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HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

PUBLISHED BY THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# *The Florida Historical Quarterly*

Published by the Florida Historical Society

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*The Florida Historical Quarterly* (ISSN 0015-4113) is published quarterly by the Florida Historical Society, 435 Brevard Avenue, Cocoa, FL 32922 in cooperation with the Department of History, University of Central Florida, Orlando. Printed by The Sheridan Press, Hanover, PA. Periodicals postage paid at Cocoa, FL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Florida Historical Society, 435 Brevard Ave., Cocoa, FL 32922.

Subscription accompanies membership in the Society. Annual membership is \$50; student membership (with proof of status) is \$30; family membership is \$75; library and institution membership is \$75; a contributing membership is \$200 and higher; and a corporate membership is \$500 and higher. Correspondence relating to membership and subscriptions, as well as orders for back copies of the *Quarterly*, should be addressed to Dr. Benjamin D. Brotemarkle, Executive Director, Florida Historical Society, 435 Brevard Ave., Cocoa, FL 32922; (321) 690-1971; email: <Ben.Brotemarkle@myfloridahistory.org.>

Correspondence concerning contributions, books for review, and all editorial matters should be addressed to Editor, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Dept. of History, CNH 551, Univ. of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32816-1350; (407) 823-0261; fax: (407) 823-3184; email: <flhisqtr@mail.ucf.edu.> Manuscripts should be submitted in triplicate. Guidelines for preparing manuscripts are available at <[http://www.cas.ucf.edu/history/fhq\\_index.php](http://www.cas.ucf.edu/history/fhq_index.php)> The *Quarterly* is a member of the Conference of Historical Journals. The Florida Historical Society and the editor of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* disclaim responsibility for statements whether of fact or opinion made by contributors.



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Spring 2011

HISTORICAL QUARTERLY Vol. 89, No. 4

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**Introduction to Special Issue:**

**This Incomperable Lande**

Maurice O'Sullivan 417

**A Boy and His Fawn: Parallel Animals in *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport* and *The Yearling***

Kathryn Seidel 423

**From Adventure Travel to Leisure Tourism:  
The Florida Letters of William Drysdale in the  
*New York Times*, 1884-1893**

Jesus Mendez 437

**"The Most Exotic of Our Cities": Race, Place,  
Writing, and George Allan England's Key West**

Philip Levy 469

**The Servants and Mrs. Rawlings: Martha Mickens  
and African American Life at Cross Creek**

Rebecca Sharpless 500

Book Reviews 530

End Notes 543

Florida History in Publications, 2010 552

Cumulative Index, Volume 89 575

Cover Illustration: Martha Mickens and Idella Parker prepare a dinner for Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and her guests at Cross Creek. *Image courtesy of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.*

## Book Reviews

- O'Brien, *Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860*.  
by Timothy J. Williams . . . . . 530
- Hobson, McAdams, and Walkiewicz, eds., *The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing after Removal*.  
by Eric Gary Anderson . . . . . 533
- Wright and Glass, eds., *Passing in the Works of Charles W. Chesnutt*.  
by J. Vincent Lowery. . . . . 535
- Wells and Phipps, eds., *Entering the Fray: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the New South*.  
by Kathleen C. Berkeley. . . . . 538
- Hagood, *Faulkner's Imperialism: Space, Place, and the Materiality of Myth*.  
by Patricia B. Anglely. . . . . 540



## Introduction: This Incomperable Lande

by Maurice O'Sullivan

Taking their cue from Michael Gannon, Florida's historians are fond of pointing out that by the time Jamestown was founded, St. Augustine was ready for urban renewal. Our state's literary scholars add that long before the Virginia Company established Jamestown, Florida already had an extensive library of works in three languages. From the beginning, that linguistic diversity would mark the region's literary tradition. While many of the earliest works about Florida, from Álgvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación* (popularly known as *Naufragios*) in 1542 to the Gentleman of Elvas' history of De Soto's expedition in 1557, were in Spanish, other works appeared in French and English as the world's colonial powers jockeyed for control of what appeared to be the gateway to North America.

When Jean Ribault, the charismatic leader of the first Huguenot expedition to Florida in 1562, returned to France, he found himself in the center of a religious war sparked by the Massacre at Vassy. Fleeing to England, he published an account of his voyage as *The Whole and True Discouerye of Terra Florida* in (London: Roulabd Hall, 1563), partly as an attempt to draw the support of English Protestants for Huguenot colonies. After an audience with Queen Elizabeth, however, he was detained in the Tower of London, suspected of being a French spy.

Ribault's description of La Florida offers an idyllic portrait of an "incomperable lande" (73), a new home that would be

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Maurice O'Sullivan is a Professor of English and Kenneth Curry Chair in Literature at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. He is the author of seven books and numerous articles. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Florida Historical Society.

"the fairest, frute fullest and plesantest of all the worlde" (72). While many of those who imagined the New World used such language, most of those who actually visited tempered their language. Ribault is unusual in his unqualified praise for both the land and its inhabitants: "They be all naked and of a goodly stature, mighty, faire and as well shapen and proportioned of bodye as any people in all the worlde, very gentill, curtious and of a good nature" (69).

Nicholas Le Challeux, a master carpenter and lay preacher on the second Huguenot expedition in 1564, offers a far different vision of paradise than Ribault's. That second expedition, led by the far less charismatic René Goulaine de Laudonnière, established Fort de la Caroline, which, in turn, caused Philip II of Spain to send Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to destroy the Huguenot settlement and establish St. Augustine. After their defeat, the surviving French returned to Dieppe. There, in 1565, Le Challeux wrote the first American poem, or at least the first poem written by someone known to have been in North America.

In his octet of frustration, Le Challeux described returning "sec & arid/Et abbatu de poureté" (dry and arid and worn out by rot). After Menéndez shattered the Huguenots' Edenic vision of a safe haven for French Protestants who could remain loyal to the crown but far enough away from their countrymen to be safe from religious persecution, a disillusioned Le Challeux believed that the only good he had gained from his Florida quest is a "beau baston blanc en ma main" (a lovely white stick in my hand), the perfect souvenir for a carpenter.

Those competing visions of a paradise and a paradise lost would become the enduring theme of Florida's literature. Both visions center on nature and both stem from the competing narratives at the beginning of Genesis, the opening book of the one text common among all colonial powers. Those narratives create two sets of dialogues which stem from the very different portraits of Eden in the first three chapters of Genesis.

Biblical scholars generally accept the documentary hypothesis, an assumption that the first five books of the Bible resulted from at least four separate narratives, edited into a single text. The first story of Eden (Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a) describes a universalized, idealized world, emphasizing effortless regeneration and limitless possibilities. In this vision, God finds everything good, encourages growth and establishes man as the center of the world.



The second account (Genesis 2:4b – 2:25) offers a radical change of tone. It focuses less on possibilities than on boundaries: economic, geographic, political, and personal. Rather than having unlimited control of an ever-expanding bounty, humans must learn to achieve harmony with the limits in both the physical world and themselves. The first vision offers endless opportunities for the tourist and developer, a world of boundless, unrestricted riches and fulfillment; the second calls for care and caution, the world of the preservationist and farmer, the promise of hope with the possibility of failure.

As Florida has flourished, it has attracted people with both visions: those who see only an abundance of riches that can quickly fulfill all our needs and desires, and those who see enormous potential which needs to be carefully nurtured, cultivated and preserved. The former believe in regeneration and renewal without effort; the latter in growth and awareness through sustained effort. While both groups use the same language in describing Florida, their visions of paradise are often at odds.

And that conflict often begets another one in a second set of dialogues. All idealists, those like Ribault with a prelapsarian vision who see Florida as a paradise, whether one easily plucked or slowly realized, regularly face the disillusioned, Le Challeux, the postlapsarians who believe that paradise has already been lost. While an exuberant Lafcadio Hearn and a sporting Ernest Hemingway may celebrate Florida's pleasures, John Muir and Marjory Stoneman Douglas warn us that those pleasures are finite. In our popular culture a coven of noir and absurdist novelists from Brett Halliday and John D. MacDonald to Harry Crews and Carl Hiaasen record—and at times revel in—the effects of lost innocence in the aging towns along Florida's coasts or on the dark streets of post-Modernist Miami.

The four essays presented in this issue of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* are the latest voices to engage in these dialogues about our state's literary traditions. In exploring parallels between the newly published *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport* (originally written in 1855) and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' *The Yearling* (1938), Kathryn Lee Seidel finds that the patterns that emerge from these works have been deeply influenced by classic genres, coming-of-age stories and hunting narratives. The traditions of those genres create a remarkable similarity between the novels. As the two boys at the center of these works deal with the challenge of becoming



men, for example, each also imagines the possibility of having a fawn as a pet.

George Morgan, the relatively wealthy, urban young hero of Cyrus Parkhurst Condit's 1855 novel, comes to Florida primarily for his health, imagining the new state as a regenerative paradise. Over the course of what is clearly a fictionalized version of its twenty-five year old author's journals and letters, George gains an increasingly deeper understanding of and confidence in himself as his growing skill in hunting and fishing give him dominion over this idealized new world. Almost a century later, in 1938, Rawlings' Jody Baxter lives in a far more complex and limited paradise. In negotiating the boundaries of his cracker world, Jody comes to recognize that maturity involves choice and sacrifice.

The private practice of keeping journals, popular among Florida's antebellum visitors, evolved into a post-war tradition of travel letters from the South published for Northern audiences. Harriet Beecher Stowe's letters about her life in Mandarin, published in the *Christian Union* newspaper, became so popular that she gathered them into the book *Palmetto Leaves* (1873). As Florida became a popular and convenient frontier for Northerners, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad even commissioned the reluctant but poor poet Sidney Lanier to write a literary travel guide, *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate and History* (1875).

Jesus Mendez discusses the work of one of the more popular and prolific of those travel writers, William Drysdale, a writer for the august *New York Times*. Mendez perfectly captures the shifting focus of both Drysdale's work and Florida's public appeal in the title of his article, "From Adventure Travel to Leisure Tourism." Like Condit, Drysdale found Florida an ideal site for both pursuing adventures (fishing, alligator hunting, sailing) and restoring his health. Where Condit's *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport* offers a lush, natural, pristine Eden, however, Drysdale celebrates the improved Florida created by entrepreneurs like Henry Flagler and Henry Plant. Like the genial developer played by Alan King in John Sayles' *Sunshine State* (2002), Drysdale appears to prefer "nature on a leash."

In his essay on George Allan England, Philip Levy discusses a spiritual and literary heir to William Drysdale. Despite a strong dose of Anglophobia, Drysdale's work has a marked racial cast and tends to portray the value of the Yankee work ethic and the positive influences of what he regarded as mature, colonial cultures on less

developed cultures. Best known as a popular science fiction writer and an unsuccessful politician, George Allan England became an extraordinarily popular visitor to Key West. An ardent socialist and anti-capitalist, his utopian vision was highly exclusive and narrowly focused; it excluded minorities and worshipped technology.

In suggesting that Key West appealed to England as a potential micro-utopia, Levy examines the boosterism that made the writer a local celebrity. Fueling England's fascination with our southernmost city was his admiration for the growing technology that provided increased access to it and the island's potential of proving that Anglo-Saxon ingenuity could tame even tropical climates. Levy creates a remarkable study of a complex but deeply flawed enthusiast, a socialist who not only revered the products of gritty capitalism, but also admired the way Anglo-Saxon imperialism imposed civilization on tropical cultures.

In 1928, the year after George Allan England settled into Key West, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and her husband, Charles, purchased an orange grove and moved to Cross Creek. One of the state's literary icons, Rawlings found her voice as she struggled for acceptance among her neighbors, both white and black. While George Allan England never attempted to question his strong sense of racial superiority—his most famous work, the trilogy *Darkness and Dawn* (1912-14) ends with a racial genocide—Rawlings spent much of her life in Florida working through the assumptions about race that she brought to Cross Creek. Just as her friendships at the Creek taught her the depth and dignity of her neighbors, her relationships with her African-American employees helped her re-evaluate her values.

Once her vision of a simple, pastoral life among Florida orange trees faded with the realities of a remote farm life, realities that drove her husband back north, she found her new world spiritually transformative. As Rebecca Sharpless shows in her marvelously detailed description of Martha Mickens' complex association with Rawlings, part of Rawlings' transformation involved developing relationships she could probably never have imagined as a privileged child in Washington, D.C., as a sorority sister at the University of Wisconsin, or as author of the "Songs of the Housewife" column for the *Rochester Journal*.

All of these essays reflect how powerfully the southernmost state has shaped its writers, and how profoundly it has been shaped by its writers. Florida has always been as much a state of mind as



a geographic location. Even those authors who are now rarely read, like William Drysdale and George Allan England, helped to define a paradise of leisure and possibility that attracted waves of Northern tourists from the end of the Civil War to the Great Depression. And those tourists expected to find the idealized Eden that had been described for them, a world slightly exotic but safe, the kind of world comfortable enough for a *New York Times* writer but interesting enough for a technological utopian.

Like all crises, the financial troubles that struck the state in the late 1920s and early 1930s, especially the bursting of the Florida land bubble, followed quickly by a series of catastrophic hurricanes, gave writers a chance to re-define Florida. Marjorie Rawlings used that opportunity to alter the public perception of cracker culture. Her characters could finally escape the comic stereotype they had been locked in since the Civil War. And the year before her Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Yearling* appeared, two other landmark Florida novels were published: Ernest Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* (1937), his only novel set largely in the United States, and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). Like Nicholas Le Challeux, Hemingway's Harry Morgan watches the small Eden he has built for himself collapse. Hurston, on the other hand, introduces in Janie Crawford a woman who, like Jean Ribault, refuses to let anyone destroy the paradise she has created in her heart and memories. All we ever know about the future of our literature is that, like paradise itself, it will always renew itself.



## A Boy and His Fawn: Parallel Animals in *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport* and *The Yearling*

by Kathryn Seidel

In Florida literature, the relationship between people and animals is ubiquitous and complex. Whether animals are hunted, eaten, despised, or cherished as companions and pets, animals express the authors' attempt to conceptualize nature and to understand the role of humans within the natural world of Florida.<sup>1</sup> When the main characters of the novels are boys, the themes of nature interweave with those of the coming-of-age novel in which the maturation of the boy depends on learning the skills, responsibilities, and character traits associated with manhood.<sup>2</sup>

Florida readers are familiar with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' portrait of a boy's love of a fawn in *The Yearling*, published in 1938, but set in Florida during the 1870s.<sup>3</sup> The novel has an earlier parallel, much less familiar to most audiences, in Cyrus Parkhurst

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Kathryn Seidel is a Professor of English at the University of Central Florida. She publishes in the area of women writers and literature of the South. She has been the recipient of two Fulbright Awards to Japan in 2007 and to Finland in 1984.

1. The meaning of animals in culture and fiction is found in studies such as those by Mary Allen, *Animals in American Literature* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Katherine C. Grier, *Pets in America: A History* (New York: Harcourt, 2007); and Mary Sanders Pollack and Catherine Rainwater, eds. *Figuring Animals: Essays on Animal Images in Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Popular Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
2. See for example the work of Anne Goodwyn Jones and Susan V. Donaldson, *Haunted Bodies: Gender and Southern Literature* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997); Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Jacob F. Rivers III, *Cultural Values in the Southern Sporting Narrative* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).
3. See Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *The Yearling* (New York: Scribner's, 1938).

Condit's *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport*.<sup>4</sup> This novel, written in 1855, was recently discovered in the Rollins College Library's manuscript collection; it has been edited by Rollins Professors Maurice O'Sullivan and Wenxian Zheng and published by the Florida Historical Society in 2009. Its form is a hunting narrative about George Morton, "a lad of seventeen years of age"<sup>5</sup> from New York who travels in Florida in the mid-1800s. The novel is a fictionalized version of Condit's own travels to Florida in the early 1850s. It appears to be based on Condit's diaries, but as a narrative, it replicates patterns found in coming-of-age stories and in hunting narratives, both of which are also present in *The Yearling*.

As a story about a boy's growth from child to adult, Condit's novel has many parallels with *The Yearling*, including the descriptions of the frontier, the views of nature, the stages of development of the two boys, and the role of hunting in their maturation. George Morton, the hero of Condit's novel, resembles Jody Baxter the boy in Rawlings' novel, in several ways: they are both thrilled with the natural world and eager to learn to hunt so as to be accepted among a society of men. Both learn the skills needed to kill nearly every type of Florida animal, but they also learn the qualities of manhood which are ritualized by the hunt. Paradoxically, both also desire to have a fawn as a pet. Jody has his fawn throughout the entire novel, while George obtains his desired pet by the novel's end. Both texts attempt to show the need to achieve harmony with nature and harmony within oneself as important components of adulthood.

Tempting though it is to think that Rawlings would have read the manuscript, editor Maurice O'Sullivan observes that it is nearly impossible that Rawlings would have known of this novel since, until 2009, it existed only as an unpublished manuscript in the Rollins College library.<sup>6</sup> The similarities result from the frame of the hunting narrative and its interaction with the coming-of-age narrative, which this essay will attempt to demonstrate. The two novels also can be read together as a window into the changing regard

4. Cyrus Parkhurst Condit, *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport*, in Maurice O'Sullivan and Wenxian Zhang, eds *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport: The Lost Novel of Cyrus Parkhurst Condit*. (Cocoa: The Florida Historical Society, 2009). Condit's novel and essays by O'Sullivan and Zhang are included in this volume. Subsequent citations will refer to O'Sullivan and Zhang for citations from their supplementary essays and to Condit for citations from the novel itself.

5. Condit, 1.

6. O'Sullivan and Zhang, "Characterization," 140.



for nature from 1855 to 1938. The novels share many commonalities: they convey the idea that animals have a hierarchy, that these young boys want very much to prove manhood by developing hunting skills, that they seek acceptance by men, that they both have childhood fantasies and ideas which must be jettisoned in order to enter adulthood, and that their relationship with the fawn is a transitional avatar for each on his way to adulthood.

In *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport*, young George chronicles the people and animals he meets. His early judgements of people based on their manners and education gradually are replaced with respect for the flattened social hierarchies among people in Florida. His acquaintance with the domestic animals he has seen in New York broadens to include wild animals as well, and he begins to perceive a hierarchy among animals, as O'Sullivan and Zhang observe.<sup>7</sup> He identifies animals as those which are hunted for sport, animals hunted for food, animals hunted because they are "varmints," animals which work to help humans, and animals that are pets. While George initially regards Florida as a playground where nature is meant to be tamed and where he can prove his manhood, he ultimately develops a reverence for nature.

In New York, George would have had first-hand experience with working animals, vagrant animals, and a vast array of pets, as Catherine C. Grier points out in *Pets in America: A History* (2006). Working animals include the horses which drew carts and wagons and of course were the main mode of transportation. Treated badly, these animals were those which would inspire Anna Sewall to write *Black Beauty* in 1877. Vagrant animals include dogs and cats which roamed freely in Manhattan; they were tolerated to control the rats and as scavengers. Domestic pigs, often allowed to run freely, were central to the removal of garbage for the city.<sup>8</sup> Many residents of the city kept pets in the home; dogs, cats, and birds were the beloved pets of people whom George knew.

The fact that both boys want a pet reflects the ideas of the role of pets during the nineteenth century. Pets were like living toys, playthings for children. Small pets like dogs and cats were kept outside or were in the house only part of the time; the most popular pet kept indoors all the time were birds. As Catherine Grier notes, however, the concept of the pet changed dramatically during the

7. Ibid. 141.

8. Grier, *Pets in America*, 255.



1800's: "some progressive parents began to accept the proposition that pets were important as a way to teach children to be kind to all living beings."<sup>9</sup> This idea was widely accepted by the late nineteenth century and resulted in an expansion of pet ownership. The idea was that caring for a living creature and loving it were ways to teach children to love other people as well.

George addresses nineteenth century cultural and philosophical views on the role of animals in society. The cult of domesticity, presenting the home as a perfect place, a potential Eden, fostered a new view of animals.<sup>10</sup> Animals were the creatures created in the Garden of Eden; as the Bible said, people were to have dominion over them but also be their guardians. According to Catherine C. Grier, New Yorkers of the mid-1800s deplored the cruel treatment of animals because they thought that such behavior brought out the worst in people; the child who was cruel to animals would become a tyrannical and perhaps debauched adult.<sup>11</sup> Animals were to be hunted and raised for meat, but not treated cruelly. George would doubtless eat pork, beef, chicken, and fish, all of which were cultivated on or near Manhattan. He would have been far removed from the daily lives of these domestic animals, since he lived in the city. He would see the smaller cats and dogs that were beginning to join humans in the house as part of the ideal home. As Grier reports, many manuals for rearing children began to include the idea that a pet would help a child develop the desirable qualities of kindness, responsibility, and caring for others, especially those who were weaker or of less advantage than oneself.<sup>12</sup>

When introduced to readers, George clearly has had no experience in caring for anyone, not even himself. He is a sickly boy of seventeen whose father has recently died. His uncle suggests a trip to Florida, renowned as a place for restoration of health. Uncle James knows that the journey will involve hunting because of all places in the South, Florida was still a wild place, not yet settled with cities, nor comprised of large plantations. As Clarence Gohdes, points out, by the Civil War, the older states in the South were already stripped of deer and other game,<sup>13</sup> but Florida retained

9. Ibid., 19.

10. Ibid., 164-171.

11. Ibid., 179-186.

12. Ibid., 18.

13. Clarence Gohdes, ed., *Hunting in the Old South: Original Narratives of the Hunters* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1867), xv.

the flavor of the Old South: a "delightful realm, with a plentitude of game."<sup>14</sup> New Yorkers of the leisure class, to which George and his uncle belonged, regarded Florida as such a place. In Florida hunting was not simply a pastime for the upper class but a necessity for poor whites, small farmers, and enslaved people, and George meets all these people who hunt alongside Mr. Hunter, the aptly named hunter who is his host, guide, and father figure in Florida. Not only was Florida's game abundant, after the Seminole wars, it was free from those native peoples who did not appreciate the presence of these interlopers. As a place to restore one's health, Florida's pristine, clear springs and mild weather attracted many travelers who visited Florida for health reasons, including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Harriet Beecher Stowe. George is thrilled to travel to Florida to recover his strength and health but also to be amused in what he at first regards as a great playground. Hunting was certainly part of recreational activities which adolescent men enjoyed in the nineteenth century, but, as John F. Reiger asserts, southern boys such as George found that they were also learning a code of behavior which was part of their socialization.<sup>15</sup> During his year hunting in Florida, George learns more about responsibility, ethical behavior and empathy than he ever had in New York.

When George enters the South as a novice hunter, he joins an ancient tradition. Hunting in the South had for centuries incorporated a code of behavior in which the hunter learned responsibility and respect. It was important to learn the skills but also the qualities of character which hunters taught and then repeated in the many narratives of hunting which were parts of the culture. A boy might hear stories of the hunt from his family and friends and also read published narratives which were very popular in the nineteenth century. George's narrative introduces the idea of a hierarchy of animals because, as Jacob F. Rivers III points out, hunting incorporated the idea of a "moral order" and gave men the "opportunity to practice the values of their class in a communal celebration of their lives as an extension of nature."<sup>16</sup> As in the case of many narratives about heroic behavior, George meets a mentor who will provide the narrative about the hunt, accompany him on his quest for

14. Ibid., xviii.

15. John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* (New York: Winchester Press, 1975), 43.

16. Rivers, xi, xv.



manhood, teach him skills, and assist him in learning the correct values. Appropriately named, Mr. Hunter is a master hunter, adept at shooting, trapping, stalking, and living in the Florida wilderness. Traveling and hunting with Mr. Hunter allows George to leave his New York home, navigate the Florida wilderness, complete a rite of passage, and confront the strange and dangerous animals which he finds there. He pits himself against nature to prove himself, but he also learns to become increasingly attuned to nature. He learns to track game, to handle the hunting dogs, and to shoot. He also learns patience and control of the excited feelings he has regarding the hunt. When he hunts a buck, for example, he learns he must wait for the right moment to take the shot; control of oneself is part of the skill set of men. As Joseph Campbell writes in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1948), the young man who wishes to be a hero must control his impulses, develop his skills, and learn respect for his teacher.<sup>17</sup> Travelling on the Florida frontier becomes a journey from childhood to adulthood for George.

Given this set of skills, it is interesting that George longs for a deer as a pet, even as he learns to kill them effectively. He hears stories from other hunters which intrigue him: "while a doe has a young fawn too small to take care of itself, both the doe and fawn leave no scent for dogs to trail. It was said to be a wonderful provision of nature."<sup>18</sup> George asks if fawns can be kept as pets and is told that they can be "kept about the house as pets, until after they were full grown. They are the most interesting creatures in the world, and you get so attached to them."<sup>19</sup> However, when they are grown, "they are very troublesome...they nibble off the tops of everything...they will chew clothes that are hung out to dry...they are very beautiful and cunning."<sup>20</sup> Because of all these problems, they must "get killed after a while."<sup>21</sup> This, of course, is the plot of *The Yearling*.

On the Florida frontier, hunting game was crucial to survival, but pet ownership of fawns apparently did occur. George's desire to have a pet fawn may also have been influenced by his New York background. Catherine C. Grier points out that in the early

17. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949; repr., New York: New World Library, 2008).

18. Condit, 36.

19. Ibid., 36.

20. Ibid., 35.

21. Ibid., 36.



nineteenth century: "young deer were popular pets among well-to-families. Because deer had been so systematically overhunted, they were rare in the eastern States, which made them desirable as living lawn ornaments in a small-scale version of the European country house 'deer park.'" <sup>22</sup> George's desire to have a fawn, is an important part of his maturing awareness of the need to care for nature, and a step along the way to caring for others, but it also may fulfill an impulse to display a rare creature, perhaps to win approval and envy. In short, one motive for George's desire for a fawn may be to obtain a status symbol.

Contrasting with this softer side, however, is George's determination to succeed in the ultimate goal of killing a buck. When Mr. Hunter's son, John, who is younger than George, sees a deer, at first George asks for the rifle. It then occurs to George that it was "a little mean to deprive [John] of his chance" <sup>23</sup> and instead allows John to shoot the deer. The narrator says that George "long wished for the opportunity" to kill his first deer, but here he controls his impulses, an important difference between being a child and being a man. Hunting can be violent and chaotic, so it is important to be able to control oneself in order to be safe and make good judgments. His self-control pays off when he finally does kill his first deer, a buck. To kill the majestic male deer is the ultimate prize for the southern hunter, as Stuart A. Marks points out: "The buck hunter is the epitome of a masculine mystique. He is cool and collected in the trying and risky moments of performance. He uses his mind instead of his emotions...he is active and assertive in the appropriate context...He knows how to win appropriately and does not cause others to become jealous... of his triumphs."<sup>24</sup> Killing a doe, a creature believed to be passive and inferior except in defense of her fawn, does not enhance the masculinity of the deer hunter. George's kill is rewarded with the ancient ritual of initiation into the world of men: he is rewarded by having a blood mark placed on his forehead, a rite which presents him to the men as one of them. He also receives the praise of one of the only women in the novel, Mrs. Hunter, who says she is happier "than if Mr. Hunter had shot a dozen deer," in reference to the event, and the

22. Grier, *Pets in America*, 55.

23. Condit, 66.

24. Stuart A. Marks, *Southern Hunting in Black and White: Nature, History, and Ritual in a Carolina Community* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 161.

narrator tells us "he was delighted."<sup>25</sup> One can only imagine that George's own mother would be horrified, but the frontier mother is thrilled with the kill as it represents her surrogate son's entrance into manhood.

George's pride, however, is soon challenged by another hunt, when he and the party of hunters kill a bear. The text states that George feels "very pleased at having had a hand in the hunt, [but] he did not think it was a thing to brag of."<sup>26</sup> Being boastful about one's success is not part of the code of men; to be modest, stoical, and self-effacing allows him to connect to others. He also begins to see that the pleasure of hunting is no pleasure at all if he has an unfair advantage. The bear was stuck in the river and had no means of defending itself and George even refers to the bear as a "poor creature."<sup>27</sup> George's encounter with the bear shows that he is learning hunting skills but also compassion and respect.

George's adventures document the frontier aspects of Florida and the pioneer spirit of its few inhabitants who must cope with threatening animals, from, alligators to mosquitoes, as well as, hunt in order to survive. While George at first perceives hunting as a sport and pastime, he soon learns from his companions and Mr. Hunter that they do not hunt for the thrill of the hunt, however, but from an ideal of the honorable sportsman with an ancient code. As Jan E. Dizard writes in *Going Wild* (1994), the code of the sportsman was "typically passed from father to son, and it is celebrated in rituals of the first kill, the big buck, and countless private markers of the ever deepening commitment to the sporting encounter with nature."<sup>28</sup> The code explicitly passes the knowledge of animals and hunting from the adult males to the young one, and often the father is the main figure in the narrative. George's surrogate father does a good job in helping him to obtain a complex understanding of animals, hunting, and adult male behavior.

The stages in Jody's coming of age in *The Yearling* follow the pattern which George has experienced. Jody is also eager, initially finds hunting thrilling, needs his father to pass along the code of hunting, and learns that hunting has a code and a purpose. Unlike George, however, Jody must learn to hunt for another important

25. Condit, 76.

26. Ibid., 47.

27. Ibid., 47.

28. Jan E. Dizard, *Going Wild: Hunting, Animal Rights, and the Contested Meaning of Nature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 99.



reason; his success at hunting is essential for the survival of himself and his family. Indeed, since his father Penny is sickly, if Jody does not learn to hunt, the family may well starve. Unlike Mr. Hunter, who as a surrogate father indirectly guides George, Penny Baxter is the actual father who teaches Jody to hunt. Penny needs to teach Jody to survive, and hunting is the means for doing this in 1870s Central Florida. Like Mr. Hunter, however, Penny is also careful to teach Jody that hunting must be done with respect and that it incurs responsibility; he tells Jody directly, "son, I've helt back my shot and contented myself with watchin' many a time when cree-turs was feedin' harmless and innocent. It goes again me to crack down a sich a time...And don't you grow up like the Forresters, killin' meat you got no use for, for the fun of it. That's evil as the bears."<sup>29</sup> The code of the hunter does not include killing for no reason, and even worse, killing animals as amusement. Condit, to some extent, and Rawlings, even more, reject the notion of the killing as sheer amusement; both emphasize that men must have the right motives for the hunt.

One of these motives is to learn to respect nature and to live in a way that is closer to the natural world. Both novelists do this by taking pains to show that the boys perceive the beauty of nature. Jody loves nature and is moved by it, as in the scene in which he is transfixed by the cranes. His father describes the experience to his wife in this way: "They had seen a thing that was unearthly. They were in a trance from the strong spell of its beauty."<sup>30</sup> Nature in *The Yearling* is regarded as sacred and beautiful. George, too, is impressed with the beauty of Florida; its warmth and abundance of fruit, birds and animals are a far cry from the sidewalks of New York. It takes George a while to connect this beauty with hunting; however, his initial motives for killing of animals are an opportunity to improve his skills and to impress Mr. and Mrs. Hunter. Indeed, had George early on seen this flock of cranes, he would no doubt have fired a few rounds at them. He does kill several ducks early in the novel. As he becomes more inculcated with the code of the hunt, he has a different view of hunting. When he finally kills a buck, he has a pang of regret and, even for him, a rare moment of meditation regarding his philosophy of nature. The narrator reports that George "felt almost sorry that he had shot it. But he knew

29. Rawlings, *The Yearling*, 50.

30. *Ibid.*, 89.

animals were made for man's use; and though he could not say he shot it just because he was hungry, he knew the other deer was almost all eaten."<sup>31</sup> This moment of insight is fleeting, however, because when he observes the buck is young with small horns, George is disappointed that he does not have some "large horns to show at home."<sup>32</sup> He is still a boy, for whom display of a trophy trumps beauty and caring.

