

January 1983

Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations

Dana F. White

Emory University and Atlanta University

Timothy J. Crimmins

Georgia State University

Harvey H. Jackson

Clayton Junior College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/provenance>



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

White, Dana F.; Crimmins, Timothy J.; and Jackson, Harvey H., "Reviews, Critiques, and Annotations," *Provenance, Journal of the Society of Georgia Archivists* 1 no. 1 (1983).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/provenance/vol1/iss1/11>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Provenance, Journal of the Society of Georgia Archivists by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.

REVIEWS, CRITIQUES, AND ANNOTATIONS

(NOTE: The review editors take special pride in recognizing the Georgia Semiquincentenary, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the state, by acknowledging the issuance of several noteworthy local historical publications, reviewed in this section.)

The Georgia Catalog, Historic American Buildings Survey: A Guide to the Architecture of the State. By John Linley. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982. Pp.xiv, 402. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, appendices, and indices. \$35. Paper, \$17.50.

Vanishing Georgia. By the state of Georgia, Department of Archives and History. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982. Pp.xiv, 225. Illustrations. \$19.95.

Anniversaries seem to be occasions when the good is gratefully recalled, the bad conveniently forgotten. While this pattern may hold true for many of the projects and ventures marking the semiquincentenary commemoration of the founding of Georgia in 1733, it in no way fits either of the volumes under review. Each of these handsomely produced books comprehends the fullness of what Bill Shipp characterized recently in the *Atlanta Constitution* (9 February 1983) as "this beautiful and awful place called Georgia."

The Georgia Catalog is two volumes in one. "Part I: A History of the Architecture of the State" by John Linley, a faculty member of the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia, serves also as something of a field guide. "Part II: A Catalog of Buildings Included in the Historic American Buildings Survey" (HABS) includes statewide listings for the

National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmarks, and the Historic American Engineering Record. Together, the history and the catalog constitute a convenient, attractive introduction to the built environment of Georgia.

Engaging is the word that best describes John Linley's chronology. With the skill he demonstrated in *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area* (Athens, 1972), the author readily transcends, in his own words, "more conventional architectural histories"; indeed, his attention throughout to town and city planning, to landscape and gardening, building crafts and industries alone guarantees such transcendence. But more than mere coverage distinguishes Linley's work, and that is something contained in his self-description as "a practicing architect and a teacher," for both roles are reflected in his book.

As a practicing architect, Linley notes such concerns as the recent revival in the Georgia mountains of the early and soon abandoned colonial craft of constructing log houses and the failure of many imported building styles to survive Georgia's climatic challenges, as against the success of some indigenous types (most notably, the so-called dog trot house) in proving their suitability to that climate, as well as their adaptability to changing times. He also indicates the spread of the "favored NNE-SSW orientation for residences" together with the use of louvered blinds in successful, preindustrial efforts at climate control and the virtual disappearance during modernization of "outbuildings and dependencies," as contrasted with the surprising affinity between a modern machine (the automobile) and an historic form (the Savannah alley). What is more, he seems ever ready to make connections between present and past, less to suggest "influences" than to enlighten the past with examples from a more familiar present. Note his distinctions between Miesean simplicity and Federal elegance or a Wrightian flow of living spaces and a Gothic Revival opening up of domestic interiors.

As a teacher of architectural history, Linley dips inevitably into "architectese," which, happily, is translated in a Glossary of Architectural Terms. Fortunately

also for the reader, the author demonstrates considerable moderation in his usage of this specialized vocabulary.

In conventional architectural histories, exposition as an end in itself presents no basic problems, for what is depicted is the architecture of a recognized elite. In works such as *The Georgia Catalog*, which seek to transcend this narrow tradition, exposition sometimes sputters before reality. Thus, it is in Linley's third chapter that the reader initially confronts the South's peculiar institution with a half-page photograph and description: "Unique buildings of the period include the Slave Market (ca. 1795) in Louisville, which was built at the juncture of primary Indian trails and used as a trading post for all kinds of public sales."

How stark, misdirected, and banal this exposition appears when measured against the historical reality of stealing and selling human beings. Questions crowd the mind confronted by the Louisville Slave Market: Who and how many slaves; where were their sales taking them; why such a structure in the open air, in the civic center of an avowedly civilized community; and how came it to survive in a region that has all but obliterated the material culture of both slavery and segregation? This is said less to criticize Linley's intentions--he later treats the housing of slaves, servants, and workers in the chapter "The Antebellum Period"--than to point out the potential hazards of extending architectural history's descriptive art into areas and conditions that are anything but value-free.

The second part of Linley's volume, the actual HABS catalog, takes up about one-quarter of the text and is the impetus for the publication of *The Georgia Catalog*. Established in 1933, the Historic American Buildings Survey published its initial survey in 1941, issued a supplement in 1959, and now, on the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, has authorized this and other state catalogs.

