


2013

Book Reviews

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Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (2013) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 92: No. 4, Article 7.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol92/iss4/7>

Book Reviews

Daniel Murphree, Book Review Editor

Climate and Culture Change in North America AD 900-1600. By William C. Foster. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012. Illustrations, maps, preface, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xi, 240. \$24.95 paperback.)

In little more than one hundred and fifty pages, William C. Foster offers his readers a great deal of information about the interrelationship of Native American culture and climate change. Foster uses archeological site reports and data from the 2006 National Research Council's study, *Surface Temperature Reconstructions for the Last 2,000 Years*, to support his argument that environmental changes stemming from the Medieval Warm Period (CE 900 to 1300) and the Little Ice Age (CE 1300-1600) influenced cultural modifications among the peoples of the American southwest, the southern Plains, the trans-Mississippi west, and the southeastern United States. Anyone interested in developing a deeper understanding of Native American societies will profit from reading this work.

Foster organizes the book into an introduction, seven chapters, and a conclusion. Each of the chapters covers a century, and within each chapter Foster presents a workmanlike discussion of the regions. Foster presents a good deal of fascinating information. The Southern Cult and its idea of a layered universe, the Cahokian "woodhenge" and its celestial observers, and the scarlet macaw and its ritual importance, all fired my imagination. Similarly, I found his treatment of cultural adaptations in response to environmental change engrossing.

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To summarize his argument, Foster asserts that during the Medieval Warm period both temperature and rainfall increased, creating a favorable environment for food production. The abundance of food fueled population growth and this larger population base made possible such cultural changes as the expansion of long-distance trade networks, the construction of monumental architecture, and the creation of socially stratified societies. Indeed, during this period of benign climate, centers of social complexity and population density that rivaled contemporary London and Paris flourished at Chaco Canyon in New Mexico, Paquim'e in Chihuahua, and Cahokia at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. Conversely, when the Little Ice Age brought colder, more mesic conditions to North America, these centers of high civilization collapsed, their people dispersed into smaller groups, and insecurity associated with warfare increased as social complexity declined. Climate change, Foster believes, played as crucial a role in the cultural history of North America as it had in Europe in the years between 900 and 1600.

This basic argument, surely sound, will provoke little controversy, but Foster's conclusions have three flaws that will cause many of his readers consternation. First, Foster believes that the "constant stress and social depression" (166) associated with the Little Ice Age "probably" (66) weakened Native Americans' ability to resist European diseases. Perhaps so, but it seems far more probable that the migration of Asians through a cold climate meant that these people brought few diseases with them to North America, while their lack of domesticated animals saved them from exposure once they arrived, and the relatively small population that left Asia created a genetic founders' effect that bequeathed their progeny few defenses against European diseases. While this fault might be attributed to over exuberance in argument, in spite of the equivocation "probably," the remaining two interrelated flaws cause more concern.

Foster, a fellow of the Texas State Historical Association, asserts that climate during the Medieval Warm Period not only aided a flourishing of culture in North America, but also "provided the positive environment necessary for the Greek and Roman civilizations" (162). He argues that these climatological conditions closely resemble today's warm climate, then states that many researchers and climatologists represent current conditions as an ecological threat to world civilization, when surely he meant to say that a *continuation* of warming trends posed such a threat. Along the same vein, he also

concludes that the colder, wetter climate of the Little Ice Age caused disruptions to the agrarian societies of both Europe and North America through 1600. He does acknowledge that the little Ice Age did not end until 1850, after Europe experienced the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, and in spite of the cold, went on to develop a more highly stratified social order, extensive trade network, and inspiring monumental architecture in spite of the cold than had existed during the Medieval Warm Period. Surely Foster meant to say that the arrival of European people and microbes closed the book on independent social development in the Americas and precluded any such adaptation in the New World in the years after 1600.

Climate and Cultural Change in North America AD 900-1600 provides its readers with an abundance of information on Native American cultures in the southeastern and southwestern United States and in northeastern Mexico regions, and relates how these cultures adapted themselves to changing climate conditions during the Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age. Unfortunately, Foster's conclusions reflect either the author's haste to be done with the project or an ideological bias. In spite of its flaws, however, the work gives a good synthesis of archeological finds and readers can gain much knowledge from its pages.

David McCally

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War on the Gulf Coast: The Spanish Fight against William Augustus Bowles. By Gilbert C. Din. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012. Acknowledgements, illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xiii, 360.)

In 1785 Creek leader Alexander McGillivray declared that the emergence of a new Republic, along with the continued imperial presence of Britain, Spain, and even France, had placed North America in a confused state. For Gilbert Din, William Augustus Bowles added significantly to this confusion, albeit in a way that has been widely misunderstood. Indeed, Din's purpose in this monograph is to correct the arguments of earlier scholars such as J. Leitch Wright, who in *William Augustus Bowles: Director General of the Creek Nation* (1967) depicted Bowles as a meaningful leader of Creeks and Seminoles, and thus an important figure in the evolving jurisdictional controversies of the Revolutionary-era Gulf

South. By diving deeply into Spanish archival records, Din offers a counter-narrative. Not only did Bowles maintain precious little support amongst Seminoles and Lower Creeks (and none at all among Upper Creeks), he was a trickster who unnecessarily drained the limited resources of the Spanish empire.