Both novels emphasize that skill in hunting is associated with adulthood. Just as George is eager to kill his first deer and to hunt bears, Jody cannot wait to get on his shoes to go after the bear that kills a sow, and George cannot sleep the night before he learns that Mr. Hunter will take him out to hunt. Both are a bit uneasy when they first are in the woods, and both feel and admit to fear, while the adult men do not. George, however, does so with the knowledge that he will soon leave for his home in New York, where he can talk about these skills to impress someone at his prep school, but where he will not need them. In Florida, he wants to be respected by the men, so he works hard at learning to shoot and track. Jody, however, learns these skills not just for fun but because he must. He too wants to impress a man, his father, but his motives are primal, to contribute to the welfare of his family, not to have a trophy.

Traveling as a metaphor for maturation is strong in the both novels. Both boys travel away from their families, experience trials and hardships, interact with helpful guides, and ultimately return home; these "circular journeys"<sup>33</sup> are often found in narratives of the young hero who leaves parents and home but then returns as a man as David S. Nordloh has shown. Jody is a lonely boy who rarely has the company of others since his father has chosen to live in the interior, on Baxter Island, as they call it. Baxter island is not really an island but an isolated hammock of fertile land within the scrubland near the St. John's River Basin. Jody longs to travel to see the wide world, and when he runs away at the end of the novel, he experiences the transformation from boy to man. George is a gregarious boy who leaves his home also, but unlike Jody, is never alone or unhappy.

The class differences between the two are of course very large. George eats the food which he hunts, but he does not hunt to obtain food. For George it is a novelty to eat venison; at no time is he

31. Condit, 76.

32. Ibid.

33. David S. Nordloh, "Circular Journeys in *The Yearling*," *The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature* 4 (1992): 25.



in danger of starving. He is a privileged boy who is roughing it. He is surrounded by grown men and many servants, and even some enslaved African Americans who belong to Mr. Hunter. These people take care of him during his entire year in Florida. Jody, on the other hand, hunts to live. When his neighbors, the Forresters, butcher a hog, the narrator notes that nothing "was wasted, not even the entrails."<sup>34</sup> Killing animals for motives other than to eat them is a major facet of George's hunting. While George learns some empathy with animals, there are classifications of animal which they kill without hesitation. He and his companions kill predators, especially the lowly "varmints," for sport. For example, George regards the Florida panther as a varmint whose cleverness makes it interesting to kill; Jody and Penny, however, kill several wildcats, but rather than doing this for sport or to protect livestock, they use the meat as food for the dogs and save the hides of the cubs to make a knapsack. Penny even uses panther oil as a salve for his arthritic joints. Thus Rawlings's message in 1938 is that resources should be conserved, while Condit's in 1855 is that some animals provide more sport than others. It is in these details that we are able to see that the sensibility of Rawling's novel is that of the twentieth century, not the nineteenth.

Certainly both novels view Florida as a paradise of the natural world, a place of beauty, yet one in which there is danger. There is a scene in each novel in which the young boy encounters a pool of water, in George's case a spring of cool fresh water from the aquifer, in which he has a refreshing bath,<sup>35</sup> perhaps a small symbol of the baptism which takes him from childhood to adulthood. Jody also loves to be by a spring to which "no one came ... but himself and the wild animals and thirsty birds."<sup>36</sup> George hears stories from the other men about dangers, but he does not experience them. His turmoil is within—will he be brave enough, shoot straight enough, gather praise from his companions? Jody, of course, must survive a horrible storm, a dreadful flood, and the ever-present danger of starvation. Because paradise is full of danger, Jody learns that he must respect the creatures within it, even the varmints; as Penny says, "a creetur that kills and eats what he needs, why, he's jest like the rest of us, makin' out the best he kin."<sup>37</sup>

34. Rawlings, *The Yearling*, 272.

35. Condit, 13.

36. Rawlings, *The Yearling*, 4.

37. *Ibid.*, 26.

Given their desire to become men, it is fascinating that both George and Jody become attached to a fawn. While George often remarks that he would love to have a fawn as a pet, throughout most of the novel, he does not have one. Only at the end, when he is about to return to New York, does his friend and mentor Mr. Hunter give him a fawn, along with a story of its capture: "Mr. Hunter said they had caught it after a hard chase. They had had it only three or four days, but it was quite tame and would eat from their hands."<sup>38</sup> George is delighted to have the fawn, and to hear the story, since the story of the hunt is part of the manly narrative which is another skill associated with manhood. The fate of the fawn is only given a few lines; it must reside in a box and make the voyage on the ship back to New York. Once arrived, they take it out and let it run in a small fenced yard; some time later, George takes it "into the country where it became a great pet for all who saw it."<sup>39</sup> In the very next sentence, the narrator notes that George's mother believes that George "had grown much heartier and looked so healthy that she was satisfied with his trip."<sup>40</sup> The juxtaposing of taking care of a pet, to his mother whose role was to take care of him, but had ceded that task to others and even to George, reveals a psychological insight in this otherwise straightforward novel. Part of adulthood is forming a caring relationship with another creature, so while George spent most of his time shooting to kill, to be a man he had to learn to care about someone other than himself. His transition animal, a fawn, prepares him for an adult life with women, his mother, and later perhaps, a wife and children.

In *The Yearling*, the fawn is a main character who even receives a name, Flag. He represents nature, and he represents Jody. It is Flag's nature to eat corn and to run around creating a ruckus. Jody delights in Flag's impulsiveness, his joy of life, his love of fun and play; of course, those are the traits of a child. Jody is at the crossroads and must decide if he is ready to be an adult. Jody watches the sheer destruction that Flag represents as he eats the seed corn which is all that stands between the Baxter family and starvation. As Anna Lillios notes, Jody has practiced a kind of magical self-deception which is associated with childhood, but the reality he must learn is that a "creature that forms the family's food supply [cannot

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38. Condit, 127.

39. Condit, 128.

40. Ibid.



be] a pet.”<sup>41</sup> Jody is full of resentment towards his parents when they order him to shoot Flag; in despair, he runs away, only to experience the excruciating pain of hunger, and the knowledge that his parents love him. He must put away the things of a child; no longer can Flag be his avatar.

In both Condit's and Rawling's novels, we see the role of pets placed in contrast with the violence of survival in frontier Florida. Both Jody and George develop their softer side, their ability to empathize with another living creature, and their keen sense that they are responsible for keeping this creature alive, for once, not for killing it. George obtains his pet, but apart from his delight in watching it, he does not form a lasting attachment; he houses it in the country, visits from time to time, and is not responsible for its food or well being. He has been warned, however, that fawns will grow up, but Condit does not show us that moment; the novel ends before George must cope with the fawn's demise. Jody, however, needs to love someone outside his family because he was lonely in the sparsely populated wilderness. He identifies not with other people but with nature; his choice of a wild animal as his companion, an animal which was never meant to be a pet, brings him to inevitable sorrow. His father is the softer parent, wanting to allow Jody to have his pet against the wishes of his mother whose practical admonishments seem heartless to Jody. As loving a father as he is, perhaps the one way in which Penny has failed his son is not telling him this explicitly. Penny leaves it to his wife, Jody's tough, stoical mother, to be the bearer of these bad tidings. Jody learns painfully that she was right all along. In jettisoning his friend and avatar, Jody rejects the soft maternal role, which his own mother has rejected as well, in order to learn his father's skills and, as Lynne Vallone points out, replace him as the breadwinner of the family.<sup>42</sup>

The idea that animals may have rights, and that humans have responsibility towards them is a contemporary view which we see developing in both novels. Both coming-of-age tales show young boys dealing with the Florida wilderness, hunting many types of animals, and owning a fawn. By the end of Cyrus Parker Condit's novel, George has learned the hunting skills that men possess and

41. Anna Lillios, "The Death of Flag: Mother-Son Bonding in Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' *The Yearling*," *Journal of Florida Literature* 14 (2005-2006): 24.

42. Lynne Vallone, "Gender and Mothering in *The Yearling*," *The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature* 2 (1989-1990): 50.

acquired a pet that he can love. His hunting skills will not get much use in the big city, but his character has matured to some extent. Jody, on the other hand, has experienced several stages of initiation into adulthood; not only has he learned to hunt and to love, but his most crucial rite of passage occurs not when he hunts but when he must kill the fawn. At that point, he becomes an adult because by doing so he is taking responsibility for others, for his family's well-being. In frontier Florida, animals and people interact; boys can grow to become men in the wilderness. As we leave George, we can see he has learned new skills and is on his way to learning responsibility and empathy. Jody, however, learns skills, but he also learns to love, and to suffer; because of these, he is the one who becomes a man.



## From Adventure Travel to Leisure Tourism: The Florida Letters of William Drysdale in the New York Times, 1884-1893

by Jesus Mendez

William Drysdale was a fixture in newspaper circles of New York City in the late nineteenth century, a reporter and writer whose powers of observation and social commentary made him equally at home covering famous legal battles of the time or describing his travels over many years in the United States, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Mexico, the Caribbean and Europe. Fortunately for Florida, some of Drysdale's best literary pages chronicled important decades for the young state that would eventually build its fortune and its future on tourism. For 24 years, he wrote, often under the thinly disguised pseudonym of "W.D.", more than 380 signed newspaper articles, contributed to weekly and monthly journals, and published 17 books—eight of them fiction. Of this sizable literary output, more than 50 articles or travel letters in the *New York Times* were devoted solely to Florida during the 1880s and 1890s. Drysdale's travel articles on Florida helped create a winter tourism bond between New York and the Sunshine State which has remained firmly in place for more than one hundred years. More important, Drysdale's letters cover a period when

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Jesus Mendez is an Associate Professor in History at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. He is currently researching the transportation and commercial links between the Caribbean and Florida in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The author wishes to thank Victor Bary and Robert Fridlington, both from Cranford, New Jersey, who have maintained the memory of William Drysdale in the community he called home for the last twenty years of his life.

travel to Florida transitioned from a wilderness adventure jaunt in a barely settled frontier area into a pleasurable and comfortable upper and upper middle class journey to a fashionable winter resort destination. His travel letters are, arguably, not only the most important and complete first-hand account we have of the landscape, protagonists, and events at a pivotal juncture in the state's history, but they also reflect the changing views towards the region by both the author and his readers within the context of tourism in a broadly-defined geographic region.

Travel writing on Florida has a long history. As Samuel Proctor pointed out more than thirty years ago, accounts by travelers and visitors to the region date back to the Spanish exploration period in the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The word tourist, however, only began to be used in connection with travel to Florida in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, although it is highly questionable as to how pleasurable excursions to the region were at the time. Even if possible, given limitations on transportation and lodging, travel as a pleasurable activity still carried in the United States a Puritanical religious stigma of being a frivolous, and perhaps even sinful, pursuit. As with the rest of the country, however, Florida began reaping the benefits of changes in the perception of travel as transportation links and lodging facilities improved. Travel began to be recast under a new light of physical recuperation and restoration, especially for those afflicted by broken health supposedly aggravated by the increasingly congested urban centers of the Northeast. Recreation soon joined recuperation and restoration (the three Rs as Cindy S. Aron labels them) as an integral part of travel.<sup>2</sup> Florida benefitted from its mild winter climate and a growing list of medical doctors prescribed warm climates as a treatment for consumption or tuberculosis, and soon gained prominence as an antebellum destination for recuperation and restoration if not yet a destination for recreation due to the lackluster accommodations available and difficulties of travel to and within the state.

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1. Samuel Proctor, preface to the new edition of *A Guidebook of Florida and the South For Tourists, Invalids and Emigrants*, Floridiana Facsimile & Reprint Series (1869; repr., Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1978), vii.

2. For an excellent study on the evolution of attitudes towards travel and vacations in the nineteenth century United States with valuable insights into changing religious perceptions of leisure, see Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).



The second half of the nineteenth century ushered in further changes in the concept of travel in the United States and in Florida. Mass industrialization also produced the geographic extension of a growing leisure tourism industry beyond its localized origins in the Northeast.<sup>3</sup> Books and articles on domestic and foreign travel proliferated as railroad and steamship travel expanded in the post-Civil War era and as American newspapers catered to that interest both from advertisers and readers as they evolved from partisan political mouthpieces into mass readership business enterprises.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the accompanying economic prosperity that followed the Panic of 1873 allowed for broadened horizons and leisure travel opportunities for members of the expanding upper and middle classes. Travel articles, many sponsored by a growing travel industry

3. Although Richard H. Garren has made a compelling argument for the birth of American mass tourism in New York state as early as the first decades of the nineteenth century in his book *The Birth of American Tourism: New York, the Hudson Valley, and American Culture, 1790-1830* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), it was in the post Civil War period that national integration allowed for the expansion of the domestic tourism phenomenon (notably in the South and West) which continued the tradition of a romantic, even existential, image and ideology of a nature tourism which had, by then, receded for many areas of the Northeast as the region rapidly industrialized. See Jon F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); William Erwin, *The New Niagara: Tourism, Technology, and the Landscape of Niagara Falls, 1776-1917* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); and David C. Miller, *Dark Eden: The Swamp in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). In his history of Thomas Cook & Son, Piers Brendon dates the birth of popular tourism in England to the mid-nineteenth century, specifically, June 9, 1841, with the first railway excursion tour of Thomas Cook. See Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cooke: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1991).
4. The expansion and improvement of transportation links, the increase in lodging facilities, and the growth in the number of popular newspapers, journals, and travel guides by the middle of the nineteenth century set the stage for what Philip Scranton labels the commodification of place in the creation of mass tourism. See the preface by Philip Scranton in Philip Scranton and Janet F. Davidson, eds., *The Business of Tourism: Place, Faith, and History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), vii-x. For the development of the lodging industry, the best and most recent study is A.K. Sandoval-Strausz, *Hotel: An American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). For changes in the American press in the mid-nineteenth century, see Hazel Dicken-Garcia, *Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), Gerald J. Baldasty, *The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), and Ted Curtis Smythe, *The Gilded Age Press, 1865-1900* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).



itself, touted tourism experiences at home and abroad.<sup>5</sup> Especially during the winter months Florida became a destination of particular interest for Northern readers.<sup>6</sup> It was in the midst of these events and developments that William Drysdale came into the journalism and, eventually, the Florida tourism travel scene.

William Drysdale was born July 11, 1852, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.<sup>7</sup> His father, Walter S. Drysdale, was one of five sons of William Drysdale from Edinburgh, Scotland, who emigrated on a sailing vessel to New York around 1817. Blown off course, the elder William landed instead in Philadelphia where he settled and raised a family. As was the custom among Scottish Presbyterians, one of the five sons, Walter, was educated to enter the ministry and gradu-

5. The domestic travel experience in the United States after the Civil War had great implications for the consolidation of a national identity and the travel industry played a vital role in the process. See Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2001) and J. Valerie Fifer, *American Progress: The Growth of the Transport, Tourist, and Information Industries in the Nineteenth-Century West Seen Through the Life and Times of George Croffut, Pioneer and Publicist of the Transcontinental Age* (Chester, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 1988). For the impact of transportation and travel narratives in Canada during the same time period, see Kevin Flynn, "Destination Nation: Nineteenth-Century Travels Aboard the Canadian Pacific Railroad," *Essays on Canadian Writing* 67 (Spring 1999): 190-222. Foreign travel also served to reinforce Americans' newly found sense of nationalism in the same period. See William W. Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). For a wider discussion of travel journalism and its relationship in the fostering of a tourism industry, see Jill Steward, "'How and Where to Go': The Role of Travel Journalism in Britain and the Evolution of Foreign Tourism, 1840-1914," in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity, and Conflict*, ed. John K. Walton (Clevendon, UK: Channel View Publications, 2005), 39-54.
6. Interest in Florida in the years after the Civil War fully merged health and economic concerns with sporting and recreational interests. Good summaries of representative works of the descriptive literature on Florida for the period (1865 to 1900) may be found in Elliot James Mackle, Jr., "The Eden of the South: Florida's Image in American Travel Literature and Painting, 1865-1900," (Ph.D. diss, Emory University, 1977); Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992); J.E. Dovell, *Florida: Historic, Dramatic, Contemporary* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1952), 606-608; Larry R. Youngs, "The Sporting Set Winters in Florida: Fertile Ground for the Leisure Revolution, 1870-1930," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (2005): 57-78; Tommy R. Thompson, "Florida in American Popular Magazines, 1870-1970," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (2003): 1-15.
7. A basic outline of the life and death of William Drysdale may be found in his *New York Times*, September 21, 1901, obituary. To the author's knowledge, the only study on the life of William Drysdale is a biographical sketch in a Cranford, New Jersey, publication. See Robert Fridlington, "William Drysdale," *The Mill Wheel: News and Notes from The Cranford Historical Society*, New Series, Number 38 (Summer 2005): 4-5.



ated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1842 and Princeton Theological Seminary in 1845. Following some years of preaching as an itinerant minister, Walter temporarily gave up preaching and became principal of the girls' high school in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1850. In 1851, he married Mary Catherine Thompson, also from Lancaster, who, in 1852, bore their only son, named William after his immigrant grandfather.

Young Drysdale spent his first six years in Lancaster, where he received his early education at home from his father. He moved often with his small family as his father resumed an active ministry in 1858, preaching at Presbyterian congregations in the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. While living in New York State in the early 1870s, William briefly published two small local newspapers, the *Dundee Telegraph* (Yates County) and the *Ontario Citizen and News* (Ontario County). Soon afterwards, William entered Columbia Law School in New York City where his father had moved when failing eyesight forced him to leave the pulpit. By the end of 1874, probably as a result of worsening economic conditions following the Panic of 1873, William left law school and joined the *New York Sun* as a staff reporter where he quickly gained prominence covering the high-profile adultery trial of Henry Ward Beecher, at the time one of America's foremost preachers. During the six-month trial and in spite of the *Sun's* persistent attacks on Beecher, Drysdale established a friendship with the minister who later asked him to edit a collection of his writings, published shortly before his death as *Proverbs from Plymouth Pulpit* (1887).<sup>8</sup> Although Drysdale's coverage of the trial for the *Sun* gained national attention, it was apparently not virulent enough for its editor, Charles Dana, who replaced him.<sup>9</sup> His experience at the *Sun*, however, was

8. Henry Ward Beecher, *Proverbs From Plymouth Pulpit*, ed. William Drysdale (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1887).

9. The young reporter who replaced Drysdale was Julian Ralph who had gained notoriety for his coverage of the Beecher trial for the rival *Daily Graphic*. Ralph would go on to great fame as a newspaper reporter and foreign correspondent and would also gain prominence for his travel writing. See Paul Lancaster, *Gentleman of the Press: The Life and Times of an Early Reporter, Julian Ralph of The Sun* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992). In 1894-95, Harper sent Ralph on a tour of what he called "Our New South," and his travel accounts were published in serialized form in *Harper's Magazine* and *Harper's Weekly*. These articles, including the one on Florida—"Our New Riviera"—were subsequently published in book form. For the Florida article, see Julian Ralph, *Dixie or Southern Scenes and Sketches* (NY: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1896), 160-206.



crucial in his formation as a news reporter and writer.<sup>10</sup> It opened doors for him as it also did for many other newspapermen at the time.<sup>11</sup> In 1876, Drysdale briefly returned to Pennsylvania as city editor of the *Philadelphia Times* taking with him a number of New York reporters to form a nucleus of writers during the event-laden year of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition.<sup>12</sup> In 1877, he returned to New York and joined the staff of the *New York Times*, a journalistic association which would last for the next 24 years.

The late 1870s saw in New York and the rest of the country a debate on the emerging world role of the United States. With the economic recovery that followed the long and drawn-out consequences of the Financial Panic of 1873, the focus of attention shifted to a perceived over-production in the industrial sector that necessitated a search for overseas export markets. In March 1878, the *New York Times* experimented with an eight-page, Spanish-language economic supplement brimming with advertisements for U.S. industrial exports. The experiment proved enough of a success for the newspaper's leadership to plan a second supplement for early 1879 to be distributed in Mexico (2,000 copies), Cuba (1,500 copies), Central and Northern South America (3,000 cop-

10. Drysdale would indirectly credit his time at the *Sun* as being crucial in his newspaper career. The setting and most of the characters in his second book of juvenile fiction, *The Young Reporter* (1895), are based on his experiences with his colleagues in the newsroom of the *Sun*. In addition, in his 1899 book *Helps for Ambitious Boys*, a career handbook for young men which explores different professions, the entire chapter on employment in newspapers is based on his own experiences at the *Sun*. It was during his time at the *Sun* in the 1870s that the "human interest" dimension in news coverage developed, and this came to profoundly affect Drysdale, as it also influenced other newspaper writers. For the "human interest" aspects in the journalism coverage of the *Sun* during these years, see Frank M. O'Brien, *The Story of The Sun: New York, 1833-1928* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1928), 173-181.

11. The role of the *New York Sun* in helping shape the profession of the reporter is addressed at length by Paul Lancaster in his book covering the years of Julian Ralph at that newspaper. See Lancaster, chapters 7-10.

12. Sandoval-Strausz argues that the coming of age of mass tourism in the United States occurs in Philadelphia in 1876 with the Centennial exposition. He makes the point that, apart from the transportation, lodging, and publicity advances which surrounded the exposition, it marked the occasion when travel in the United States achieved a new quantitative dimension in the leap in the number of travelers as well as a new qualitative dimension as women and children (or what Sandoval-Strausz labels, travel *en famille*) joined in great numbers what had previously been, in general terms, a predominantly male travel experience. See Sandoval-Strausz, *Hotel*, 104-107. Drysdale not only witnessed these revolutionary travel changes in Philadelphia but was also a participant in the first-hand newspaper coverage he provided in the *Philadelphia Times*.



ies), and Brazil and the Rio de la Plata region (4,000 copies).<sup>13</sup> In conjunction with this drive to focus attention on increasing exports to the Latin American market, a reduction in tariffs, and an increase in newspaper advertising by New York manufacturers, Drysdale was sent on assignment to Mexico and Cuba. He chronicled his trip in a series of travel letters on Mexico and Cuba written and published in the winter and spring of 1879 in the *New York Times*.

Drysdale's travel letters on Cuba and Mexico are early U.S. examples of a colonialist-themed travel literature already well-established in other parts of the world.<sup>14</sup> Traveling on the "City of Merida" of the Alexandre Line (more properly known as the New York, Havana & Mexican Mail Line), Drysdale left New York on a frigid December 28, 1878, with a dozen other passengers.<sup>15</sup> After penning letters that focused on the ocean voyage and on his travel companions, Drysdale wrote two travel letters on Havana. Commenting on Havana, he was taken aback by the generally high prices, the physical shortness of both the Spanish soldiers and the Cuban horses, both of which seemed to be everywhere, the multitude of churches, and the city's narrow colonial streets.<sup>16</sup> Yet his overall impression of the city was favorable. The natural beauty of the city's setting ("The [Morro] castle and the harbor it guards form a picture to whose beauty no pen and few pencils can do justice") enchanted him and, when comparing the city to New York, the point of reference for him personally as well as for his readers, he concluded: "...the city generally, with due respect for New-York [sic], has much more of a cosmopolitan appearance than our Metropolis. The soldiery, in a great variety of uniforms; the priests, to be run against at all hours, in their somber costumes; the half-

13. *New York Times*, March 25, 1878; February 3, 1879; February 10, 1879.

14. The literary study of colonial-themed travel writing and letters has received much attention in recent years and grown enormously since the 1990s along with tourism studies. The renewed interest has been driven in part by globalization, deconstructionism, gender studies, and post-modern analysis. One of the best studies is David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993). For a good early overview of the new discourse, see Harry Liebersohn, "Recent Works on Travel Writing," *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 3 (September 1996): 617-628. For a representative view of the latest ideas on contemporary tourism as affected by the above issues, see Sharon Bohn Gmelch, ed., *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2010).

15. For a summary of the history of the Alexandre Line and its most important vessels, see Edward A. Mueller, "The City of Vera Cruz and the Alexandre Line," *Steamboat Bill* 66, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 34-42.

16. *New York Times*, January 27, 1879.

naked negroes; the gaily-dressed ladies, give the city an appearance of gayety that is not to be found in New-York."<sup>17</sup>

Drysdale did not view Mexico as kindly as he viewed Havana, however. He was joined in Vera Cruz by an excursion party of 80 merchants and manufacturers from Chicago and the Midwest (officially "The American Industrial Deputation to Mexico") and group dynamics and the many tedious government-sponsored official functions, often influenced his observations. In a typical letter entitled "The Americans in Mexico," he pointed to the overwhelming number of zopilotes (turkey-buzzards) in Vera Cruz that picked at the garbage on the streets, helping keep them clean, and noted that the party made its way off the ship, "taking in the scenery [of Vera Cruz], zopilotes in the foreground, and more zopilotes for a background..."<sup>18</sup> An official welcome breakfast in Vera Cruz for the group led Drysdale to mockingly remark: "...the Mayor and the Governor of the State came around and said they had some nice cases of tumors and concussions and chewed ears in the hospitals, military and civic, that they would be glad to exhibit to the excursionists; as they understood the visit was to be one of pleasure as well as business."<sup>19</sup>

After a two-day railroad trip to Mexico City on an official train with four first-class coaches, "although almost everywhere else they would have ranked as third class, at the best," with a number of official stops and a mosquito-infested overnight stay in Orizaba, Drysdale and his party arrived in Mexico City, where President Porfirio Diaz hosted an official welcome. To Drysdale: "The President is a handsome specimen of the Aztec Indian with, perhaps, some white blood in his veins, coal-black hair and eyes, below the middle age, with a frank manner and a manly bearing. The complexion of a copper cent is about the color of President Diaz's face; but he has such a manly way and kind, though dignified, manner that the color of his skin is hardly noticeable."<sup>20</sup>

While in Mexico, Drysdale wrote travel letters on subjects which he felt would be of particular interest to his New York readers. In two letters, "Guadaloupe's[sic] Cathedral" and "The Churches in Mexico," Drysdale titillated his mainly Protestant newspaper readers with cynical, almost blasphemous, comments in reference to Roman Catholicism. Writing about the shroud of the Virgin of Guadalupe, he

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17. Ibid.

18. *New York Times*, February 13, 1879.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.



commented: "The aloe cloth upon which the Virgin Mary is said to have imprinted her portrait is exhibited in a glass case, and, looking at it from a New-York point of view, I should say that the painter who made it did not take sufficient pains to hide the marks of his brush. If the Virgin really did make it, she cannot be ranked with the old masters."<sup>21</sup> He also regaled his readers with details on the National Pawnshop (the *Nacional Monte de Piedad*) and the Government Lottery, commenting: "It is a happy circumstance that a Government that conducts national lotteries should also have a national pawnshop, where its people can raise money to buy lottery tickets."<sup>22</sup> In addition to a number of travel letters focusing on the poverty among Mexican Indians in the countryside, Drysdale also included in his series a letter on two American entrepreneurs embarking on the building of a railroad in Mexico and a letter recounting a tour of a lavish country estate built by an English banking family.<sup>23</sup> To Drysdale, it is clear that the progressive spirit of economic development in Mexico came not from within the country but from abroad.

Drysdale's articles on Cuba and Mexico, his first signed articles in the *New York Times*, specifically used the travel letter format that was becoming wildly popular at the time they appeared. The travel letter narrative, with its curious mixture of an observer's supposed private epistolary insights, contrasted with the letter's public printed format. It first gained popularity in its book format in the late eighteenth-century Romantic period. The transformation of European and American newspapers by the middle of the nineteenth century into business enterprises seeking larger circulation figures produced a growing demand for the letters as leisure travel was becoming not only more possible but also more popular for a greater number of people.<sup>24</sup> The letter narrative format—discrete in length, coherent in its capsulation of a day's events and observations, and linked to preceding and subsequent units of correspondence—mirrored the daily publication cycle, immediacy needs, and space constraints of the

21. *New York Times*, March 9, 1879.

22. *New York Times*, April 14, 1879.

23. *New York Times*, April 20 and May 12, 1879. Travel letters about Mexico written by Drysdale on this trip also appeared in the *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, under the pseudonym "Drys." These travel letters, entirely different from the ones published in the *New York Times* but covering the same experiences, as well as scattered later articles by him uncovered in other newspapers, suggest the possibility that Drysdale reached a much wider audience with his travel letters than just his readers in New York City. See *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, January 18, February 22, March 15, and March 29, 1879.



mass circulation newspapers. It also reflected a letter-writing mania consuming the more-developed societies that, with improvements in transportation linking major urban centers, had become accustomed to mail deliveries two and three times a day. Among the well-to-do, a large portion of the day was devoted to merely keeping up with the growing volume of personal and business correspondence.<sup>25</sup>

While the signed letter narrative format had first been widely used in newspapers throughout the early nineteenth century, the advent of the field war correspondent and the use of the eyewitness account, first with the Mexican-American War (1846-48), then with the Crimean War (1854-57) and, perhaps most successfully, with the US Civil War (1861-65), helped the travel letter genre to flourish in American newspapers during the postwar period as many of its early travel correspondents came from the ranks of those earlier war correspondents.<sup>26</sup> Benjamin C. Truman, a noted Civil War correspondent, took advantage of his connections to write a series of travel letters from the postwar South for the *New York Times* when the area was still under military travel restrictions. Truman is, arguably, the first newspaper travel correspondent to cover the state of Florida after the Civil War.<sup>27</sup>

With the end of Presidential Reconstruction and the beginning of Congressional Reconstruction in the spring of 1867, multi-pronged Northern strategies towards the South, as well as towards

24. The letter format and its growth in popularity in the context of the late eighteenth-century Romantic Movement is discussed by Glynis Ridley "Letters: Britain" and Ursula Hudson-Wiedenman "Letters: Germany" in *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era, 1760-1850*, ed. Christopher John Murray (London: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 2:672-674. On travel letters as a literary genre, Julia Gergits wrote: "The genre of travel letters has declined with the modernization of communication....Modern readers might run into books derived from e-mail messages or chat rooms, but long, intensely detailed letters are gone, particularly for recording day-to-day adventures and discoveries on the road." For the mid to late nineteenth-century heyday of the travel letter genre, see Julia M. Gergits, "Letters" in *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Jennifer Speake (New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003), 2:712-714.

25. The letter-writing mania in the second half of the nineteenth century is covered by John Freeman, *The Tyranny of E-mail: The Four-Thousand-Year Journey to Your Inbox* (New York: Scribner, 2009). In his book, Freeman even cites (p. 53) a humorous article by Drysdale, "Does Anybody Read Them?" *New York Times*, November 6, 1887, which chronicled the astounding amount of political campaign literature that kept winding up in his mailbox every day during an electoral campaign season.

26. The growing importance of the war correspondent in the gathering of news lifted the figure of the reporter from the ranks of anonymity and helped make reporting an established occupation. See William E. Huntzicker, *The Popular Press, 1833-1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999).



