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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Column Editor: **Barry Fast** (Academic Book Center)

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Black Police in America

by **W. Marvin Dulaney**. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. Softcover, xvii + 193 pages, indexed. ISBN 0-2532-1046-2 (\$14.95)

Reviewed by **William Finley**
(College of Charleston)

If, in calling **W. Marvin Dulaney's** *Black Police in America* "the first study to examine the history of black police in this country," Charleston South Carolina police chief **Reuben Greenberg** ignores earlier studies such as **Nicholas Alex's** *Black in Blue: A Study of the Negro Policeman* (1969) and **James Reaves's** *Black Cops* (1991), he may be forgiven; for most previous books and articles on this subject have dealt only with the experiences of African-Americans in particular police departments, the relationship of police and the black community, or the psychology of the black policeman. In *Black Police in America*, an extension of his Ph.D. thesis at Ohio State University, Dr. Dulaney (director of the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture at the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina) traces the evolution of the African-American policeman from his first appearance in the eighteenth century as a member of "slave patrols" to his current status in police departments throughout the nation.

As Dulaney states in his preface, this book makes an important contribution in three related areas: American police history, African-American history, and American race relations; and in doing so offers a number of eye-opening revelations. The stated purpose of this study is "to explain how blacks progressed from being objects of policing to becoming some of the leading police administrators and reformers in the American police establishment." With forceful examples, *Black Police in America* makes clear that this progression has not been an easy struggle.

Leaving most of the theorizing to sociologists and criminologists, Dulaney concentrates on revealing the high and low points of black policing in the United States, from participation in early "slave patrols" and as members of city guards in certain southern cities (as early as 1805 in New Orleans) to positions of high command in the police forces of most major American cities today. Dulaney points out that, from the very beginning, police activity in the United States was linked to the black community. In most cities, police were organized to monitor and control black com-

munities, especially in the slave states of the South, where the fear of slave insurrection was always present. This history is one of intimidation, proscription, and persecution and forms a pertinent chapter in the evolution of racism in America. With self-explanatory designations, Dulaney identifies three generations of black law enforcement officers: "crime fighters" (Reconstruction to 1940s), "reformers" (1940s-1960s), and "professionals" (1970s to the present). This path is clearly charted by the various chapter titles: "Black Pioneers," "The Politics of Tokenism," "Separate and Unequal," "The Rise of Black Unionism," "Black Police Administrators."

It will not surprise most readers to learn that in the nineteenth century black police were traditionally assigned to black communities, were forced to have separate facilities, were not permitted to join fraternal police orders or attend social events, and were not allowed to arrest white lawbreakers. What will surprise many readers is the revelation that these practices were common in most U. S. cities until very recent times. Blacks were forced to endure these and other indignities well into the twentieth century. As recently as 1959, a survey of 130 police departments disclosed that 83% of these cities relegated black police to black communities, that only three departments had promoted black officers above the rank of sergeant, and that only one-third of the departments surveyed authorized black police to arrest whites.

With precise documentation, Dulaney depicts the plight of the black policeman in his quest for equality. Although Reconstruction politics after the Civil War ensured the presence of black policemen in the South, between Reconstruction and the 1940s there was not a single African-American on police forces in the Deep South states of Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, despite heavy black populations in these states. Before 1950, only two African-Americans in the U. S. (in New Orleans and Chicago) were promoted to the rank of captain. Only by establishing their own unions, such

as the Miami Colored Police Benevolent Association, the Guardian Association of New York City, the Texas Negro Peace Officers' Association and the Afro-American Patrolmen's League of Chicago — all precursors of the National Black Police Association — were black police able to force departments to ad-

dress their grievances.

Despite being treated as second-class citizens, many black police pioneers overcame racial proscriptions to earn a niche in the annals of black policing. *Black Police in America* illustrates its points by chronicling the experiences of several black pioneers, including **Octave Rey**, the first black to be appointed police captain in American history; **Ira Cooper**, the best-known detective and first black sergeant and lieutenant in the St. Louis police department; **Lee Brown**, Atlanta's second African-American public safety commissioner and later the first black chief of police in Houston and the second black police commissioner of New York city; and **Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.**, the first black general in the United States Air Force who became, with great controversy, the first black public safety director in Cleveland. The experiences of these pioneers and others in cities as diverse as Houston, Chicago, Miami, Detroit, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Newark graphically portray the many problems which black law enforcement officers were forced to overcome. Dulaney's final chapter documents the more recent struggle of black women in U.S. police forces to overcome the dual stigmas of race and gender in order to prove their worth.

If this book has weaknesses, they perhaps lie in the areas of balance and summary. Although the study, as noted above, gives attention to black police experiences in major cities throughout the country, the focus constantly returns to the South, emphasized by the fact that four of the sixteen very useful (though somewhat dated) statistical tables in the appendix concern only the South. One does not get the same thorough sense of historical evolution in other sections of the country as in the

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South. Likewise, although police activities are generally studied in major U. S. cities, readers may wish to know more of the experiences of black police in small American towns, an area documented here by only one or two examples. Readers might also appreciate a stronger summing up of Dulaney's observations on the growth of black policing in America and his thoughts on the future of interracial police departments and the input of black policemen and policewomen on race relations in the United States.

Not the least attractive features of this concise study are the copious notes and exhaustive bibliography which document the scholarly nature of this work and enrich the usefulness of this book for students and researchers of American police history, African-American history, and race relations in the United States.

Esqy: The Early Years at Esquire by **Hugh Merrill**. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995. Hardcover, x + 188 pages, indexed. ISBN 0-8135-2165-3 (\$27.95)

Reviewed by **Nat Bodian** (Publishers Marketing Consultant)

"Esqy" is the name of the pop-eyed man-about-town who appeared on the cover of the first issue of *Esquire*, the magazine for gentlemen that first appeared during the depression-era year of 1933, and who has served as its corporate symbol ever since. *Esqy* is also the name of a newly published book that describes the birth and early years of "the first American magazine for men" and its numerous contributions to American journalism and to American literature.