The three-columned HABS catalog is arranged alphabetically by place--town, city, or nearest town or city in each county--with a subheading for each county included. Each building is listed separately, delineated architecturally according to the standard HABS format,

and furnished with a HABS number for reference and an inventory of the photographs, drawings, and other data on file at the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. A map of HABS sites in forty-seven Georgia counties invites comparison with maps of National Register listings in one hundred Georgia counties, National Historic Landmark sites in twenty-two counties, and Historic American Engineering Record sites in three counties. These maps constitute a ready guide to significant structures statewide. Unfortunately, since the illustrations--all contained in the history section--are unnumbered, the reader who attempts to cross-check and compare is forced to refer constantly to the two indices. All the same, this is the only (and a relatively minor) inconvenience in using this valuable and handsomely produced book.

Vanishing Georgia, because of its visual appeal, might easily qualify as one of those coffee table books that appear in waves (usually during Christmas season) and are remaindered and advertised, seemingly forever, in unsolicited, seasonal mail-order catalogs. But, because of what it represents, *Vanishing Georgia* is much, much more. It is, to begin with, a selection of over two hundred photographs from the eighteen thousand prints in the Vanishing Georgia collection of the Georgia Department of Archives and History. It is also a measure of the range between the beautiful and the awful in this state.

The photographs are reproduced in an 11-x-8½-inch format that focuses attention automatically on the pictures and not on the words accompanying them. Most of the captions are commendably brief and to the point. For the most part, the compilers have paid close attention to Mies van der Rohe's design dictum that "less is more," happily avoiding those psychoanalytic flights of interpretation that infest so many anthologies of this sort, choosing instead to let the photographs speak for themselves both individually and collectively.

The photographs are grouped under six headings--"The Land," "The Town Evolves," "How We Looked," "Enjoying Ourselves," "Into the Twentieth Century,"

and "Days Remembered"--each with an informative and unpretentious two-to-three page introduction. Although other possible groupings--by area or period--suggest themselves, the one carried out here is especially effective in conveying the variety of everyday life in the state. "Into the Twentieth Century," for example, opens with a picture of an early automobile being driven down (the wrong side of, according to later traffic laws) a country road and includes a scattering of some dozen auto-related shots among photographs of civic fairs, advertising promotions, other new technologies (telephones, airships, movies, and the medical and domestic sciences), new products (Coca-Cola), new structures (a dam and a hotel), and unrelated period pieces (a scene from a local-option Prohibition election, another of convict labor in old-fashioned zebra suits). In the end, this diversity of images produces a unity all its own.

Certain clusters of images stand out. They range from everyday life, with farm women variously hulling rice, hoeing corn, and riding a cow, to the bizarre, with a carnival geek holding a live snake in his mouth and a portly small-town police chief astride a dead circus elephant which had just trampled its keeper. Both the occasion and the composition of the photographs are compelling.

What is missing from *Vanishing Georgia* is some equivalent to the survey materials provided in *The Georgia Catalog*. Only two pages of its introduction are given over to a description of the Vanishing Georgia Project. Here we do learn that it was begun in 1975 and is ongoing, that most of the collection covers the period from 1890 to 1930, and that photographs were selected "primarily for their documentary content and historical significance." In addition, Sherry Konter, who wrote the text, describes in some detail the field procedures followed for extending the project's influence statewide. What potential users of this collection need--ideally as an appendix in a papercover edition of this volume--is systematized information about coverage by county and topic, as well as some indication of photo numbers and original source. Something along the lines suggested in George Talbot's landmark catalog *At Home: Domestic*

Life in the Post-Centennial Era, 1876-1920 (The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977) would be useful. Until such a research supplement is available, *Vanishing Georgia* must remain less than an introduction to the collection.

Still, by chapters, in subject groupings or singly, the photographs of *Vanishing Georgia* convey the sense that here is real life. Here is the Georgia the traveler yet encounters along rural roads and among scattered hamlets--the full range, the beautiful, and the awful. Together with *The Georgia Catalog*, it provides a special introduction to the built--and the lived in--environment of the state.

Emory University and
Atlanta University

Dana F. White

Atlanta: Triumph of a People. By Norman Shavin and Bruce Galphin. Atlanta: Capricorn Corporation, 1982. Pp.456. Illustrations. \$34.95.