Florida, began to emerge, and travel literature on the state reflected these changes. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the most important Northern writer to focus national attention on Florida, came to be a champion for that hoped-for moral regeneration of the state.<sup>28</sup> She covered her early years in Florida in a series of letter articles for the *Christian Union* newspaper which were later published, with modifications, in book form under the title *Palmetto Leaves* (1873).<sup>29</sup> Also in 1873, the Florida travel letters of Amos J. Cummings (written under the pseudonym of "Siska") appeared in the *New York Sun*. They reflected the human interest approach increasingly adopted by the nation's newspapers.<sup>30</sup> The "Siska" letters focused generally on the adventure travel aspects of Florida (Cummings was an avid fisherman) and spe-

27. After writing about Florida's glorious winter weather, its health benefits, and its opportunities for boundless economic growth, Truman ended one of his travel letters in the *New York Times*, December 14, 1865, with this burst of Reconstruction exuberance: "In conclusion, I must say that I bespeak for Florida a glorious future. I predict that peace, prosperity, wealth and happiness will be her lot...What may we not expect of her, now that she has FREEDOM [author's emphasis] for her guiding star?" Truman's championing of Florida's weather and economic future would take a back seat to his interest in the American West and California after a visit to both locales in 1866-67, and he would go on to become one of California's biggest boosters through his articles in the *New York Times* and as a publicist for the Southern Pacific Railroad. See Gary F. Kurutz, *Benjamin C. Truman: California Booster and Bon Vivant* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1984) and Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 133-134.
28. Harriet Beecher Stowe arrived in Florida in March 1867. The work she undertook in Florida is analyzed in John T. Foster, Jr. and Sarah Whitmer Foster, *Beechers, Stowes, and Yankee Strangers: The Transformation of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999). Also see Olav Thulesius, *Harriet Beecher Stowe in Florida, 1867 to 1884* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2001). Harriet Beecher Stowe was the sister of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.
29. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999). The *Christian Union* newspaper was, at the time, edited by her brother, Henry Ward Beecher.
30. Cummings, before his military service in the Civil War for which he was later awarded the Medal of Honor, worked under Horace Greeley at the *New York Tribune*. After the Civil War, he joined the *New York Sun* and was on the paper's staff at the time when Drysdale joined. Cummings eventually entered politics and went on to become a United States Representative from New York. For an excellent work on Cummings' edited Florida letters, see Jerald T. Milanich, ed., *Frolicking Bears, Wet Vultures, & Other Oddities: A New York City Journalist in Nineteenth-Century Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005). Cummings, like Truman, would also find fertile ground in the western territories for his travel letters. These have also been edited by Jerald T. Milanich in Amos Jay Cummings, *A Remarkable Curiosity: Dispatches From A New York City Journalist's 1873 Railroad Trip*, ed. Jerald T. Milanich (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2008). Both books contain excellent biographical introductions by Milanich on Cummings and his career.



cifically on New Smyrna, a theme continued by Lawrence S. Kane in his Florida travel letters that appeared in the *New York Times* in 1876-77.<sup>31</sup> A simply titled *Guide to Florida*, whose author wrote under the pseudonym "Rambler," appeared in 1873, possibly commissioned by hotels and steamship companies.<sup>32</sup> In 1875, under contract with an Atlantic Coast Line system of railroads eager to expand passenger traffic volume to the South, the poet Sidney Lanier published *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History*, a tourist guide to the state extolling the supposed tourism appeal of what was a very rustic, perhaps still-backward state.<sup>33</sup> Finally, in 1875, Edward King published *The Great South*, a compilation of travel letters covering his travels in the South, including Florida, which had first appeared in serialized form in *Scribner's Monthly* during 1873-1874. The series, written at the insistence of Roswell Smith, one of the founders of Scribner and Company, was crucial to a growing national rehabilitation of the image held by Northerners of the South. Characterized by Robert

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31. Fishing and hunting, as Youngs points out, were recurring themes in the Florida sporting scene in the 1870s and 1880s. See Youngs, "Sporting Set", 62-67. For a profile of Amos J. Cummings, fisherman, see: Fred Mather, *My Angling Friends, Being a Second Series of Sketches of Men I Have Fished With* (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Company, 1901), 187-197. Kane's first travel letter from Florida in 1876 makes reference to a close friend who had wintered in Florida for the previous five seasons and who introduces him to the beauties of fishing in New Smyrna. It appears that it is Cummings who introduces Kane to Florida since the dates Kane cites agree with Cummings' visits to Florida and since the men had known each other ever since their days at the *Sun* in the early 1870s when Cummings was the paper's managing editor and Kane was its city editor. Their friendship appears to have been so close that, when Kane died in 1884, Cummings served as one of his pallbearers. During his career at the *New York Times*, Kane filled a number of positions and was the paper's financial editor at the time of his death. For the first Florida travel letter written by Kane, which begins with a long discussion of the great transportation difficulties in merely getting to Florida, see L.S.K., "Experiences in Florida, A Winter Visit to the Peninsula," *New York Times*, December 14, 1876. For Kane's obituary and funeral, see *New York Times*, December 25, 1884; December 27, 1884.
  32. Rembert W. Patrick offers this speculation in his introduction to the 1964 reprint of the book based on the number of hotel and steamship ads which appeared in the original editions. Rembert W. Patrick, *Guide to Florida*, *Floridiana Facsimile & Reprint Series* (1875; rept., Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), xv.
  33. Sidney Lanier, *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History*, *Floridiana Facsimile & Reprint Series* (1875; rept., Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973). Lanier gave the particulars of the contract with the Atlantic Coast Line in a letter to his wife. See Sydney Lanier to Mary Day Lanier, March 24, 1875, in Charles R. Anderson and Aubrey H. Starke, eds., *Sidney Lanier Letters, 1874-1877* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1945), 9:182-183.



Underwood Johnson, at the time associated with *Scribner's Monthly* and later editor of its successor magazine *The Century*, as "a masterly project...conceived [by Smith] in magnanimity and sympathy," *The Great South* was also a call for Northern business penetration alongside national reconciliation in spite of the later protestation by Johnson that "...surely there was little business advantage to be developed from a region so near bankruptcy as the shattered South of that day."<sup>34</sup> The themes of economic opportunity alongside moral regeneration entered the Yankee discourse on Florida travel by the close of the 1870s, joining the previous allures of health benefits, a warm winter climate, and adventure travel in the minds of some Americans.<sup>35</sup> These themes reflected the growing interests of a Northern reading public and helped frame the future Florida travel writings of William Drysdale.

After the series on Cuba and Mexico, Drysdale received a commission to write a guide book to Glen Island, a summer day-excursion attraction 20 miles from New York City on Long Island Sound which opened in June 1880. The marketing of leisure travel and tourism increasingly provided the customer with options both near and far, expensive and inexpensive. John H. Starin, former New York congressman and founder and head of Starin Transporta-

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34. Robert Underwood Johnson, *Remembered Yesterdays* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1923), 96.

35. There are striking parallels between the American quest for overseas semi-colonial interests and markets in the 1870s and growing Northern interest in the American South and Florida beginning in the same period. In the classic 1951 work, C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 311, 396, Woodward devoted an entire chapter to what he called "The Colonial Economy" in the post-Reconstruction South and argued: "Like republics below the Rio Grande the South was limited largely to the role of a producer of raw materials, a tributary of industrial powers, an economy dominated by absentee owners." In another chapter in the same work entitled "Philanthropy and the Forgotten Man," Woodward went on to write: "The baffling social problems of the South, which had frustrated Radical Reconstruction missionaries in the seventies, Redeemers of the New-South School in the eighties and Populists in the nineties, became in the first decade of the new [twentieth] century the main laboratory for sociological experiments of organized Northern philanthropy and its Southern agents." The continuing validity of the fundamental questions raised by Woodward more than fifty years ago for "The New South" are underscored by the essays in John B. Boles and Bethany L. Johnson, eds., *Origins of the New South, Fifty Years Later: The Continuing Influence of a Historical Classic* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003). Needless to add, "The Great South" described by King would serve as a fitting setting to "The New South" as envisioned by Henry Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, and others.



tion, a conglomerate of railroad car floats, tugboats, and excursion ferries in New York harbor, was probably very familiar with Drysdale's city reporting on the waterfront and his writing skills.<sup>36</sup> In the Glen Island guidebook, Drysdale not only included a detailed analysis of the sights to be viewed on the water voyage to the island attraction, but also dabbled in a future interest in fiction by inserting a mystery short story on a supposed hidden treasure chest on the island to be read during the island excursion.<sup>37</sup> No signed Drysdale contribution appeared in the *New York Times* for the next four years although his unsigned news items continued to be published. The hiatus from travel writing seems to have been connected to his inability to venture far from New York City at a time when both his mother and father were ailing. His mother died in October 1881 and his father followed in April 1882.<sup>38</sup> Soon after their deaths, Drysdale resumed his travel reporting.

The focus of Drysdale's second series of travel articles in the

36. In all probability, it was Drysdale who wrote the anonymous news article "Steam Excursion Boats: A Vast and Growing Trade, John H. Starin's Great Enterprise," *New York Times*, March 21, 1880. The article describes the phenomenal growth in the previous ten years of the summer one-day excursion business in New York City. The use of humor in a similar anonymous news article "Excursions On The Water: Arrangements for Barge Parties and Picnics," *New York Times*, May 21, 1883, is a signature of Drysdale's writing, and this article can, therefore, be more comfortably attributed to Drysdale. Paul Lancaster's writing on the life and work of Julian Ralph and Jerald T. Milanich's writing on Amos J. Cummings faced similar difficulties in identifying and giving proper attribution to anonymous news articles written by their respective subjects.

37. William Drysdale, *A Trip to Glen Island and the Tale of the Wonderful Treasure-Chest Which Was Found There* (New York: Starin's City, River, and Harbor Transportation Company, Excursion Department, [1881?]). While sometimes labeled a "summer resort," Glen Island was more properly an amusement or theme park, catering to an upper middle class market, since it was a strictly daytime operation with no overnight lodging provided. At its height in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the theme park in New Rochelle comprised seven islands with facilities for bathing, fishing, rowing, picnicking, a bicycle track, a German-themed island with its own castle, beer garden, Tyrolean music, singing entertainment, a natural history museum, a zoo menagerie, and various incursions into world-themed villages. See *New York Times* July 18, 1897, and Jim Futrell, *Amusement Parks of New York* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2006), 24. A marketing emphasis on summer amusement was possible by the end of the nineteenth century as the last vestiges of religious remorse over frivolous entertainment disappeared. See Alexis McCrossen, *Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

38. *New York Times*, October 28, 1881; April 7, 1882; April 8, 1882; *Lancaster Daily Intelligencer*, April 7, 1882.



winter and spring of 1883 was the island of Bermuda. These writings provided the New Yorker with the opportunity to assume the role of the American "Yank" on British colonial soil. Written during the coldest winter months, the travel letters clearly meant to appeal to the winter vacationer of the Gilded Age seeking escape from the cold. The letters described for the New York market the voyage on the "Orinoco" of the Quebec Steamship Line, the sights of Bermuda and its splendid winter climate.<sup>39</sup> They also gave the correspondent opportunity to comment on various aspects of British nineteenth-century customs, ambivalently viewed by most Americans with an egalitarian mixture of both awe and contempt. On the British imperial presence in Bermuda, he wrote: "There are a great many soldiers here and some sailors, and uniforms with men inside of them are to be seen anywhere. They are very fine, most of these uniforms; some of them are almost as gorgeous as the dress of one of our drum majors. I am perfectly sure the Prince of Wales is in Bermuda in disguise."<sup>40</sup> One of the travel letters is devoted entirely to the visit by Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria and wife of the Marquess de Lorne, at the time Governor General of Canada, and the extensive preparations on the island for her arrival. As the ship launch with the princess onboard moved closer to shore, the welcoming crowds were carefully described; the political dignitaries on the dock landing, the well-dressed society ladies on view on the street verandas, the American entourage (mostly fellow tourists) clustered outside the U.S. Consulate building, and, in Drysdale's words, "the 'darkies' everywhere. As the princess made landfall and the official welcoming speeches began, Drysdale commented in a disdainful, if humorous, manner, "Please note that whenever the royal family is mentioned, the word is begun with a capital even down to 'Her subjects,' just as we capitalize the pro-

39. Given the extensive coverage devoted to the Quebec Steamship Company and its vessels in Drysdale's Bermuda and later British Caribbean travel letters, it is probable that the company subsidized the author's travels in return for the publicity received from his travel letters. The Quebec Steamship Company, established in 1867 as the Quebec and Gulf Ports Steamship Company, had secured in 1874 a contract from the Bermuda government for a New York-Hamilton service. In 1880, a service to the British West Indies began. For the Quebec Steamship Company, see Edgar Andrew Collard, *Passage to the Seas: The Story of Canada Steamship Lines* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1991), 75-78, and Brian J. Cudahy, *Around Manhattan Island and Other Maritime Tales of New York* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 170-172.

40. *New York Times*, January 28, 1883.

nouns indicating the Creator. In reply to this colonial taffy, the Princess bowed, and said that she had a very pleasant voyage."<sup>41</sup>

The well-received Bermuda series in early 1883 led to the travel letter chronicles of an extended and rambling journey from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. Beginning in October 1883, Drysdale travelled along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers on a journey which was ultimately interrupted by intervening and unexpected railroad trips. This new series of travel letters gave Drysdale full opportunity to record his travels and express his views on the South as a smug New York Yankee. The vivid and entertaining letters were full of local color and characters as Drysdale embarked on the first leg of his trip on the riverboat "Starlight" from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati. His first travel letter gives us a preview of his coverage of the Southern journey by focusing on the "darkies" loading the riverboat in Pittsburgh with cargo in the early night while singing a lively Negro tune under a driving rain. Drysdale commented that this scene provided "the first indication that I was really 300 or 400 miles from New-York, and approaching what once was the land of cotton."<sup>42</sup> After an uncomfortable overnight trip on the Ohio River in a miniscule boat cabin barely larger than the sheet on his bed, Drysdale arrived at Wheeling, West Virginia, to be greeted not only by a festive holiday parade of Germans but also by a low river which forced him to complete his trip to Cincinnati by rail. In his next travel letter, the author commented on the dress of the parade goers at the Wheeling train station ("The fashion plates of 15 bygone generations would not do justice to their costumes"), and described a

41. *New York Times*, February 6, 1883. Duncan McDowall, in his book on the history of tourism in Bermuda, cites the visit of Princess Louise to the islands in 1883 and contends that the coverage devoted to it in the *New York Times* was pivotal in the rise of tourism in Bermuda. According to McDowall, "After the departure of Princess Louise and her American journalistic shadow [Drysdale], Bermuda would never again be the same." Louise's visit and the marvelous *Times* coverage did not open the floodgates of tourism....But together they sowed the seed of an image that Bermuda was a regal place to visit, where the right kind of Americans mingled with the right kind of colonials and where the torments of North American life were dissolved by the warm Gulf Stream." See Duncan McDowall, *Another World: Bermuda and the Rise of Modern Tourism* (London and Basingtoke: Macmillan Education, Ltd., 1999), 31. Although McDowall quotes extensively in his book from Drysdale's 1883 Bermuda travel letters published in the *New York Times* and correctly points out their great importance to the beginnings of Bermuda's tourism industry and its ties to the Northeast US market, he never identifies Drysdale by name as the author of the letters.

42. *New York Times*, November 18, 1883.



virtual riot of 300 drunken Grangers on board the train. Upon arriving in Cincinnati, Drysdale booked passage to New Orleans on the riverboat "Paris C. Brown."<sup>43</sup>

The trip on the "Paris C. Brown" was full of misadventures which led to detours on the way to New Orleans. After commenting on the poor conditions on the boat ("the state-rooms were small, dark, unwholesome, and the bedding unclean"), the passengers from the South and West ("there were two or three among them who could sit 15 feet away from the spittoon and not miss it by more than six inches on either side"), and the Southern cuisine on board ("plenty of hot bread, hot corn-cakes, and meat fried in oceans of fat"), Drysdale recounts a violent and very public tussle between two black crew members, one of whom placed a hex on the other, which cast a foreboding shadow on the start of the river journey.<sup>44</sup> The incident set the tone for a travel letter entitled "A Steam-Boat Bewitched" covering the perilous journey of the "Paris C. Brown" through the falls south of Louisville which, with the river water level low, led to the scraping of the boat's bottom, failed attempts at patchwork repairs, and, ultimately, an end to the water journey in Paducah. Resuming the journey to New Orleans by train, Drysdale proceeded to Memphis, Little Rock, Hot Springs (where he stayed in the region for some days with a recently made acquaintance), Marshall (Texas), Shreveport, and, from there, finally connecting with a steamboat for the trip down the Red River to New Orleans. Each of these adventure stops merited at least one travel letter. They offered New Yorkers a glimpse into exotic regions unexplored by the public imagination and now exposed by the expanded, though not as yet fully integrated, transportation links to the South and Southwest. Drysdale, fresh from his Bermuda experience a little more than six months previously, wrote also on what he called the "artic weather in the so-called sunny South" after spending some frigid days while in Texas and Louisiana, an experience which in later years always led him to steer New York winter vacationers to much warmer regions.<sup>45</sup>

From New Orleans, Drysdale planned to take a steamship di-

43. *New York Times*, November 25, 1883.

44. On the change in mood which the incident caused among the crew who witnessed it aboard the boat, Drysdale wrote, "Here are 30 negro roustabouts on deck, and 20 or 30 negro servants in the cabin, all as superstitious as so many natives in the interior of Africa." See *New York Times*, December 9, 1883.

45. *New York Times*, February 10, 1884; February 14, 1884.

rectly to Key West and from there connect with a schooner to Nassau where he intended to meet a friend from New York in mid-February 1884.<sup>46</sup> Finding once in New Orleans that his steamship to Key West was hard aground off the Florida coast and would not reach New Orleans anytime soon, Drysdale chose to take an unexpected detour by rail, crossing the Florida peninsula twice to reach Cedar Keys where he could pick up another steamer to Key West.<sup>47</sup> His travels and unexpected discoveries in the wilderness of Florida produced Drysdale's first travel letters focusing on his adventures in the state. After a dreary and very cold overnight railroad trip from New Orleans through the Florida panhandle almost to Jacksonville, Drysdale changed trains just outside of Jacksonville at Baldwin ("...a charming little rural station...and from all I have heard of this place I cannot be too thankful that when our train reached there it was too dark for anything of it to be seen"), and backtracked across the state in a southwesterly direction to Cedar Keys, at the time the only way to reach the destination by rail.<sup>48</sup> His train arrived several hours late at Cedar Keys after covering a distance of about 100 miles in 13 hours. Drysdale noted, "We have since learned that the later you get to Cedar Keys the better you are off, and the happiest man is he who misses his train and never gets here."<sup>49</sup> After finding that he would have to wait for four days until the steamboat arrived for his journey to Key West and not looking forward to an extended stay at Cedar Keys, he fortuitously ran into three acquaintances from New York on a winter hunting expedition and hitched a ride with them in their boat down the west coast to Palma Sola on Tampa Bay, the last steam-boat landing on their route. On the trip south, the temperature rose, the heavy overcoats came off, and Drysdale was introduced to the fabled tropical winter climate, the

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46. The New York friend was Robert W. Parsons, holder of the New York to Nassau mail contract which was later held in conjunction with the Ward Steamship Line, more properly known as the New York and Cuba Mail Steamship Line. Drysdale's friendship with Parsons might date back to Drysdale's travels to Cuba and Mexico in 1879 and his subsequent news reporting on New York shipping matters. Parsons later helped negotiate with the Bahamian government Henry Flagler's steamship contract between Miami and Nassau which would lead to an expansion of Flagler's overseas shipping interests and the building of Flagler's Colonial Hotel in Nassau. Parsons became a vice president in Flagler's railroad line and, eventually, president of Flagler's Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Company.

47. Cedar Key at the time was referred to as "Cedar Keys." The latter spelling has been retained throughout the article.

48. *New York Times*, March 23, 1884.

49. *Ibid.*



solitude, and the fishing of southwest Florida.

Intending to initially stay for only one night before catching the steamship to Key West, his visit to Palma Sola stretched to two weeks. These first Florida travel letters reflect the adventure travel themes which had characterized much of the travel writing on the state since the Civil War. In his first travel letter from Palma Sola, as he described the enchanting tropical scenery of the isolated settlement from the verandah of the small but charming hotel, Drysdale discovered in a newspaper several weeks old the death notice of John B. Wood, famed night editor (known as "The Great American Condenser" for his skills with the editing pen) of *The New York Sun* with whom he had worked during his apprentice years ten years earlier. He briefly digressed to engage in a very personal and moving tribute to his departed mentor.<sup>50</sup> After this sentimental interlude, he resumed his narrative and detailed a delicious Florida dinner: "All the luxuries of Southern Florida were there—great big clams, beautifully fried; the sweetest of oysters from Sarasota, served raw; an abundance of fresh vegetables just out of the garden; fresh, ripe Florida oranges, and a great dish of guava jelly, homemade, from Manatee County guavas". With such an auspicious start, Drysdale went on to write many of his Florida travel letters on the adventure topics of fishing, alligator-hunting, and sailing expeditions in Palma Sola.<sup>51</sup> As he himself acknowledged, "I never saw or heard of this country till two weeks ago...It was good fortune (and the yacht Mallory) that brought me here, for after visiting nearly all the warm countries frequented by Americans—Cuba, Mexico, Bermuda, Yucatan, Texas, Louisiana, and many of the smaller West India islands—I like the west coast of Florida best of all."<sup>52</sup> His accidental detour through Florida not only produced his first pages devoted to the

50. *New York Times*, April 6, 1884. John B. Wood would serve as the model for one of the characters in Drysdale's 1895 juvenile novel *The Young Reporter*. Drysdale's writing technique of providing glimpses into his own personality throughout his travel letters would, in addition to his use of humor, greatly add to his popularity among his newspaper readers.

51. *New York Times*, April 13, 20, and 27, 1884. The most extensive series of adventure travel letters, fifty in total, focusing on Florida during this period appear to be those written by Francis R. Stebbins in reference to the Indian River region written for the *Adrian Daily Times and Expositor* in Adrian, Michigan. See Carolyn Baker Lewis, ed., *The Winter Sailor: Francis R. Stebbins on Florida's Indian River, 1878-1888* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004).

52. *New York Times*, April 6, 1884. Drysdale's articles on Palma Sola were so laudatory that a local settler had them reprinted in pamphlet form, setting off a short-lived local real estate boom. See William Drysdale, *Palma Sola: The Youngest and Largest Town in Florida* (New York: Broun & Green, 1884).

state but also kindled in him an interest in Florida that would last for the next twenty years. Coincidentally, the wilderness of the west coast of Florida would also come to the attention of the rest of the country in the same year with the arrival of Henry Bradley Plant's railroad to Tampa.

Drysdale eventually caught a steamer from Palma Sola to Key West where he transferred to a schooner for Nassau. On the trip to Key West, he struck up a conversation with the editor of a Key West black newspaper who characterized it as "...a Spanish town set down in America, with a lot of American customs and styles mixed in."<sup>53</sup> In this travel letter Drysdale also discussed the Key West overseas railroad project, expressing skepticism as to its feasibility ("Its enterprising projectors, who would build 60 miles of track across part of the ocean, will not need to go further than Coney Island or Long Branch to see what a lively storm will do to even a sixteenth of a mile of ocean pier").<sup>54</sup> During his Key West stay at the Russell House Hotel, Drysdale would explore the city and write on its many Cuban restaurants, its many cigar factories and stores, its many mosquitoes, and, while trying to buy a good pair of shoes, the peculiar footwear (narrow and high heeled) worn by the Cubans.<sup>55</sup> Sailing to Nassau, he remained in the Bahamas for two weeks and returned back to New York early in March 1884.

Drysdale's two week winter stay in Nassau would translate into a later residence spanning two years. In late August 1884, he again embarked for Nassau (this time not on a sailing schooner but on a Ward Steamship Line luxury liner) with a project to establish a winter resort hotel at Waterloo, next to Fort Montagu on the then eastern fringes of Nassau, in partnership with Warren F. Leland, a well-known New York hotelier.<sup>56</sup> For more than a year, Drysdale wrote almost weekly articles on Nassau and the Bahamas. Inter-

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53. *New York Times*, May 4, 1884.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.* May 11, 1884.

56. Drysdale had experienced first-hand the running of a resort hotel in 1883 during his stay in Bermuda when he had used his printing experience to help George C. Mead, manager of the Hamilton Hotel where he was staying, print the hotel's dinner menus. Drysdale recounts his views on the running of the hotel in an article he wrote on the unexpected and sudden death of Mead a few short weeks later. See William Drysdale, "A Model Landlord: The Death of George C. Mead, of the Hamilton Hotel," *New York Times*, May 29, 1883. For the peculiar appeal of hotel ownership to newspapermen and their lifestyle and the hotel experience of journalist and publicist George A. Crofutt, see J. Valerie Fifer, *American Progress*, 216-221. Warren F. Leland was a well



perspersed with these were travel letters from the cities of Santiago and Cienfuegos, the result of a short voyage on the Ward Steamship Line route from New York and Nassau which continued to the south coast of Cuba.<sup>57</sup> While the hotel project, designed to compete with the venerable crown colony-owned Royal Victoria Hotel, never came to fruition, his extended stay during the winter of 1884-85 produced a series of articles on the Bahamas, later published, along with some of his previous articles on Cuba, as *In Sunny Lands: Out-Door Life in Nassau and Cuba* (1885).<sup>58</sup> Drysdale found much to fault in the so-called tropical indolence of the Bahamian blacks.<sup>59</sup>

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known hotel-chain manager who eventually managed the old Windsor Hotel in Jacksonville before the city's 1901 fire. See *New York Times*, April 5, 1899. Drysdale's hotel experiment at Waterloo would eventually become a reality forty years later when the Fort Montagu Beach Hotel, one of the icons of the Bahamian tourism industry in the mid-twentieth century, opened on the site in 1926. For a brief history of the Fort Montagu Beach Hotel, with no mention of Drysdale, see Angela B. Cleare, *History of Tourism in the Bahamas: A Global Perspective* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2007), 65.

57. Louis A. Perez cites Drysdale's Cuba travel letters in Louis A. Perez, *Slaves, Sugar & Colonial Society: Travel Accounts of Cuba, 1801-1899* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1992). The Ward Steamship Line would gain notoriety years later for the legendary fire off the New Jersey coast in 1934 aboard one of its larger vessels, the "Morro Castle." That incident has captured the attention of writers ever since to the detriment of general studies on the line's history and its impact on Cuban and Bahamian travel and commerce with the United States. For a general history of the Ward line, see Michael Alderson, "History of the [Ward] Line," Ward Line, <http://www.wardline.com/page/page/4557564.htm> (accessed September 13, 2010). For the most recent book on the "Morro Castle" disaster, see Brian Hicks, *When the Dancing Stopped: The Real Story of the Morro Castle Disaster and Its Deadly Wake* (New York: Free Press, 2006).
58. William Drysdale, *In Sunny Lands: Out-Door Life in Nassau and Cuba* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1885). Many of Drysdale's travel letters on Nassau were also published at the time in the *Nassau Guardian*. When published in book form, Drysdale's letters were widely seen as one of the best sources of information on the Bahamas. Louis Diston Powles, a past court justice in the Bahamas, drew extensively from Drysdale's letters in his own 1888 book on the Bahamas, and the Ward Steamship Line, in a guide book it published also in 1888 on Nassau, Cuba, and Mexico, quoted liberally from Drysdale's Nassau letters. See Louis Diston Powles, *The Land of the Pink Pearl or Recollections of Life in the Bahamas* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, Ltd., 1888) and Edmund Collins, *Guide to Nassau, Cuba, and Mexico* (New York: James E. Ward & Co., 1888).
59. Drysdale remains a controversial figure among historians of the Bahamas because of his views towards blacks. See Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream, A History of the Bahamian People* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 2:107-11; and Ian Gregory Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 10-11, 97, 100-12.



Soon after his return to New York late in the spring of 1885, Drysdale married Adelaide Louise Bigelow, only daughter of Alden B. Bigelow, one of the founders of Cranford, New Jersey.<sup>60</sup> William and Adelaide spent their honeymoon in Quebec, a stay which produced three articles by Drysdale on the region. Late in September, 1885, Drysdale embarked on a month-long ocean voyage from New York to the Leeward and Windward Islands on the brand-new "Trinidad" of the Quebec Steamship Line which led to a series of articles from October 1885 to April 1886 on the British Caribbean colonies of St. Kitts, Montserrat, Antigua, Dominica, Barbados, Tobago, and Trinidad. He wrote two additional articles on the French island colony of Martinique. In many of these articles on the British Caribbean islands, a growing anti-British attitude was evident in his writings as he satirically portrayed the comings and goings of British colonial governors in the midst of a growing American economic influence in the region.

In the spring of 1886, due probably to a combination of factors including Adelaide's sense of homesickness and a growing disenchantment with Nassau over the failed hotel project, Drysdale closed his home at Waterloo, moved all his belongings to New Jersey and set up house in Cranford. His racist criticisms of blacks, already present in his 1883-1884 articles on the American South, had become more virulent as his frustrations in the Bahamas mounted. The charming Bahamian tropical climate of a year before was now to blame for all his mildewed possessions. Some of his most biting criticism, however, was reserved for the white Bahamian ruling clique which, in Drysdale's view, exploited the islanders, residents and visitors alike, for its own benefit and which he scathingly portrayed in the letter "Ali Baba's Forty Thieves; Their Descendants Still Operating in the Tropics," which later appeared as a pamphlet in 1887.<sup>61</sup> With his Bahamian adventure behind him, Drysdale now began in New Jersey a period of commuter/suburban bliss with his young bride as chronicled in a series of articles on life in Cranford in the fall 1886. The lure of adventure and winter warmth soon worked its mysterious magic, however, and Drysdale returned to the Caribbean, this time to the island of Jamaica by way of the Atlas Steamship Line in November 1887. This trip produced an extend-

60. *New York Times*, August 27, 1885.

61. William Drysdale, *Ali Baba's Forty Thieves: Or Nassau, N.P.* (Key West: Key West News, Co., 1887). The travel letter originally appeared in the *New York Times*, May 23, 1886.



ed series of articles on the island published between January and September 1888.

The year 1889 proved to be pivotal for Drysdale and Florida. On February 9, a brief news item appeared in *The New York Times* which simply read: "Mr. William Drysdale, the well-known metropolitan journalist, lies dangerously ill at his home in Cranford, N.J." The illness may have been the first indication of the heart disease which eventually claimed his life. In search as much for health and recovery as comfort and adventure, he returned that March to a Florida markedly different from the one he had first seen five years before, one increasingly attracting many new visitors to the state. In those intervening years, much of Florida had been profoundly transformed by Henry B. Plant, head of the Southern Express Company and a growing railroad empire based in Savannah, Georgia, and Henry M. Flagler, partner of John D. Rockefeller and one of the main stockholders in the newly created Standard Oil Trust.<sup>62</sup> The state now combined the pleasures of exclusive resort life with the fabled pristine wilderness. In 1888 Flagler opened the exquisite Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine, and Plant announced his own plans for a luxurious hotel in Tampa which opened in 1891 as the Tampa Bay Hotel. These two hotels would be only the first in their respective chains of Florida resort hotels. In January 1888, the Pullman Car Company, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Atlantic Coast Line and the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad (better known as the Plant System) inaugurated the winter-season Florida special to whisk travelers in luxurious ves-

62. Various studies on the life of Henry Flagler exist ranging from the landmark study by Sidney Walter Martin, first published in 1949, to the more recent biography by Edward N. Akin published in 1988. See Sidney Walter Martin, *Florida's Flagler* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1949); Edward N. Akin, *Flagler, Rockefeller Partner and Florida Baron* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1988). Henry Plant's life has not been as well studied and researchers still rely on the semi-official biography published by his pastor the year before Plant's death. See G. Hutchinson Smyth, *The Life of Henry Bradley Plant, Founder and President of the Plant System of Railroads and Steamships and Also of the Southern Express Company* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898). Sydney Walter Martin also did a study on the life of Henry Plant which, while a very good summary, is not as in-depth as his study on Flagler. See Sydney Walter Martin, "Henry Bradley Plant" in *Georgians in Profile: Historical Essays in Honor of Ellis Merton Coulter*, ed. Horace Montgomery (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1958), 261-276. For a more recent, popular biography of Plant see Kelly Reynolds, *Henry Plant, Pioneer Empire Builder* (Cocoa: The Florida Historical Society, 2003). A more focused study on the Flagler/Plant relationship during the crucial 1888-1892 period is Jesus Mendez, "1892—A Year of Crucial Decisions in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2009):83-106.



tibule railcars between New York City and Jacksonville in only 30 hours.<sup>63</sup> In addition, Ward G. Foster established in the same year the "Ask Mr. Foster" travel agency in St. Augustine. The era of Florida winter resort vacations and true pleasure tourism had begun just as Drysdale's illness seemed to signal an end to his own active adventure travels and the beginning of more sedate journeys.<sup>64</sup> In a departure from his earlier solo travels, Drysdale was accompanied on his March 1889 trip to Florida by a close friend who had been at his bedside during his illness and the wives of both men. As Drysdale notes in the first installment of this second series of travel letters on Florida, "With a determination to go everywhere and pay ourselves in good measure for what we had gone through, our only definite plan at the outset was to do the grand society set first for a week at the gorgeous Ponce de Leon [Hotel in St. Augustine] and then slip quietly into flannel shirts and float about wherever the fates drifted us."<sup>65</sup>

Drysdale's articles on St. Augustine focused on the town's growth, what he saw as its lazy inhabitants (both the resident Hispanics he calls the Dons and blacks), and its lack of old-time authenticity. According to Drysdale, however, the Dons were already in danger of disappearing as progressive Northerners were transforming the town ("The recent improvements, the prohibition law,

63. *New York Times*, January 10, 1888.

