Georgia Library Quarterly

Volume 44 | Issue 1   Article 32

April 2007

REVIEW: Touching the Web of Southern Novelists

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Recommended Citation

was decimated not only by battle fatalities but also by disease. This book will appeal to Civil War buffs as well as to any reader interested in the human condition. ⏭

— Reviewed by **Carolyn M. Brown**
Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library, Emory University

Touching the Web of Southern Novelists *by David Madden* (University of Tennessee Press, 2006; ISBN 978-1-57233-463-2, $37.00).

David Madden, professor of creative writing at Louisiana State University, explores his personal and professional relationships with a select group of Southern novelists, using the "charged image" (a term he coined describing an image with multiple layers of meaning) of a spider web. Each strand of the web connects his reactions to the subjects of his essays from his viewpoints as reader, teacher, novelist, and critic. Most of the essays included in this collection are reprints from journals, the lone exception being the previously unpublished Evelyn Scott's "Breathe Upon These Slain: A Gallery of Imagined Photographs." However, the two essays connected to Georgia are "Flannery O'Connor: Old Testament Christian Storyteller" and "Carson McCullers: Transfixed among the Self-Inflicted Ruins." (O'Connor was born in Savannah and died in Milledgeville; McCullers was born in Columbus.) Madden's web connects with O'Connor peripherally; he shipped out of Savannah as a merchant marine, and he stopped at a Milledgeville diner while traveling through Georgia and had O'Connor's property pointed out to him. His web also encompasses Robert Penn Warren, William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, Thomas Wolfe, Ernest Gaines, Jesse Hill Ford, George Garrett, Barry Hannah, Cormac McCarthy, and James Agee, with some strands strengthened by personal anecdotes. While most of these names evoke some degree of familiarity, Jesse Hill Ford of Tennessee is a relative unknown. Madden's essay on Ford is one of the most compelling in the collection. Ford, a white writer, thinly novelized the local murder of a black undertaker a decade earlier in *The Liberation of Lord Byron Jones* (1965), and then he brought Hollywood to rural Tennessee to shoot the film. His seeming disregard for the people involved and his reinterpretation of crucial facts to suit his vision polarized local residents into two camps, and eventually Ford shot and killed a young black soldier he feared was waiting to murder his son as he came home. Madden's web reverberates with insight and personal contemplation, distinguishing this collection of literary criticism from the typical dry fare of academe. He
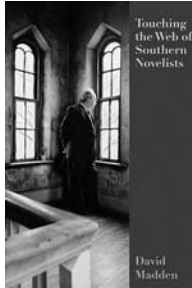
delves into his own psyche with the same degree of consideration he gives his subjects, bringing to life the reason why he is one of the preeminent voices in Southern literature. In addition, this collection contains a comprehensive index most researchers dream of finding and almost never see. Recommended for academic libraries and larger public libraries. ⏭

— Reviewed by **Melanie C. Duncan**
Middle Georgia Regional Library System

Remembering Georgia's Confederates *by Dr. David N. Wiggins* (Arcadia Publishing, 2005; ISBN 0-7385-1823-9, $19.99).

With over 4,000 titles in print, Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series is familiar to legions of local history buffs. The winning formula involves pairing regional enthusiasts with a niche imprint eager to publish annotated black-and-white photographic images of a place or period of history. Longtime Carroll County educator and Civil War collector Dr. Wiggins presents over two hundred historically significant early photographic images of many of Georgia's men in grey. Wiggins is particularly adept in identifying names of individuals, muster rolls, birthplaces, burial sites, service records, and the particulars of uniforms and weaponry. He assiduously cites the sources of his material. The reader will encounter moving and often haunting portraits gleaned from private collections, libraries, historical societies, and what must be a valuable personal cache of images. Enlisted men mingle on the same page with distinguished officers. Real brothers in arms stare into the camera. Part one, the major part of the book, is a compilation of individual soldiers. We view members of the "Wirth Rebels," the "Fayette Grey Guards," the "McIntosh Volunteers," and the "Clinch Rifles." We see the "proclaimed youngest regular Confederate, 10-year-old David Bailey Freeman. In contrast, we see an image of General William Joshua Bush, Georgia's last living Confederate veteran, who died in 1952 at the age of 107. The second part presents pictures of Confederate reunions held in Georgia, while the third and fourth parts contain images of monuments and cemeteries honoring the dead. A self-described miscellany of early photographs, engravings, postcards, and portraits, the book is a visual treat for anyone interested in Georgia's Civil War legacy. ⏭

— Reviewed by **James A. Taylor**
Atlanta-Fulton Public Library

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