Din presents his argument in true narrative form. Born in Maryland, Bowles sided with the British in the War of American Independence. After 1783 he went to the West Indies, acquired commercial connections in Nassau, and returned to the Gulf Coast with marginal British support. Once there he acquired the loyalties of some Seminoles and Lower Creeks. Bowles eventually appointed himself "Director General" of Creeks and attempted to establish the state of Muskogee to serve as an Indian sanctuary (based on a model employed by the British in the Northwest). Concerned with such endeavors, Spanish officials took him prisoner in 1792. For the next six years he was shuffled between Madrid, Cadiz, and the Philippines. He finally escaped in 1798, made his return to the Gulf Coast in 1799, and spent the next several years struggling to establish Muskogee. In 1800, along with Seminole and Lower Creek supporters, Bowles laid siege to and briefly captured Fort San Marcos de Apalache. Although he would not hold it long, Bowles continued to challenge Spanish authority throughout the Floridas. Only two things ultimately undermined him: the Peace of Amiens, which cost him covert British support, and the shift of Seminole leader Kinache from Bowles-supporter to neutral observer. A subsequent congress produced the Treaty of Apalache, through which Indian neutrality was completed. Bowles was finally apprehended in May 1803. Sent to Cuba, he starved himself to death without ever facing trial.

There is little theory to interfere with Din's blow-by-blow account of the fascinatingly complex Bowles-era Gulf Coast. A few issues do emerge, however. One wonders, for example, about the complexity of the West Florida experience, particularly as Andrew McMichael has recently described it in *Atlantic Loyalties: Americans in Spanish West Florida, 1785-1810* (2008). Spanish efforts at "colonizing" Americans and connecting them to the broader Iberian Atlantic world are absent from this narrative, and would enhance the significance of the tale. More powerfully, Din does not seem to like his protagonist in the slightest—describing him at various points as theatrical, egotistical, cowardly, a liar, a "rascally adventurer" (82) with diabolical designs, and an "extrovert who oozed charm to mislead strangers"

(26). He suggests that nothing Bowles said should be taken at face value, noting at one point that “[h]e shamelessly ignored truth in favor of deception and audacity because he was determined to achieve attention, power, and importance regardless of the cost” (26). At times this lack of balance is distracting, and builds upon sources containing inherent biases of their own. To understand Bowles it is critical to consult Spanish material, of course, but it is not surprising that it paints a dark picture of his character. Reading between the lines, it becomes clear that Bowles was far more nuanced than the Spanish liked to reveal. The sources also indicate that Bowles held more sway amongst Creeks and Seminoles than Din gives him credit for. Finally, indigenous populations come across as strangely wooden in this narrative. They lack agency, and their presentation seems historiographically rooted in Anglo-American traditions. One example: “In March [1801], signs of greater belligerence appeared when Indians milled around the fort, eager to lift a scalp or inflict an injury” (159). Surely there was more motivating them to action. Their understandings of their place in the evolving trans-Appalachian world need greater clarification.

In the end, Din has created a fascinating counter-narrative to the traditional historiographical interpretation. But if scholars such as Wright offer historians one pole, Din has created the opposite. Somewhere in between lay the still elusive William Augustus Bowles.

Kristofer Ray

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The Maroons of Prospect Bluff and Their Quest for Freedom in the Atlantic World. By Nathaniel Millett. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. Acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xiii, 339. \$74.95 cloth.)

Historians of slavery have long argued that too many obstacles existed in North America for the creation of viable, independent maroon colonies. By-and-large this statement holds up as most maroons struggled merely to survive, let alone coalesce into functional societies. Prospect Bluff—dubbed “Negro Fort” by its contemporaries—was the exception to this rule. Formed on the Apalachicola River in Spanish Florida during the War of 1812, Prospect Bluff boasted a growing population of several hundred diverse

African and African American men, women, and children. They engaged in an exchange economy, grew crops, ably defended their well-constructed homes with supplies and training from British soldiers, and formed unique political and social identities. Although well-known by contemporaries, Prospect Bluff has failed to gain appropriate attention from modern historians. Nathaniel Millett's *The Maroons of Prospect Bluff* attempts to reinsert this unique maroon colony into the narratives of "the Southeast, the War of 1812, the First Seminole War, the American annexation of Florida, and the expansion of the plantation complex" (5). Millett argues that a close examination of Prospect Bluff provides a unique outlook on the subject of slavery and slave life both within a North American framework and a comparative Atlantic model.

The study is organized into three sections: a chronological narrative of the rise and fall of Prospect Bluff, an analysis of life within Prospect Bluff, and the connections between Prospect Bluff and the Seminole Wars. Millett attributes the origins of Prospect Bluff to the efforts of British officer Edward Nicolls. After serving throughout the Atlantic world, Nicolls received notoriety for radical anti-slavery beliefs, openly claiming that returning slaves to captivity violated British law regardless of any crimes slaves might commit in manumitting themselves. Nicolls conceptualized the British Empire as "an entity for progress and liberalism in the Age of Revolution" (24). He sought to spread revolutionary values throughout the Atlantic world. During the War of 1812, Nicolls was dispatched to Spanish Florida for the purpose of recruiting and training irregular troops including runaway slaves, free blacks, and allied Native Americans. To those who answered Nicolls's call, he offered equal citizenship within the British Empire. Nicolls regarded blacks and Indians "as more than potential allies or pawns; they were human beings who required aid in the defense of their liberties, as so recently had the inhabitants of much of Europe" (52). The growing numbers of armed, trained runaway slaves from American, Native American, and Spanish masters, as well as their alliances with powerful Native American allies, caused great concern throughout the American South.

Following the war, Nicolls lacked sufficient space to evacuate the hundreds of former slaves and their families, but promised to return and transport them elsewhere in the British Empire. The British government, however, had no interest in risking peace with the United States by removing the former slaves at Prospect Bluff. Moreover, the residents of the maroon community were perfectly content to

remain left in charge of a well-supplied fort with all the official rights of British subjects. After almost a year of petitioning the Spanish government, Americans received tacit permission to assault Prospect Bluff in 1816. The maroons repelled the Americans and their Coweta Creek allies for days, acting as "British subjects who were defending sovereign territory in resisting the American invasion" and had every reason to believe their defense would be successful. On the fifth day, however, a "one-in-millions" cannon shot aimed at measuring range scored a direct hit on a powder magazine (after possibly bouncing off a tree), virtually incinerating the fort and nearly all of its defenders in the subsequent explosion (234).

