure your equipment is sound and in good repair."

"And if you remember not to get overconfident," Cox added.

"The idea," Mark continued, "is not to get any higher than you care to fall."

Nevertheless, there are times when gliding gets sticky. Power lines, ski lifts and high cliffs have killed many. FAA regulation of the sport is being considered.

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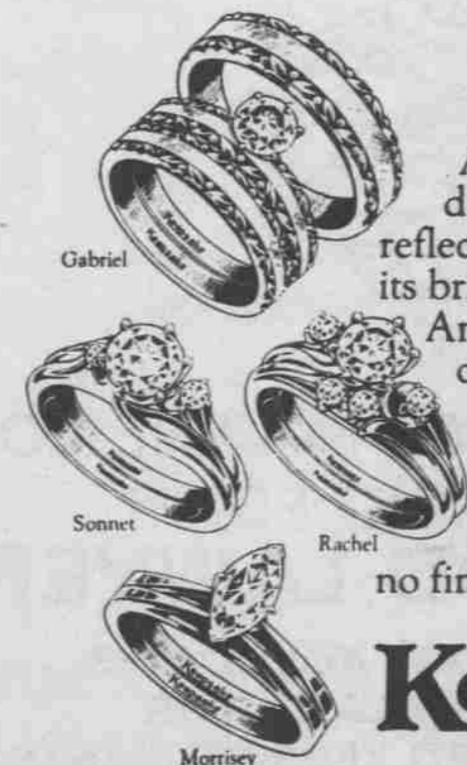
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