64. Although much of the current literature on tourism accepts Valene Smith's definition of the tourist as "a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change," such a definition would necessarily include early adventure travelers who merely substituted hard work at home for hard work in traveling with only a change in the nature and setting of the work. See Valene Smith, ed., *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 1. The figure of the modern tourist is theoretically analyzed by Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976). In an updated introduction to a later edition (1989), MacCannell comments on possible postmodern critiques of his work while a foreword by Lucy R. Lippard added to the 1999 edition places the work in the context of travel studies by the end of the twentieth century. For the historical emergence of the mass tourism phenomenon and its impact on travel writing and letters in the 1860s and 1870s in the American context, see Jeffrey Alan Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism: The Tide of a Great Popular Movement* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 1-58. On the general phenomenon of tourism, Piers Brendon has, perhaps, stated it best when he wrote "tourism is the discovery of the well-known (whereas travel is the discovery of the ill-known and exploration the discovery of the unknown)." See Brendon, *Thomas Cook*, 63.

65. *New York Times*, March 24, 1889.



and the quality of the firewater clandestinely sold have proved too much for them and they have almost disappeared").<sup>66</sup> He surveyed the historical sites around town and, after showing some skepticism about their historical claims, wrote, in a back-handed comment, "Though it is not so quaint an old town, nor so sleepy and lazy, nor yet so distinctively Spanish as one might imagine to read about it, St. Augustine is a pleasant place."<sup>67</sup> He described in detail his arrival at the Ponce de Leon Hotel (down to his check-in and the furniture placement in his room No. 112) and provided his readers with an overview of the other Flagler hotels.<sup>68</sup> The Ponce de Leon Hotel (one of the "Southern palaces built for Northern millionaires") deeply impressed him.<sup>69</sup>

Yet, not too far from the resort town, south on the St. Johns River, one could as easily find the pristine natural beauty of Silver Springs as the indolent white settlers of Grahamville, so typical, according to Drysdale, of the sleepy Southerner.<sup>70</sup> There was, for him, the contrast of Jupiter, Florida's town of the future, with Titusville, a most uninviting place to be stranded on a Sunday with no railroad service and nothing to drink but foul water.<sup>71</sup> Upon reaching Jupiter by steamboat, he lamented not being able to continue all the way south and through

66. Ibid., April 14, 1889.

67. Ibid. In a travel letter three years later in reference to St. Augustine, Drysdale wrote "The Spaniards are gone and the only trademarks they have left in St. Augustine are the old fort and the ruins of a city wall. There is nothing in the least Spanish about any of the old buildings, not even the oldest of them; and as to the Seminoles, they have reached the bead-work stage, which is next to annihilation." *New York Times*, February 17, 1892.

68. Ibid., April 28, 1889.

69. Ibid. Reiko Hillyer argues that the orchestration of an exotic Spanish colonial past in the creation of St. Augustine as a winter resort was part of a broader post-Civil War effort to rewrite history, erase conflictive sectional memories among wealthy Northerners and ensure their investments for a prosperous New South. See Reiko Hillyer, "The New South in the Ancient City: Flagler's St. Augustine Hotels and Sectional Reconciliation," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts: The American Hotel* 25 (2005): 104-135.

70. *New York Times*, May 19, 1889. Grahamville, on the banks of the Ocklawaha River, no longer exists but is immortalized in the writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, especially in *The Yearling* (1938; rept., n.p.: Berne Convention, 1999).

71. *New York Times*, June 23, 1889; June 30, 1889. Drysdale's comments on Titusville drew the ire of the editor of the *Florida Star*, the Titusville newspaper. The editor wrote, "The editorial page of the last issue of the Lakeland *Cracker* contains an extract from a letter written to the *New York Times* [sic] recently by a fellow named William Drysdale in which letter the writer virtually abuses Titusville in the most unmeasured terms. It is so contemptibly written that anyone with good judgment will see that Drysdale tried to vent his spleen on Titusville because he had to stay over here on Sunday." *Florida Star*, July 24, 1889.



the south-east-coast wilderness to Biscayne Bay, Miami, Cocconut [sic] Grove, and Cutler: "But it was impossible with our heavy artillery (the trunks) and all the impediments that go to make up either an army or a family except infantry."<sup>72</sup> Yet wishing to recapture some of his past adventure travels, and insinuating to his travelling companions a wish to continue south, the reply swiftly came: "'Further!' one of the ladies exclaimed when I delicately hinted the subject to her at Jupiter. 'Further! I feel as if we were a thousand miles away from civilization now.'"<sup>73</sup> Retracing their steps, he crossed the state by rail for a return visit after an absence of five years to a progressive, and unrecognizable, Tampa with a stop at newly built Port Tampa. A return to a now-desolate Palma Sola, where the inevitable economic "bust" had followed the unprecedented earlier "boom", produced one of Drysdale's most melancholy articles<sup>74</sup>. Finally, squeezed into the Florida itinerary, a quick trip to Havana from Port Tampa only serves to remind us of Cuba's ever-present role in the destinies of the state.<sup>75</sup>

Apart from marking Drysdale's return to Florida, the year 1889 also signaled a shift in his professional career. It appears his bout with illness forced him to cut back on hectic city reporting assignments and, encouraged his fiction and travel writing on a contract basis as an outlet and source of income. In late 1889, the first of four short stories appeared in the *New York Times*.<sup>76</sup> In addition, he began work on his first book of fiction, *The Princess of Montserrat; A Strange Narrative of Adventure and Peril on Land and Sea* (1890), a romance novel set in the Caribbean.<sup>77</sup> His longest continuous series of signed articles in the *New York Times*, including many on Florida, were published from mid-1889 to mid-1893 when he averaged a signed article once every two weeks, indicating that he either sharply curtailed his anonymous news reporting activities or abandoned them altogether to devote time to his travels and fiction writing.<sup>78</sup>

72. *New York Times*, June 9, 1889.

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Ibid.*, November 3, 1889.

75. *Ibid.*, July 14, 1889.

76. *Ibid.*, December 22, 1889.

77. Drysdale's view of creative writing as a source of income is best seen in the brief preface to the book entitled "The Author's Advice to the Book" which opens "Go out, my child, into the broad world, and act well your part, which is to interest your readers, to amuse them, and to SELL [his emphasis]." See William Drysdale, *The Princess of Montserrat: A Strange Narrative of Adventure and Peril on Land and Sea* (Albany, NY: Albany Book Company, 1890).

78. Drysdale's obituary in the *New York Times* alludes to the gradual reduction of his day-to-day reporting chores at the newspaper. See *New York Times*, September 21, 1901.



Along with the Florida series, Drysdale also wrote letters on Puerto Rico as well as a final series on Bermuda.

Drysdale's letters from Florida during these years, always published during the cold winter months, focused primarily on its west coast and the regions covered by the Plant System of railroads, hotels and steamship lines. They bear little resemblance to the frontier adventure travel letters of old.<sup>79</sup> As he noted in late 1890 in a column covering the upcoming 1890-91 winter resort season, "Every year brings improvement [in Florida], not only in the accommodations, but in the travelling facilities."<sup>80</sup> Drysdale's Florida letters now focused on the growth of the region, and they chronicled his various railroad travels in the state alongside Henry B. Plant.<sup>81</sup> The letters covered the opening of Plant's Tampa Bay Hotel; the expansion of the phosphate mining, lumbering, winter vegetable, orange, and sugar cane industries; and the growing towns in the Central Florida area (Orlando, Winter Park, Maitland, Sanford, Eustis, and others) covered by Plant's South Florida railroad. Lamenting that "In a large number of Florida towns the use of paint is apparently wholly unknown," Drysdale assured his readers "there are too many New-Englanders in Winter Park and in most of the towns of Orange County to let things go to ruin in this way."<sup>82</sup> Even when the travel letters turned to traditional adventure travel subjects like the warm winter climate or sport fishing, it was in the business context of whether a cold winter snap would

79. The story of the Plant System which integrated railroads, hotels, and steamship lines is covered in Gregg M. Turner and Seth H. Bramson, *The Plant System of Railroads, Steamships and Hotels: The South's First Great Industrial Enterprise* (Laurys Station, PA: Garrigues House, 2004).

80. *New York Times*, November 9, 1890.

81. Plant quickly came to appreciate the publicity value of Drysdale's Florida travel letters and personally escorted him to and placed at his disposal all types of facilities. What would turn out to be Drysdale's last Florida travel letter was on a fishing expedition to Southwest Florida with Henry Plant himself in his private railroad car. See *New York Times*, May 7, 1893. In return, Drysdale was very complimentary of Plant and saw him as a pioneer in the development of Florida. See *New York Times*, February 15, 1891.

82. *New York Times*, February 21, 1892. It appears that Drysdale had his Maitland winter headquarters, at least in his early Florida years, at the Park House Hotel, erected in 1878 by James M. Willcox, a businessman from Philadelphia. The Park House also attracted a series of notable visitors to early Maitland. See Alfred Jackson Hanna, *Fort Maitland: Its Origins and History* (Maitland, FL: The Fort Maitland Committee, 1936), 16-17. In his later travel letters from Maitland, Drysdale refers to living during the winter season at a house near the Maitland train station.



harm the orange crop or how the new Plant steamer "Tarpon" had opened up the lower Southwest coast of Florida to fishing enthusiasts.<sup>83</sup> Drysdale's travel letters come to reflect an ever-growing Northern interest in the economic possibilities of the South and Florida and the state's inevitable material progress. In addition, the timing and frequency of Drysdale's Florida travel letters in the *New York Times*, at a time when the leisure tourism industry in the state was beginning to reach a critical mass, has few parallels in the history of tourism promotion, or product placement, in the United States.<sup>84</sup>

From mid-1893 until late 1896, no signed newspaper articles by Drysdale appeared in *The New York Times*. By 1893, the *New York Times* was seeing a decline in circulation and experiencing serious financial difficulties, and these two factors may have contributed to Drysdale's absence in its pages during these years.<sup>85</sup> Newspaper reporting was a demanding craft best suited for an independent young man in the prime of life, and Drysdale, by this time, was middle aged, probably not in the best of health and had multiple family responsibilities. He began devoting more of his time to writing freelance articles and fiction. Perhaps because of some disenchantment at the reception his adult novel *The Princess of Montserrat* had earlier received, he shifted his efforts to juvenile literature, most probably through the influence of Kirk Munroe, a former colleague at *The New York Sun* and an established children's book author after having been the first editor of *Harper's Young People*.<sup>86</sup> Drysdale's first juve-

83. *New York Times*, February 19, 1893; March 19, 1893.

84. The letters also began to be published shortly after the yellow fever outbreaks in Florida in 1887 and 1888 when renewed confidence in the state's tourism industry was much needed. See Mendez, "1892—A Year of Crucial Decisions in Florida," 87-88. To label Florida tourism in the 1880s and 1890s as mass tourism is probably premature even if many of its characteristics were already in evidence. Most historians would probably agree that mass tourism is a phenomenon that only fully develops in Florida during World War I and shortly after although David Nelson argues that it is a later phenomenon that develops in the 1930s. Nevertheless, a growing upper middle class, aspiring in many respects to imitate the upper class, was already venturing in larger numbers to Florida by the 1880s. For Nelson's analysis of the development of a middle class mass tourism in Florida in the 1930s, see David Nelson, "When Modern Tourism Was Born: Florida at the World Fairs and on the World Stage in the 1930s," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88, no. 4 (2010): 435-468.

85. On the decline and subsequent resurgence of the *New York Times* in the decade of the 1890s, see Elmer Davis, *History of The New York Times, 1851-1921* (New York: New York Times, 1921), 155-242; and Meyer Berger, *The Story of The New York Times, 1851-1951* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), 87-128.



nile short stories began appearing in 1893 in *Harper's Young People*, a leading competitor to *St. Nicholas* and *The Youth's Companion* in the field of children's periodicals.<sup>87</sup> In 1894, his first novel in the juvenile literature genre, *The Mystery of Abel Forefinger*, was published by Harper and Brothers after having been earlier serialized in *Harper's Young People*. In the novel, young hero Larry Kirkwood enjoys a series of adventures sailing to Bermuda, the Bahamas, Cuba, Mexico, St. Kitts, Martinique, St. Lucia, Tobago, and Trinidad, retracing a composite of the same adventures Drysdale himself had chronicled in his newspaper travel letters since 1879. His second novel, *The Young Reporter: A Story of Printing House Square* (1895), and most of his subsequent fiction books, were published by W.A. Wilde of Boston, a press that specialized in the publication of Christian and morally uplifting literature. *The Young Reporter* is the most autobiographical of all of Drysdale's juvenile fiction books. It chronicles the struggles of Dick Sumner, a young reporter who through clean living and hard work achieves success. Among Dick's travel assignments as a reporter, we find a remarkably faithful recompilation of Drysdale's earlier travels to Mexico and Cuba, the American South and Southwest, and Puerto Rico. In addition, Dick's transformation from newspaperman to novelist in the book is clearly autobiographical and provides

86. There are a number of parallels in the lives of Kirk Munroe and William Drysdale. Both started their professional careers as journalists at the *New York Sun* during the early 1870s and were associated in the publication of their juvenile fiction literature with Harper and Brothers in New York and W.A. Wilde in Boston. Both are also very important in Florida's history with Munroe writing a number of books set in Florida. The most famous, and perhaps the best is *The Flamingo Feather* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1887). Finally, Munroe is closely associated with Coconut Grove in South Florida while Drysdale is associated with Maitland in Central Florida. For a more detailed study of Kirk Munroe and his juvenile fiction books, along with a selection of his popular journal articles on Florida, see Irving A. Leonard, *The Florida Adventures of Kirk Munroe* (Chuluota, FL: Mickler House Publishers, 1975).

87. The second half of the nineteenth century, especially after the Civil War, was a golden age for juvenile literature, and children's periodicals were crucial in shaping views of citizenship in the United States among the adolescent population. See Lorinda B. Cohoon, *Serialized Citizenship: Periodicals, Books, and American Boys, 1840-1911* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006). For a discussion of *Harper's Young People*, its impact on the field of children's periodicals in the late nineteenth century, and the magazine's many contributors, see Mary Jane Roggenbuck, "Twenty Years of *Harper's Young People*," *The Horn Book Magazine* 53, no.1 (1977): 29-35. For a general discussion of the various Harper and Brothers literary magazines—*Harper's Weekly*, *Harper's New Monthly Review*, *Harper's Bazar* [sic], and *Harper's Young People*—see John Gray Laird Dowgray, "A History of Harper's Literary Magazines, 1850-1900" (PhD diss. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1956).



much insight into how Drysdale saw his own evolution as a writer from 1889 to 1894.

Drysdale published his third juvenile novel, *The Fast Mail: The Story of a Train Boy*, in 1896. *The Fast Mail* is Drysdale's quintessential Florida novel and reflects his close working association with Henry Plant and the Plant System, as well as his many winters residing in Maitland. It follows the adventures of young Bert Walker, a newspaper and book vendor employee on the trains, who, through hard work and ethical behavior, rises to a choice position on the Plant System's lucrative West India Fast Mail express train (New York to Tampa in 36 hours). The book is centered on the operation of the express train through the Middle Atlantic and southeastern states to Tampa, where it connects with the "Olivette" and "Mascotte" of the Plant Steamship Line to deliver cargo and the U.S. Mail to Cuba and points beyond in the Caribbean. As the plot unfolds, Drysdale describes the seasonal winter train traffic to Florida, the small towns in Central Florida, and the orange and winter vegetable agricultural industries. One chapter describes the disastrous freeze of 1894-95 while another chapter is devoted to Bert's adventures in Key West and the Florida Keys while reporting on the rumored expansion of Henry Flagler's "East Coast Lines" from Biscayne Bay down to Key West. Among the many characters in the book is none other than a grandfatherly Henry Plant who, through a series of fortuitous chance meetings with Bert (so typical in the juvenile literature genre of the time), plays a key role in the young man's promotions. While the book suffers from its multiple subplots—among them a kidnapped little sister, a wayward young friend sent to a correctional facility, and a visit to Thomas Edison's laboratory in New Jersey—it nonetheless provides fascinating insights into Florida in the late nineteenth century.

In short succession, Drysdale published two additional books—*The Beach Patrol: A Story of the Life-Saving Service* (1897) and *The Young Supercargo: A Story of the Merchant Marine* (1898)—which, along with *The Young Reporter* and *The Fast Mail*, comprised his four-volume "Brain and Brawn" series for W.A. Wilde on the adventures of hard-working and righteous adolescent boys. In 1896, he returned to *The New York Times*, revitalized under Adolph Ochs, with a series of signed articles. In 1897-98, the author embarked on a year-long trip to Europe where he was joined by his wife, son, and father-in-law, and published in the paper his longest series of travel letters (65 in total) covering his journeys in England (for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee), Belgium, Germany, France, Monaco, and Italy.



Soon after his return to the U.S., he travelled to Tampa to cover the mobilization of troops for the Spanish-American War which, along with his prior trips to Cuba and Santiago, provided material for his book *Cadet Standish of the St. Louis: A Story of the Spanish-American War* (1899). The following year, *The Treasury Club: A Story of the Treasury Department, Illustrating How Important a Factor Is Money in Our National Life* (1900) appeared, the first volume of a planned "United States Government" series blending a fictional story line with detailed factual introductions to the inner workings of various branches of the federal government. Drysdale only completed one other volume in this series, *The Young Consul: A Story of the Department of State* (1901). He also published two books on jobs and careers for young people, *Helps for Ambitious Boys* (1899), which contained a prominent portrait of Henry Plant as a model worthy of emulation by any young man, and *Helps for Ambitious Girls* (1900).

As his health slowly deteriorated, Drysdale spent his winters in long residence in Maitland, Florida, with his last winter spent in New Berne, North Carolina, the latter stay providing material for three articles in *The New York Times* in the spring of 1901. His last newspaper work, eight articles on the Pan American Exposition at Buffalo and its surrounding sights, appeared in *The New York Times* late in the spring and summer of 1901. William Drysdale died from heart failure at the age of 49 on September 20, 1901, at his home in Cranford, New Jersey. His last novel, *Pine Ridge Plantation or the Trials and Successes of a Young Cotton Planter*, drawn from his observations in North Carolina, was published posthumously in 1901.

Interest in the work of William Drysdale did not survive long after his death. While several of his juvenile literature books were subsequently reprinted and, as late as 1906, *The Fast Mail* was among the most requested books in juvenile fiction at the New York Public Library, interest in boy's books from the Gilded Age soon became relegated to academic studies, usually focusing on Horatio Alger, Jr., and his rags to riches stories. It is not surprising that most of Drysdale's travel letters which had appeared in newspapers were soon discarded with yesterday's news.<sup>88</sup> It is important,

88. Some of Drysdale's travel letters on the Bahamas and Cuba are better known since they were reprinted in book form as *In Sunny Lands* where they have been more easily accessible. *In Sunny Lands* is the only Drysdale work listed by Harold F. Smith in *American Travellers Abroad*. See Harold F. Smith, *American Travellers Abroad: A Bibliography of Accounts Published Before 1900* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1969), 37.

however, to re-introduce William Drysdale's travel letters to a new reading public. The letters, appearing as they did in the country's most important newspaper in its largest metropolitan market, are authentic historical testimony of the subjects treated and of the interests and biases of both writers and readers of the period. The letters are also among the best examples of a newspaper travel literature which played a crucial role in the development of an expanded mass tourism industry in the United States, both at home and increasingly abroad.

Among the best of Drysdale's letters are, certainly, his reminiscences on Bermuda and the Bahamas, along with those from Jamaica and the Windward and Leeward Islands. Almost forgotten now are his Florida letters, which transcend the romanticism of period literature about the state and capture moments of crucial importance in its history. These Florida letters from the late nineteenth century, written by not only an astute observer and promoter of, but also by an active participant in, the changes the state was undergoing provide keen insights into the early development of Florida's mass tourism industry. As Col. Beverly W. Wrenn, Passenger Traffic Manager of the Plant System, noted on Drysdale's importance to Florida only two months after his death, "[He] probably did more to boom Florida when it needed booming than any other newspaper writer."<sup>89</sup> As if underscoring the link between improved transportation systems and the development of leisure tourism, Wrenn went on to add "I doubt if there was a newspaperman living who had such an extensive acquaintance with railroad, steamship and steamboat men..."<sup>90</sup> William Drysdale's Florida letters also evidence a humor which, if at times caustic and outrageous, always proves entertaining. They were written in such a clear prose that they remain as enjoyable and accessible to today's reading audience as when originally penned more than a century ago.

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89. "'Drysdale'—A Memorial," *New York Commercial*, reprinted in the *Cranford Chronicle*, November 12, 1901.

90. *Ibid.*



## **"The Most Exotic of Our Cities": Race, Place, Writing, and George Allan England's Key West**

by Philip Levy

In the late 1920s, a prominent American writer arrived in Key West. He and his wife came to this Florida backwater to escape chilly winters and to carve out time for writing. Once settled in town, the writer gradually eased into the rhythms of Key West life. He built personal connections and began observing local characters who, in time, would re-emerge in his stories. He liked boats and the outdoors life. He had an inclination toward dangerous adventures and enjoyment of killing animals as well as an ability to convey these sentiments to audiences through popular literature. While in the Keys he would visit sites near and distant, and see places and hear stories that would return in his writing. It was, after all, always about the writing. The year was 1927, and the writer was George Allan England.

The above outline will be familiar to anyone acquainted with the fabled story of Ernest Hemingway's 1928 arrival in Key West. The details of this story have endured many retellings, which always include observations about the significance of the arrival for both

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Philip Levy is an Associate Professor of History and Anthropology at the University of South Florida. He offers thanks to Gary Mormino, David Muraca, Kennan Ferguson, and Sarah Carleton who read and commented on early drafts of the essay. Fraser Ottanelli and Julia Irwin proved to be invaluable resources. Very special thanks go to Bill Dudley who provided a wonderful opportunity to talk about George Allan England on Florida Public Radio under the auspices of the Florida Humanities Council. Special thanks are offered to Tom Hambright and to Jeanne Sanford of the Monroe County School District for her help in learning about Key West. Very special thanks go to Anthony DeStefanis for his help, encouragement, and friendship. Finally, the author is grateful to the editors, staff, and reviewers at the *Florida Historical Quarterly* for their assistance.

Hemingway and the island itself.<sup>1</sup> While the mutually beneficial decade-long association between Hemingway and his sometime island home is well known, the relationship between England and Key West is more obscure. Indeed, England himself was long ago consigned to the dusty shelves of America's forgotten authors. But in his day, many readers of Hemingway's predecessor in Key West held the author in high esteem. A self-fashioned character, he was a prolific writer, producing an enormous corpus of literature, including socialist tracts, utopianist science fiction, poetry, adventure yarns, and travel writing. A Midwesterner by birth but a New Englander by choice, England strongly identified with Maine, where he once ran for governor, and New Hampshire, where he churned out articles and raised chickens at a retreat he called Camp Sans Souci. Between 1918 and the early 1930s he passed his winters in a home on Key West's lower Whitehead Street, where he became so well-known that local boosters called him the "Key West Ambassador."<sup>2</sup> In the late 1920s, England turned his writer's eye on his adopted winter home and penned one major essay about Key West and several other works that made passing reference to the city.

This essay looks closely at the writing England produced in the 1920s, first to acknowledge England as a unique and influential Key West promoter, but more importantly, to show how he fit the city into contemporary ideologies of racial superiority, American Empire, and modernity. England's pen reconciled modernity and Key West in a unique fashion, and provided an important rhetorical building block in the New Deal reinvention of the city and its more recent tourist promotion.

Many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers touched on Key West's climate, its mix of peoples, and its fine location, often casting the unusual island city as a counterpoint to mainland America.<sup>3</sup> But the larger reality is that volatile industrial

1. The literature on Hemingway is voluminous. The Hemingway Key West arrival story can be seen in James McLeandon, *Papa Hemingway in Key West* (Miami: E. A. Seeman Publishing, 1972); Anne Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in The American Literary Imagination* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1986), 92-106; Maureen Ogle, *Key West: History of an Island of Dreams* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 139-160.
2. *Key West Citizen* (hereafter cited as KWC), 3 January 1927: 2.
3. William Barnett outlines the ways that writers shaped Key West as a counterpoint and retreat from "modern" America. See, Barnett, "Inventing the Conch Republic: The Creation of Key West as an Escape from Modern America," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 139-172.



economics, the transformation of state power, and race—in short, modernity—have been the real engines defining Key West.

England uniquely celebrated what others mistrusted or lamented. Whereas most observers fretted over changes in rail and highway access and subsequent visitors that they believed threatened to rob Key West of its uniqueness, England supported more roads and visitors to the region, and he hoped artists of many types would make the city their muse. He saw the development and social mix others observed not as a challenge to, or a retreat from America, but rather as a perfect vision of the nation's innate potential at a time when the United States was expanding its Caribbean, Latin American, and Philippines colonial activities and, as historian Terry Smith has observed, a moment when modernity was in "one of the acknowledged moments of its most brilliant appearance."<sup>4</sup> Key West was, thanks to modernity's steel and concrete, connected to the mainland in dramatic ways. Key West's New Deal reinvention—the turning point in remaking the town into a tourist mecca—itself a project steeped in the logic of modernity's economics, and state power—was presaged by England's vision of a town washed in warm flower-scented breezes yet bustling with roads and industry and flooded with artists and tourists living in refurbished fishermen's shacks.<sup>5</sup> In 1934, Governor David Sholtz and

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4. Terry Smith, *Making the Modern: Industry, Art, and Design in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 2.

5. Ogle, *Key West*. Ogle's synthetic history is the best of its type even though it does little to challenge the prevailing timeline and narrative. The best recent study is found in the Key West sections of William C. Barnett, *From Gateway to Getaway: Labor, Leisure, and Environment in American Maritime Cities* (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 2005). Key West has had some scholarly treatment but the literature is diffuse and hard to summarize. Furthermore, the town's tourist industry has led to a large number of popular works that more or less repeat an established narrative while also adding layers of new information and meanings. In short, Key West's past is not a possession of professional scholars: it has many crafters speaking to many kinds of audiences through a variety of small non-academic presses. There are a number of older broad sweep histories still of great use. These include Jefferson B. Browne, *Key West: The Old and the New* (1912, repr. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1973); Louise White and Nora Smiley, *History of Key West* (St Petersburg: Great Outdoors Publishing, 1959). Key West's role in the Key's larger history of wrecking has been limned by John Viele in *The Florida Key's Volume 3: The Wreckers* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 2001). Also see Dorothy Dodd, "The Wrecking Business on the Florida Reef, 1822-1860," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 22, no.4 (April 1944) 171-199. There are a number of historical photograph collections that make subtle arguments in emphasis and selection about Key West history. These include Lynn Homan and Thomas Reilly, *Images of America: Key West* (Charleston SC:



Key West's Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) chief, Julius Stone Jr., listed the island city's "natural beauty, its strategic location, unexcelled climate," and "isolation" as the basis for the remaking of Key West, and thereby touched on the exact unique local alchemy, hyperbolic prose, and issues of social—particularly racial—control and balance that first came together most powerfully in England's writing.<sup>6</sup> If historian William Barnett offers us a vision of Key West as a paradoxical "escape from America," and cultural scholar Jani Scandura showed a Depression-era Key West as a place drenched in discussions of death and healing, this essay seeks to show how George Allan England used Key West as an example of high modernity expressing the potential wonders of an American overseas empire.<sup>7</sup> Whereas most scholars of modernity see it as devaluing the "local" or the "place-bound" in favor of universalizing laws and systems, England's Key West reveals how central places

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Arcadia Press, 2000); Stan Windorn and Wright Langley, *Yesterday's Key West* (Miami: E.A. Seeman Publishing, 1973); Joan and Wright Langley, *Key West: Images of the Past* (Key West: Belland and Swift, 1982). The Wright Langley collections are especially interesting as they are based on the author's own rich and diverse private image collection. Tourism has led to a large body of local tales and walking tour literature. Here again, these books provide interesting glimpses into Key West's ever evolving narrative. See, J. Wills Burke, *The Streets of Key West: A History Through Street Names* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 2004); and Joy Williams, *The Florida Keys* (New York: Random House, 1995). For Key West and Cuban history see, Gerald E. Poyo, "Key West and the Cuban Ten Years War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (January 1979), 289-307. Also see Consuelo Stebbins, *City of Intrigue, Nest of Revolution* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2007). Hemingway's time in the city is a manner of subfield in and of itself. All major biographical works devote at least a chapter to these years and several books take on that theme including James McLendon, *Papa Hemingway in Key West* (Miami: E.A. Seeman Publishing, 1972), Stuart B. McIver, *Hemingway's Key West* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1993); and Phil Scott, *Hemingway's Hurricane: The Great Florida Keys Storm of 1935* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2006). The cigar industry, particularly its role in immigration and labor unrest, has produced its own literature. See L. Glenn Westfall, *Key West: Cigar City USA* (Key West: Historical Key West Preservation Board, 1984). The only book-length study (albeit a small one) of Key West's African American population is Sharon Wells, *Forgotten Legacy: Blacks in Nineteenth-Century Key West* (Key West: Historical Key West Preservation Board, 1991).

6. *Florida Keys Sun* (6 July 1934), 1. See also, Durward Long, "Key West and the New Deal, 1934-1936," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (January 1968): 209-218; Garry Boulard, "State of Emergency: Key West in the Great Depression," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (October 1988): 166-183.
7. Barnett, "Inventing the Conch Republic," 169; The Creation of Key West as an Escape from Modern America," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (Fall 2009), 169; Jani Scandura, *Down in the Dumps: Place, Modernity, and American Depression* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).



can be to the very success of the modern.<sup>8</sup> Key West's mix of peoples, geography, and "improvements" were for England a single, unique, and distinctly local phenomenon offering broader lessons about race and American empire.

Lurking behind what Maureen Ogle called England's "overblown prose" was something more than mere boosterism and a flashy pen.<sup>9</sup> England's Key West reflected the author's broader concerns of ruin and decline, man versus nature, and most powerfully race, empire, and human evolutionary possibilities—particularly in island geography. For England, Key West's mix of beauty, industry, and isolation made it an evolutionarily "perfect" place with enormous implications for empire and Anglo Saxon superiority. In this way England spoke to Americans who could see in a place like Key West far grander issues than local economics and tourism. Recent work on American imperialism has offered a provocative challenge to the long-standing consensus that a logic of Anglo-Saxon superiority informed American overseas adventures. Eric Love, for example, demonstrated that in fact there was considerable fear of tropical climes and the way they might negatively affect racially superior peoples.<sup>10</sup> England's texts are riven with reflections of Americans' own disagreements about the tropics, Anglo-Saxon superiority, and the ups and downs of empire. His overlooked travel writings in particular are exactly the kinds of texts that reveal important tensions in larger imperial rhetoric, and call for reexamination in light of Love's and other work. Given Florida's long history as an object of and a springboard for American imperial activity, England's Key West writings are long overdue for close analysis in light of race and empire.

As Anne Rowe noted, American writers have developed what she called "the idea of Florida" for centuries, stemming from Ponce De Leon's Fountain of Youth all the way through Ernest Hemingway's "last wild country."<sup>11</sup> For Rowe, the image of a tropical, lush

8. Timothy Oakes, "Place and the Paradox of Modernity," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87, no. 3 (September 1997): 509-531.

9. Ogle, *Key West*, 141.

10. Eric Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). See also Paul Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1315-1353.