By focusing specifically on Prospect Bluff, Millett is able to address a plethora of questions that have plagued historians of slavery regarding conceptions of freedom. He conclusively demonstrates that those at Prospect Bluff fully understood various Atlantic anti-slavery and abolitionist movements because they heard them directly from anti-slavery proponents. Millett asserts that "when totally left to their own devices," their actions are emblematic of what other slaves throughout North America "understood and envisioned as freedom (128)." They then used these revolutionary and Atlantic ideologies to cultivate their own perceptions of freedom. This included a diverse daily life, community involvement, an active militia, varied political discourse, and formal interactions with surrounding white, black, and Native neighbors. It is in these analysis chapters (6-9) that Millett makes his strongest contributions and most cogent arguments.

Maroons of Prospect Bluff will appeal to a diverse audience. Though written to be accessible to non-academics, it will likely be most valuable to specialists. Military scholars, especially those interested in the War of 1812 and Seminole War, will be drawn to Millett's analysis of the war in the South and the impact of Prospect Bluff on Andrew Jackson's campaigns. Historians of slavery will appreciate Millett's qualified comparisons with other maroon societies, systems of slavery, and detailed assessments on the beliefs and actions of those at Prospect Bluff. Millett is at his best when exploring the unique culture of this community. Additionally, Millett's analysis of maroons provides a unique perspective on slave resistance in North America beyond the brief, violent, direct-action campaigns of Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner. Native American scholars, especially those interested in the Creeks and Seminoles, will appreciate Millett's careful characterization of the Red Sticks

and the evolution and growing importance of race and slavery among the divided Creek Nation. To this point, one avenue of analysis that goes unexplored is the presence of Choctaws fighting alongside maroons at Prospect Bluff. Millett mentions their appearance, but fails to account for who they were or why they stood in opposition to the majority of Choctaws in the War of 1812. Taken together, however, Millett has shed new light on the history of this unique maroon colony and its place within the broader narratives of American and Atlantic world history.

Jeffrey L. Fortney

University of Oklahoma

Jim Crow's Counterculture: The Blues and Black Southerners, 1890-1945.

By R. A. Lawson. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010. Acknowledgements, illustrations, discography, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xiii. \$45 cloth.)

Travelling with a minstrel band in Mississippi in the first decade of the twentieth century, W. C. Handy, the son of an Alabama preacher, first encountered an odd, improvised music very different from the arranged compositions he performed and taught. This music, which he later heard in different forms throughout the Delta, would inspire Handy both musically as well as professionally. The weirdness of the music, as well as the sight of coins tossed towards the guitarist, stayed with Handy as he began to compose his version of the blues. Handy's music—a combination of the 12-bar blues, popular dance rhythms, and black and white folk music—was incredibly successful and helped spawn a blues craze in the late 1910s and 1920s. The history of the blues, of course, is much larger than Handy, but the composer's background strikes at many of the central elements of the blues story: the mythic origins, the complexity of a superficially simple music, the fluidity of form, and the collision of commerce and expression. "The blues of the Jim Crow era," R. A. Lawson writes in his fascinatingly idiosyncratic new book on the meaning of the blues, "would be produced by aspiring professional musicians who tried to differentiate themselves from others by their individual interpretations of the shared folk traditions of southern black music as well as the hip, contemporary model offered by Handy and his cohort of composers" (10). Lawson examines the blues within this context and grounds his work in

the lives of “messenger-musicians” as they crafted a unique culture that derided, parodied, and debased Jim Crow society.

Throughout *Jim Crow's Counterculture*, Lawson takes aim at various historiographical targets as he constructs an engaging tale of the formation of black male identity through the evolution of the blues. Central to his discussion is a dismantling of the debate between enthusiasts (such as John Lomax) who viewed the blues primarily as a culture of accommodation, on one side, and listeners (such as Lomax's son, Alan) who saw in the music promise of protest and revolution. Lawson generally rejects this dichotomy and instead emphasizes the fluidity of this narrative as musicians filtered their feelings through the blues. Some of this argument is apparent even with a passing knowledge of the blues, and rather rigid and ideological parameters by earlier scholars should not detract from the fundamental human element of the story. To Lawson's credit, he maintains a keen eye for detail throughout this study and his book is a very nuanced and elegantly constructed story of the ways in which black southerners navigated the quotidian cruelties and degradations of the Jim Crow Era. Ultimately, this book—despite its historiographic focus—is driven by a careful consideration of the meaning of identity, place, and the invention of a language to make sense of an often-irrational world.

Lawson maintains a broad scope throughout *Jim Crow's Counterculture* as he traces his various themes from the origins of the music through the Great Depression and into the 1940s. This perspective provides for a wider appreciation of the macro landscape of the blues and allows for a careful appreciation of the basic fact that “no unified black culture or community” existed during these decades (199). In terms of the highlights, Lawson is exceptionally good at teasing out meaning from various lyrics, and throughout this book, the lyrical examples refuse to lie flat on the page. The section on the blues and anti-Japanese racism is a good example of Lawson's ability to wind a complex tale. Better yet, Lawson provides a compelling study of Blind Blake's “Detroit Bound Blues” and its connection to Woody Guthrie's “Goin' Down the Road.” Concise and attentive, this discussion is a good example of the finer points of this study. Despite these general strengths, one aspect that Lawson gives less weight to is the actual sound of the music; more focus on particulars of the music itself would help expand his larger point of the various contortions of modern black identity. Still, this book is a thoughtfully arranged take on a crucial aspect of black southern identity in the first half of the twentieth century.