By what standard should an illustrated city history be judged--the story it tells, the insights it provides, or the goals it sees for itself? In his introduction to *Atlanta: Triumph of a People*, Norman Shavin describes the volume as one written "to trace some major and minor roads to self discovery," constructed "to be readable, anecdotal and well illustrated," and "designed to be used and enjoyed, not shelved and ignored." By these criteria, this Atlanta history is at least a partial success. It is, first and foremost, a coffee table book, to be picked up for perusal during an idle moment. The photographs, special features sections, and corporation advertisements summarize succinctly the 1917 fire, the crash at Orly, and the 1895 fair and provide minihistories of such local institutions as the Coca-Cola Company, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, and Rich's Department Store. The brief, lively sketches in the book and the book's size (nine-by-twelve inches) should keep *Atlanta: Triumph of a People* out in view where it can indeed be "enjoyed, not shelved and ignored."

Shavin and Galphin have written the latest in a long line of city-boosting, business-oriented histories that include Edward Y. Clarke's *Illustrated History of Atlanta* (1877), Paul W. Miller's *Atlanta: Capital of the South* (1949), and First National Bank's *Atlanta Resurgens* (1971). In all of these, an upbeat narrative tells of the commercial initiatives that molded an important American city. The Shavin-Galphin account distinguishes itself, though, from its predecessors and also from the better known local histories written by Franklin Garrett in several ways: It attempts to trace the city all the way to the present; it seeks to integrate the accomplishments of black Atlanta into its narrative; and it tries to depict the changes in the physical forms of the city.

By bringing Atlanta to the present, Shavin and Galphin deal with a critical issue earlier histories ignored--race. Yet while they chronicle some achievements of black Atlantans, they do not present a fully integrated history of the city. Their priorities emerge in the relative space given various subjects. One third of the volume is devoted to color photographs of the city today and sketches of those businesses which sponsored the publication. About 10 percent of space is devoted to the Civil War; only one percent to the civil rights movement. Black Atlantans are found occasionally in the text, more frequently in the period after 1960; but their important contributions to Atlanta are segregated into a separate four-page feature entitled "Atlanta's Amazing Blacks." Nobel Laureate Martin Luther King, Jr., is treated in one page; *Constitution* editor Henry Grady in two; and author Margaret Mitchell in six. While black Atlantans are visible in this volume as they have been in no previous popular work, the dimensions of the city's black side remain largely unexplored. There is no treatment of the colorline that replaced slavery in the 1870s, no use of photographs to illustrate the segregation of public facilities in the twentieth century, and no quotations of progressive white leaders (such as Henry Grady) who supported segregation.

The point of view taken throughout is of the white

business leadership, most clearly apparent in the account of the "Whirlwinds of Change" beginning in the 1960s. Desegregation was something city leaders "handled" because "segregation was an impediment to a national corporation's free flow of employees, an offense to a majority of its customers, and a magnet for agitation where practiced." The handler in this account is Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., whose racial moderation is contrasted with the stridency of his electoral opponent Lester Maddox, but whose efforts to buttress residential segregation in southwest Atlanta early in his administration are conveniently omitted. On the other hand, the achievements of Maynard Jackson--Atlanta's first black mayor--are seen only as disruptions of the old alliance between (white) business and government.

Shavin and Galphin have selected illustrations which document the transformation of a railroad terminus to a regional metropolis, yet they miss the opportunity to make that dramatic physical change more intelligible to current residents. Photographic captions give details of locations and dates of earlier streetscapes, but there are no then and now examples. Thirty-two pages of color photographs give striking views of modern Atlanta, however, their relation to the rest of the text is unclear. And for those readers who wish to increase their knowledge of Atlanta, Shavin and Galphin provide no guidance beyond their own text. Apart from photo credits at the end of the volume, there is no listing of sources, no suggestions for additional reading. The absence of these standard devices greatly limits the utility of this study. Atlanta is a far more complex city than the one rendered here, a metropolis whose major roads to self discovery still need to be traced in a popular book.

Georgia State University

Timothy J. Crimmins

The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia. Vol. 20. *Original Papers, Correspondence to the Trustees, James Oglethorpe, and Others, 1732-1735*. Edited by Kenneth Coleman and Milton Ready. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978. Pp.x, 520. Index. \$25.

For years, *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, twenty-five volumes edited by Allen D. Candler and Lucian Lamar Knight and published between 1904 and 1919, have been the essential source for students of early Georgia history. Equally valuable, but less well known, were the remaining records--some twenty volumes in typescript, which could be consulted at only a very few locations around the state. Their inaccessibility worked a considerable hardship on both lay and professional historians, with the result that many needed studies went unwritten.

In 1976, under the auspices of the Georgia Commission for the National Bicentennial and the Georgia Department of Archives and History--with Kenneth Coleman and Milton Ready serving as editors--Volume 28, Part 1, of the unpublished records was brought out by the University of Georgia Press. Since that initial effort, Volume 28, Part 2, and Volume 27 have also appeared. With the arrival of this latest addition, Volume 20, hope that the project will be completed is raised once again.

