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REVIEW: Hell's Broke Loose in Georgia: Survival in a Civil War Regiment

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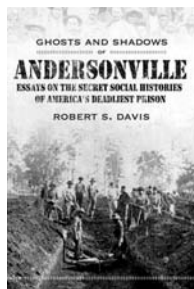
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Ghosts and Shadows of Andersonville: Essays on the Secret Social Histories of America's Deadliest Prison by Robert S. Davis (Mercer University Press, 2006; ISBN 0-88146-012-5, \$35.00).



Robert S. Davis's new book of essays explores the history of the infamous confederate prison as told through the experiences of the many groups and individuals caught up within the narrative. Each essay is devoted to a different person or group of people that interacted during the prison's brief existence from 1862 to 1864. In addition to describing the dire conditions of imprisonment in Andersonville, the book tackles many of the myths and misconceptions that have developed over the centuries. Through extensive primary research, Robert S. Davis postulates theories to answer some of the most enduring questions that remain about Andersonville, such as why more prisoners didn't escape and why General Sherman didn't liberate the prison. The author weaves the stories of prisoners, guards, generals, and slaves into a narrative that vividly illuminates the complex social histories of Andersonville. This book also contains an excellent bibliography and guide to historical research on Andersonville. Recommended for academic and public libraries. ►►

— Reviewed by **Elizabeth White**
University of Georgia

Sherman's 1864 Trail of Battle to Atlanta by Philip L. Secrist (Mercer University Press, 2006; ISBN 0-86554-745-9, \$24.00).



In May 1864, General William T. Sherman began his 120-day Atlanta campaign, battling his way across a 100-mile trail from Dalton to Jonesboro. Author Philip L. Secrist, a descendant of a Civil War soldier, takes the reader on a tour of Sherman's 100-mile battle path, stopping at key battle sites along the way. From Dalton, Sherman headed toward Resaca before leading a march to Adairsville, Cassville, and the Etowah River. More battles were fought at Dallas, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek (the battle site of Peachtree Creek is now an upscale Buckhead neighborhood with only a small park to serve as a reminder of the Civil War battle fought there), culminating on July 22, 1864, with the Battle of Atlanta, one of the bloodiest battles waged by Sherman.

Of special interest to Secrist is the terrain on which Sherman's battles were fought. This interest led the author to compare the terrain in 1864 to the same land today when attempting to verify the location of battle sites. War artifacts recovered from battle sites, along with Secrist's study of the terrain, aided in the identification of the sites. Secrist illustrates his account of Sherman's campaign with a variety of historic images: a Confederate belt buckle found 300 yards from the New Hope Church Battle site; military headquarters along the way; and maps depicting wartime trenches, battle lines, and 1864 landmarks. Well researched and full of historical details, this book is a must for Civil War buffs. However, the gripping accounts by soldiers and civilians, the author's highly descriptive and engaging writing style, and the tour-guide approach of the book will interest even the casual reader. People presently living along Sherman's trail to Atlanta will feel a particularly strong connection to the book. *Sherman's 1864 Trail of Battle to Atlanta* is recommended for public libraries and American history and/or Civil War history collections. ►►

— Reviewed by **Lisa Block**
Emory University

Hell's Broke Loose in Georgia: Survival in a Civil War Regiment by Scott Walker (University of Georgia Press, 2005; ISBN 0-8203-2605-4, \$39.95).



Author Scott Walker writes a narrative history of the 57th Georgia Infantry Regiment in which Robert Braswell, his great- great-grandfather, enlisted.

The book reveals the beliefs and the human suffering endured by these soldiers and their families as they tell their own stories in excerpts from unpublished letters and diaries. Soldiers of the 57th Georgia were primarily very young men, many related and even neighbors, who joined the regiment not only out of a sense of duty to the newly formed Confederacy but also as an adventure. The men came from very small South Georgia towns like Fort Valley or Thomasville and had never been away from home before. From 1862 to 1865, the 57th Georgia marched into Kentucky and Vicksburg, and the soldiers served as prison guards in Andersonville and fought Sherman in the Atlanta campaign. The men had inadequate training, very old guns and ammunition, and limited supplies of food and clothing. Beside all of these hardships, incompetent leaders kept the soldiers marching constantly for days without even an enemy encounter. By the end of the Civil War, the 57th Georgia

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. ►►

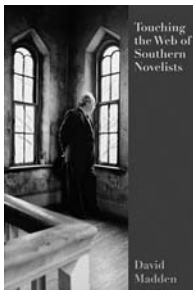
— Reviewed by **Carolyn M. Brown**

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



dives 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