11. Anne Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).

"Good Place" was central to the written idea of Florida. Historian Tommy R. Thompson has argued that this sort of imagery ultimately served to obscure the many ugly realities of a state full of alligators, lynchings, and chain gangs, and allowed promoters to remake Florida as a land of sunshine and opportunity.<sup>12</sup> Jani Scandura has gone farther and shown how, for Key West in particular, "metaphors of death and revival" were central to the discussion of the crumbling town and New Deal-era efforts to turn it into a tropical tourist Mecca.<sup>13</sup> Central to this scholarship is the notion that the written Florida—particularly during the twentieth century—was more than a sideshow to historical realities. In a place so dependent on visitation and outside money, there were (and arguably still are) very real consequences to every written word. Julius Stone tellingly declared that "with a scratch of my pen I started this work in Key West and with a scratch of my pen I can stop it."<sup>14</sup> If, indeed, as Stephen Whitfield argues, Florida has claimed to be (or has been claimed to be) a "kind of hologram of Paradise," it has always been a hologram made up of the written word.<sup>15</sup>

So much of that writing has concentrated on Florida's wild side. Be it Zane Gray's or Henry Carleton's big "game fish of Florida" or Ring Lardner's "garden spot of God's green footstool," the writer's gaze has often landed on Florida's seemingly untamable expansive greenery.<sup>16</sup> Key West has often been a challenge to that norm—being depicted as more troubled and industrial than wild and natural.<sup>17</sup> Visiting writers typically have struggled with Key West as a place. Nineteenth-century readers enjoyed tales of colorful Keys' wreckers and yellow fever, but none of this did much to make Key West seem like a paradise.<sup>18</sup> Its strong industrial base and large

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12. Tommy R. Thompson, "Florida in American Popular Magazines, 1870-1970," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 82:4 (2003): 1-15.

13. Scandura, 76.

14. Boulard, "State of Emergency," 171.

15. Stephen J. Whitfield, "Florida's Fudged Identity," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 71:4 (April 1993), 413.

16. Henry Carleton, "Big Game Fish of Florida," *Outing Magazine* 29:4 (January 1897).

17. The category of the natural however has been destabilized in recent scholarship. See, Richard White *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995) and William Cronon ed, *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995).

18. Barnett, *From Gateway to Getaway*, 257-275.



population also made it a problem for writers seeking a verdant wonderland of alligators and palms.

Prior to the twentieth century, some writers opposed negative images and literary depictions of Key West. Pre-England booster pieces like that in the pages of the *Daily Equator Democrat*, in 1889, praised the "City Without Winter" as "one of the most beautiful places in America," and made the case for the city as a fit place for investment and visitation.<sup>19</sup> But the balance between extolling natural splendor as a lure for visitors and a robust manufacturing sector as a draw for investors was always a difficult rhetorical act to sustain.<sup>20</sup>

Writing in 1894, Charles Richard Dodge dismissed Key West in a *Scribner's Magazine* article which otherwise sang the praises of wild Florida. In the "dusty old town" of Key West, Dodge found "very little of interest here to hold the tourist." The city's buildings were odd, "small and cheap," and only a few could be called "imposing." Among Key West's other uninteresting elements, Dodge listed the cigar, sponge, and turtle meat industries and a curious mix of peoples. But mostly, the city served as a stop-over on the way to what really made Florida a travel-worthy destination.<sup>21</sup>

In 1918, Nevin Winter was similarly unimpressed. He declared "it cannot be asserted that Key West is a beautiful city" although he did call it "quaint and interesting"—something of a step up from Dodge's dim view. Winter noted in matter-of-fact fashion the existence of the cigar and turtle meat industries, the fact that the children of the large population of immigrant cigar workers "speak their native tongue except when English becomes necessary," and that the "large Negro population" of Key West occupies "a section by themselves."<sup>22</sup> While Winter had high praise for the Keys and much of wild Florida, Key West received only a passing glance, in part, because its mix of industry, labor, immigrants, and African Americans was exactly the sort of burgeoning America that Northerners like Winter came to Florida to leave behind. Key West was

19. *Daily Equator Democrat* 1889, 1, 9.

20. Barnett, *From Gateway to Getaway*, 491. Barnett offers an excellent discussion of early twentieth-century promotional writing including a detailed review of Elmer Davis. He skipped over England however and went right on to Hemingway's arrival.

21. Charles Richard Dodge, "Subtropical Florida" *Scribner's Magazine* 15:3 (March 1894), 350-351.

22. Nevin Winter, *Florida, The Land of Enchantment* (Boston: The Page Company, 1918) 326-327.

not all that compelling to many of them precisely because it was too familiar.

This issue came into play most creatively in two essays penned by Elmer Davis. Writing in the mid-1920s, Davis lamented the changes Key West faced due to the Florida land boom and the new highway linking it to the mainland. While Davis mourned for what the city was in the process of losing, he saw it as a lost cause. His Key West was neither Florida nor was it really the United States either—it was its own place with its own rhythms and sounds. Predictably, these were Caribbean and Cuban inflected but all in all, the town itself was unremarkable. Davis's essays were free of superlatives and lacked mentions of beauty. Instead, he described "rows and rows of gray shacks" which "somehow fit the town, fit the flat almost treeless sandbank on which Key West is built."<sup>23</sup> For Davis, what was special about Key West was that it had avoided becoming "American," and consequently maintained its cultural independence in an age of increasing consumer driven homogeneity. Davis wrote not to simply praise Key West but to condemn a rapacious, American, popular consumer capitalist culture.

Against this backdrop, George Allan England offered something unique to debates on Key West images. England's 1928 article in *Travel* magazine, entitled "Island of Felicity," came to Americans amidst an epoch of Caribbean and Latin American adventurism which saw U.S. troops asserting themselves in places ranging from Mexico to Haiti.<sup>24</sup> These interventions raised a number of important racial questions.<sup>25</sup> Among those was whether or not Anglo Saxons could survive and thrive in tropical climates so different from the settings of their racial origins. Americans had long worried about what historian Warwick Anderson called "white male breakdown in the tropics," and had a general fear that warmer climes were a threat to Anglo-Saxon dominance.<sup>26</sup> England's pro-

23. Elmer Davis, "Another Caribbean Conquest," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* (January 1929), 172. Davis wrote two essays on Key West. This description post-dates England's essay, but was Davis's clearest statement of the city's appearance and therefore worthy of use here. See also, Barnett, "Inventing the Conch Republic," 160-161.

24. George Allan England, "America's Island of Felicity," *Travel* (1928), 43. (Hereafter cited as "Felicity.")

25. Paul Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions and Anglo-Saxons," 1318-1319.

26. Warwick Anderson, "The Trespass Speaks: While Masculinity and Colonial Breakdown," *American Historical Review* 102:5 (December 1997), 1345. See also, Idem, "Climates of Opinion: Acclimatization in Nineteenth-Century France and England," *Victorian Studies* 35:2 (Winter, 1992), 135-137.



motion of Key West, especially his full-throated advocacy of this island city as a wonderful, even perfect place, promoted his belief that Anglo Saxons could expect to survive and thrive in the tropics.<sup>27</sup>

England's time in Key West produced several essays and a few newspaper articles, all of which came out in print during and just after his 1927 season-long visit. He wrote all of these either in the city or just after his 1927 stay, and all of them stemmed from travels he took using the city as his base of operations. This body of work dealt with places as far away as Cozumel, Mexico and Grand Cayman Island, and as close to the Keys as the Dry Tortugas. All were unified by an interest in what he saw as the distinctness of islands, and how the island plays on the evolutionary status of its residents.<sup>28</sup> They are also all marked by concerns of race and empire, both being themes near and dear to England's heart. In this writing, Key West, with its combination of races and "modern improvements," held the status of the most evolutionarily ideal of all. Additionally, each of the essays kept Key West itself in play in various ways, making the city a secondary subject of each venture. And, all of this writing reached American readers just as the new "Overseas Highway" opened, making the length of the archipelago fully accessible by car—a defining moment in the history of the Keys.<sup>29</sup> This means that the readers England reached through *Travel*, *Harper's*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, his essay collection entitled *Isles of Romance*, and other venues, read about Key West right at the moment when it was for the first time possible for them to get in their cars, gas up, and motor down to America's "southernmost city."

England's works reached audiences at a time of extensive U.S. imperial activity in the Caribbean and as part of the attendant debates about those projects. United States involvement in Mexico,

27. Eric Love, *Race Over Empire*.

28. England has not been the only one with an interest in islands. Well before his epoch, Charles Darwin saw in islands the possibilities of unique patterns for animal life. He argued that all islands had once been linked, but gradual dispersal allowed for the isolation of various species. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959) 617-618. More recent scholars as well have seen islands as useful and compelling places for human interaction. See Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980) and Greg Denning, *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land, Marquesas 1774-1880* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1980).

29. Ogle, *Key West*, 140-142. See also, Barnett, *Gateway to Getaway*, Chapter 7.

Central America, Haiti, Cuba and the Philippines all raised questions about exactly what Americans could expect to do and become in these alien environments. Opponents and advocates of American overseas empire, as well as racial theorists, wondered about the effects of tropical climates on Anglo Saxons and the viability of American civilization in warm climates. Would

Americans be able to recreate the fruits of northern civilization amidst tropical jungles inhabited by racially inferior others? Or, would the innate danger of these environments literally swamp progress and cause the regression of otherwise stalwart Anglo Saxons? By positioning Key West in relation to other tropical places and emphasizing the success, even the perfection, of this special city, England suggested that not only could Americans overcome the problems posed by the tropics, but with the right blend of circumstances, they could create something truly superior in Caribbean locales.<sup>30</sup> For England, Key West's mix of peoples and environment made the city a test case for just what American civilization could do and become in unfamiliar climes. The result was what he repeatedly called "perfection."

### Thinking of England

To understand England's Key West, we must begin by understanding England himself. This is not the easiest task. There is a very small scholarship about him, and although he was prolific in the extreme, he made no effort to preserve his personal papers.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, we can learn his mind only from his published writing, a few autobiographic pieces, and a cryptic and somewhat misleading family-written biographical sheet stashed away in a Maine local historical society. There is little in the way of England's personal, non-public-consumption writing upon which to understand his worldview.<sup>32</sup>

30. Eric Love, *Race Over Empire*.

31. There is only one published essay dedicated solely to England and that is Mark Pittinger's study of the racial and genocidal dimensions of England's best known book, *Darkness and Dawn* (1914). "Imagining Genocide in the Progressive Era: The Socialist Science Fiction of George Allan England," *American Studies* 35:1 (1994): 91-108.

32. I discovered England as part of my current research on the creation of George Washington, the Cherry Tree, and Washington's boyhood home as joined historical icons. England wrote promotional articles celebrating the Cherry Tree story and the American values embodied in stories about Washington's



He was born in 1877 in Nebraska, the son of a U.S. Army chaplain, but was saved from a frontier life of posts and sod blocks by a wealthy aunt who brought him to Boston to serve as her coachman. He received a Harvard education and found his writing talent early, penning his first published essays while still at university. After graduating he embarked on a career as a New York City insurance salesman, but a bout of tuberculosis and a resulting weak chest caused him to abandon the city for the New England woods, the ancestral home of his wife's relatives, where he had to rely on his writing skills to get by. England always made much of his flight from urban life and his physical and literary salvation in the woods and it is small wonder that turn-of-the-century Rooseveltian themes of fitness (both racial and physical), manliness, rusticity, and survival all play central roles in his writings.<sup>33</sup>

He first turned his pen to pure politics—socialist politics to be precise. In an article and a pamphlet he decried the abuses of the United States' Supreme Court, reviewed the history of the international movement, and prophesized a socialist future for all. "Socialism is the heir apparent of capitalism, the next stage of development, the historical sequel of capitalist production," he assured his readers, in prose that revealed an ability to master the styles and tropes of genre writing and an interest in imagining the future—both attributes which would also later infuse his writing.<sup>34</sup>

Before World War I, England made a name for himself as a writer, activist, historian of American socialism, and admirer and

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Boyhood in the mid-1920s—just before he went to Florida. My research has led me into his copious catalogue and has had me searching out every piece of personal writing I can find in various collections. Three articles and a doctoral dissertation mention England although each of the authors is not particularly interested in England beyond the question at hand in each piece. Maureen Ogle quotes England's 1928 Key West essay, "America's Island of Felicity" in her *Key West*, 141, although she dismisses England as a sappy promoter and privileges Hemingway as a more substantive observer. William Barnett ignores England altogether. "George Allan England—Writer, Linguist, and Sportsman," September 16, 1981, Collections of the Woodstock Historical Society Museum Larry McBride and the Maine Hist Society, Woodstock, Maine.

33. Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995) particularly chapters 3 and 5.

34. George Allan England, "International Socialism as a Political Force," *Wayland's Monthly* 99 (July 1908), 12. See also, England, "Socialism and the Law: The Basis and Practice of Modern Legal Procedure and its Relation to the Working Class," Fort Scott, Kansas: Legal; Department Appeal to Reason, 1913; England, "Fiat Pax," New York: American Association for International Conciliation, 1914.

ally of Eugene Debs. His career as a public, socialist intellectual and activist culminated with his 1912 run for the Governorship of Maine on the Socialist Party ticket. Politely put, England was trounced, coming in fourth (out of four) just behind the Prohibition Party candidate. Looking back at his attempt at office holding, the chastened former candidate labeled himself, "the most unpopular man in the country, politically" for having been defeated by "the largest pluralities ever given in a state."<sup>35</sup> Although he never really renounced his socialism, England's early doctrinal radicalism gradually faded from his writing.<sup>36</sup> In time, he settled into producing a rather formulaic run of mysteries, adventure yarns, and travel writing to pay the bills.

England began wintering in Key West around 1918, when he was in the full flush of his literary fame. He made himself a regular at local settings like the Casa Marina hotel where he was photographed in full golfing togs looming over the far shorter Lou Gehrig.<sup>37</sup> Within a decade, England's annual arrival in town was heralded by the *Key West Citizen*, which labeled him as a "Key West Ambassador." England correspondingly offered up choice promotional quotations in reference to Key West, calling the town a "miracle city" and a "little paradise."<sup>38</sup> The *Key West Citizen*, as the main proponent of Key West boosterism, praised England as a noted writer, a promotion which not only flattered England but also advertised the town as a place of substance and culture. Most of England's writings penned in Key West were travel pieces, and little mention was made of the deeply complicated work for which he was best known—*Darkness and Dawn* (1914).

The book was part of a body of socialist utopian science fiction, most of which he produced during the WWI years. Following the lead of now-almost-forgotten utopianist Ignatius Donnelly and better-remembered Jack London, whose *The Iron Heel* (1907) vir-

35. George Allan England, "The Fiction Factory," *The Independent* 74:3356 (27 March 1913), 687.

36. Pittenger suggests that England renounced his earlier pacifism as a result of WWI. This would mean that like many Americans, he accepted Wilsonian rhetoric that the war was essential to preserve democracy—a flagship Anglo-Saxon achievement. Lacking England's papers makes it hard to know his mind on these matters. What is certain though is that the socialist tone of his writing was largely gone by the end of WWI.

37. Joan and Wright Langley, *Key West: Images of the Past* (Key West: Belland and Swift, 1982), 90.

38. KWC, 3 January 1927, 1; KWC, 13 June, 1928, 1.



tually created the genre, England took his real-life struggle for a better world into imaginary futures that he created and published in serial form and between hard covers. In somewhat heavy-handed allegories, England showed his readers worlds in which trained professional heroes used logic, physical skill, courage, and a mastery of science and technical knowledge to strike blows against world capitalism. England's was a vanguard literature in which the workers themselves were largely absent. Socialism was presented largely as a gift from well-trained, square-jawed, technologically-savvy white men remarkably well mannered and middle-class in outward manifestations, rather than the result of a messy class struggle.

*Darkness and Dawn* was a trilogy which intellectual historian Mark Pittenger, one of the few scholars to discuss England, described as sitting "at the intersection of several formative discourses and genres" including debates over the nature of socialism, evolutionary theory, and the boundaries between the human and the animalistic.<sup>39</sup> The book is a tale of devastating natural disaster, primitive survival, war, and eventual genocide in which the forces of white American technology and know-how triumph over those of "darkness," racial impurity, primitivism, and disorder. The book centers on capable engineer Allan Stern and his blonde secretary Beatrice Kendrick who awaken in the ruins of their New York City office, having slept for a millennium following a cataclysmic disaster which wiped out civilization. This valiant couple appears to be all that is left of Anglo-Saxon stock, and they use their racial ability and American know-how to adapt, survive, and set about rebuilding what was lost. Opposing them is a "Hoard" of ape-like creatures which Stern and Kendrick contend represents the product of one thousand years of miscegenation between apes and "Negroes" left free, having slipped the leash of white control. England portrays these products of evolution-gone-wrong in the most unflattering terms, and Stern finds himself physically repulsed by their greasy skin and barbaric rituals.

The connection between Blacks and anti-civilization is not a passing one; England in fact goes out of his way to make clear this analogy. In one exchange reflecting on the Hoard's origins, England's characters offer a pointed history lesson and racial allegory. "Perhaps the white and yellow peoples perished utterly in the cata-

39. Pittenger, "Imagining Genocide in the Progressive Era: The Socialist Science Fiction of George Allan England," *American Studies* 35:1 (1994), 94.

clysm leaving only a few scattered blacks," a race who Stern reminds Beatrice "are immune to several germ-infections that destroy other races." Showing her historical acumen (and an innate intellectual ability typical of her race) Beatrice concludes, "so the whole world may have gone to pieces the way Liberia and Haiti and Santo Domingo once did, when white rule ceased." Indeed, "history shows it" Stern responds, echoing the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "it didn't take a hundred years after Toussaint L'Ouverture and Desalines, in Haiti, for the blacks to shuck off French civilization and go back to grass huts and human sacrifice."<sup>40</sup> If, in this fascinating "history," Haiti went from canapés to cannibalism in one hundred years, then the last Americans standing in the ruins of Manhattan are confronting the results of over one thousand years' decline. Stern suggests there may have been a period of continuity "maybe fifty or one hundred years" when the few surviving American Blacks "kept some sort dwindling civilization" and even the "pretense of maintaining the school system, railroads, steamship lines, newspapers and churches, banks" and all the elements of "that wonderfully complex system" now lost.<sup>41</sup> The lesson is simple: the fruits of civilization, denied their racially proper custodians and thus left in the wrong hands, are doomed to decline.

With this realization, England's heroes set off to set right this abhorrent evolutionary trajectory through a brutal and highly personal race war, and once war is engaged, it cannot end until the error is corrected and white rule reestablished in the ruins of America. They are aided in this task by a small army of albino "Merucaans" (Americans) who have survived the centuries in the heat and darkness at the bottom of an enormous cavern created by the disaster that ended the world Stern and Kendrick had once known.<sup>42</sup> That these last Americans survived in the steamy heat near the earth's core has a special significance in light of how England would later call tropical Key West a perfect place. Even before

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40. George Allan England, *Darkness and Dawn*, Reprint edition (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press Inc., 1974), 112-13; Roosevelt on Haiti quoted in E. Benjamin Skinner, *A Crime So Monstrous: Face to Face with Modern-Day Slavery* (New York: The Free Press, 2008), 14.

41. England, *Darkness and Dawn*, 112.

42. George Allan England, *Darkness and Dawn*, Reprint edition (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press Inc., 1974). Scholarship on England has understandably focused on the implications of this fascinating book. See, Pittinger, "Imagining Genocide in the Progressive Era," 91-108.



he began to winter in the city, England was open to the possibility of Anglo Saxon racial perfection outside the usual latitudes.

Global cataclysm, race war, creative technologies—small wonder that what scholarship there is on England has focused almost exclusively on the profound and disturbing implications of this 225,000-word (England's own count) fantasy of ethnic cleansing. Indeed, one critic asserted that if England is memorable at all, it is for this work alone.<sup>43</sup> Many socialist intellectuals at the dawn of the twentieth century faced a problem in envisioning a socialist American future: how can a more perfect society be built from the imperfect materials of racial others such as African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and immigrants from less-than-desirable European homelands? The solutions varied. Some leaders, like England's erstwhile movement hero, Eugene V. Debs, believed in the essential improbability of mankind. Blacks and others were inferior yes, but at least some of this inferiority was itself a product of capitalist exploitation and was therefore fixable by reversing the worst excesses. Other socialists were less sanguine, and worked to keep minorities of all stripes out of their Unions, parties, and organizations.

But few went as far as England did, albeit in a fictional Utopianist future, to suggest that extermination would be the catalyst for the better tomorrow. Indeed, as Mark Pittenger wrote, "it is a striking if sobering fact" that England's genocidal fantasy was as popular as it was in the years leading up to the twin disasters of two World Wars.<sup>44</sup>

Although England's other fiction works of the period featured Anglo Saxon technocratic heroes similar to Allan Stern, none of that writing brought the problems posed by race and race mixing into such clear focus. Nevertheless, his concern over race did not disappear in subsequent writing. And indeed, once a writer has given such a powerful endorsement of race war, all subsequent statements regarding race are worthy of some scrutiny. It is in England's most overlooked and seemingly innocuous material—his travel writings—where his ideas of race once again came visibly to

43. Walter Rideout, *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900-1954* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 59; Aileen Krador, *The Radical Persuasion 1890-1917* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). See also, Goran Theorborn, "Dialectics of Modernity: On Critical Theory and the Legacy of Twentieth-Century Marxism," *New Left Review* 1:215 (January-February 1996): 59-81.

44. Pittenger, "Imagining Genocide," 92.

the fore. And in the case of Key West, the presentation of these ideas had echoes beyond England's initial intent.

Scholars have almost entirely overlooked or dismissed this writing and therefore have not seen how this popular author was busy working to construct the boundaries of race and place for the innumerable readers of most American popular magazines in the 1920s. Nowhere is England's racial and evolutionary projecting more visible or more consequential than in his Key West-based writing of the late 1920s. Through these essays, England combined place and race, imbuing a few select destinations and the people he met there with distinct racial characteristics which were themselves a sort of racial parable about the island city which he had made his winter home. England argued that islands presented distinctive evolutionary challenges to which ideal human populations could rise. Nowhere was this more evident than in Key West.

### England and Key West

In the fall of 1927, England packed up his typewriter and tobacco pouch and left New Hampshire for Key West in the company of his wife and a young ingénue traveling companion. The jaunt down the Eastern seaboard was something of an annual event for the Englands, who habitually used the trip as a chance to see sights and collect stories. The editors of *The Key West Citizen* sent a "correspondent" to sit down with George upon his arrival, discuss the trip from Bradford, New Hampshire (which the paper mislabeled as Bradford, New Jersey), and offer readers a peek at the writer's plans. England related that he sought out this "earthly paradise" to "thaw out" and "write, write, write."<sup>45</sup> He also made known his intention to "prepare some stories on local topics" and to use the island as a base of operations for other travels.<sup>46</sup> He then went on to offer up a few distinctive platitudes about his part-time home. "Key West is a miracle city" he effused, allowing Yankees like him to leave behind the North's "snow and pneumonia, sniffing and sneezing, coughs and colds" and arrive in a "charming island city" in mid-winter and "find summer in full sway." Key West, England told the paper's readership, was "the most ideal place" to "spend the winter most delightfully."<sup>47</sup>

45. KWC, 3 January 1927: 2.

46. KWC, 3 January 1927: 1.

47. Ibid.



On its face, these good words were just the kind of boilerplate promotional stuff hoped for by the newspaper's editors, the local chamber of commerce, and the town's specially constituted Advertising Committee, which purchased ad space and placed brochure-bearing representatives on inbound trains in an ongoing attempt to attract tourist dollars.<sup>48</sup>

In the 1920s, Key West embodied an important paradox within the growing state of Florida. The Florida land boom drew visitors and residents to the state who were looking for long beaches, warmth, sunshine, and fragrant flowers. Much of the still-largely-empty state could make good on those promises, if one added in mosquitoes, cottonmouths, and swamps. But at the time of the boom, Key West was far from being the sort of Florida paradise over which pamphleteers effused. Instead, the island city was still a hub of legal and illegal trade, and its population was dwindling as jobs and industry left the declining industrial center. Although the city was still a significant outpost of U.S. military power, even that presence declined after World War I. All of this emptied the city's streets and homes to such an extent that one market-minded observer noted that Key West had been "about as dead and discouraged a town as could be found in the United States."<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the city was connected to the mainland only by a single vulnerable thread of rail line always at risk during the annual hurricane cycle and entirely reliant on rain water for its survival. In these respects, Key West was a "frontier" community in the way the New Western Historians have shown American frontiers to be compressed distillations of state power, exploitation, and economic tumult, all teetering on the edge of ecological collapse.<sup>50</sup> Boom-time Florida had no less likely a tourist Mecca than this gritty, down-in-the-mouth port town.

But a steady flow of visitors could change all of that, and the struggle to bring tourists and their greenbacks to the city was as longstanding as it was unsuccessful.<sup>51</sup> Visitors did come, but most

48. KWC, 22 March 1926: 1.

49. "Farthest South: A Florida City that Will Bear Watching," *Barron's*, (15 February 1926): 11. See also, Ogle, *Key West*, 84-97, 90, 100. See also, Robert P. Ingalls and Louis A. Perez, *Tampa Cigar Workers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

50. Patricia Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987).

51. David Nolan, *Fifty Feet in Paradise: The Booming of Florida* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1984).

only passed a night or two on their way to or from Havana via Henry Flagler's Key West rail head.<sup>52</sup> The trick was to make them stay longer—not an easy prospect for a shabby town with little to keep tourists happy. *The Key West Citizen* strongly advocated tourist-minded improvements and brought into focus every bit of positive publicity the city received on the mainland. The editors were well aware that their discarded papers would end up on ferries and in train cars heading for parts unknown, making each page a chance to advertise their town's features. For the benefit of chance readers and potential visitors, the paper frequently carried large set-asides (much of it paid for by a specially constituted local booster group) which sang the town's praises, noting its "delightful and healthful climate" and listing the names of its "leading hotels," as well as featuring headlines blaring statements like "Key West is on the March."<sup>53</sup> Additionally, the paper's role as the Voice of Boosterism meant that it regularly devoted page space to the comings and goings of the many "notables" who passed through town, either by train or in stately yachts. The editors made sure to highlight the laudatory comments of visitors like the influential publisher C. W. Barron, who in a 1926 winter sojourn claimed that "Key West holds advantages not possessed by any city in the state of Florida."<sup>54</sup> Such testimonials from prominent men acted as endorsements of the town and proof that the paper's boosterism was more than just Caribbean hot air.

Viewed that way, England was just one of many "notables" tapped by the paper for a few good words in the proper style. And England knew just the right words to utter. "I have traveled the world over, been in all parts of the United States," England declared. In his mind, Key West was "a garden spot," an "earthly paradise," and most remarkably, "the finest place in the world."<sup>55</sup> It is hard to imagine a more forceful endorsement or a bar set any higher than England's labeling of Key West as simply, "the finest place in the world." Such words, and the promise of similar ones soon to come, were music to the ears of Key West boosters.

52. Les Staniford, *Last Train to Paradise: Henry Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Railroad that Crossed the Ocean* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002).

53. KWC, 18 February 1926: 7.

54. KWC, 19 February 1926: 1. In 1926 Barron was the owner and publisher of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Barron's Weekly*. He and his son wrote a set of essays about Key West and the health of the Florida real estate market. Barron thought that once Key West had a reliable road connection to the mainland and a better water supply that collected rain, the town would take off.



But England's choice of words signified more than mere hyperbole.<sup>56</sup> Considering the proscriptive bent of England's writings, and the author's demonstrated interest in the evolutionary possibilities for the human race, England was in fact giving voice to a real truth as he understood it. Key West provided just the right mix of factors to produce a sort of a perfect place, one where the benefits of nature and technology fused to produce the "finest place in the world."

As the U.S. extended its reach into lands well beyond its continental borders as the nineteenth century ended, theorists debated the possibilities and perils for Anglo Saxons and their civilization in alien places—particularly those in the tropics. The debate was a simple one, and one that had roots going back into the eighteenth century. It was widely held that tropical places, with their unfamiliar diseases, flora and fauna, as well as their dangerous, albeit inferior, peoples, posed an existential threat to Anglo Saxons accustomed to very different climes. Indeed, the evidence for this was substantial, given the challenges posed by diseases like malaria which hampered European African colonization and was only defeated late in the nineteenth century. Leeches, piranha fishes, and poisonous snakes were just a few of the horrors which also haunted the dreams of would-be imperialists, along with lurking "savages." While there was some consensus that tropical places were indeed dangerous, there was considerable disagreement about their implications. Some imperialists argued that the innate Anglo Saxon superiority would triumph over all obstacles, either through technology like swamp draining, or via heroic medicine like that which had recently ended the malaria threat. Others, though, feared that the tropics would sap Anglo Saxon male vigor, devastating not only the direct agents of imperialism (soldiers, missionaries, traders, etc.) but weakening the metropole as well.<sup>57</sup>

To understand England's race-infused evolutionary boosterism, we need to turn to England's Key West essay and the other essays he penned in the city. As he told the *Key West Citizen*, his plan

55. KWC, 3 January 1927: 1.

56. Ogle, *Key West*, 141.

57. See Eric T. L. Love, *Race Over Empire*; Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1992); Christopher Herbert, *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991); Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the Modern World* (London: Routledge Press, 1989).

was to use the island as a base of operation for his travel writing. Without his papers, it is difficult to know the specifics of his travel dates, but the Cozumel, Grand Cayman, and Dry Tortugas trips all appear to have clustered around this visit. Furthermore, England made mention of Key West in each of these essays in ways which not only lock them together in time, but also offer analytical comparisons. England, in fact, believed that islands themselves were special places harboring special human possibilities. In his *Isles of Romance*, England cast his enduring love of islands in distinctly evolutionary terms. He averred that the "hard and unnatural conditions" typifying many islands provided challenges to "human and animal biology" and encouraged "queer shifts and compromises" to "social and economic puzzles" in order to survive.<sup>58</sup>

Adaptation could take wonderful forms and result in visible defining traits which England repeatedly labeled with words like "charm," "quaint," and "queer." In his writing, England used each described island as a racial stand-in. Cozumel was Indian, Grand Cayman was Negro, and even though they lacked the sort of settled population the others had, the Dry Tortugas were the purview of Anglo Saxons. For England, Cozumel, Grand Cayman, and the Dry Tortugas each represented imperfect island worlds, whereas Key West was the ideal.<sup>59</sup> This imperfection was visible in many forms—all clustering around concerns which run throughout England's writings. The three most important indicators were each island's position within broader imperial frameworks, the quality of their internal industries, and the racial traits of the inhabitants. Each of these provided evidence of the relative evolutionary perfection of each island.<sup>60</sup>

58. George Allan England, *Isles of Romance*, (New York: The Century Co., 1929), vii. Hereafter cited as *Isles*.

59. The scholarship on the complicated polyvocality of travel writing is quite large. My analysis of England rests principally on a few key works. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Press, 1979) and Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Also crucial is Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992); James Duncan and Derek Gregory, eds., *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 1999); Eric Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler: from Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic Books, 1991). See also, Carol Traynor Williams, ed., *Travel Culture: Essays on What Makes Us Go* (Westport Ct.: Praeger Press, 1998).

60. See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge Press, 1995); Christopher Herbert, *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination on the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).



