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REVIEW: Carroll County, Georgia Pioneers: Sketches of Early Settlers of Carroll County, Georgia and Their Descendants Selected from Nineteenth-century Biographical Sources

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and medicine/physiology. Then they promptly dive back into obscurity. What if you are the world's premiere evolutionary biologist and Alfred Nobel simply ignored or never envisioned your field? How does the public find out about you? Well, write an autobiography, preferably an award-winning one.

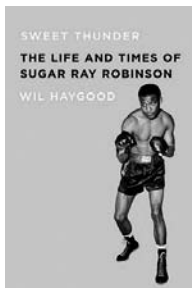
That is what the very shy Edward O. Wilson did by writing *Naturalist*. He is the Honorary Curator in Entomology at Harvard University and Pellegrino University Professor Emeritus there too. He is the winner of numerous science medals and two Pulitzer prizes in nonfiction literature. A childhood encounter with a pinfish cost him the sight of his right eye. It was pierced by a "needle like spine" from the flailing fish's dorsal fin. Here is how he describes the career choice made after this horrendous moment: "The attention of my surviving eye turned to the ground. I would thereafter celebrate the little things of the world, the animals that can be picked up between thumb and forefinger and brought close for inspection." (p. 15)

E.O. Wilson grew up in the American South. He was a lonely, curious child who sought the wild places in and near cities where his family lived, like Birmingham and Pensacola. Wilson studied the inhabitants of swamps and woodlands – especially ant colonies — with a doggedness that served him well as a field biologist in later life. A straight trajectory to Harvard and world renown as a myrmecologist (one who studies ants) seemed rather unlikely, yet he landed there and never left. ▶▶

— Reviewed by **JoEllen Broome**
Zach S. Henderson Library
Georgia Southern University

Sweet Thunder: The Life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson by Wil Haygood (Alfred A. Knopf, 2009; ISBN 978-1-4000-4497-9, \$27.95)

Walker Smith Jr. was born in the rural south Georgia town of Ailey on May 3, 1921. His family moved to Detroit, then settled in Harlem where the teenage Walker was encouraged to participate in a Youth Boxing League. Entering and winning a league match at the last minute, under another boxer's name, he began fighting seriously. When a local sportswriter described him as a "sweet fighter" and nicknamed him "Sugar," Walker Smith Jr., age 16, became Sugar Ray Robinson and started his rise to the championship. Upon his death in 1989, Robinson's



statistics were impressive: 173 wins, 19 losses, six draws and multiple World Championships. His final legacy wasn't just in sports – he played jazz, danced and sang, and his friends were people who were changing the face of America – Lena Horne, Langston Hughes, Miles Davis, Joe Louis and Eleanor Roosevelt. His final legacy was his Youth Club – chartered in 1969, the Sugar Ray Robinson Youth Foundation provided programs for elementary and junior high school youth throughout the Los Angeles area. There were classes in ballet, drama, soccer, etiquette, fashion modeling. What wasn't taught was boxing; Robinson said he did not want to see children hitting each other.

The subtitle of *Sweet Thunder: The Life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson* describes the book completely; for it is a biography of the man and the times he lived in, influenced and helped to change for the better. This is a biography not only for those who are interested in boxing, but also those who are interested in the social history of America in the 20th century and includes endnotes, source notes and a selected bibliography. Author Wil Haygood is an award-winning columnist for the Washington Post and has written two other biographies of notable African-American historical figures: *In Black and White: The Life of Sammy Davis Jr.* and *King of the Cats: The Life and Times of Adam Clayton Powell Jr.* Highly recommended for public libraries. ▶▶

— Reviewed by **Dusty Gres**
Director
Ohoopee Regional Library System

Carroll County, Georgia Pioneers: Sketches of Early Settlers of Carroll County, Georgia and Their Descendants Selected from Nineteenth-century Biographical Sources compiled by Myron Wade House (Myron Wade House, 2009; ISBN 978-0-98255-830-0, \$47.95, hbk.)