Overall, Lawson, a gifted and at times witty writer, has produced a thoroughly compelling study of the language and cultural meaning of the blues. Blues scholars with academic backgrounds should appreciate the complexity of Lawson's argument and his connection to the larger historiographical currents. Readers with a more casual interest in the blues should find value in the ways in which Lawson ably inserts the music into the wider context of the ultimate meaning, however fractured, of the nation. "In pushing to be included in the promise of American life," Lawson contends, "black southerners initiated a period in which they sought to redefine American citizenship once again, as had both Reconstruction Republicans and Jim Crow segregationists before them" (197). Intellectual without being overtly theoretical, nuanced without being obsessive, pointed without being pedantic, *Jim Crow's Counterculture* is a welcome addition to our understanding of the blues and the various ways in which black southerners confronted modern America.

Court Carney

Stephen F. Austin State University

Beyond Forty Acres and a Mule: African American Landowning Families since Reconstruction. Edited by Debra A. Reid and Evan P. Bennett. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012. Maps, tables, illustrations, index. Pp. xviii, 352. \$69.95 cloth.)

Lowndes County, Alabama, birthplace of the Black Panthers, had a long history of civil rights activism before the 1960s. Black farmers, sharecroppers, and tenants joined the communist party to resist an agricultural capitalist system that exploited farm labor in the 1930s. In a few months of organizing, the Share Croppers Union (SCU) managed to sign up over eight hundred members, making it the largest black-led communist-inspired labor union in Alabama. Veronica L. Womack's chapter, "Black Power in the Alabama Black Belt to the 1970s," is a typical chapter in an anthology that goes well beyond examining the history of landowning African Americans. *Beyond Forty Acres and a Mule: African American Landowning Families since Reconstruction*, edited by Debra A. Reid and Evan P. Bennett, concentrates on farm families exercising their right to protest the discriminatory policies and laws that constrained the expression of their citizenship by organizing in the homes, churches, and associations of rural farming black Americans. As such, *Beyond Forty*

Acres, though a credible text on African American landowners and farmers, belongs with other studies illustrating the great diversity of African American life and experience. This book rejects the oft-studied urban or rural poor as defining the fullness of that experience.

Much of the literature on African American history focuses on slavery and poverty in the United States. More recently, historians have delved into areas that alter the traditional discourse of the African American experience. Gender, of course, is one major change that began with Deborah Grey White's *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (1985). Sociologist Adelaide M. Cromwell's published doctoral dissertation, *The Other Brahmins: Boston's Black Upper Class, 1750-1950* (1994) looks at black political and social leadership in the city, uncovering the role elite blacks played from the Antebellum Era to the mid-twentieth century. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham noted the importance of the black church in black women's political lives in her book, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (1993). Higginbotham's text examined the importance of the politics of respectability, which opened a door to other historians who studied the significance of elite and middle class uplift in the political lives of black clubwomen and others.

Debra A. Reid and Evan P. Bennett's edited collection furthers this discourse by chronicling southern African American landowning from the end of Reconstruction to the present. This important area of study unveils the political complexity black southern landowning farmers faced in negotiating both southern white racism and agricultural corporate capitalism. The text agrees that though sharecropping and racism victimized most blacks in the rural south, an increasing number of black farmers bought and farmed their land in the post-Reconstruction era, and in doing so, created new communities that struggled for change.

Beyond Forty Acres is made up of five parts divided into twelve chapters that inspect Historiography and Philosophy; Farm Acquisition and Retention; Agrarianism and Black Politics; Farm Families at Work; and Legal Activism and Civil Rights Expansion. The titles of the first four parts of this collection mistakenly gave this reader the impression that the contents would read as a long and data driven farm report. Instead, though the text is illustrated with maps, figures, and tables, *Beyond Forty Acres* is a well-researched history of the efforts of rural farming blacks to organize. The first chapter places this collection among other agricultural texts and clearly presents the overwhelming obstacles black farmers faced in the nation. The next

three chapters are case studies of three black farm families that illustrate the successes and failures of these families to hold onto land in the later twentieth-century. As these families struggled, they created black communities that worked collectively to improve their land and create good schools for their children. Their success in educating their children, though, resulted in those children leaving farming for other careers. Additionally, in the case of James E. Youngblood, contributor Keith J. Volanto uncovers how mixed-heritage could advantage some black farmers. This was true in the North as well, and that advantage was frequently expressed in their political activism.

The two chapters that make up Part three of this collection delve further into the collective action taken by black farmers to organize over one million men and women in the Colored Alliance, the foundation of the People's Party, which promoted black land ownership and unions while conducting boycotts and strikes for their rights. A Black Nationalist ideology remained strong in the rural south up through the early twentieth century when 500 divisions of Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association, out of 1176 worldwide, were situated in southern states.

Chapters seven through nine make up the next part of the collection and illustrate an earlier version of the feminist consciousness raising groups of the 1970s. Kelly A. Minor's contribution, "'Justifiable Pride': Negotiation and Collaboration in Florida African American Extension" shows how the strategic work of black female extension workers frequently resulted in empowering local black women by building a sense of autonomy, authority, and leadership in women that would serve the civil rights movement two decades later.

The final section weaves together the strands of the previous chapters to its inevitable conclusion: the civil rights and black power movements owe much to black landowners, men and women, who struggled against the Jim Crow South by organizing, by raising a collective black consciousness, and by suffering the repercussions of their radicalism. Though the efforts of these landowners, sharecroppers, and tenants were not successful at the time, they nonetheless built a foundation upon which the next generation could succeed in ending Jim Crow. This book adds another important layer to the intersection of race and class in the nation, and is suitable for undergraduate and graduate courses in African American history and labor studies.

Dolita D. Cathcart

Wheaton College

Georgia Democrats, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Shaping of the New South. By Tim S. R. Boyd. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xiv, 288. \$74.95 cloth.)