Each essay made specific references to the tools of empire as comforting symbols and even useful and welcome aids to the tourist. England's trip to the Dry Tortugas, for example, was courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard, in the "slim-waisted wasp" form of patrol boat C.G. 293 and its "snappy crew of seven men."<sup>61</sup> These hale fellows were full of colorful jargon and were a source of even more colorful anecdotes like shipwreck tales and ghost stories from abandoned Fort Jefferson. Even though the military was absent from his Grand Cayman narrative, England assured his readers that "King George V is the island's rightful ruler, loved in a far-off, hazy, dutiful way" and the Union Jack flies in Grand Cayman's "tropical breezes."<sup>62</sup>

The Cozumel trip provided the most obviously imperial narrative, written with the themes of U.S. Mexican adventurism and U.S. occupations of Haiti and Nicaragua not so hidden between the lines. Key Westers told England prior to his departure from the town that he had better make the trip heavily armed as "in Cozumel they murder a man for twenty-five cents" and that "those Mayan Indians will probably butcher and eat you on the beach."<sup>63</sup> Unable to find a ship in Key West going to the Mexican island, England made his way west as a passenger guest of a twenty-six-strong U.S. Navy "Scouting Squadron," a happy accident that allowed him to indeed arrive heavily armed, as advised.<sup>64</sup> In language mirroring the flight of his intrepid, racially pure *Darkness and Dawn* heroes, England describes how he "winged a bee-flight to low and mangrove-tangled coasts," seeing sights "from whence fiction and romance are woven."<sup>65</sup> On his landing, the locals did not react well to what was really a show of military force consisting of war planes and a tender ship arriving amidst U.S. incursions in the Caribbean. England treated as comedy the distress of Mexicans who, island by island, believed they were suddenly and at war with and invaded by "Tio Sam."<sup>66</sup> At one stop, threadbare, terrified Mexican officials quickly brought down the Mexican flag and "instantly surrendered at discretion."<sup>67</sup> At another, locals put on a braver face. "Behold, it is war" another official called out, "the Americanos come! We are lost. They can shoot and kill us. Resistance is Hopeless. But we die

61. *Isles*, 6 and 4.

62. *Isles*, 120.

63. *Isles*, 294.

64. *Isles*, 291.

65. *Isles*, 292.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*

like brave men!"<sup>68</sup> In each tense meeting, only England's much-prized language fluencies and ample application of American cigarettes calmed the crises. Yet even with "the Stars and Stripes snapping boldly and gaily" England noted that it was nevertheless "disconcerting to land, contrary to all law and order, in a foreign and tropical island under the scrutiny of hundreds of beady black eyes set in hundreds of copper Indian faces."<sup>69</sup> England's version of these rather telling international encounters revealed a casual, though still threatening, display of American force as well as England's own enjoyment of his position within these mini-crises. But it also served to reinvent Key West's military presence (one which his Key West essay itself barely noted) as a benign tool of a tourist empire. England portrayed Anglo Saxon empires and their tools as beneficent, ameliorating and tempering whatever dangers were implicit in these non-Anglo Saxon destinations. In this way, England's invocation of Key West as "Gibraltar of America" was more than a military boast. It was, in fact, a specific invocation of an outpost of, and springboard for, white civilization at the gateway to further imperial objects.

Likewise, England's discussion of industry was more than mere observation. The unpopulated Dry Tortugas offered no opportunity to discuss an operating commercial industry. But the enormous and then abandoned Fort Jefferson was itself an "imagination-stirring" testament to Anglo Saxon skill and ability to bring civilization to the most unlikely of places.<sup>70</sup> The other islands did provide chances to see real island industries at work. On Cozumel, England met the pith-helmeted English colonial entrepreneur Alan Moysey Adams, the "Chicle King." In contrast to the "beady black eyes set in hundreds of copper Indian faces," Adams's "two bright blue and beaming optics" were themselves a tonic.<sup>71</sup> From Adams, England learned the ins and outs of "queer" Cozumel's industry.<sup>72</sup> These "optics" became the lenses through which England saw the island. In contrast to his youthful socialism, England described the local union—the *Liga de los Obreros*—as a principal hindrance to industrial growth. All labor was controlled by the *Liga*, which collected job responsibilities and then divided them amongst laborers

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68. *Isles*, 293.

69. *Isles*, 294-95.

70. *Isles*, 17.

71. *Isles*, 294-95.

72. *Isles*, 297.



using a scheme lost on the frustrated Anglo Saxon observers. The scheme ensured that all work—mostly carrying freight between wharves and warehouses—was done by men and not machines or animals. And while he could appreciate the argument of one “old Maya” who reasoned “think of the honest men out of jobs if horses did their work,” England nevertheless sided with his host, averring that “Cozumel employers suffer more than Cozumel workmen.”<sup>73</sup>

In contrast, Grand Cayman had no industry to speak of, but its absence here was not like its total absence in the Dry Tortugas. England cast Grand Cayman’s lack of industry in temporal terms. The island, he claimed, was a contemporary seventeenth century, a place in time, a living relic of “a remote past before machinery came or banks functioned.”<sup>74</sup> In fact, the islanders owned only three industrial machines in total, augmented here and there with a few car and boat engines. The fruits of industrial civilization were marvelous curiosities, as evidenced by the “burned-out electric light bulbs carefully saved in fishermen’s huts as curios.”<sup>75</sup> Lacking the elements of capitalist industry, Cayman islanders eked out a living in more relaxed fashion such as collecting sea turtles—an industry that was also part of Key West’s “charm.”

On both Cozumel and Grand Cayman, island environments stymied industrial growth. Simple extractive industries of gum or turtles might thrive, but these were themselves bounties provided by the same environments which thwarted technological advances. Survival on these islands was possible, and could even be comfortable. But true civilization required the right people, and England devoted considerable effort to exploring the presence and absence of this crucial element.

The racial potentialities of each island’s population mingled with the location’s specific evolutionary challenges to determine the shape of human habitation. Just as superior races could excel in difficult environments, so too could they be pulled down by these, as well as by too much contact with lesser populations. It was not a given that an Anglo Saxon man would thrive in all conditions, but his success was a sure sign of his evolutionary superiority just as his failure served as an indication of how very dangerous some places could be. This thinking was part of why England was so hap-

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73. *Isles*, 305.

74. *Isles*, 103.

75. *Ibid.*

py to see an Englishman's "two bright blue and beaming optics" so soon after his dramatic arrival in Cozumel.<sup>76</sup>

The symbols of Anglo Saxon imperialism written into that encounter—the blue eyes, the pith helmet, and the cheery, "Right-O"—were all signs that the cannibalism (be it physical or cultural) that Key Westers warned him of was an avoidable fate.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, the reassuring presence of the Union Jack, the islanders' evident love of King George, and the "snowy-white linen" apparel of local officials offset traits like "stove-black" skin as evolutionary proofs.<sup>78</sup> Since acquired traits could be passed down between generations, a proper respect of Anglo Saxon authority had in time settled into the makeup of Grand Cayman Islanders, rendering them partially civilized and therefore full of the "charm" and quaintness that was, for England, a model evolutionary state.

In the Dry Tortugas, England witnessed the hardiness of Anglo Saxons manifested first and foremost in the crumbling massive brick edifice of Fort Jefferson. England wondered aloud "how the devil men ever brought all that brick and stone and iron out here into open ocean," as the isolated fort "loomed up like all eternity."<sup>79</sup> England was singularly impressed with how barren, isolated and dangerous were the islands, touching on his ideas about the evolutionary challenges islands possessed, while the decaying fort brought out much of England's fascination with ruins. Few places were as well suited to England's tastes. But it was the past and current people he found there that brought out his admiration for Anglo Saxons and their ability to live in edge environments.

The "charms" of the Coast Guardsman's dialects and stories, and the warmth and hospitality of the lighthouse keepers were all tales of white men keeping up their spirits and triumphing against adversity. In fact, all of England's musings about the archipelago's inhospitality only served to highlight the difficulty of the challenge mastered by these hardy souls. Even his retelling of the tale of Dr Samuel Mudd, the Maryland physician convicted as a Lincoln assassination conspirator, became one of racial hardiness. Mudd fixed John Wilkes Booth's broken leg, and based "largely on Negro evidence" spent a health-wrecking four years in Fort Jefferson for

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76. *Isles*, 294-95.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Isles*, 134.

79. *Isles*, 6, 12.



his troubles.<sup>80</sup> But it was his steadfast care of fellow prisoners during an 1867 outbreak of yellow fever that raged within the prison's walls which most caught England's eye. Despite risk to himself and his own illness, England described Mudd as laboring ceaselessly and selflessly in the worst possible conditions. Furthermore, Mudd even penned a treatise on the disease which, though "illuminating in its utter ignorance," was nevertheless a remarkable achievement in its own right.<sup>81</sup>

Only by understanding the imperfections of each of these islands can we fully appreciate the perfection England saw in Key West. The island city offered a remarkable blend of environment and technological achievements, which enhanced some racial traits and ameliorated others. For Americans still worried about the detrimental effects of the tropics, England's Key West showed that perfection was indeed achievable even without a regular frost. In language which emphasized perfection, wonder, and his favorite content-rich adjectives of "charming," "quaint," and "queer," England took readers through a carefully guided tour of Key West's natural, technological, and human wonders. He presented a perfect tropical place to an American readership more accustomed to seeing the tropics as being filled with malarial swamps, dangerous flora and fauna, and savage evolutionarily racial inferiors.

England declared Key West to be "absolutely West Indian" and covered with a "puzzling confusion" of plants and none of the "usual American trees and flowers."<sup>82</sup> The setting, therefore, was unmistakably different from his New Hampshire home and more akin to Cuba and Haiti—readers would not have missed this reference. And yet, technological marvels showed the possibility of American progress in this tropical setting. He foregrounded in both words and photograph the "Eighth Wonder of the World: Henry Flagler's Overseas Railroad" which he (and many others) saw as "one of the most remarkable engineering achievements of our day."<sup>83</sup> But England also made much of the then-nearly-completed "beautiful" Overseas Highway—soon to be the "Ninth Wonder of the World."<sup>84</sup> As if reflecting his own personal travel history, he noted that once the road opened, motorists would be able to "drive from Maine

80. *Isles*, 50.

81. *Isles*, 58.

82. "Felicity," 13.

83. "Felicity," 14.

84. "Felicity," 13, 43.

directly into Key West." He asked his audience, "Where else shall you find a marvel quite like this?"<sup>85</sup> Indeed, what other city could boast two Wonders of the World at its very doorstep?

Whereas many Americans were inclined to fear the effects of tropical climates, England revealed that Key West was blessed with "the finest climate in the world."<sup>86</sup> So healthful was Key West, in fact, that the town's "one and only undertaker has to work at other jobs to make a living," although this may have been as much an effect of ten years of population decline as it was due to the environment.<sup>87</sup> That England would muse on the health benefits of the island makes sense in light of his own view that the right climate cured his own illness early in life. He claimed that "epidemics spare Key West" and that "the flu hasn't a ghost of a chance there; pneumonia is a practical impossibility."<sup>88</sup> This observation is remarkable for its contrast with prevailing views of such climes, but also for how much it conflicts with England's own discussion of disease in the Dry Tortugas— islands whose climate was essentially identical to that of the Keys.<sup>89</sup> Disease there was one of the many environmental challenges posed by islands. But Key West itself offered protection from the kinds of illnesses that laid low Fort Jefferson's prisoners, Spanish American War soldiers in camp and in the field, and even U.S. Marines occupying Haiti at the time of his writing.

Likewise, England immunized Key West from the effects of hurricanes, of which he rather disingenuously suggested "Key West has little fear."<sup>90</sup> Despite damage from numerous storms over the years, England claimed the city had "never been flooded or washed out" largely because "she is a city built upon a rock" and therefore, "she shall not be moved."<sup>91</sup>

Whereas many visitors offered their praise of the town, many also recognized local problems, like the editor of *Barron's* complaint that a reliance on rainwater retarded development.<sup>92</sup> But England turned the water situation created by the city resting upon a bed of coral into a charming virtue. Every city fire hydrant, he related, was

85. "Felicity," 43.

86. "Felicity," 44.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. See, Warwick, "Climates of Opinion," 135-137.

90. "Felicity," 44.

91. "Felicity," 44.

92. C. W. Barron, "Farthest South," *Barron's* (15 February 1926): 11.



"an independent unit driven down to salt water" which, he added, happened to be "the best kind of water, by the way, for putting out fires."<sup>93</sup> Here England is almost certainly parroting the assessment of in-town friends and may even be indirectly addressing concerns raised in *Barron's*. But he also reveals his ability to turn a failing of the city into a quaint virtue.

It was in England's discussion of Key Westers themselves, though, where his readers could most clearly see the advantages of the place. England focused on the island's non-Anglo Saxon residents in ways that showed that racial failings of Key Westers were softened or even removed, while his choice of words and images reinforced his sense of the "quaint." The ridiculous, impoverished, and disorganized Mexicans of Cozumel contrasted sharply with the industrious and colorful Key West "Latins."<sup>94</sup> To be sure, as England put it in personal terms, "your Latin workmen" were not the equals of "we Nordics," but nevertheless, these people were useful, and even special. He portrayed them as a proud and culturally distinct people who were "friendly, picturesque, likable—in a word, *simpáticos*."<sup>95</sup> The town bore the imprint of their unique tastes for "shiny blue" painted walls, "hard chairs," their "open-fronted shops," and the "flower-clad piazzas" of their numerous coffee-shops and clubs."<sup>96</sup> The sound of their speech was audible all over town as "little fountains of conversation" emanating from "little groceries, drug-stores, and barber-shops."<sup>97</sup> But the centerpiece of Key West Spanish life was cigar production. England told his readers that it was only the "deft fingers" of the island's Latino cigar workers that could "roll the magic cylinders" which ushered forth from the city's factories at a rate of "fifty million" a year "to beautify the world."<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, in what sounds like a jab at Tampa, which had already drawn away large portions of the industry, cigars of this quality could only be made amidst the "warm moist air" of Key West's "tobacco winds" because, when "worked in colder climates," the "precious Cuban leaf crumbles."<sup>99</sup>

93. "Felicity," 44.

94. "Felicity," 16.

95. "Felicity," 17.

96. Ibid.

97. "Felicity," 27.

98. "Felicity," 16.

99. Ibid, See also, Ingalls and Perez, *Tampa Cigar Workers*.

Just as Key West's environment nurtured tobacco leaves into something beautiful, exportable, and profitable, the city's Latino population itself also became something special in the island's warm humid breezes. The same was true of the city's African Americans. "The Key West negro" England related, "seems a good negro."<sup>100</sup> Unlike Grand Cayman Islanders' pervasive lassitude, Black Key Westers were "reasonably industrious." The evidence of this was all over town through England's shape-shifting gaze. One example was the eagerness of "black boys along the wharf" to dive into the "blue green crystal waters" to catch coins tossed in by spectators. For England, these half-naked black bodies disappearing into magical waters at the whim of far wealthier white people was not a view into a rather grim exploitation of impoverished children, but rather a mark of desirable traits seen in unexpected places. Likewise, England's description of laboring African American women turned the toils of the island's Black working class into charm, quaintness, and evidence of Key West's perfection. "Aunt Dinah" England wrote, could be seen "boiling a huge kettle outdoors under a banana palm" while other "aunties" of "majestic gait" were visible hustling along with "huge baskets of laundry" or firewood or beams "on turbaned heads."<sup>101</sup> England invoked distinctly Afro-Caribbean imagery of banana leaves and head bundles, but here all was contained within the safe control of white authority and an idealized capitalist work ethic, all of which pointed to the unique racial balance (not to say harmony) that prevailed on the Island of Felicity. This made quite a contrast to not only the underdeveloped laziness of England's Grand Cayman Islanders, but to the sort of stories produced by Haitians' resistance to U.S. domination as well.

Even the supernatural could be domesticated and made charming in Key West. Unlike Haiti's spawning of Voodoo tales, England showed fear of "ghosties" and magical practice as a quaint attribute of otherwise charming and industrious blacks. One woman in particular, whom England called Aunt Rachel Munnings, told him that "ghosties" and other spirits "don't bodder me none, sah" because she artfully used careful placement of coffee grounds in the corners of her rooms to ward them off.<sup>102</sup> The result was that the spirits would be slowed down as "dem ha'nts got to stop an' count

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100. "Felicity," 43.

101. "Felicity," 43.

102. *Ibid.*



all dem coffee grounds."<sup>103</sup> Aunt Rachel may have been pulling England's leg or she may have been offering a real glimpse into magical thought and practice. She may also have been offering a subtle commentary on acquisitiveness and busy work. But in England's hands she offered readers a view of the supernatural on Key West, domesticated and employed under proper supervision, in a setting unique for its perfecting abilities.

England's tale positioned the ritual magic in Key West as nothing fearful, but rather something harmless—even useful. In this story as in others, he situated the products of the Caribbean (in this case coffee) as a charming part of a friendly domestic tableau. Coffee grounds in the corner, like the coffee drunk by Key West Latino cigar workers, were part of a larger ongoing colonial process whereby U.S. interests and soldiers struggled to ensure American control over Caribbean economies and the flow of their goods. That process raised concerns over how well Northern Americans could function in tropical environments and what was the proper role of non-Anglo Saxons within an imperial framework put in place by a democracy, as well as many others. As an advocate of Anglo Saxon imperialism, England saw great potential in the tropical places he visited. But he was also aware of the social and evolutionary dangers many of his countrymen and women saw in steaming mangroves and long white coastlines. The Key West that England presented to the American reading public was a place carefully fashioned to show the possibilities for the great things his "Nordics" could achieve in the right settings. By contrasting Key West with other similar tropical places and focusing on interrelated issues of race, industry, and technology, England positioned Key West as a model—a perfect place—partly unique in its meeting of circumstances, and partly a vision of what an Anglo Saxon Caribbean world might achieve. Beyond that, though, England enlisted language for his project which anticipated decades of promotional writing that shared the goal of promoting Key West as a desirable travel destination, while simultaneously dropping his incepting and larger interest in the evolutionary potentials of human races and the goal of achieving a very real earthly paradise.

England wrote of Key West just as it was rapidly sliding into its

103. "Felicity," 43.

worst days. By 1927, more than half of its earlier population had quit town as its industries left or died out. Within a few years of England's hope that "50,000 people should live here," the bankrupted city had slipped into receivership and become a ward of the Roosevelt administration, overseen by its own New Deal viceroy, Julius Stone.<sup>104</sup> Stone's plan was to transform the city into one large tourist destination, a project that would both bring needed dollars to town and put its vast numbers of unemployed to work painting homes, cleaning streets and beaches, and planting trees. This was the birth of the Key West Americans best know. But while Stone had the authority and money to enact this transformation, and although he became one of the town's most ardent boosters, he did not invent the vision he promoted, nor was his administration the first to bring Key West to American readers. That vision had a significant, if unlikely, genesis in George Allan England's interests in race, the evolutionary potential of island environments, the role of place in modernity, and Anglo Saxons' abilities to thrive and perfect otherwise dangerous tropical environments.

In 1934 Key West's New Deal reinvention as a tourist destination was getting into full swing led by local FERA director Stone., He took out ads in national newspapers and oversaw the printing of promotional pamphlets to bring people and investment to the struggling city. Stone fully grasped the value of the written Florida and Key West whose outlines had been already well drawn. These included the usual invocations of the climate, the mix of peoples, and the presence of amenities. But when Stone turned to describing Key West, he was using the resources of the federal government to echo England's own praises. Via Stone, Key West's long time 'ambassador's' vision became a policy of the state. Stone described a place of "fantastic plants, Spanish limes, sopadillas, anemones, dates, pomegranates and cocopalm" rich with an "atmosphere of romantic history." He celebrated the city's "sun streamed, shuttered, balconied houses, the aroma of ardent tropical flowers and the salty sea air."<sup>105</sup> England had wondered why no painter had yet "immortalized himself" by capturing on canvas "the brown and white sails" of the city's "fishing fleet a-wing," and had assured his fellow scribblers that "so many phases

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104. KWC, 3 January 1927: 2.

105. *New York Times*, (3 December 1934), 6XX; Boulard, "State of Emergency," 174.



of Key West life would make complete stories."<sup>106</sup> But it was Stone who saw to it that federal money went into making sure that that dream would become a reality.

For both Stone and England before him, Key West was a triumph of modernity's mix of commerce, state power, racial categorizing, and landscape balance even though both came to that realization in very different ways and towards rather different ends.

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106. "Felicity," 15.

## The Servants and Mrs. Rawlings: Martha Mickens and African American Life at Cross Creek

by Rebecca Sharpless

The year is about 1940. It is evening at Cross Creek, the home of author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, a simple wood-frame house set among working orange groves near Hawthorne in North Central Florida. An unknown photographer is documenting an evening of dining and entertainment for Rawlings and a group of her friends, who like the author are white people of means and accomplishment. One photograph focuses on three African American women who are standing in a row and singing, their eyes cast upward, accompanied by a man on the harmonica. A second man leans on the head of a guitar, and the guests, in the foreground, listen attentively. The performers are all Rawlings's employees or their family members: a woman in her sixties named Martha Mickens, two of her adult children, and the children's spouses. They are likely singing spirituals or hymns, for Martha Mickens knows a huge repertoire.<sup>1</sup> In a second photograph of

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Rebecca Sharpless is Associate Professor of history at Texas Christian University. She is the author of *Fertile Ground, Narrow Choices: Women on Texas Cotton Farms, 1900-1940* and *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1865-1960*, both from the University of North Carolina Press. The author thanks Sheila Barnes at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park and Flo Turcotte at the Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida.

1. Image 180 and 241, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida; Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Cross Creek* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 34-35; Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *The Private Marjorie: The Love Letters of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to Norton S. Baskin*, ed. Rodger S. Tarr (Gainesville: University Press of Florida,





An evening at the Cross Creek home of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, c. 1940. Idella Parker is in the background. *Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.*

the same evening, Rawlings's friend Rebecca Camp stands in the middle of the dining room. Behind Camp, with her back to the camera and headed toward the kitchen, is Idella Parker, Rawlings's cook, in full formal servant's uniform: white headpiece, dark dress

2004), 466. The title of this article refers to Alison Light, *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants: An Intimate History of Domestic Life in Bloomsbury* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), a study of Virginia Woolf and her employees. As one critic points out, the book, as the title conveys, discusses primarily Mrs. Woolf with the servants being secondary to the famous author, Kathryn J. Oberdeck, "Hewers of Words and Drawers of Water," *Journal of Women's History* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 142. In this essay, I hope to foreground the servants and not Marjorie Rawlings. For an analysis of the relationship between Parker and Rawlings, see Rebecca Sharpless, "Neither Friends nor Peers: Idella Parker, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and the Limits of Gender Solidarity at Cross Creek," *Journal of Southern History*, forthcoming 2012.



with a white collar, and white apron. Although the dining table is not visible, the diners likely enjoyed one of Parker's sumptuous meals, perhaps a roast pork loin from one of Rawlings's pigs or seafood Newburg, made with fresh fish from the nearby Atlantic, served on one of Rawlings's several sets of imported china.<sup>2</sup> The photograph centers on Camp in her evening dress; Parker, in her worker's garb, is busy in the background.

The pleasures of this splendidly clad, distinguished group of white people, from their dinner to their entertainment, were made possible by the efforts of the African American employees who maintained a strong presence at Cross Creek both in Rawlings's writings and in reality.<sup>3</sup> Between the time that Rawlings and her first husband, Charles Rawlings, bought the farm in 1928 and her death in 1953, at least twenty employees worked on the premises. These employees engaged in a variety of labors, from managing orange groves to scrubbing laundry to making Hollandaise sauce. Most of the workers, such as Beatrice, Kate, and Raymond, whose family names are unrecorded, stayed only briefly. Idella Parker remained for ten years, off and on. Rawlings constantly fretted about her need for steady workers, even unsuccessfully attempting on three occasions to take young girls and turn them into household workers who would stay at Cross Creek after they grew up.<sup>4</sup> She wanted good household help so that she could maintain an undisturbed writing schedule as well as a lively entertaining calendar befitting a prize-winning author.

Amid this swirl of employees was one elderly woman, Martha Mickens, who with her husband, Will Mickens, formed the nucleus of life at Cross Creek for almost half a century. As Rawlings characterized it, "The colored population of the Creek has the solid base of

2. For examples of menus at Cross Creek, see Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 230-31, 238, 253, 259, 273, 274, 294, 296, 369, 384.

3. Elsa Barkley Brown, "'What Has Happened Here': The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics," *Feminist Studies* 18, no. 2 (1992): 298. "Cross Creek" refers both to the community on the shore of Orange Lake and to the Rawlings household; Rawlings and others used the term interchangeably.

4. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 84-89; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 148-49, 352, 390, 402, 417, 436; Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Selected Letters of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings*, ed. Gordon E. Bigelow and Laura V. Monti (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1983), 253; Idella Parker, *Idella Parker: From Reddick to Cross Creek* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 101; Idella Parker, *Idella: Marjorie Rawlings' "Perfect Maid"* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 57-58.



the Mickens family, against which other transient Negroes surge and retreat."<sup>5</sup> But Martha Mickens provided a solid base not only for the African Americans but for Marjorie Rawlings as well. Day in, day out, Rawlings could depend on Mickens to be present. When Idella Parker, the cook, took off in a huff, as she frequently did, Martha Mickens stepped in to lay the morning fires. When her son, Little Will Mickens, failed to gather the morning's eggs, Martha Mickens tended the hens in his absence. Martha Mickens referred to this practice as "taking up the slack,"<sup>6</sup> and her constancy kept Cross Creek, in all of its complexity, from spinning out of control. While everyone else came and went, Martha and Will Mickens remained stationary, living on the place until their deaths in 1960 and 1964, respectively.

The Cross Creek of Martha Mickens differed from that of Marjorie Rawlings and even that of Idella Parker. Mickens experienced North Central Florida as someone who had been there, seen the orange groves thrive, and stayed as the groves were dwindling.<sup>7</sup> Hers was almost totally a rural experience, as she seldom ventured more than a few miles from Cross Creek.<sup>8</sup> Examining her life illuminates much about change and continuity in the rural South. Mickens embodied the old ways of rural living in tension with others who sought life off the farm. No one else knew what she knew, and no one else stayed while she stayed. Around her, the world was shifting, but Martha Mickens maintained her serene lifestyle despite the people around her who craved motion and modernity. Her relationships with Rawlings, Parker, and her own daughters, Adrenna Mickens and Sissie Fountain, demonstrate that women's lives at Cross Creek varied not only in terms of race, but also according to social class, education, age, and childbearing. While the women shared the characteristic of sex, as well as the residential experience at Cross Creek, each one's life was still very different from that of the others. Each woman negotiated her circumstances

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5. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 25. The older Will Mickens is often referred to as "Old Will," to distinguish him from their son, "Little Will." J. T. Glisson refers to the Mickenses as "the Creek's only black family," J. T. Glisson, *The Creek* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 87.

6. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 31.

7. Glisson, *The Creek*, 93. For a summary of the freezes in Central Florida, see Geoff Dobson, "Historic City Memories II: The Death of the Citrus Industry in Northeast Florida," *Historic City News*, <http://www.historiccit.com/2009/staugustine/news/florida/historic-city-memories-the-big-freeze-ii-2223> (accessed September 10, 2010).

8. Parker, *Idella*, 44.

in her own way, and each formed her own relationships with Rawlings and with one another. Biological labels or sexual identity did not create solidarity between the women at Cross Creek.

Examining Cross Creek from Martha Mickens's perspective tilts the published narratives about the farm to a new angle, away from the wealthy novelist and even from that of other African American workers, toward the constant, unflappable woman rooted in Alachua County. But to look at Cross Creek as Mickens might have, one must depend on the words of others. Mickens could barely read or write and no member of her family seems to have left any written materials. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings commented extensively about the workers at Cross Creek. Affecting and amusing tales of life in the orange groves and hummocks of the region appeared in a book of essays, *Cross Creek*, and a cookbook, *Cross Creek Cookery*, both published in 1942.<sup>9</sup> Rawlings was also a prolific letter writer, and she talked about the workers at length in her correspondence, particularly in her letters to her husband, Norton Baskin.<sup>10</sup> The Mickenses, especially Martha, figure large in all of Rawlings's accounts. In a unique turn of affairs, Idella Parker, who worked as Rawlings's cook off and on between 1940 and 1950, also published two volumes of autobiography in which she eloquently and forcefully told her side of her tumultuous relationship with Rawlings.<sup>11</sup>

9. Relatively little criticism of Rawlings's work exists. Carolyn Jones, "Race and the Rural in Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's *Cross Creek*," *Mississippi Quarterly* 57 (Spring 2004): 215-30, examines some of Rawlings's writings about Martha Mickens. C. Anita Tarr, "The Evolution of a 'Southern Liberal': Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Race," *The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature* 15 (2007): 141-62, thoughtfully discusses Rawlings's contradictory racial views.
10. Other employers' accounts of servants may be found in Dolly Lunt Burge, *The Diary of Dolly Lunt Burge, 1848-1879*, ed. Christine Jacobson Carter (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Letitia M. Burwell, *A Girl's Life in Virginia before the War* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1895); Magnolia Wynn Le Guin, *A Home-Concealed Woman: The Diaries of Magnolia Wynn Le Guin, 1901-1913*, ed. Charles A. Le Guin (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990); Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation since the War* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1883); Elizabeth Waites Allston Pringle, *A Woman Rice Planter* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1914); Harriott Horry Ravenel, *Eliza Pinckney* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896); Susan Dabney Smedes, *Memorials of a Southern Planter* (Baltimore, MD: Cushings and Bailey, 1887); Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, *The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1848-1889*, ed. Virginia Ingraham Burr (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).
11. Parker, *Idella; Parker, From Reddick to Cross Creek*.



Parker lived and worked alongside Martha Mickens for the better part of a decade, and she too discussed her older colleague. J. T. Glisson, a writer who grew up in Cross Creek in the 1930s and early 1940s, made passing comments about Mickens in his memoir.<sup>12</sup> A handful of photographs, probably taken by friends of Rawlings, extend the record a bit further. We know about the lives of Martha Mickens and her family members mainly because of their association with Marjorie Rawlings.

Scenes such as the Cross Creek dinner party were hardly new in 1940; for more than four centuries, affluent white people in the American South benefited from the labor of African Americans in their homes. African American women, in particular, took care of children, cooked, cleaned, did laundry, and performed a constellation of other tasks so that their white owners or employers could pursue other activities, including leisure. After the Civil War, African American women used domestic work as a bridge from slavery to the open economy created by the civil rights acts of the 1960s. It was employment that was widely available, despite the numerous drawbacks. African American women controlled their working conditions to the greatest extent that they could and most left domestic service as soon as other opportunities opened.<sup>13</sup>

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings depended on her African American employees to maintain her standard of living. She made her literary fortune writing about the poor whites of upper Florida in her Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel *The Yearling* (1938) and other works, but the lifestyle that she created for herself in Alachua County was anything

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12. Glisson, *The Creek*.

13. The secondary literature on domestic workers in the postbellum South includes Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domesticity in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Bonnie Thornton Dill, *Across the Boundaries of Race and Class: An Exploration of Work and Family Among Black Female Domestic Servants* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994); Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Dianne Swann-Wright, *A Way Out of No Way: Claiming Family and Freedom in the New South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002); Psyche A. Williams-Forson, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and Lois Rita Helmbold, "Making Choices, Making Do: Black and White Working Class Women's Lives and Work during the Great Depression" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1983).

but plain. Rawlings maintained a steady stream of house guests, some for weeks at a time and others for an evening, and she prided herself on providing sumptuous food for them. The workers at Cross Creek spent their days maintaining the household of one woman and her companions.<sup>14</sup>

At first glance, the lifestyle of Martha Mickens at Cross Creek appears to be a throwback, a relic of an era in which African Americans lived on the premises of their employers, available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.<sup>15</sup> In many ways, Mickens's living and working conditions were also a function of the rurality and relative isolation of Cross Creek. While domestic workers in urban areas overwhelmingly chose to live in their own homes and commute to their work places, those at Cross Creek had little choice but to live there because of its comparative remoteness, more than twenty miles from Ocala and accessible only on sandy roads. Since none of the workers at Cross Creek had their own vehicles, they had to walk, hitch a ride, or get permission from Rawlings to borrow the grove truck or her Oldsmobile. During her first three months there, Idella Parker likened it to a plantation: "It seemed just like what my grandmother had told me about slavery. All the days I had been there, all I saw was Mrs. Rawlings and the people who worked for her."<sup>16</sup> The physical conditions, too, reflected an older era which was on the decline in urban America by the 1940s, when many of the poorest neighborhoods had at least some access to city utilities. The workers at Cross Creek had no running water, indoor plumbing, or electricity for their personal use, although Rawlings added those conveniences gradually to their work space, her home and workplace.<sup>17</sup> By the 1940s, most people living in towns bought most, if not all, of their

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14. Norton Baskin, whom Rawlings married in 1941, spent most of World War II in Burma. Upon returning to the U.S., he lived at his hotel, Castle Warden, in St. Augustine, ninety miles away. Baskin never maintained a primary residence at Cross Creek.

