

das derzeit an der Universidad de Buenos Aires entsteht, letztlich hervorbringt, bleibt abzuwarten.

Das zurückhaltend und schön gestaltete Buch, das in der Reihe „Neue Bauhausbücher“ erschienen ist, stellt eine lesenswerte Übersicht über aktuelle Perspektiven der Bauhausrezeptionsforschung dar. Für einen konzeptionellen Sammelband hätte man sich eine noch stärkere analytische Rahmung gewünscht, die etwa durch ein zusammenführendes Schlusskapitel der Herausgeber hätte erreicht werden können. Die durchaus spannende Perspektive, das Bauhaus als Knotenpunkt lokaler und globaler Geistesströmungen zu kontextualisieren, hätte dadurch an Pointierung gewonnen. Vielen (nicht allen) Beiträgen sieht man zudem den Vortragscharakter an, was sie einerseits leicht lesbar macht, andererseits aber doch sehr an der Oberfläche schürfen lässt. So ist der Band als anregende Neuvermessung der Bauhausrezeptionsforschung zu lesen. Eine Vertiefung der entdeckten Perspektiven dürfte sich an vielen Stellen lohnen.

Jane G. Landers: *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010, 340 S.

Reviewed by
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This very engaging book assembles the stories of a few dozen African Americans that Jane Landers has been researching and writing about for more than twenty years.

She uses the term “Atlantic creole,” popularized by Ira Berlin, to emphasize her subjects’ cosmopolitan character and ability to cross cultural boundaries and survive in a variety of social environments. The book broadly concerns the north Caribbean and southeastern North America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Its six chapters are chronologically arranged but three focus on Florida, two on Cuba, and one on South Carolina. The segments are knitted together by crisscrossing movements of migration provoked by war, U.S. expansion, the Haitian Revolution, and the continual political flux of this turbulent period. Several of the characters appear in more than one chapter.

For much of this period, a great deal of the American southeast was administered and defended from Havana (as Louisiana and East and West Florida). The inhabitants of Spanish Florida were twice relocated to Cuba: in 1763, when they were displaced for twenty years by British conquerors, and in 1821, when the colony became a U.S. territory. The American Revolutionary War was a rare moment of military success for Spain and brought it a reversal of fortune in the region. Yet the Spanish presence was always under constant pressure from southward migrating Indians and Anglo settlers. Spain responded to this pressure with a policy of heterogeneous repoblación that involved Minorcans, Greeks, and a variety of African Americans. The latter form the core of Jane Landers’ study. The permeable frontier between the zones of Anglo and Hispanic settlement in North America was, in the matter of race relations, a major cultural boundary, Landers insists. Although plantation slavery was

common across the region, the Spanish- and English-speaking societies of North America represented polar opposites in their willingness to incorporate free people of African descent. Spain was unique in its policy of liberating selected fugitive slaves and giving them land grants. The Catholic church was a powerful agent of assimilation through its ceremonies, festivals, and universal outreach, and the colonial militias provided free blacks an avenue for integration and advancement unimaginable north of Florida. Spanish bureaucracy and law courts also provided a measure of protection.

These circumstances form the backdrop to Landers' first case study, that of Prince/Juan Bautista Whitten. An African enslaved on a South Carolina plantation, Whitten escaped with his young family to Florida during the confusion following the American Revolutionary War. Landers describes the sordid violence he left behind in the South Carolina backcountry, the very worst of the American Revolution, and she paints a sympathetic portrait of the black carpenter as he created a new life as a farmer, militia sergeant, and Catholic community leader. In the early 1790s, Florida was briefly threatened by the French Republic (the Genet expedition), and Whitten was mobilized to defend the frontier in the name of the King of Spain. The narrative falters at this point, because (as elsewhere in the book) the author tends to conflate republicanism and antislavery and she fails to point out just when France abolished slavery. The reader might find it difficult to sort out the issues at stake here.