This book describes the factionalized Democratic Party of (one-party) Georgia in the 1940s and 1950s, painstakingly detailing its internal struggles and the halting advance toward two-party Georgia by the late 1960s. It is not about the Civil Rights Movement, but about how Georgia's white politicians reacted to and accommodated the Movement and other social and demographic changes after World War II. Two wings of the party vied for control: "Regulars" (traditional or segregationist southern Democrats), who lost, and "Loyalists" (supporters of moderation in race matters, economic modernization, and generally, the aims of the national party), who in the end won control of the Georgia party. Initially, like their predecessors the Loyalists, "New South Democrats" of the post-civil rights era employed "progressive color blindness" (12, 61), defending voting rights, educational opportunity, and economic advancement for all, but muting calls for affirmative action to achieve real racial equality. Eventually they embraced black politicians and especially black voters, and thus, the Movement goals. That this inter-party contest ended in the ascendance of Georgia's Republican Party has long been explained by what is called "white backlash." This theory posits that old Democratic Regulars joined the more conservative Republican Party in large part because of the covert racism of the "southern strategy" used by Republicans to woo traditional southerners. Tim S. R. Boyd wrote this book to examine and champion another thesis: the "southern strategy," he concludes, was sometimes employed but never as helpful to southern Republicans as a "suburban strategy" (105). He shows how Democrats held on to the same strongholds throughout the cities and small towns in rural parts of the state, and Republicans profited from the huge growth of white suburbs in post-war Georgia. The new (post-1965) Georgia Democrats and their ideas, he says, dominated state politics through the 1990s. "The Civil Rights Movement did not destroy the Democratic Party in the South," Boyd says, "rather, the ability of New South Democrats to adjust to it . . . allowed them to take the lead in shaping a more progressive political culture for the South" (7). But that progressive political culture had its limits. The author also discusses the Vietnam War's

significant impact on the southern Democratic Party and shows how Governor Jimmy Carter deftly deferred questions about antiwar protests during the McGovern campaign, while remaining a reluctant party loyalist. Carter's 1976 presidential campaign was an important result of the rise of New South Democrats and of the appeal of progressive color blindness to the rest of the nation.

Georgia Democrats, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Shaping of the New South does not pretend to be a history of Georgia from the 1940s to the 1980s; readers will search long and hard for significant social or cultural events or issues that impinge upon the politics discussed. The women's movement to keep schools open (HOPE), and some grassroots white Democratic Party activists merit inclusion, as do older black leaders like Colonel A. T. Walden, but no activities of the Civil Rights Movement are described. Martin Luther King, Jr. receives a few passing references, and Julian Bond appears only in his political persona as a legislator. Even the state politicians whose careers are outlined here are not subjected to any sort of personal analysis. The focus of this book is the workings of state and regional politics—a point underlined by the inclusion of a plethora of charts and graphs about Georgia elections, showing how sectors of the state population voted in each election and, in the accompanying text, explaining and analyzing results which substantiate the author's thesis. This reader learned a great deal, but wondered about political views of the behind the scenes folks who wield power and influence in Atlanta, Savannah, or Augusta—lawyers or industrialists and such—and also about U.S. senators, especially Richard Russell. It just seems impossible that a book about Georgia politics in the post-war period mentions Senator Russell only in passing. Boyd says that massive resistance ended in Georgia when the Vandiver administration accepted the Sibley report and token school desegregation; this may be a matter of definition, but it seems to me that massive resistance ended when Richard Russell's filibuster against the Civil Rights Act collapsed in 1964. Boyd discusses presidential elections of 1948, 1960, 1976, and 1980, but the only Senate election discussed is that of Sam Nunn. Nunn, a conservative New South Democrat, ran after Russell died in 1971 not as a liberal, but as more progressive than his right wing Republican opponent—a "modus operandi" (219) of all New South Democrats. One wonders how this author might categorize the venerable Russell—an often reluctant Loyalist, but not a New South Democrat? He is harder to pin down than most of the Georgia politicians discussed in this book, as was his younger colleague, Herman Talmadge, after

he reached the Senate. Talmadge gets more space here, though most of that is devoted to his gubernatorial tenure.

There are problems with this text that could have been easily cured by closer editing. Sometimes the narrative, which doubles back now and then, and the winding, windy sentences, become confusing. In a few instances actors are introduced before they are described, so one turns to the index, which is, to be generous, sparse. Several times we simply need background information: governors cannot succeed themselves until—oh, now they can, one finds, without explanation (every reader will not know Georgia Constitutions). On the other hand, this book is full of new ideas and interesting details that will delight historians and political scientists trying to make sense of the evolution of twentieth century southern politics. And it creditably challenges the backlash theory, touted by liberal journalists and historians as the cause of southern Republicanism's ascendancy for decades. I particularly recommend the book's introduction as a good summary of the author's argument. Students of modern Georgia history should know this book, but its thesis is malleable and transferable to other southern states, including Florida.

Sarah H. Brown

Florida Atlantic University

Skyway: The True Story of Tampa Bay's Signature Bridge and the Man Who Brought it Down. By Bill DeYoung. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. Preface, notes, acknowledgements, index. Pp. xiv, 224. \$24.95 cloth.)

The Sunshine Skyway bridge carries traffic on Interstate 275 across lower Tampa Bay, connecting Pinellas and Manatee Counties. Some motorists fear it, perhaps because of what happened on May 9, 1980 to its predecessor bridge bearing the same name. During a sudden, violent squall, an ocean-going freighter rammed one of the bridge's support columns. Instantly, the roadbed fell 150 feet into the bay. The collapse was invisible to southbound vehicles until they crested the bridge. Within a few minutes, several (including a Greyhound bus) drove off the broken edge of the bridge, and tumbled into the bay. Thirty-five people died.