15. David M. Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 297; Daniel E. Sutherland, *Americans and Their Servants: Domestic Service in the United States from 1800 to 1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 184.

16. Parker, *Idella*, 40.

17. U.S. National Park Service, *National Historic Landmark Nomination for the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings House and Farm Yard*, Murray D. Laurie, September 30, 2005, 6, <http://www.nps.gov/nhl/designations/samples/fl/Rawlings%20house.pdf> (accessed August 29, 2010). The tenant house may have had electricity by the late 1940s, when Rawlings stipulated in her will that Mickens was to have electricity without charge for the rest of her life.



food. At Cross Creek, conversely, the Mickenses raised much of the food that was consumed by Rawlings and her guests as well as the workers. For Rawlings, and especially her readers and guests who did not have to perform any of the labor or miss any of the events of the larger world, the absence of technology and the local food supply was likely a significant part of the charm of Cross Creek. But for the workers, modernity, it seems, stopped at the Cross Creek gate.

Martha Mickens lived and worked competently, perhaps even happily, in such a rustic setting. After seventy years in Central Florida, Mickens possessed a wealth of knowledge about how to function in the rural South that Rawlings lacked and needed badly, particularly when it came to caring for livestock. Rawlings's efforts to import the finery of the outside world into the countryside, conversely, created only difficulty for Mickens. She cooked poorly and continually failed to place the silverware correctly on the dining table. She could not be both the animal tender and the consummate house servant that Rawlings so desired. Rawlings's yearning to have the best of both worlds—Wedgwood in a cracker cottage, haute cuisine made from home-grown ingredients—meant that she needed both Martha Mickens and someone in the kitchen. Rawlings tried persistently to remake Mickens's daughters, Adrenna Mickens and Sissie Mickens Fountain, into the urbane workers that she desired to produce sophisticated meals, but the sisters never succeeded in pleasing her. Only Idella Parker, college-educated and trained as a cook in a wealthy home in West Palm Beach, could prepare the food that Rawlings wanted for herself and her guests.<sup>18</sup> Parker's knowledge of city ways was crucial to Rawlings's idealization of the rural, while Mickens's knowledge of rural life actually kept the operation afloat.

Martha Mickens was born in Florida about 1880 to a relatively prosperous farming family and married Will Mickens about 1895.<sup>19</sup> Ac-

18. Parker, *Idella*, 13.

19. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 160. Confusion exists about Martha Mickens's age. The 1930 census says that Will Mickens was twelve years her senior, born in 1868 and married for the first time in 1877, which would mean that he had a wife before Martha. The census says that Martha Mickens was born in 1880 and married in 1895. Rawlings describes Mickens's age in the late 1920s or early 1930s as "getting on to seventy," which would mean that the census is incorrect, Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 27. Rawlings confirms that Will is "some ten years older than she," *Ibid.*, 33. In a 1965 interview, Will Mickens is described as ninety-nine years old, putting his birth year at 1866 and Martha's, therefore, about 1876, Nixon Smiley, "She Wept, Cussed as He Left": Uncle Recalls Day Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Husband Quit Cross Creek," *Miami Herald*, December 19, 1965. Rawlings, therefore, seems to have exaggerated Martha's age by about ten years.

according to Rawlings, Will and Martha Mickens worked at Cross Creek when the grove was first planted in the early twentieth century. When Rawlings met them in the late 1920s or early 1930s, the Mickenses were living four miles from Cross Creek, and Martha Mickens was walking back and forth, doing laundry and other tasks for the residents of the area, including Rawlings.<sup>20</sup> They later moved into the old McKay house nearer Cross Creek and in 1939 settled into the tenant house which Rawlings had erected in 1934.<sup>21</sup> Even after setting up housekeeping at Cross Creek and spending the preponderance of her time in the service of Rawlings, Martha Mickens continued washing for other residents, occasionally helping at labor-intensive tasks such as hog killing, and serving as a practical nurse for the sick. Her work mattered not only to Rawlings but to the entire community of Cross Creek.<sup>22</sup>

Martha and Will Mickens had ten children, some of whom stayed in Florida and some who left. The oldest daughter, Idella, lived close enough to visit on Sundays.<sup>23</sup> Another daughter, Hattie, lived outside Baltimore, where she did domestic work for one family from the late 1920s until her death in 1944.<sup>24</sup> One son, "Little Will" Mickens, came and went from Cross Creek. Another son farmed near Flemington, eighteen miles west of Cross Creek, and maintained regular contact with his parents.<sup>25</sup> Daughter Estelle and her husband, Sam Sweet, worked around Cross Creek then moved to Hawthorne, four miles away, in 1936.<sup>26</sup> Adrenna Mickens was the first member of the family to work for Rawlings full-time, arriving sometime in the late 1930s. According to J. T. Glisson, Adrenna Mickens had numerous husbands. In 1939 she was married briefly to a man named C. J. Samson, who also worked at Cross Creek.<sup>27</sup> Zamilla, also known as Sissie, was married to Henry Foun-

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20. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 27-29, 33; Glisson, *The Creek*, 77, 87. The chronology of the Mickenses' residences is unclear. In 1930, the only census in which Will and Martha Mickens appear, they were living in Evanston, on the other side of Orange Lake from Cross Creek (Fifteenth Census of the U.S., 1930). Rawlings says that they lived "for years" on the Guthrie place, "in the woods," Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 148.

21. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 24, 211; Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 87.

22. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 216.

23. "Visitor's Recollection, 1984-88," May 1, 1988, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, Cross Creek, Florida.

24. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 178-79. Rawlings spells her name "Hettie" in 1944, *Ibid.*, 411.

25. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 140.

26. Glisson, *The Creek*, 136.

27. *Ibid.*



tain until his death in 1943, which left her with four small children, and she cooked for Rawlings in her early widowhood. The Mickens grandchildren also played a role at Cross Creek. In 1943, Rawlings decided to train two of Sissie Mickens Fountain's children, a boy and a girl, as servants. In the summer of 1944 she brought Little Martha Fountain, age four, into the house at Cross Creek for Idella Parker to supervise.<sup>28</sup> Although she claimed that she was taking Little Martha "not to make a [slave] of her but to give her a chance," Rawlings soon complained that the preschooler was a trial who fibbed to get out of work. Little Martha was confined to the kitchen and not allowed into the living areas of the house.<sup>29</sup> By October, the experiment had ended and the child returned to her mother.<sup>30</sup> Adrenna Mickens's son Jack, born about 1920, worked at the farm during World War II, and another grandson, March, came to work in the early 1950s. For the offspring who stayed in Central Florida, the stability of Will and Martha Mickens played a significant role. The tenant house at Cross Creek became their port in the storm, the place where they could go when circumstances elsewhere soured. Their parents did not own the space, but they opened the doors regardless.

Martha and Will Mickens moved to Cross Creek in 1939 while their daughter Adrenna Mickens was working as Rawlings's cook. Soon thereafter, Martha became indispensable to the running of the household. Martha and Will's duties at Cross Creek during the late 1930s and 1940s consisted mostly of supplying food for Rawlings and others on the farm. Both of them worked in the garden, and Will Mickens raised potatoes, broccoli, lettuce, parsley, beans, beets, sweet potatoes, and cabbages on shares, giving some to Rawlings in return for the use of the land and keeping some for his and Martha Mickens's consumption.<sup>31</sup> Tomatoes and collard greens grew in abundance as well.<sup>32</sup> Rawlings sometimes participated in gardening, working with Martha Mickens to set out tomato, eggplant, and bell pepper plants in the spring of 1940. Rawlings expected Martha Mickens to do the ongoing work of tending the plants, however, for she complained in July 1944 that Mickens

28. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 148-49, 352, 390; Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 253; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 101; Parker, *Idella*, 57-58.

29. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 402, 417.

30. *Ibid.*, 436.

31. *Ibid.*, 140, 196.

32. *Ibid.*, 196, 301.

had "simply abandoned my garden."<sup>33</sup> The farm also had oranges and tangerines for home consumption, and apparently the workers received some of the crop.<sup>34</sup> Mickens's granddaughter, Agnes Jenkins, recalled coming to Cross Creek on Sundays to visit her grandparents and to "play and eat oranges."<sup>35</sup>

Cross Creek supported a significant poultry population; when Rawlings left to spend several months in North Carolina in 1934, she left a worker named Kate with the responsibility for fifty-four young chickens (possums and skunks subsequently killed all of them).<sup>36</sup> After her return to the farm, Martha Mickens bore most of the duty for poultry production, tending the hens and ducks, gathering eggs, and caring for the chicks and ducklings.<sup>37</sup> In a 1944 letter to Baskin, Rawlings described Mickens's skill with poultry and yearned for her return from St. Petersburg where she was caring for her sick daughter, Adrenna. In a rare admission of her own incompetence, Rawlings wrote, "Baby chicks and ducklings are hatching and Sissie doesn't keep up with them, and I don't know how to take care of them when things go wrong, and we are losing them. I found a baby chick wandering alone by the front steps and he was so glad to see somebody and be picked up and have his cold feet warmed. Martha would have known where he came from and to whom he belonged."<sup>38</sup> Neither of the younger women—Rawlings or Sissie Fountain—possessed Mickens's ability to tend the poultry. After raising the chickens, Mickens killed and dressed them for her employer's table. The tasks of killing the birds, eviscerating them, cutting off heads and claws, and plucking the feathers from the corpses all fell to her so that Rawlings or the cooks could simply get a clean bird from the icebox for cooking. Resourceful, Mickens once took the loser of a cockfight, dressed him, and put him in the icebox for consumption.<sup>39</sup> Mickens's skill and knowledge developed through decades of working with domestic birds. Idella Parker, many years younger and less experienced

33. Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 183-84; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 420.

34. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Cross Creek Cookery* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 206; Parker, *Idella*, 27.

35. Unpaged recollection of Agnes Jenkins, May 1, 1988, file "Visitor's Recollections, 1984-88," Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, Cross Creek, Florida.

36. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 192.

37. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 369.

38. *Ibid.*, 312.

39. Rawlings, *Cross Creek Cookery*, 102-3; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 110, 222, 295, 419, 420.





Rawlings and Mickens pose with some of the chickens raised at Cross Creek. *Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.*



than Mickens, had to rely on her colleague to teach her how to get rid of the tiny pinfeathers on a duck.<sup>40</sup>

Martha Mickens also had responsibility for caring for the cows. Numerous bovines inhabited Cross Creek over two decades, including the much-revered Dora, source of extraordinarily rich butter and cream for Rawlings's recipes.<sup>41</sup> Dairy production took skill, for the cows had to be bred in a timely fashion and milked regularly to keep a steady supply of milk flowing from their udders.<sup>42</sup> Martha Mickens proved her mettle in breeding cows as late as 1951, overseeing the production of a cow named Chrissie.<sup>43</sup> Mickens, sometimes with her son Little Will Mickens, herded the cows and ensured that they were fed regularly, and she was also responsible for making buttermilk, churning cream into butter, and occasionally selling the butter.<sup>44</sup>

Rawlings owned numerous hogs, and Mickens assisted in their care, which mainly consisted of feeding them but also meant helping with vaccinations. After struggling, along with four other people, to inoculate nine shoats, Mickens expressed her disdain for the animals: "Folks say they don't know where the devil is. Huh, I know. He in hogs."<sup>45</sup> Hog killing, the southern cold-weather ritual, apparently took place annually at Cross Creek, providing a continuing supply of pork products. In most southern households, men killed and bled the hogs, while women processed the meat. Martha Mickens assisted several white families around the area with their butchering and customarily received part of the meat as her pay. Sausage making was a crucial part of hog killing, and at Cross Creek, they rendered lard quickly after the butchering. Mickens stood at the wash pot over the open fire, cooking down pork fat into the white cream that would serve as the basis of everything from frying to pie crusts.<sup>46</sup>

The workers' days at Cross Creek began early. Their first priorities were to make the main house warm and to fix Rawlings's breakfast in time for her to rise about seven o'clock. The house had a wood-burning stove and fireplaces for heat, and the men supplied

40. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 419, 420, 443; Parker, *Idella*, 71.

41. Rawlings, *Cross Creek Cookery*, 199-200; Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 80-81.

42. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 192. Rawlings details her own difficulties in attempting to milk in *Ibid.*, 119-20.

43. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 102, 625; Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 345.

44. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 54, 158, 281, 539-40; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 99; Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 272.

45. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 365.



firewood for both cooking and heating. The cook usually lit a fire in Rawlings's bedroom about breakfast time, and Mickens taught other workers precisely how Rawlings liked her meals served.<sup>47</sup> After breakfast, the workers commenced their other daily chores. The house at Cross Creek was a simple ell in design, with two bedrooms and a living room on one angle and the dining room and kitchen on the other. Although Rawlings installed indoor plumbing over time, the outhouse and the outdoor water pump remained fixtures for many years.<sup>48</sup> The cook did most of the regular cleaning, but Mickens pitched in when needed. After one of Rawlings's extended absences, Mickens discovered a four-foot-long water moccasin blocking the toilet. Rawlings wrote, "It stuck its head up when she sifted in the Dutch cleanser, and stuck it up again when I peered in."<sup>49</sup> Rawlings slammed down the lid and left to run errands. By the time she returned, Rawlings's neighbor Leonard Fiddia, presumably summoned by Mickens, had killed the snake.

The processes and products of cooking created conflict between Rawlings and her employees, particularly Martha Mickens. Until Idella Parker arrived at Cross Creek in October 1940, Rawlings searched constantly for a cook who could meet her high standards. Rawlings was herself a superb cook, and she expected the finest foods not only for her guests but for herself when she was alone. Martha Mickens was never the primary cook, although she filled in as best she could, and seldom pleased her employer.<sup>50</sup> Norton Baskin told a story, which he intended to be humorous, about Mickens keeping warm a three-minute egg (an egg barely cooked, with a very runny yolk) by putting it back in the cooking water, which of course cooked the egg past its desired doneness.<sup>51</sup> In both her public and private writings Rawlings recounted the accomplishments of her cooks, such as Beatrice's pride in her tangerine sherbet and Meade's ability to make Hollandaise sauce.<sup>52</sup>

46. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 186, 456. Tellingly, *Cross Creek Cookery* does not have a recipe for pie crust. Apparently Rawlings considered it too basic or plebian to be included.

47. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 261, 313; Parker, *Idella*, 28; Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 101; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 90, 99.

48. Laurie, *National Historic Landmark Nomination*, 4-6.

49. Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 272.

50. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 557.

51. "Cross Creek: 'Cheese Grits-No Greater Feast,'" October 24, 1968, file "Mickens," Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, Cross Creek, Florida.

52. Rawlings, *Cross Creek Cookery*, 222; Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 166.

Both of these employees left Cross Creek quickly, however, and the Mickens family always stepped into the breach. Neither Sissie Mickens Fountain nor Adrenna Mickens had any formal culinary training, and their shortcomings as cooks drove Rawlings to distraction. She despaired of Fountain's ability to learn: "The hopelessness of cream sauce, of Hollandaise, of Mayonnaise, when soft-boiling an egg is something revolutionary!"<sup>53</sup> Rawlings taught Fountain to make a cream cheese and olive spread while fretting that she "doesn't even know how to butter bread for our kind of sandwich"—not indicating what "our kind" of sandwich might be.<sup>54</sup> To Rawlings, the Mickens daughters were not only ignorant but also unteachable.

When Idella Parker arrived at Cross Creek in the fall of 1940, Martha Mickens became her occasional assistant. A very fine cook, Parker was capable of turning out elaborate meals for crowds. A photograph taken about 1940 shows Mickens and Parker in the kitchen preparing a feast. Parker, in a white uniform and headpiece, is working with a turkey or large chicken, possibly trussing it, and a ham studded with cloves sits nearby. Mickens, in a dark dress with a white apron and the white cap that she often wore, is standing in front of the sink and looking at an orange in her left hand. A bottle of alcohol, perhaps the sherry used in one of Rawlings's favorite ham recipes, sits next to the ham.<sup>55</sup> A sheet cake, frosted with white icing and decorated with fruit, is in the foreground, and a tree branch with large oranges is also on the table. The meal consists of multiple courses. Parker, not Mickens, is in charge of the entrée, even though it is likely that Mickens raised and slaughtered the bird. The two women appear to be working harmoniously in the small kitchen despite the difference in their skill levels. Rawling's guests would eat well that night, as on many other occasions.

While Cross Creek was a rambling old farmhouse, Rawlings used formal table service for both her meals alone and intricate dinner parties for guests, whether served à la russe, with each course brought to the table sequentially, or buffet style.<sup>56</sup> Her

53. Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 166; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 143.

54. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 139, 177.

55. Rawlings, *Cross Creek Cookery*, 114-15.

56. *Ibid.*, 97, 206; Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 98; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 462; Parker, *Idella*, 104.



household employees routinely wore uniforms, and her tables featured the finest European tableware.<sup>57</sup> Rawlings complained constantly of her employees' inability to set a proper table.<sup>58</sup> She particularly grumbled about the Mickenses' inability to set formal place settings: "Training Sissie is an appalling job, not for any lack of willingness on her part, but from her abysmal ignorance. I think she has lived an even leaner life than Martha, poor soul. I've explained three times where things go on a tray, and they still look as though Sissie had stood off at a distance and held the tray and Martha had pitched over the silver and dishes like a drunken quoit player—and for all I know, that may be exactly the way the trays *are* laid."<sup>59</sup> Rawlings refused to give up her urban sophistication and continued trying to bend the Mickenses to her ways.

Martha Mickens's primary task aside from food preparation was laundry, which she did every Monday. Cross Creek had only the rudest of washing equipment, and laundry was hot, hard, and somewhat dangerous work. With the water boiling in washtubs over open fires, Mickens scrubbed with lye soap or Octagon brand soap, boiling the clothes for half an hour, then rinsing them twice. Idella Parker recalled that it took seven buckets of water to fill the wash pot, each one toted from the pump. Mickens, Parker, and other women who happened to be present hung the wet clothes on the line, where they dried until sundown. Laundry, like animal husbandry, took place outside, and the outdoors is where Mickens functioned best. But her duties crossed into the house as well: after laundry, Mickens and Parker ironed in between other tasks. By 1943, Rawlings had bought an electric iron, but the old flatirons

57. Rawlings, *Cross Creek Cookery*, 60. The dining room at Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park exhibits two sets of Wedgwood that belonged to Rawlings. According to J. T. Glisson, in January 1940 Adrenna Mickens borrowed a set of Limoges, unbeknownst to Rawlings, for a new year's celebration, Glisson, *The Creek*, 136, 141. A photograph taken about 1941 shows Parker on the back porch steps in a white uniform and headpiece, carrying a bucket. Martha Mickens and Little Will Mickens's girlfriend, Alberta, are wearing aprons, and hats with wide brims, while Little Will Mickens is dressed in overalls, Image 179, Rawlings Collection, University of Florida. In 1950, Rawlings detailed Parker's uniform wardrobe: "Eight in all, from her oldest worn ones that I ordered last summer, up to her two fancy and expensive white ones, one poplin, one a \$16. Nylon," Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 570.

58. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 142, 225, 635, 637; Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 33, 198.

59. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 142. Quoit is a game similar to horseshoes, played with rings.

remained in the house as backup. No mechanical failure would stop ironing day.<sup>60</sup>

As valuable as she was at helping run the Cross Creek farm, Martha Mickens helped Rawlings in other ways as well. Over seven decades, Martha Mickens developed a deep knowledge of spiritual matters as well as practical ones, and she shared her learning freely. Rawlings took much of this information and turned it into fodder for her writing. Mickens, Rawlings wrote, was a "Primitive, or foot-washing, Baptist," but she did not attend worship regularly because the nearest church was in Micanopy, ten miles on the other side of Orange Lake, and her transportation depended on Rawlings's loaning her a vehicle and someone to drive, since Mickens did not know how to operate a vehicle.<sup>61</sup> Despite her lack of a church community, Mickens had great reverence for Christianity, spoke often of her love for God and gave generously to a nearby church from her meager funds.<sup>62</sup> Rawlings reported that Mickens was extremely happy to receive a Bible from Norman and Julie Berg, friends of Rawlings, in 1947. According to Rawlings, it was Mickens's first Bible, and she requested that her employer read to her from it. Mickens knew a wide repertoire of spirituals, and her family members shared their wealth of knowledge with Rawlings and her guests.<sup>63</sup> Idella Parker was horrified at the performances, which she believed opened the Mickenses up to ridicule. The use of drink to entice the Mickenses to sing particularly disgusted Parker. Rawlings and her guests, Parker said, "made fun of us black people right to our faces, and supposed that we were too stupid to know it."<sup>64</sup> Mickens sometimes turned singing to her advantage, however, by requesting cash tips from random visitors to Cross Creek for performing in her sweet soprano voice.<sup>65</sup> The Mickenses also apparently enjoyed music for their own pleasure. Although Martha

60. Ibid., 151, 297, 325; Parker, *Idella*, 31-32; Unpaged recollection of Idella Parker, June 8, 1985, "Visitor's recollections, 1984-88," Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, Cross Creek, Florida. It is unclear whether Mickens did her own family's laundry with Rawlings's.

61. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 34; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 176.

62. Glisson, *The Creek*, 145; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 285; Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 306.

63. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 34-35; Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 236; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 466.

64. Parker, *Idella*, 80-81; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 96-98, 153. The quotation comes from Parker, *Idella*, 81.

65. Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 236; Parker, *Cross Creek*, 34.



Mickens disapproved of the blues, on summer nights the family sang to the accompaniment of Little Will Mickens's guitar.<sup>66</sup>

Martha Mickens's knowledge also included a storehouse of traditional beliefs. According to Rawlings, she allowed Mickens to structure household chores according to her convictions about the proper sequencing of cleaning and discarding debris.<sup>67</sup> Mickens also engaged in various types of conjuring, which Rawlings referred to as "Martha's voodoo." The magic that Mickens described included a friend who "told back" her errant husband "by getting some hairs from his head and burying them with other items under the house" and the proper composition of a "cunjur bag" with a particular bone of a black cat boiled alive. Although Rawlings apparently never indulged in casting spells, she wrote about them in *Cross Creek*, making Mickens appear primitive and curious to an international audience.

The reasons that Martha Mickens stayed at Cross Creek and that Idella Parker, Adrenna Mickens, and Sissie Mickens Fountain left and returned several times were numerous and complex. The desire to be near their mother likely motivated the Mickens daughters, but money almost certainly constituted a much more tempting factor. Despite considerable drawbacks as an employer, Rawlings compensated her employees more equitably than did most employers in the South. In 1940, Adrenna Mickens was earning \$4.50 a week. By 1944, Rawlings was paying Martha Mickens \$5 per week, better wages than many full-time domestic workers received. Idella Parker's income for 1943 totaled \$1,040 a year, or \$20 a week, exceedingly good wages for domestic work.<sup>68</sup> Rawlings also attempted to harass her neighbors into a similar wage structure, and in 1943 the Brice family was shamed into paying Sissie Fountain \$6 a week and not charging her rent.<sup>69</sup> Government funds helped during the 1940s, and Rawlings actively sought pensions as supplemental income for the Mickens family. Martha and Will Mickens received "old-age pensions" from the "Welfare Board" which in 1944 amounted to \$5 a week for Martha Mickens and

66. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 34-35, 282; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 196.

67. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 311-12.

68. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 49, 327. For a comparison of domestic workers' wages, see Rebecca Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1865-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 185-87.

69. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 201.

\$5.25 for her husband.<sup>70</sup> Henry Fountain was a World War I veteran, and after his death in 1943, Sissie Mickens Fountain received his veterans' pension of forty dollars per month for herself and her children.<sup>71</sup>

Lodging also came as part of the compensation package, a feature not always welcome but necessary at Cross Creek. Although most African American domestic workers preferred to live in their own homes and commute to their work sites, the remoteness of Cross Creek made living on the premises a simpler solution than living in town. Realizing this, in 1934 Rawlings built a structure that she called "the nigger tenant house." If one could house one's workers, Rawlings observed, one "can always get someone."<sup>72</sup> Rawlings made an addition to the tenant house about 1939, and Martha and Will Mickens moved in at that time.<sup>73</sup> Rawlings considered this lodging part of the Mickenses' compensation, though it was anything but capacious. The rooms were open to the rafters and clothes hung from nails on the walls. Sanitary facilities consisted of an outhouse, three tin wash-tubs, a hand pump, and a rain barrel.<sup>74</sup> As various members of the Mickens family came and went from Cross Creek, they all lived in the tenant house. When Idella Parker arrived in the fall of 1940, Martha and Will Mickens, their son Little Will, and his girlfriend Alberta were sharing the space. Parker had her own room, divided from the Mickenses by a curtain strung across the doorway. In 1941, Rawlings built an apartment on the back for Parker, giving the Mickens family the two older rooms. At one point in 1944, the Mickens' two rooms held Martha, Will, their grandson Jack, Sissie Mickens Fountain, and Fountain's four children.<sup>75</sup> The cramped quarters required no cash expenditure from the Mickenses, however, and were better than many of their counterparts, which often leaked, lacked windows, or were otherwise substandard. With the tenant house, Rawlings demonstrated both her ties to the majority of southern landowners and her difference. The house was better than most, though it was hardly

70. Ibid., 103, 327, 351. As agricultural workers, the Mickens were probably excluded from Social Security. The pensions likely came from the welfare board of Alachua County, Elna Green, e-mail communication, August 27, 2010.

71. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 163.

72. Rawlings, *Selected Letters*, 87.

73. Parker, *Cross Creek*, 64, 211, 311.

74. Parker, *Idella*, 22-23; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 87-88.

75. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 223; Parker, *Idella*, 22, 24; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 116.



adequate for the numbers of people it housed. Had Martha and Will Mickens lived there alone, the space issues would not have been so crucial, but the children and grandchildren remained a perennial, if varying, presence for the entire time that Rawlings owned Cross Creek. Rawlings wanted the benefit of the Mickens offsprings' labor, but she did not feel responsible for providing adequate housing for them. Rawlings also showed her preference for Idella Parker, giving her a room to herself and buying all new furniture in the early 1940s.<sup>76</sup>

Rawlings frequently paid for medical care for her employees and their family members. This was a vital service that she performed, often making a difference between life and death. The local hospitals were less than sympathetic to the medical needs of poor rural African Americans. Tom Glisson carted C. J. Samson, one of Rawlings's employees, to the hospital in Gainesville after his brother-in-law Henry Fountain put "three loads of No. 5 shot" into his abdomen. Glisson recalled, "I had a hell of a row with that fool woman that runs the county hospital. She wasn't going to let me bring him in unless I promised to pay his bill."<sup>77</sup> Glisson promised, but it was Rawlings who actually made the payment, including the cost of operations to remove shot from Samson's hands.<sup>78</sup> Rawlings never seemed to refuse requests for medical care, writing in *Cross Creek* that she was "doomed" to pay for a major surgery that Adrenna Mickens needed, and she sometimes went far beyond what her workers might reasonably expect.<sup>79</sup> Her employee Mary, whom Rawlings claimed was manic-depressive, needed a "minor operation," which Rawlings paid for, and then Rawlings "nursed her at home afterward."<sup>80</sup> When Idella Parker suffered complications from an appendectomy, Rawlings arranged for her to remain six weeks in the African American section of Flagler Hospital in St. Augustine and paid for a private nurse.<sup>81</sup> At other times, she let

76. Parker, *Idella*, 37.

77. Glisson, *The Creek*, 141-42.

78. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 202-3, 205. As a boy, J. T. Glisson adored Henry Fountain and told the story of the shooting from a perspective that was critical of Rawlings's handling of the situation between Fountain and Samson, Glisson, *The Creek*, 131-49. Number 5 shot is birdshot, large enough to do damage but usually not fatal to humans. According to Glisson, Samson slipped out of the hospital in the middle of the night and was never seen again.

79. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 213.

80. *Ibid.*, 144.

81. Parker, *Idella*, 90-92; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 124-25. For other examples, see Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 554, 557-58.

the local social service agencies take financial responsibility. Sissie Fountain's two-year-old son David almost died from pneumonia in 1944 but recovered as a "charity case" at a Gainesville hospital.<sup>82</sup> The workers could apparently count on Rawlings for medical care, though the quantity and quality of the donated care varied from highly personal to nonstandard.

Cross Creek employees occasionally received leftover food from the main house, but for the most part, everyone except the cook relied on their own resources. In addition to the garden that they kept for their employer, the Mickenses had a separate plot of their own. Rawlings considered the garden space and seed that the Mickenses received as part of their compensation.<sup>83</sup> They also had their own hogs and chickens, sometimes obtained as gifts from Rawlings, though they paid for their own feed.<sup>84</sup> The Mickenses received their eggs and milk from Rawlings's chickens and cows that Martha Mickens tended.<sup>85</sup> Martha Mickens, however, was accustomed to cooking without dairy products. Rawlings related how Mickens could make sweet potato pone from grated sweet potatoes, flour, bacon grease, soda, cane syrup, and water. If Mickens had eggs, she added them, and she used butter and milk when they were available.<sup>86</sup>

The Mickens family made good use of wild supply. Martha Mickens loved turtle and turtle eggs, and she "rejoiced" when Rawlings captured wild possums, which could be penned and fed properly before cooking. Mickens also used wild produce, frying the so-called horse-banana and "call[ing] it edible," and making jelly from guavas which could have been either domestic or wild.<sup>87</sup> Mickens knew where wild plums and blueberries grew, and she showed Rawlings wild apricot and pear trees.<sup>88</sup> Through Rawlings's compensation and their own resourcefulness, the Mickens family ate comfortably.

Like many employers and domestic workers, Mickens and Rawlings clearly shared complicated emotional bonds of affection and dependence.<sup>89</sup> In a 1965 interview, Will Mickens depicted himself

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82. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 320-22.

83. *Ibid.*, 238, 351.

84. *Ibid.*, 455, 635.

85. *Ibid.*, 327, 351.

86. Rawlings, *Cross Creek Cookery*, 184.

87. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 128, 234; Glisson, *The Creek*, 89, 144; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 332, 356, 373.

88. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 381-82.

89. Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens*, 129-72.



and Martha Mickens as Rawlings's emotional support when her first husband, Charles Rawlings, left in 1934: "And there was the three of us a-standing there, with Missus Rawlings a-holding Mandy and the tears a-rolling down her face . . . [ellipses in original] and Old Martha is crying and I is crying . . . [ellipses in original] and Missus Rawlings she say: 'Hell. Damn it to hell.' And all three of us cried some mo'."<sup>90</sup> The scene is a compelling one: the abandoned woman and her two African American workers, standing loyally by her side. Will Mickens may have told this story to establish himself and Martha as Rawlings's intimates and enhance their stature at Cross Creek. The Mickenses were not yet living at Cross Creek full time. Another angle of this picture, however, is Rawlings's isolation from people off the farm and Mickens's proximity. According to J. T. Glisson, when Rawlings received the letter announcing that she had won the Pulitzer Prize, "there was no one around but Aunt Martha."<sup>91</sup> When there was no one else to tell, Martha Mickens was available.

According to Idella Parker, Martha Mickens was indeed dedicated to Rawlings: "It was obvious that she loved, cared for, and would do anything for, Mrs. Rawlings. She once said to me, 'Baby, you don't know. Me and her have been through many things.' She was referring, I'm sure, to the difficult times Mrs. Rawlings had had as she struggled to make a living before she sold her first book. By the time I arrived, Mrs. Rawlings had some money, for she had just sold the movie rights to her book *The Yearling*."<sup>92</sup> Parker believed that Martha Mickens occupied the most exalted position at Cross Creek: "She was Mrs. Rawlings' pet, her 'heartstrings.' She had been with Mrs. Rawlings for so many years that she had a sixth sense about when she would be needed. When she was down at the tenant house, she always kept an eye on the main house. From the front porch of the tenant house she could see straight across to the house, and she would come running anytime Mrs. Rawlings called, sometimes even before she called."<sup>93</sup> Mickens went about her days attuned to Rawlings's needs and desires and usually strove to fulfill them to the best of her ability.