Esquire was started in the midst of the Great Depression by two young Chicago entrepreneurs, **Arnold Gingrich** and **David Smart**, whose publishing venture was to bring them wealth, fame, and fortune. The first issue of *Esquire*, priced at 50 cents and bearing an October 1933 date, was an instant hit, selling out its 10,000 copies and beginning a publishing success story that within five years peaked at 728,000 copies. The magazine for men was what one reviewer in its early years called "an unholy combination" that mixed the literature of high society with Ziegfeldian sex, comedy, and cartoons.

Historically, *Esquire's* fiction, particularly the fiction the magazine published in the 1930s, has had a more lasting impact than any other feature of the magazine. Founder-Editor Gingrich's taste for the unconventional, combined with his ability to attract "name" writers, led the magazine to publish such writers as **Ernest Hemingway** (who wrote for *Esquire* 33 times), **John Dos Passos**, **Erskine**

Caldwell, **Dashiell Hammett**, **John O'Hara**, **John Steinbeck**, and **Theodore Dreiser** in the thirties. The magazine began as a quarterly with nine employees, went monthly in its second issue, and by 1937 had 275 full-time employees, including 28 advertising salesmen.

During the early years of this century preceding the launch of *Esquire*, **Florenz Ziegfeld** (1867-1932) had proved himself a showman with a remarkable ability to transform popular lowbrow entertainment into theatrical productions for the wealthy and highborn. From 1907 through 1931, the *Ziegfeld Follies* presented more than 3,000 chorus girls in various states of undress to New York audiences who paid five dollars a ticket to see them. At the time *Esquire* was first published, Broadway had been incorporated into Hollywood through vehicles like the *Busby Berkeley* musicals, and it was the stars and chorus girls of both Hollywood and Broadway that shaped *Esquire*. *Esquire's* most popular feature was the "girl" paintings by **George Petty** and **Alberto Vargas**. The women in the paintings were nameless — just that month's model. They were like chorus girls — beautiful, anonymous, presented for a passing or lingering glance in an unreal setting. There were other similarities between the world of Broadway and *Esquire*. The magazine's cartoons often showed beautiful women, glittering with jewelry and in the company of substantial old gentlemen.

Esqy, the book, delves, with fascinating detail, into the life and times of the magazine's founders and recreates the era of its early years and of the workers and contributors who made *Esquire* the outstanding success that it was. The launch of *Esquire* followed the first inauguration of **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** by ten months. On the opening page of its premiere issue, it said, in part: "The New Deal has given leisure a new economic significance, and the five-day week has become not merely every man's right but virtually every man's duty ... what more opportune occasion for the appearance of a new magazine — a new kind of magazine — one that will answer the question of What to do? What to eat, what to drink, what to wear, how to play, what to read — in short a magazine dedicated to the improvement of the new leisure."

Esqy, the book, sets out to tell the story of how **Gingrich**, the son of a Grand Rapids, Michigan wood-carver, and **Smart**, the son of a Chicago barber, set out to fulfill that lofty aim and, in the process, created an American institution that gave rise to a new kind of American periodical journalism that emphasized fashion and correctness, and was, at the same time, flashy and literary, catering to interests in both the bawdy and the lifestyles of the upper classes. In the afterword, author **Hugh Merrill**, who teaches journalism at the University of West Florida, gives a brief overview of *Esquire's* destiny from the post-World War II era up to the present date. Merrill describes how, after World War II, publisher

Gingrich made a decision not to compete with *Playboy*, which had stolen *Esquire's* World War II format, but rather with *Sports Illustrated* and with the lavishly illustrated *Holiday* magazine, and to search out a younger audience. **Gingrich** did this by recruiting a staff of "Young Turks" that included such names as **Henry Wolf**, art director; **Clay Felker**, feature editor; **Ralph Ginzburg**, articles editor; and **Harold Hayes**, assistant to the publisher. By the 1960s, *Esquire* had become the hottest magazine of the era and its literary reputation soared to heights above those reached in the 1930s.

By the 1970s, with **Gingrich's** death and **Hayes's** departure, the magazine floundered and wound up in the hands of **Associated News**, a British corporation, with **Clay Felker** as editor. It subsequently passed to two Knoxville, Tennessee magazine publishers, **Phillip Moffitt** and **Christopher Whittle**. In 1986, *Esquire* was bought by the **Hearst Corporation**, and in 1993, sixty years after its founding, **Hearst** devised a new *Esquire* formula that involved heavy coverage of young movie stars, fashion, and fiction. The editorship was given to **Edward Kosner**, a longtime editor of *New York magazine*. The mid-1990s mission of *Esquire* seems to be showing men how to get along in a society where maleness itself often seems in question. Editor **Kosner** also reintroduced the corporate character *Esqy*, although in redesigned form. Today, *Esquire* enjoys only an ambivalent place in the men's magazine market and seems to be only a shadow of its former self.

Esqy, the book, is smoothly written and an enjoyable read. It is loaded with names, events, and numerous insights into popular American publishing as it evolved and flourished in this century.

Nat Bodian is a book marketing consultant and the author of numerous books on publishing and book marketing, including the authoritative, two-volume Book Marketing Handbook. His formal thirty-year career in book publishing ended with his retirement from John Wiley in 1988. He has since been active consulting, writing, and reviewing publishing-related books. His eleventh book, The Joy of Publishing — a cyclopedic collection of fascinating facts about books, publishing, and authors — will be published in April 1996 by Open Horizons Publishing Company (Fairfield, Iowa).