Ever since, the accident has fascinated residents and visitors. In *Skyway*, Bill DeYoung has crafted a lively narrative covering three parts of the story—the bridge, the accident, and the Tampa Bay

pilot, John Lerro, who was navigating the freighter *Summit Venture* that morning. The bridge itself, the original span of which opened in 1954, expressed postwar Florida boosterism on a grand scale. It also reflected other assumptions of its time, among them, the disregard for protecting the bridge supports. In hindsight, that attitude appears naïve, but at the time of the bridge's design and construction, and for decades thereafter, it seemed sensible. In a 1978 interview discussing the Sunshine Skyway's lack of robust fenders, a senior state transportation official responsible for bridge maintenance pondered aloud: "How far should we go in being our brother's keeper? Should we put armor plating over houses to protect them from airplanes" (37)?

DeYoung's account of the accident from the perspectives of the victims travelling on the bridge is riveting. In addition to using contemporary newspaper stories and investigation transcripts, DeYoung interviewed witnesses, or their friends and relatives. Paul Hornbuckle and Wesley MacIntire became briefly famous because of the disaster—Hornbuckle because he braked to a sliding stop inches from the edge of the roadbed. (Hornbuckle's yellow Buick, parked askew on the precipice, with the ruined bridge and the damaged freighter below, is *Skyway's* dramatic dust jacket photo). MacIntire experienced the disaster more completely than anyone—he drove off the bridge, but regained consciousness in the cab of his truck at the bottom of the ship channel. Kicking himself free of the wreck, he swam to the surface, where the crew of the *Summit Venture* rescued him. He was the only survivor of the bridge collapse.

Skyway's opening sentence introduces the unlucky harbor pilot: "John Lerro knew he was in trouble" (1). The interweaving of the pilot's story throughout is the book's greatest strength. After the accident, critics excoriated him for approaching the Sunshine Skyway in conditions of violent, shifting winds and zero visibility. In retrospect, Lerro chose unwisely, but as DeYoung attempts to show, in the jaws of catastrophe, the pilot had no good choices. The weather event that overtook the *Summit Venture* was a macroburst, or gust front, that resulted from a fast-moving line of storms. As it became clear that wind was overpowering the *Summit Venture*, the options of stopping the ship, turning it around, or veering out of the channel were no longer open. To most lay people, Lerro's explanations rang hollow. The Florida Department of Professional Regulation (as it was then known) and the Board of Pilot Commissioners acquitted Lerro of responsibility for the accident, although critics dismissed the pro-

ceedings as a whitewash. Interviewed by DeYoung, Lerro's attorney Steven Yerrid described the Board as "the most reluctant group of people I've seen forced to follow the law . . . [t]hey did not want to accept this guy's exoneration. They wanted to find any reason not to, and they couldn't" (150). But for the rest of his life, Lerro was consumed by remorse. He died in 2002, at age 59, of complications from multiple sclerosis, a disease aggravated by stress. DeYoung persuasively argues that Lerro was the thirty-sixth casualty of the disaster.

DeYoung's source notes and index are spotty and at times unhelpful. Elsewhere, *Skyway* is hampered by glitches. For example, DeYoung describes an early ferry, a converted Mississippi paddleboat, that crossed twenty miles of Tampa Bay in forty minutes (14). That achievement would require a vessel to travel at a constant speed of thirty miles per hour (the actual distance was about five and a half miles). Such mistakes are merely distracting, but *Skyway* also contains statements that inhibit the reader's comprehension of the central event. In a passage that aims to set the scene during the moments before the squall struck, DeYoung places an outbound tanker, the *Pure Oil*, three miles to the west of the Skyway (69). If correct, the other ship would have already passed Lerro's vessel, the *Summit Venture*. In fact (and as DeYoung relates elsewhere), the investigation established the presence of the tanker, approaching the Skyway Bridge from the east, as a concern that rightly deterred Lerro from turning north out of the ship channel (turning south out of the channel was equally risky, as it would have placed powerful winds on the *Summit Venture's* beam, pushing it sideways, out of control, toward the bridge).

Skyway is a fresh and vivid retelling of the disaster, and the most substantive effort since George Mair's *Bridge Down: A True Story* (1982). It is based on broad secondary and primary sources, the strongest of those being interviews that DeYoung conducted with people who experienced dimensions of the disaster, such as Lerro's son Chance and attorney Yerrid, or with others such as Lerro's fellow pilots. However, DeYoung describes his book as "a work of creative nonfiction . . . [that] attempts to portray the truth" (201). An authoritative history that reconciles discrepancies and places the facts of the tragedy in coherent perspective still deserves to be written. The Sunshine Skyway, and the 1980 disaster that befell it, vividly illustrate the fragility of the place that is modern Florida.

Integrating Women into the Astronaut Corps: Politics and Logistics at NASA, 1972–2004. By Amy E. Foster. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011. Acknowledgements, notes, illustrations, index. Pp. ix, 197. \$55 cloth.)

The study of women in space begins with a striking contrast. Compare Valentina Tereshkova, launched into space by the Soviet Union in 1963, with Sally Ride, who became the first American woman in space a whopping twenty years later. Tereshkova lifted into space as part of a state-directed, segregated women's space program; Ride did so only after decades of American women attempted to integrate the exclusively male astronaut corps. While the leaders of the U.S. space program measured all their other achievements against the Soviets, for years NASA did not care to match its rival's foray into sexual equality.

Amy Foster's *Integrating Women into the Astronaut Corps* explains this gap as the result of social attitudes about sex and gender combined with bureaucratic inertia. Women achieved integration of the astronaut corps because of changes in attitudes, bureaucratic evolution, and their own agency. In tracing these threads, Foster speaks to the fields of cultural history, labor history, the history of technology, and women's history. At its best, Foster's book serves as a sort of alternative history of NASA, told not in launches and payloads, but also in social trends and the broadening diversity of this most symbolic of government agencies.