The subtitle for Volume 20 underscores its significance. In it are some of the most important documents relating to the founding of Georgia and to the critical years during which those "victims of philanthropy" (as Daniel Boorstin called the settlers) struggled to make the dreams of their London sponsors a reality on Yamacraw Bluff. Letters to and from the colony reveal with a clarity found only in primary sources the reality of day-to-day life in a settlement struggling to survive. At the same time, they show with equal clarity how little those trustees who guided the colony understood the hardships their charges faced. The tale told in these letters and accounts, however, is not entirely one of failure, for if it were, Georgia would not be celebrating its semiquincentenary this year. They

relate--simply and eloquently--the genesis of Georgia, and with their publication they are available for all to read.

This is an important addition to an important series. The Georgia Press should be encouraged by everyone interested in the preservation and use of historic records to complete the project. Along with the already published *Colonial Records* (which, with the *Revolutionary Records of Georgia*, are available on microfilm), it will give the state a resource its citizens will treasure forever.

Clayton Junior College

Harvey H. Jackson

Rare Books and Manuscript Thefts: A Security System for Librarians, Booksellers, and Collectors. By John H. Jenkins. Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10021, 1982. Pp.28. Softcover. Free.

This handy pamphlet is an interesting introduction to the topic and, although directed primarily toward books, should be on the shelves of all archivists responsible for security.

Changing Patterns in Internal Communication in Large Academic Libraries. By Joanne R. Euster. Occasional Papers Number 6. Office of Management Studies, Association of Research Libraries, 1527 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 1981. Pp.21. Appendix. Softcover. \$8.

Archival managers may find in this publication useful suggestions for dealing with the ever-present internal communication problem. The publication is based on the experience of Association of Research Library members.

Images in Time: A Basic Guide to the Processing and Preservation of Historical Photographs. By Jean E. Dryden. Alberta: Alberta Educational Communications Corporation, 1982. Pp.56. Preface, bibliography, photographs, forms. Softcover. No price given.

Intended primarily for individual collectors and small archives and museums, this publication is attractively illustrated by photographs from the Provincial Archives of Alberta. The short text goes beyond the limits suggested in the subtitle to include comments on acquisitions and reference.

Public Works History in the United States: A Guide to the Literature. Compiled and edited by Suellen M. Hoy and Michael C. Robinson with research associate Rita C. Lynch. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1982. Pp.x, 477. Preface, index. Cloth. \$49.

Sponsored by the Public Works Historical Society, this bibliography consists of an annotated list of books, articles, dissertations, and theses written as history about public works in the United States. The entries are organized alphabetically by author within fourteen topical chapters. Items published through 1980 are cited; the quarterly newsletter of the Public Works Historical Society lists or reviews subsequent publications. It is indexed for authors and titles only and is for reference and special utility in archives with public records.

Material Culture Studies in America. Compiled and edited with introductions and bibliography by Thomas J. Schlereth. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1982. Pp.xviii, 419. Preface, bibliographic essay, tables, index. \$22.95. Paper, \$15.

An anthology designed for introductory courses on

American material culture, this volume brings together the essential literature on the subject--articles on the history, theory, method, and practice of material culture research. Schlereth supplies a very long original essay on the history of material culture studies in America from 1876 to 1976, lengthy introductions to each of the other twenty-three articles, and a selective bibliographical essay. It is good for archives doubling as museums.

An Introduction to Archives and Manuscripts. By David B. Gracy II. Special Libraries Association, 235 Park Avenue South, New York NY 10003, 1981. Pp. ix, 36. Table of contents, introduction, glossary, bibliography. Softcover. No price given.

This booklet in the Special Libraries Association's Professional Development Series is divided into two main sections "Principles" and "Process." Naturally, Gracy compares and contrasts archival activity with that of librarians. Although probably intended for librarians untrained in archives who are given archival responsibilities, this concise, well-written essay will also be a useful introduction for archival education courses and on-the-job training of new employees.

NOTE: Greenwood Press (88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881) has published *Research Institutions and Learned Societies*, edited by Joseph C. Kiger (Pp.xxv, 551. \$45). This volume in the Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Institutions series provides information on more than 160 nonprofit societies, academies, councils, libraries, laboratories, and museums which have had a national influence during the last two centuries.

NOTE: The 300-page *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives* expands and updates the 1964

edition. It is available for \$21 (hardcover) or \$17 (softcover) from Genealogical Guide, Box 601, National Archives, Washington, DC 20408.

NOTE: Archivists may wish to contact the National Archives Trust Fund (NEPS), National Archives Building, Washington, DC 20408, concerning the recent availability of the 1910 census.

NOTE: Both Heritage Books, Inc. (3602 Maureen, Suite 104, Bowie, MD 20715) and Gale Research Company (Book Tower, Detroit, MI 48226) would be pleased to provide information concerning their publications.