

It is a great pity that the extraordinary richness of the text was not accompanied by more suitable maps and tables, as the four included maps are not tremendously valuable and the great quantity of data presented in the text is somewhat harder to digest than should have been the case. The changing rates of landownership and farm size described here lend themselves to graphic presentation, and in this form might well have invited comparison with Euro-American experiences beyond Kulikoff's disappointing exclusion of all but the canonical thirteen mainland colonies. As a master narrative, *Colonial American Farmers* succeeds in elegantly synthesizing a massive body of literature, probing the relationships between economy, demography and society, and in vigorously shaping and inspiring debate on the formation of American society for years to come.

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Daniel A. Coleman. *The Anarchist: A Novel* (Chapel Hill, NC: Willowbrook Press, 2001).

The assassination of Pres. William McKinley in September 1901 seriously shook the bubble of comfort and optimism that had developed within the American middle class. The depression of the 1890s was well behind them; increasing wealth was apparent in the cities and on the farms. The U.S. had won its "splendid little war" against Spain in 1898, and found itself a newly imperial power, stretching across the Pacific and the Caribbean.

Two things at the turn-of-the-century epitomized this confidence. The first was McKinley's reelection in 1900. He seemed to represent the new, expanding, industrial and commercial America, unified and stable; while his opponent, as in 1896, was William Jennings Bryan, echoing the pre-industrial past and a discordant society. McKinley and his Republican Party were definitely in control.

Second, nothing seemed to better express America's new-found leadership in commerce, science, and world affairs than the place where McKinley was shot – the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, an ebullient exhibit of industrial development and American wealth, and the greatest display of the power of electricity anyone had ever seen.

There was, of course, a darker side, which middle class America tried to ignore but which tended to intrude at regular intervals. Wealth in the new America was hardly general: the new urban working class, largely immigrant, was consistently exploited and many led lives of true desperation. That, in turn,

ignited frequently bloody strikes like that in Homestead against the Carnegie Steel works in 1892, and the national Pullman strike of 1894. Middle class Americans were worried by such events, and even more by the strain of revolutionary radicalism that had been spearheaded by the anarchists since the 1880s. Such radicalism was alien to American values, they believed, and was driven by alien peoples, immigrants from a Europe that lacked America's superior social order.

Emma Goldman was the *bête noire* of middle class fears: a foreigner, a Jew, a woman, and an advocate of everything from women's rights and birth control to violent overthrow of capitalist society. It was her lover and colleague, Alexander Berkman, who had shot and stabbed (but failed to kill) William C. Frick of Carnegie Steel during the Homestead strike. It was Goldman who defended Gaetano Bresci, the anarchist Italian immigrant who traveled back to Italy in 1900 to assassinate King Umberto I. And, as it turned out, it was she who served as an inspiration and ideal to Leon F. Czolgosz, the man who assassinated McKinley.

There were, in fact, real fears expressed for McKinley's safety in a crowded venue like the Exposition. Some in the president's entourage thought his appearance was a bad idea. But the president was persuaded of his own safety; his America was not a land of assassins. Leon Czolgosz counted on that, stalked the president, and shot him on September 6th; McKinley lingered until the 14th. Czolgosz was quickly tried, condemned on September 26, and then electrocuted at Auburn Prison on October 29th, less than five weeks later.

Czolgosz, contrary to popular perception, was not an immigrant. He was American-born, of Polish immigrant parents. Like other presidential assassins, he was a "loser" and a dreamer, a drifter whose life had been rarely other than sad. He was not politically sophisticated, but had been a member of the Socialist party in Cleveland, and was "inspired" when he heard Emma Goldman speak. Whether he was actually an anarchist continues to be a matter of dispute, as is the question of his true mental and psychological health.

Daniel Coleman's historical novel treats of these matters. It is a "serious" historical novel, in that the author is concerned with probing the issues involved as much as in providing a readable narrative. The book focuses on the brief period when Czolgosz was in Auburn prison, awaiting execution, but looks back via fictional interviews with the assassin. Except for Czolgosz and Emma Goldman, all the book's characters are fictional, and the main scene in which Goldman appears is fictional as well. The reader, therefore, should understand that much that is general can be learned from the novel, but that the specifics are entirely imaginary.

The story is a first-person narrative by the book's protagonist, Jon Parker, a medical student serving an internship with the chief physician at Auburn Prison. His experiences and perceptions frame what we see and hear. Since

Parker is aiming at a career in psychiatry, he becomes much involved in the most controversial questions surrounding Czolgosz: is he sane or insane? is he really an anarchist? were there others involved? Ultimately, Parker is permitted to conduct several interviews with a willing Czolgosz, which permits Coleman to investigate these questions, ultimately and wisely avoiding easy answers.

The narrative itself is a pleasant one, carrying the reader along quickly and easily. One shares Parker's perceptions not only of Czolgosz, but of the prison in general, daily life in Auburn, and turn-of-the-century American life in general. While definitely middle-class, Parker, as a student, is not wealthy, and therefore frequents a working-class bar, which lets Coleman portray the "other side" of the community. Likewise, Parker's romance with his mentor's headstrong daughter, Lucy, permits the author to bring in issues of women's rights and late Victorian morality. At the end, of course, the questions of capital punishment and of the electric chair also make their appearance.

The author is interested in questions of social justice, and of the nature, controversiality, and role of anarchism at the time. By making his protagonist both inquisitive and open-minded, Coleman is able to explore these issues in an impartial way, to the reader's advantage.

It is difficult to tell how much actual research went into this book. The author seems well-informed on the central and peripheral questions he deals with in the narrative, but the bibliographic note is extremely brief. Notably missing is any reference to A. Wesley Johns' 1970 book, *The Man Who Shot McKinley*, probably the leading secondary source. (If the reader wants to look at the book *American Assassins*, which Coleman does list, its author's name is misspelled there: it is James W. Clarke, with an "e.")

Overall, it is a successful book. For the general reader, it is an "easy read" that also provides a good historical background to an important time and important events. For the professional historian, the book's value is somewhat less clear, but it is informative in a general way, and reminds one of issues that are not entirely in the past.

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Robert McIntosh, *Boys in the Pits: Child Labour in Coal Mines* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

The boys in the pits both impressed and dismayed American journalist Stephen Crane in his 1894 visit to a Pennsylvania coal mine. They "swore long oaths with skill," he reported, and while their boss thought he controlled them, Crane was