Women might well be the most efficient choice for space flight, as their relative lower weight consumes less fuel. But U.S. sex attitudes, as well as barriers to opportunity, prevented women from becoming astronaut candidates until the 1970s. By only considering pilots trained on high-performance military aircraft, or technicians from the male-dominated fields of science and engineering, NASA's astronaut requirements acted as de facto discrimination against women. While NASA ignored issues of equality in order to win the space race, its officials claimed, by the late 1960s NASA leadership began a conscious effort to go above and beyond the legal requirements for equal employment opportunities. Evolving from exclusionary to inclusionary, NASA comes across in Foster's account as exemplary in terms of workplace integration. When the astronaut corps became sexually (and racially) integrated in 1978, the change (although overdue) was celebratory rather than controversial.

Foster's work nicely frames the dilemma of NASA: its need to build public enthusiasm for the space program without appear-

ing gimmicky. When women became astronauts, making too big a deal of their accomplishment risked diminishing the space program as a whole. This dilemma, Foster shows, also surfaced in the female astronauts themselves. Proud of their success but eager to be considered astronauts who merely happened to be women—or simply “one of the guys” (142), as they themselves put it—the first female astronauts worried that emphasizing their sex brought into question their qualifications as genuine astronauts. But when a generation of young women and girls idolized them, they found it difficult not to celebrate their achievements as women.

Throughout the book, Foster shows that public and cultural opinion often shared the dim view that space was an inappropriate place for women because of their supposedly frail brains and high-maintenance female needs. “And how will a girl keep her hair curled in outer space?” read a typical misogynist diatribe (65). Even as overtly sexist statements declined into the 1970s, sex remained an issue for the U.S. public, which expressed concern that men and women, for reasons of propriety, should not cohabit the outrageously cramped quarters of a space shuttle. Foster does not, however, tie these cultural assumptions to the first female astronauts. What motivated these women? How were they able to see beyond these stereotypes? In fact, despite the frequent use of oral history, Foster does not provide a great deal of biographical information about the women astronauts. A female version of Tom Wolfe’s *The Right Stuff* (1979) this is not. Fortunately, interested readers can turn to many memoirs by, and accounts of, female astronauts. But the text is fairly short—readers would likely have welcomed more on these women who Foster clearly admires.

Other events and people, while clearly not the focus of the book, are glossed over. While the book is admittedly about the integration of NASA, one feels that this is only half the story. *Integrating Women* has hardly anything on, for example, the *Challenger* disaster, which killed astronaut Judith Resnik. Did Resnik’s death at all alter the public’s views of women in space? Or was her sex not even an issue? Ultimately, the full story of women in space remains to be written.

Foster ends her book with a more recent tale of a female astronaut: Lisa Nowak, who in 2007 drove from Houston to Orlando—infamously wearing astro-diapers to avoid pit stops—in order to assault and kidnap a presumed romantic rival. Nowak’s tale invites comparisons with the more distinguished women of the space program, such as Kathy Sullivan (the first woman to perform a

spacewalk) or Shannon Lucid (who set a duration record in 1996). In contrast, Foster argues that Nowak's breakdown reflects the massive pressures that confront each woman at NASA.

And yet, for the most part Foster's account does not paint such a gloomy picture. By her own evidence, the process of integrating the astronaut corps seems to have been a predominantly positive process. Male astronauts were accepting of their female peers: "[B]efore long they [the male astronauts] were publicly defending the argument that the women were making—that they had earned their places in the astronaut corps and did their jobs just like the men" (104), and women were piloting shuttles and space stations by the 1990s. While women faced (and erased) double standards, the book does not mention a single instance of hazing or sexual harassment among the astronauts. Furthermore, NASA, as an agency, pushed for integration from the top down, adapting equipment for female bodies and providing institutional support and advocates. As Foster tells it, NASA seems like it very much wants women to succeed and has helped them do so ever since the end of the discriminatory days of the 1960s. While much of the public memory of NASA focuses on the race to be first to the moon in the 1960s, Foster has written an important exploration of another NASA first, in the process presenting us with a very human side of the space story.

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The Politics of Disaster: Tracking the Impact of Hurricane Andrew. By David K. Twigg. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012. Acknowledgements, tables, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. 211. \$74.95 cloth.)

Two recent presidents have shown how a hurricane can affect politics. The refusal of President George W. Bush to cut short his vacation to visit hurricane-ravaged New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and then his praising of the discredited chief of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Michael Brown, with what became a catchphrase, "Brownie, you're doing a heckuva job," sent the Texan's popularity to its lowest levels. President Barack Obama saw his popularity increase just before the 2012 election when Hurricane Sandy caused extensive damage to the Northeast. Phrases such as "looking Presidential," appeared everywhere.

Lesser public officials also fell under the media spotlight in both storms; New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin and Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco suffered after Katrina, while New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg gained in popularity after Sandy.

David K. Twigg, the director of the Jack D. Gordon Institute of Public Policy and Citizenship Studies at Florida International University, has examined the political implications of one of the worst hurricanes to strike Florida, Andrew in 1992. At the time, Andrew was the costliest storm to hit the United States.

As with many storms, the worst of the damage was not immediately seen; downtown Miami was spared, and the bulk of the damage was to the south. Although the storm was one of the worst on record, it did not generate the type of political controversy that Katrina and Sandy drew. The storm struck in August 1992, just ten weeks before the presidential election, and President George H. W. Bush was sharply criticized for the slow federal response. Exasperated, a county official said, "Where the hell is the cavalry on this one. They keep saying we're going to get supplies. For God's sake, where are they" (70).

Despite the slow response, Bush carried Florida, although with a smaller margin than in 1988, while he lost the election to Bill Clinton. Twigg discusses the national election, but devotes most of the book to the local races in the hardest-hit areas. He looks at municipal, legislative and statewide races beginning before the hurricane struck and seeks to find how the storm affected the race.

