

## Society's Books of Note

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Adena Spingarn, *Uncle Tom: From Martyr to Traitor*, Foreword by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018. \$40.00. 272 pp.

Adena Spingarn, Lecturer in English at Stanford University, charts the dramatic cultural transformation of perhaps the most controversial literary character in American history. From his origins as the heroic, Christ-like protagonist of Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel, the best-selling book of the nineteenth century after the Bible, Uncle Tom has become a widely recognized epithet for a black person deemed so subservient to whites that he betrays his race. Within the stubborn American binary of black and white, citizens have used this rhetorical figure to debate the boundaries of racial difference and the legacy of slavery.

Anders Walker, *The Burning House: Jim Crow and the Making of Modern America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018. \$30.00. 304 pp.

Anders Walker, Associate Dean for Research and Engagement at St. Louis University, demonstrates that racial segregation under Jim Crow fostered not simply terror and violence, but also diversity, one of our most celebrated ideals. Prominent intellectuals of the time like Robert Penn Warren, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Flannery O'Connor and Zora Neale Hurston found pluralism in Jim Crow. Baldwin likened white culture to a "burning house". In this provocative book, Walker offers a new lens through which to understand the history of civil rights in the United States.

David Jenemann, *The Baseball Glove: History, Material, Meaning, and Value*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge Books, 2018. \$24.95. 158 pp.

David Jenemann, Associate Professor of English at the University of Vermont, argues that the baseball

glove is a ubiquitous item, a crucial piece of equipment in the game of baseball, and it offers the opportunity to examine the production of material culture and social practice at numerous levels. Where and how is a glove made, and how does its manufacture square with the narratives surrounding its place in American cultural life? What are the myths, superstitions, and beliefs surrounding its acquisition, care, use, and significance?

Tamler Sommers, *Why Honor Matters*. New York: Basic Books, 2018. \$27.00. 272 pp.

Tamler Sommers, Associate Professor of Philosophy. University of Houston, argues that our collective rejection of honor has come at great cost. Reliant only on Enlightenment liberalism, the United States has become the home of the cowardly, the shameless, the selfish, and the alienated. Properly channeled, honor encourages virtues like courage, integrity, and solidarity, and gives a sense of living for something larger than oneself.

Damon Centola, *How Behavior Spreads: The Science of Complex Contagions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. \$35.00. 312 pp.

Damon Centola, Associate Professor in the Annenberg School for Communication and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania, examines how changes in societal behavior—in voting, health, technology, and finance—occur and the ways social networks can be used to influence how they propagate. Centola's startling findings show that the same conditions accelerating the viral expansion of an epidemic unexpectedly inhibit the spread of behaviors.