The second chapter concerns Georges Biassou, one of the leaders of the Saint Domingue slave uprising of 1791–1793,

who was recruited by the Spanish in their war against the French Republic and later was exiled to Florida (1796–1801). Landers seeks to humanize the black general, who was caricatured by his contemporaries and then by historians, and to claim for him the primary role in the slave uprising. Her account of the Haitian Revolution is rather inaccurate, as it relies on the recent disastrously unreliable book by Madison Bell, but the argument regarding Biassou is original and interesting, although not really convincing. It takes at face value Biassou's megalomaniacal claims and ignores much contrary evidence. Whereas the Prince Whitten portrait is exhaustively assembled from innumerable scraps of evidence, that of Biassou draws on only a portion of the relevant documentation in Spanish archives and none at all from the French. In truth, the generalissimo's military achievements were fairly meager, both in Saint Domingue and in Florida, where, in old age, he shared militia duties with Prince Whitten. The two men's families, Anglo-African and French Creole, intermarried in Florida as Spanish Catholics before continuing their migrations in the nineteenth century to Cuba. There they continued to play the role of loyal servants of the king.

Chapter 3 lucidly guides the reader through the death throes of Spanish Florida, in which Whitten, Biassou, and many other black migrants played a part. It is a complex political narrative dotted with extraordinary events and personalities, and a tragic undertow long ignored in United States history. Through the 1790s the colony was threatened by William Augustus Bowles, a Loyalist renegade who founded the pluriethnic state of Musk-

ogee, in which a miscellany of Indian, white, and black opponents of the Spanish briefly found common cause. In the War of 1812 against the United States, the British encouraged the desertion to Florida of hundreds of slaves whom they armed and then abandoned to a bitter fate. Vengeful and expansionist Georgians invaded north Florida in the so-called Patriot War of 1812/13. They were beaten back but 1817 saw no fewer than three invasions, by Anglo and Hispanic filibusters and then by the U.S. navy. Andrew Jackson again violated the international frontier in 1818 pursuing Seminole Indians and their black allies. Chapter 5 focuses on the blacks who lived among the Seminoles (or Lower Creek). It explains how contemporaries often confused the few black slaves the Indians owned with the larger number of black fugitives (Black Seminoles) who settled in tributary villages and eventually took the lead in fighting their common enemy, the United States. As in other chapters, Landers digs out some documentary nuggets as she surveys the Seminole Wars of 1817–1818 and 1835–1837, which, for the Indians and blacks, as for the Spanish before them, ended in defeat and deportation.

Free people of color in Cuba are the subject of chapters 4 and 6. The first of the chapters follows the rise and demise of Havana's non-white militia from the 1760s to the 1830s. Expanded and elevated in status under the Bourbon reforms of Carlos III, the militia came under increasing pressure from the planter class and hostile administrators as Cuba became a fully fledged slave society after 1790. Landers details the struggle of militiamen to defend their

privileges during an era of mounting slave rebellion and colonial secession. Along the way, she investigates other free black institutions, the religious brotherhoods (*cofradías*) and ethnic societies (*cabildos de nación*), and the ambitious 1812 conspiracy of the black woodcarver José Antonio Aponte. Besides participating in all three types of institution, Aponte had served as a militiaman in Florida during the American Revolutionary War. The final chapter takes the story up to the brutally suppressed Ladder Conspiracy of 1843–44, in which enslaved and free people of color apparently combined. Landers takes as her vantage point the boom town of Matanzas in the heart of Cuba's sugar-producing zone. She finds interesting information on local free coloreds' connections with the international antislavery movement, in accord with her Atlantic Creole theme, and notes that the poet Plácido, the best-known of the martyrs of 1844, was a member of this community.

This is a remarkable and original book that spans the domains of Borderlands and Caribbean history, and obliquely underpins the concept of a Greater Caribbean region. It is particularly notable for the way it brings the reader closer to the individual lives of its subjects, which is a hallmark of Jane Landers' work. Those familiar with her other publications will not find here a lot that is new, except in the Matanzas chapter, but the book is sure to find a wider readership beyond the confines of academia. With ample endnotes and illustrations, *Atlantic Creoles* successfully bridges the genres of haute vulgarisation and scholarly text, and is extraordinarily readable.