Twigg has thoroughly researched the subject and there is a wealth of information about the storm's impact on South Florida and politics in Dade County. Twigg has assembled an impressive array of facts by pouring through scholarly documents, books, and back issues of magazines. He concludes that Andrew gave the incumbents a heightened profile and an advantage in seeking re-election.

As Twigg clearly shows, office holders at all levels were able to use the storm to gain attention. Interestingly, while the 2012 Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, cut back on campaigning in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, candidate Bill Clinton toured the hurricane damage area and received tremendous publicity.

But there were so many things happening in the 1990s to influence the elections besides the storm. The state House and Senate districts had undergone redistricting as a result of the 1990s cen-

sus, and incumbents often had sizeable chunks of new voters. The 1992 election was a mess—the primary was scheduled for the week after the storm struck, but Dade County obtained a one-week delay. The lives of tens of thousands of voters were so badly disrupted that voting was the last thing on their minds. By the 1994 election, the Republicans were sweeping the races for national office—the Republicans gained control of Congress in that election—and gaining strength in the state legislature. Compounding the problems for a researcher is the fact that South Florida politics can be unstable in the best of conditions.

In the end, Andrew had a great impact on South Florida, but it is impossible to say for certain what role it played in determining the outcome of local elections.

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Walkin' Lawton. By John Dos Passos Coggin. (Cocoa: Florida Historical Society Press, 2012. Acknowledgements, illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography. Pp. xvii, 474. \$24.95 paper.)

Lawton Chiles' forty-year political career overlapped with Florida's emergence as a pillar of the New South. Serving in the state legislature from 1958 through 1970, the United States Senate from 1971 through 1989, and as Governor from 1991 until his untimely death in December 1998, he left an indelible mark on the state. Chiles was integral to numerous good government and public health initiatives, fought against the Reagan revolution as Senate budget chair, and managed Florida's response to Hurricane Andrew. Unfortunately, readers who finish John Coggin's *Walkin' Lawton* will likely be unaware of the importance of these developments beyond Chiles' immediate purview. Billing itself as a "definitive biography" of Chiles, this book falls short of the mark.

Chiles took a traditional mid-20th century approach to political prominence in Florida. While a student at the University of Florida he was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity and Florida Blue Key, the leadership honorary that launched the careers of such luminaries as Spessard Holland, George Smathers, and Bob Graham. He received his law degree in 1955 and took up private practice in his native Lakeland. He served a short stint in the Army and then leveraged his university connections to gain election to

the state legislature in 1958. After four terms, he advanced to the state senate.

Coggin's account of Chiles' early years suffers from the most glaring weakness of the book, namely the lack of archival sources. Coggin consulted a number of Florida newspapers, secondary sources, and the oral histories at Florida Southern College's Center for Florida History, but the bulk of the narrative comes from the over one-hundred interviews with Chiles' family, friends, staff, and colleagues that Coggin conducted. While certainly an impressive accomplishment, relying on oral histories without documentary evidence provides a limited and uneven story. The decision to build the book around the interviews is especially curious given that Chiles' gubernatorial papers are open to researchers. Coggin quotes three documents from The Senatorial Papers, housed at the University of Florida but currently closed to researchers, and none from gubernatorial papers.

Often, Coggin's sources lead him to focus on personal details that, while interesting, ignore the larger context of Chiles' political career. Coggin frequently describes Spessard Holland as Chiles' mentor, but does not elaborate on their relationship beyond a few words. Likewise, he devotes a mere three lines to the Government in the Sunshine Act that Chiles and Reubin Askew worked on as state senators in 1967. He notes the passage of the law, but makes no effort to describe its scope, contents, or reception from state legislators or the public at large. He distills Chiles' time in the legislature down to a number of personal, rather than political, relationships. We do learn that Lawton aligned with a number of legislators against the infamous Pork Chop Gang of Florida lore, but do not get a clear picture as to who his allies were, nor the strategies they used to win their fight.

The problems with the book's limited perspective are exacerbated by Coggin's writing style. The early chapters lack structure and frequently veer from anecdote to anecdote with little transition. We learn, for example, that one of the Chiles family dogs "died in traffic" and, immediately thereafter, that Chiles liked to dress as Santa Claus. The reader is often left wondering why the information is relevant and how the collection of stories advances the book's overarching argument.

Once the book moves to the statewide phases of Chiles' career, the narrative gains more coherence. Chiles is perhaps most known for his innovative and successful 1970 U.S. Senate cam-

paign, during which he walked the length of the state from the town of Century, on the Alabama line, to Key Largo; earning him the nickname "Walkin' Lawton." The well-publicized stunt allowed him both to connect directly with voters and overcome the superior war chests of his better-known rivals. Here, Coggin relies on firsthand accounts Chiles dictated for supporters as his evidentiary base and the story becomes more focused. While the reader would benefit from more details, the importance of the campaign and Chiles' political style are readily apparent.

Chiles's three terms in the senate are dispatched fairly rapidly with most attention paid to his quests for transparency and a balanced budget. His fight with Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd is a high point in Coggin's story. Additionally, the accounts of some of Chiles' most notable achievements as governor, such as the 1995 lawsuit against Big Tobacco and the Healthy Start program, are robust and informative. This is likely due to the reliability of interview subjects only a decade removed from the events they were asked to describe.

With *Walkin' Lawton*, Coggin has made a good effort, and the interviews are certainly noteworthy, but the limited perspective hurts the book in the end. General readers will come away with insight into Chiles' personality and his interactions with his family and friends, but will likely still be curious as to how Chiles' career relates to the broader historiography of Florida and American politics. Lawton Chiles was a key figure in Florida's growth and he deserves a full-length biographical treatment that examines his accomplishments in the context of a state and nation in transition.

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