Former University of West Georgia Archivist Myron House is a Carroll County, Ga., historian. This work represents one of his projected series of histories of the area and its early settlers. The subtitle tells you exactly what you get: a collection of biographies, straight out of 19th-century sources. This makes the compilation relatively easy to assemble; no editorial hand is needed or desired, which may seem like a simple project on the face of it, but House's knowledge of early settlers is what makes the work possible. Some biographies do not mention Carroll County at all, but House includes a note at the end of the sketch that indicates why that particular biography appears in this volume; it is because of the subject's

relationship to another Carroll County resident (e.g., cf. "J. T. Musick"). The work will be of particular interest to genealogists and historians of Carroll County, Ga. A total of 212 men are profiled. Black-and-white portrait reproductions of 13 men accompany their sketch and are a nice touch. The biographical sketches detail the family members of the individuals profiled, of course, so in that way, women are represented. The source for each biography is noted at the end of each sketch.

House credits Ozzie Binion for the layout of this volume, but it leaves something to be desired. The text is too tight to the binding (typically 1 centimeter or less), while the outer margin is too large (typically 6 and one-half centimeters). If users of the work wish to photocopy a sketch, it may be difficult to get a page printed in its entirety, and the need to press the inner pages down on the copier will tear up the book over time. It would have been better if the main text was moved 4 centimeters closer to the edge of the page; perhaps that could be achieved in a subsequent printing. The volume is nicely finished in a quality hard binding. This adds to the cost of the volume, but it will allow the book to hold up on library shelves for years to come — a wise decision. A must-purchase for Georgia genealogical and local history collections. ►►

— Reviewed by **Shelley L. Smith**
Senior Cataloger
University of West Georgia

Southern Bedtime Stories by Tim McWhorter (Hearts on Fire Books, 2009; ISBN 978-1449590666, \$19.99)

Native West Georgian Tim McWhorter has done what many long to do, but never accomplish: putting the stories of your childhood and the tales of life lessons learned along the way down



in black and white. To this Yankee gal, this book reads like a primer on the mysterious creature known as the Southern man. It's all here: hemorrhoids, jock straps, urination, animal breeding, girls, moonshine stills, snakes, firecrackers, cats and sandboxes, telephoning fish, spotlighting deer and plenty of football, just to name a few ... all the traditional sources of male humor delivered by a man who grew up in Bowdon, Ga., as part of the baby boomer generation.

McWhorter tells of a time of innocence before the digital age. It's a slice of life, usually humorous, sometimes sentimental, occasionally preachy and potentially offensive. This is not eloquent, polished prose. McWhorter simply tells his stories as though he's sitting right next to you, speaking extemporaneously. Some editorial work would have been advisable here, as the text presents "your" for "you're"; "bridal" for "bridle"; "waist" for "waste"; "loosing" for "losing" (he does that one a great deal!); "stake" for "steak"; "roll" for "role"; "poll" for "pole"; "sowing" for "sewing" ... you get the idea. He notes in the dedication that the stories "are not up to professional grade in respect to proper English guidelines," but reflect the Southern dialect. A Southern dialect is fine, but malapropisms might have been corrected before publication.

Nonetheless, the charm of this book comes through despite the lack of editorial finesse. Mark Twain he's not, but his stories reflect his time and an utterly male point of view that will be timeless. Folks a hundred or two years from now could enjoy these stories. Southern men today will find his stories hilarious, and women will gain fresh insights. Recommended for general library fiction collections. ►►

— Reviewed by **Shelley L. Smith**
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Have you checked out the Georgia Library Association's home page lately? Take a look at <http://glg.georgialibraries.org/> for the new library profile feature, "Georgia Library Spotlight." Every six weeks, a new library will share information about its history, facilities, programs and specialties. If you're interested in seeing your library profiled, please e-mail Sarah Steiner at ssteiner@gsu.edu.

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