Despite the affection between Rawlings and her workers, life at Cross Creek could be difficult. Even when she was sober, Rawlings

90. Smiley, "She Wept, Cussed as He Left."

91. Glisson, *The Creek*, 101.

92. Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 98-99.

93. Parker, *Idella*, 29.

had a short temper and a razor-sharp, profanity-laced tongue. On at least one occasion, she also had a .38 pistol. J. T. Glisson recalled one night when Rawlings returned from a trip and apparently found Adrenna Mickens and others consuming her supply of alcohol. She dispersed the revelers with numerous gunshots, and they ran to the Glisson house where J. T.'s father, Tom Glisson, allowed them to spend the night in the barn while Rawlings cooled off. Tom Glisson teased Adrenna Mickens and the others: "Y'all ain't scared of that little woman, are you?" Mickens replied, "Don't fun us. I is scared of her tongue and that thirty-eight special!" Rawlings did in fact show up the next morning to "get her help back." As Glisson observed, "her tantrums receded as fast as they rose."<sup>94</sup> In some ways, Rawlings's mercurial ways might have been even more difficult to endure than someone who was consistently abusive. Her employers tolerated successive waves of anger and affection, never knowing what to expect.

Marjorie Rawlings's own alcohol use and abuse created great strain at Cross Creek. Rawlings drank heavily, and that colored her relationships with her employees. In addition to asking the Mickens family to drink with guests, she also imbibed privately with Martha Mickens, writing in 1943: "When I got in last night, I invited Martha to have a drink with me. We got high as kites and swore undying loyalty. 'Old Martha will be here right on, Sugar.'"<sup>95</sup> Rawlings did not record her own words of promise. Perhaps more than anyone else, Martha Mickens spoke candidly, although nonjudgmentally, about Rawlings's moods and her dependence on alcohol, which frequently led her to drive recklessly, to pass out at inopportune times, and to write and mail letters she later regretted. When J. T. Glisson's mother inquired about Rawlings's well-being, Mickens replied, "She's havin' one of her black spells, bless her heart."<sup>96</sup> Idella Parker observed that Mickens reported to Norton Baskin about Rawlings's attempts to cut down on her drinking: "I can see her now with that dip of snuff in her mouth, saying, 'Now Mr. Baskin, how you doing? Mrs. Rawlings is there, doing pretty good. She hasn't been sick for a long time.'"<sup>97</sup> By 1952, Rawlings's attempts to

94. Glisson, *The Creek*, 95.

95. Parker, *Idella*, 80; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 96-98; Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 102, 224, 286, 462. "Sugar" was apparently Mickens's appellation for a number of people; she also referred to Parker as "Sugar" and "Baby," Parker, *Idella*, 29; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 98.

96. Glisson, *The Creek*, 90.

97. Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 153.



stop drinking led Mickens to pray on her employer's behalf. Rawlings wrote to Baskin: "I asked Martha to pray for me, and I did 'real good' Sunday, just had two small drinks in the evening. Monday and yesterday were beyond the pale, and I asked Martha if she quit praying after Sunday, and she said she had. I told her to get back on the job. . . ." Mickens prayed again in front of Rawlings, referring to her in prayer as "Mrs. Baskin."<sup>98</sup> Although Rawlings wrote humorously about the incident, as she did about most other topics, her drinking was a serious matter, and she hoped, in vain, that Mickens would somehow be able to help her stop it.

Whether it was to show her fidelity and genuine concern or to manipulate the allegiance of her workers, Rawlings made provisions in her will for Mickens and Parker. Parker clearly regarded the offer as coercion, for her share was conditional upon her remaining in Rawlings's employ, which she did not do. Mickens's part had no such contingency; apparently Rawlings believed (correctly) that she would remain at Cross Creek for the duration. The will, executed in December 1949, directed that Mickens receive five dollars a week and the use of the tenant house, rent free, with electricity and water, for the rest of her life. Mickens received this benefit until her death in 1960, and Will Mickens stayed in the tenant house on weekends until his death at age 102 in 1967.<sup>99</sup> Parker left three years before Rawlings died, and Rawlings added a codicil to her will, making doubly sure that Parker received no inheritance.<sup>100</sup> Mickens had proven her loyalty enough that Rawlings did not feel the need to qualify her bequest to make her stay at the farm.

That Martha Mickens possessed a strong personality was obvious to her neighbor, J. T. Glisson, who tellingly declared that she "made any meeting seem like the Second Coming, and she was the Messiah."<sup>101</sup> Despite Mickens's fealty to Rawlings, she often used the weapons at her disposal to make Rawlings aware of her feelings. One of those weapons was moodiness that Rawlings characterized

98. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 634.

99. Smiley, "'She Wept, Cussed as He Left'"; "'Ole Will' is dead; Rawlings' friend 102," undated clipping, file "Mickens," Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, Cross Creek, Florida.

100. Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 142; Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Last Will and Testament, file "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Last Will and Testament," Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, Cross Creek, Florida.

101. Glisson, *The Creek*, 145.

as "droopiness" or her "practically-at-death's-door moods." In the latter case, Mickens wanted transportation to help her daughter Estelle dress hogs, a favor which Rawlings refused, partially because of the gasoline rationing then in effect.<sup>102</sup> Mickens also acted in ways that Rawlings often interpreted as deliberate and subversive, and they may well have been.<sup>103</sup> Mickens sometimes performed her duties, particularly in the house, at a schedule that varied from that of Rawlings. In the absence of a cook, Mickens had meal preparation added to her morning chores of milking and feeding the cow and tending the chickens. When she arrived in the kitchen as early as 5:30, Mickens often made noise by turning on the stove and carelessly wielding pots and pans. Rawlings regarded this commotion as a type of aggression.<sup>104</sup> The two women struggled over the timing of Rawlings's breakfast, with Mickens sometimes preparing food before Rawlings asked for it or occasionally waiting until Rawlings got herself up and dressed before preparing the meal.<sup>105</sup> One can easily imagine the resentment of the employee, up long before the employer chose to arise from her bed, and expressing her displeasure through deeds though never words.

From the distance of the tenant house, Mickens also completely ignored Rawlings on occasion. Her employer complained that she and her company had arrived "rather late" from fishing. "I wanted the fish when we got in last night, although it was rather late, as they are so much better when fresh out of the water, and I called loudly (and sweetly) to Martha as we came in. I don't see how she could have helped hearing me, but she never appeared."<sup>106</sup> Mickens was not just about to leave her house to fry fish for Rawlings and her guests, and pretending not to hear Rawlings call was an easy way to resist being on duty twenty-four hours a day. The fish and grits that Rawlings wanted simply had to wait a day. Doing things wrong also became a means of acting out for Mickens. Since Rawlings placed such an emphasis on superior table service, it galled her when Mickens prepared plates so precisely wrong as to appear to be doing it deliberately: "Last night our main dish was jellyed chicken, and Martha heated the dinner plates to a crisp. Then Edith's scrambled eggs this morning, and her toast, were served on

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102. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 53, 83, 222 362, 380, 442, 447.

103. *Ibid.*, 52, 381.

104. *Ibid.*, 111, 140-41, 225.

105. *Ibid.*, 289, 380.

106. *Ibid.*, 290.



clammy cold plates."<sup>107</sup> With sins both of omission and commission, Mickens managed to irritate her boss.

The contrast between Parker's abilities and those of the members of the Mickens family, as well as Rawlings's clear preference for Parker as cook, caused friction among all of the women at Cross Creek, black and white. Parker came and left three times between 1940 and 1950. Each time she left, a Mickens daughter filled in, and each time Parker returned, the Mickens daughter found herself without work. This situation created considerable tension for Martha Mickens, who wanted her daughters to succeed. Rawlings, however, expected Martha Mickens to extend a warm welcome to Parker each time she returned and threatened to dismiss all of the Mickenses if they were unkind to Parker.<sup>108</sup> Rawlings knew exactly the situation she was creating and made sure that the daughters were not bereft when they left her employ. For example, in 1943, Rawlings assured herself that Sissie would be getting her late husband Henry's military pension as well as working for the Brice family and so would be all right.<sup>109</sup> Each time an opening appeared at Cross Creek, Mickens made sure that either Sissie or Adrenna was standing by, ready to fill the void. Finally, in 1952, after Parker had been gone two years and Rawlings was trying to lure her back yet one more time, Mickens stood up to Rawlings in her daughter's defense. Rawlings wrote, "Martha said firmly and reprovingly, 'Adrenna come here for the 'spress purpose of he'ping you and keeping me company. She told the Williams right off that when you come back, she was working for *you*.'"<sup>110</sup> Adrenna had left a steady job to come back to Cross Creek, and her mother was determined that she would not be left in the lurch again. Her appeal worked, and Parker did not return to Rawlings's household.

Rawlings played Martha Mickens and Parker off one another, as each sought to maintain her standing with their employer, even at the expense of the other. For Mickens, that meant mainly looking out for her children as best she could. Parker enjoyed special privileges, such as better lodging than the Mickenses, frequent use of Rawlings's car, and the knowledge that she would likely be re-

107. Ibid., 380, 557.

108. Ibid., 121, 147-48, 175, 178-79, 444, 624, 631; Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 212.

109. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 200-201.

110. Ibid., 631. According to J. T. Glisson, Mickens "decided who among the blacks at Cross Creek worked for whom and where they lived," Glisson, *The Creek*, 135-36, but evidently Rawlings took an active hand in placement as well.

hired each time she took off. Indeed, Rawlings never fired Parker; each time she left, it was of her own volition. Parker deliberately held herself apart from the Mickens clan, commenting that she had more "sense" than they did.<sup>111</sup> Parker disdained their amusements, refusing to join Little Will and Alberta in their visits to nearby juke joints and disapproving of the Mickens family's sharing drinks with Rawlings's guests.<sup>112</sup> The two employees circled one another, noting each other's flaws and vulnerabilities. Although Parker reported that Mickens was kind to her, Mickens watched for errors on Parker's part and maintained a "smug air" when the cook slipped.<sup>113</sup> Parker likewise criticized Mickens's work, silently noting her disapproval of how Mickens lit the fires in the morning and her carelessness in cooking eggs.<sup>114</sup> Yet Parker needed Mickens and her knowledge to live successfully at Cross Creek, and Mickens gave her the information that she needed, whether grudgingly or freely. The Mickens women apparently seldom competed with one another, even when their men were engaged in mortal struggles. Only once did Sissie Fountain complain. Left with all of the chores at Cross Creek when her mother went to nurse Adrenna in St. Petersburg, she doubted that her older sister was suffering from anything more serious than menopause, according to Rawlings.<sup>115</sup> And Martha Mickens sometimes became tired of having a houseful of small children.<sup>116</sup> Overall, however, mother and sisters stuck together.

Mickens's closeness to Rawlings sometimes made other workers, particularly Parker, uncomfortable around her. Mickens inserted herself into situations where she was neither needed nor wanted, on one occasion showing up unexpected and with no explanation, to help Parker serve a dinner for company. Her presence made Parker feel that Rawlings did not trust her, even after six years of employment.<sup>117</sup> Parker evidently regarded Mickens as sort of a spy for their employer, and with just cause, for Mickens did serve as reporter about the neighbors and other workers to Rawl-

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111. Parker, *Idella*, 35.

112. Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 92; Parker, *Idella*, 40, 80-81.

113. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 422. Mickens also remained alert for opportunities for her son, Little Will Mickens. She arranged for him to have the job which his brother-in-law, Samson, vacated after Henry Fountain shot him in 1939, Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 212.

114. Parker, *Idella*, 27-28; Parker, *From Reddick to Cross Creek*, 90.

115. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 305.

116. *Ibid.*, 181, 183.

117. *Ibid.*, 462.





Martha and Will Mickens in their later years. *Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.*

ings. Mickens did laundry for Rawling's neighbor, Marsh Turner, and also observed and told about his activities. "Almost every Monday morning," Rawlings wrote, Mickens had "a racy account of his Saturday night drunk."<sup>118</sup> Mickens carried news from the outside world back to Cross Creek. While picking beans in Fairfield, about

<sup>118</sup> Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 149; Glisson, *The Creek*, 90.

twenty miles from the Creek, she encountered Rawling's former cook named Mary. Mary, she told Rawlings, "sent her love to you."<sup>119</sup> Mickens in particular served as an interlocutor between Parker and Rawlings, receiving letters from Parker and sending them to Rawlings without Parker's permission, and reporting to Rawlings on Parker's whereabouts when she went missing. She even went to Parker's family home in Reddick in 1943 and gave Rawlings a report on Parker's departure for New York based on her conversations with Parker's relatives.<sup>120</sup> By sharing Parker's information with Rawlings, Mickens clearly indicated that she sided with Rawlings, not with Parker, in the ongoing disputes between the two.

And yet, in the end, Mickens's loyalty may have been not to Rawlings but to Cross Creek itself. In 1945, she was in her mid-seventies and her back was causing her ongoing, significant pain. She told Rawlings that she had been to the "doctor and the witch woman" and gotten no relief. She proposed that she and Will Mickens move to St. Petersburg with their daughter Adrenna. Rawlings called her bluff: "I said of course she must go if she wanted to, but if or when she did, I should also of course have to close up the place entirely and not come back, and sell the cows and pigs and ducks and chickens." Rawlings reported that Mickens "gave a little start and said, well, she'd just rock on a while and maybe she would feel better."<sup>121</sup> Rawlings did not indicate whether she really meant what she said; if so, her equation of Mickens with Cross Creek was total: without Mickens, there would be no Cross Creek. Or perhaps Rawlings was bluffing herself, but it was Rawlings who ultimately won the standoff. Threatening to sell the animals and the land that the Mickenses had occupied off and on for half a century was enough to keep Mickens right where Rawlings wanted her, which was Cross Creek. Despite her physical pain, Mickens could not abide the idea of her animals and Cross Creek being sold, and on the next day she told Rawlings that she intended to stay right there and take care of the bounty of baby pigs.<sup>122</sup>

And so Martha Mickens remained, while Rawlings did not. Throughout the late 1940s, Rawlings spent an increasing amount of time at her new house in Van Hornesville, New York. Idella

119. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 144-45.

120. Rawlings, *Private Marjorie*, 121, 125, 183-84, 567, 570.

121. *Ibid.*, 231, 241, 447.

122. *Ibid.*, 448.



Parker left for good in 1950, and Adrenna Mickens returned to Cross Creek to cook for Rawlings during the months that she was in Florida. When Rawlings died suddenly in December 1953, Cross Creek passed to the University of Florida, then to the state of Florida as part of a state historic park. Under the terms of Rawling's will, Martha Mickens stayed at Cross Creek and received her pension for the rest of her life. Martha Mickens died in 1960 and Will Mickens followed in 1964; they were buried in unmarked graves near Boardman, Florida, across Orange Lake from Cross Creek.<sup>123</sup> The orange groves died in a series of severe freezes in the 1950s.<sup>124</sup> Through her work, Martha Mickens purchased security for herself and her husband in their old age, if not for her entire family. She perceived Cross Creek to be her best option in a world constrained by racism and poverty, and she strove to maximize her benefits and those of her children and her children's children.

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123. Gary Kirkland, "Family Finally Gets Its Due: Funds from the Rawlings Society Help Purchase a Granite Headstone that Bears Their Names," *Gainesville Sun*, April 17, 1996.

124. Laurie, *National Historic Landmark Nomination*, 6.

## Book Reviews

*Daniel Murphree, Book Review Editor*

*Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860.* By Michael O'Brien. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. Foreword, notes, index. Pp. x, 400. \$39.95 cloth.)

In 2004, the University of North Carolina Press published Michael O'Brien's two-volume magnum opus—*Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860*—which provides the most thorough and nuanced history of the Old South ever written. A culmination of decades of work in southern intellectual history, *Conjectures of Order* examines all manner of intellectuals, as well as their private and social lives, the institutions to which they belonged, the ideas they studied, and the texts they produced. In more than 1,200 pages, O'Brien demonstrates that the South—a region often dismissed as anti-intellectual—in fact produced a vibrant, dynamic, and modern intellectual life. The book under review here is an abridgement of that work. Although this volume is only a quarter of the length of *Conjectures of Order*, it contains the same graceful style and strong argument that distinguishes the original as a masterful work of intellectual history.

*Intellectual Life and the American South* argues that the antebellum south was at once “national, post-colonial, and imperial” (3). Southerners helped to define the parameters of the American republic and viewed that project as a repudiation of “metropolitan authority,” (2) though they clung to traditions such as the importation of slaves and exclusion of Indians. O'Brien shows how southern intellectuals sought to order this often contradictory world according to late-Enlightenment traditions of natural and social classification



of human beings based on race, sex, and even class. Romanticism began to influence southern thinking in the early nineteenth-century, and this empiricism gave way to new notions of social identity whereby sex, race, ethnicity, class, and local identity were "not only cultural inventions but quasi-biological fates, not things that the human will had chosen" (5). The book's overarching narrative describes this shift in southern intellectual life from an empirical, to a sentimental and historical, and finally to an abstract understanding of self and society. This transition in understanding nature and society influenced the texts that southern intellectuals produced in the late antebellum period. The result was an intellectual life that was "not premodern but deeply implicated in modernity, though an idiosyncratic version mostly based on slavery" (11).

O'Brien's intellectuals comprised a regional "intelligentsia" rooted in local, national, and global intellectual traditions. They were "clever people, who once expressed themselves in complicated patterns, which other clever people have taken seriously" (10-11). These clever people tended to be urban, well educated, from "the middling orders" of society, ranging from such states as Texas, Florida, and Delaware. They were men who worked as botanists, geologists, editors, doctors, librarians, novelists, philosophers, and theologians, and most "tended to associate with the modernizing sector of society," except usually when it came to slavery (14). Although women were encouraged to receive an education, they could not as easily participate in public intellectual life due to rigid social boundaries that exclusively consigned women to the domestic sphere. Because O'Brien views intellectual history as the history of intellectual canon, however, he has limited his study to those who gave shape to that canon, and many readers will find lawyers, judges, and students missing from this history. Slaves and free blacks do not receive as much attention in this volume as those who governed them, for O'Brien explains that the antebellum African-American intellectual tradition "had different themes, origins, and ambitions" (8). Still, O'Brien provides a compelling discussion of black authorship and attempts whenever possible to integrate the voices of enslaved and free blacks.

An important contribution of this work is the way in which O'Brien combines intellectual and social history—how he connects the history of ideas themselves with the history of engagement with ideas. The first half of this book deals with how southern intellectuals interacted with one another and with other cultures through travel, and in broad professional networks and local communities.

Particularly interesting is O'Brien's discussion of institutions of southern intellectual life—libraries, historical societies, and literary and debating societies. These institutions provided social spaces for the production, dissemination, and reception of knowledge, particularly for young southerners. Here, books circulated among readers, and ideas electrified public discourse. This "cultural activity" shaped the history of ideas that O'Brien explores in the second half of the book. He examines southerners' changing ideas about history, literature, government, politics, political economy, philosophy, and religion. Illustrating the shift from the late-Enlightenment to nineteenth-century realism, O'Brien pays particular attention to the South's indigenous literature—its historical writing, poetry, fiction, slave narratives, and the proslavery argument.

Readers interested in Florida's contribution to southern intellectual life will find some interesting references in this work, though not as many as they may like. This, of course, is not O'Brien's fault. Florida, acquired in 1819 and made a state in 1845, was "something of a remote orphan" of the South (14). Still, O'Brien captures Florida in the imagination of southern intellectuals. Irish-born Presbyterian theologian Thomas Smith almost went to Florida to become a missionary during the first third of the nineteenth-century. And fellow Irish-born Richard Henry Wilde wrote about Florida in his epic poem *Hesperia* (1867). By the late antebellum period, the makings of a formal intellectual life began to emerge in Florida. In 1856, for instance, a historical society met (albeit intermittently) in St. Augustine. Another great addition to its modest collection of intellectuals, Caroline Lee Hentz, one of the South's most notable female authors, ultimately moved with her husband to Florida to spend their final years. This volume certainly will whet the appetite of readers interested in Florida's position in the Old South's intellectual order, though *Conjectures of Order* will provide greater detail.

In all, *Intellectual Life and the American South* is a beautifully written and persuasive intellectual history. It makes the vast erudition of *Conjectures of Order* available to students as well as non-specialists who have an interest in the Old South and the history of ideas in America more generally. Serious scholars and graduate students will also find that this book is an engaging read, and a helpful compendium to the original. Michael O'Brien deserves the highest praise for making this rich intellectual history accessible to a wider audience.



*The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing after Removal.*

Edited by Geary Hobson, Janet McAdams, and Kathryn Walkiewicz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. Acknowledgments, introduction, Pp. xii, 349. \$24.95 paperback.)

This excellent anthology puts to rest any lingering notions that the Indian Removal Act of 1830 completely extracted American Indians from the Southeast, let alone rendered them silent about their identities, histories, politics, present circumstances, and prospects as both Southerners and Indians. That some Indians stayed in the South will, I suspect, be less surprising to many readers than that, as the rich array of selections in this book amply demonstrates, southeastern Indians from all parts of the South have a vibrant literature that spans historical periods as well as literary genres and styles. These diverse yet cohesive pieces, finally gathered together in a single book, make possible a major tectonic shift in the terrains of American Indian literature. More importantly, however, this shift affects southern literary studies, in which Indians are typically overlooked or, at best, seen as bit players in works by non-Native writers. But, for all their diversity, the writings gathered together in *The People Who Stayed* offer more: an indigenous southern community that collectively makes the crucial point that Indians have survived to tell *their* stories, even in the face of the most wrenching upheaval.

In a succinct introduction, "The South Seldom Seen," the editors explain that "This anthology seeks to tell . . . the stories of the people who stayed. The forces of disappearance have been, and remain, strong. Yet Indian people of the South resist, survive, persist. Through song, story, picture, declaration, and declamation, they use language and art to claim—and reclaim—their identities and homelands, to say: 'We are still here'" (2). Indeed, Native peoples have inhabited the lands now denominated as "the Southeast" for millennia. Thus, even though this anthology primarily features contemporary writers, the editors (two of whom are themselves southeastern Indian writers of distinction) and many of the included writers acknowledge and honor this much longer, deeper indigenous southern presence. Readers are thus well able to understand European settler-colonialism in broad historical contexts that effectively make plain the extent to which "aboriginal people . . . became fixtures of the lands that are now the southeastern

United States" (2). Foregrounding this deeply grounded connection between Indian people and southern places does not, of course, diminish the brutal reality and lasting trauma of removal; it does, however, help give the lie to an oddly enduring "rhetoric of disappearance" which counterfactually perpetuates the notion that Indians have long since vanished from the South and that the South is biracial (black and white) but not multiracial.

The selections in *The People Who Stayed* are organized into four parts, beginning with a relatively brief section titled "Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware." Subsequent sections center on the "Carolinas, Tennessee, and Kentucky"; "Deep South: Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi"; and "Arkansas, Louisiana, and East Texas." To populate each of these sections, the editors carefully consider each writer's tribal affiliation(s) and other connections to particular states or sub regions as well as the settings of the anthologized writings. These decisions are at times difficult, in part because tribal lands and identities do not always dovetail neatly with non-Native state boundaries. Moreover, many of the included writers no longer live in the South, though their orientation remains southern and their physical distance from the South animates their psychic proximity to it in fascinating ways. The editors also acknowledge, in a footnote, that in a project such as this one, omissions are inevitable. Indeed, one of their guiding editorial principles, explained in another footnote, is that "We are purposely omitting the writings of Indian people who are descended from Southeastern tribes that were removed to Indian Territory and whose orientation is essentially from 'Oklahoma' rather than the southeastern United States" (19). Thus, a number of very significant contemporary writers, including Joy Harjo, LeAnne Howe, and Craig Womack, are not represented here.

I do not necessarily agree with the editorial decisions to omit Oklahoma writers with southeastern ties, to organize the selections by states and sub regions, and to exclude texts made or written before the presidency of Andrew Jackson. But I respect these decisions and understand them to be challenging, carefully considered, and productive, especially in that they promise to spark animated discussion, in classrooms and elsewhere, about how best to represent this wealth of material. While I see no need to quibble with such conscientious and hard-won editorial strategies here, I *do* wish that the discussions of editorial decision-making were not largely relegated to footnotes. And although the editors rightly point out that non-Na-



tive southern writers almost always overlook Native southern literary traditions, I wish that the editors had engaged with potential allies in southern literary studies. One of particular importance is the New Southern Studies, which includes scholars whose work might have helped deconstruct the very notion of "the South"—a notion that this book holds onto, perhaps more than it needs to, even as it also demystifies and enriches our sense of what constitutes southern identity and southern writing.

Perhaps what matters most, however, is that the selected writings themselves are generally terrific. This is an exceptionally readable anthology; it also shows great classroom promise. I appreciated the inclusion of a full play by Spiderwoman Theater; I liked the historical integrity of many of the pieces chosen; and I learned much from pieces first published in college newspapers or by small tribal presses. Editor Janet McAdams's piece on "Writing the Indigenous Deep South" strikes me as the best thing yet done on this important subject. In sum, *The People Who Stayed* decisively accomplishes what it sets out to do: it demonstrates that Indians are indeed everywhere, very much including the South, and it gives us the great gift of a beautifully rendered collection of writings that will surely change the way many readers see both Indians and the South.

Eric Gary Anderson

George Mason University

*Passing in the Works of Charles W. Chesnutt.* Edited by Susan Wright and Ernestine Glass. (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2010. Acknowledgments, index, Pp. xiii, 160. \$50 cloth.)

In recent years, historians and literary scholars increasingly have focused on turn-of-the-century novelist Charles W. Chesnutt. The grandson of an African American woman and a white North Carolinian, Chesnutt devoted much of his literary output to the dilemma of the color line he experienced first-hand, and his complex meditations have rightly drawn the interest of a diverse group of scholars probing the meaning and performance of racial identity in the Jim Crow South.

*Passing in the Works of Charles W. Chesnutt* reflects this academic trend, having been inspired by panels at the Modern Languages, American Literature Association, and College Language Associa-

tion conferences. The contributors, all literary scholars, are mostly affiliated with interdisciplinary programs and are intent on placing the fields of literary studies and history in greater conversation. Their essays should encourage historians to examine Chesnutt's works more closely to better understand the color line in the post-emancipation South and the lives of those defined as being in between black and white.

In the opening essay, literary scholar Werner Sollors observes that "Chesnutt's historical imagination, paired with his sense of irony, made him an unusually perceptive witness of his own time" (3). Citing his personal knowledge of the plight of African Americans and his familiarity with leading southern whites of his day, Chesnutt considered himself capable of surpassing the accomplishments of such well-known writers as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Albion W. Tourg  e. As SallyAnn H. Ferguson notes, contemporary racial politics compelled Chesnutt to develop subversive strategies to achieve his goal.

Chesnutt built his literary reputation on a series of conjure tales that challenged the racial sentimentality of dialect stories popularized by Joel Chandler Harris. In her essay on Chesnutt's famous short story "Po' Sandy" (1899), a tale told by ex-slave Uncle Julius to a northern white couple, Margaret Bauer asserts that "[i]n the tradition of tragedy, one of Chesnutt's points seems to have been to show how even the slave in the best possible situation – living on a plantation where slaves were seldom beaten – still suffered the horrors of slavery (particularly the separation of family members from each other)" (33). Aaron Ritzenberg also notes Chesnutt's critique of southern white historical fantasies in *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900). Ritzenberg interprets the novel as a commentary on southern whites' romanticism that hinged on their ability to forget, juxtaposed against mulatto characters' determination to remember. Ritzenberg's interpretation should inspire historians to situate Chesnutt within the growing body of literature on historical memory in the postbellum South.

Chesnutt devoted most of his writing to those who, like him, lived in the interstices of black and white racial identities. Donald B. Gibson interprets *Mandy Oxendine* (1997), one of six novels Chesnutt did not publish in his own lifetime, as "a cautionary tale that strongly warns of the pitfalls and dangers of passing" (92). Literary scholars have debated whether its main mulatto characters planned to pass as white at the end of the novel to evade the dilemmas posed by their racial identification. Gibson rejects the "passing" interpretation, effectively arguing that Chesnutt intend-



ed for the novel to refute the belief that passing was an appropriate response to such racial uncertainty. Gibson interprets the novel as a unique look into the mind of those forced to choose an identity when race might be a matter of life and death.

Although readers will assume that the title *Passing* refers to Chesnutt's recurrent literary treatment of those who "passed" from black into white society, Martha J. Cutter and Susan Prothro Wright identify a broader concept within the novelist's work. Examining Chesnutt's short story, "The Passing of Grandison" (1899), Cutter detects Chesnutt's effort to assert the humanity of his enslaved characters as she recasts the notion of "passing" as the subterfuge employed by one enslaved man to secure freedom for himself and his enslaved family members. Prothro Wright contends that Chesnutt's *Paul Marchand, F.M.C.* (1999), a novel rejected by publishers in 1921, was "poised to disrupt all race-based assumptions," (78) presenting a scenario in which a white man, raised to believe he is a quadroon, shuns his white inheritance in favor of passing as an African American abroad and fulfilling his obligations to his nonwhite family. Prothro Wright interprets the novel as a response to the depiction of the natural distinctions between the races in D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). Through her analysis of *Paul Marchand*, Prothro Wright reveals Chesnutt's imaginative alternative, one that "bases all questions of honor not on color, codes, or traditions, but on character" (70).

Scott Thomas Gibson and Keith Byerman explore Chesnutt's solution to the dilemma of the color line. While Gibson asserts that Chesnutt fell under the spell of Brazil, where race relations and racial identification were more fluid, and imagined the possibilities of an amalgamated United States in *Evelyn's Husband* (2009), Byerman convincingly asserts that Chesnutt argued that racial identities were "based on irrational and silly assumptions" (91).

The analyses of Chesnutt's observations about life along color line gathered by Wright and Glass should encourage historians to contribute to a more nuanced reading of his work, especially the role of passing in his life and thought. Readers, however, will be frustrated by the limited historical perspective provided by the essays in *Passing in the Works of Charles W. Chesnutt*. Nonetheless, the collection deserves an audience that will incorporate Chesnutt's insight and perspectives into cultural histories of the South's race problem in the era of Jim Crow.

*Entering the Fray: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the New South.* Edited by Jonathan Wells and Shelia Phipps. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2010. Charts, index. Pp. viii, 272. \$44.95 cloth.)

The long-standing partnership between the Southern Association for Women Historians (SAWH) and the University of Missouri Press (UMP) continues to thrive as evidenced by the most recent title in the Southern Women Series, *Entering the Fray: Gender, Politics and Culture in the New South*. Drawn from papers first presented at the Seventh Southern Conference on Women's History held in Baltimore, Maryland in June 2006, the nine articles illuminate the tensions between public actions and cultural constraints against the backdrop of a modernizing South. The collection's broad range spans the years following the American Civil War to the last decade of the twentieth century. The selected essays offer up a mix of studies of individual women (Charlotte "Lottie" Moon, a missionary; Marie Kimball, a curator at Monticello; Kathryn Dunaway, an anti-ERA organizer; and Susan Smith, convicted for murdering her three-year old toddler and fourteen month baby) and civic organizations, groups, programs, and labor unions (Georgia's Woman's Christian Temperance Movement, Federation of Women's Clubs, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, STOP ERA, Florida's Home Demonstration Program, New Orleans' Riverfront Extension Program, Memphis's Voter Registration Drives, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America). As individuals or as participants in formal and informal reform movements spanning the political spectrum from radical to conservative, southern white and black women advanced their causes by negotiating the tricky boundaries of gender conventions.

*Entering the Fray* opens with Regina Sullivan's "Myth, Memory, and the Making of Lottie Moon," the story of a late nineteenth century unmarried, educated, southern white woman who served as a missionary in China under the direction of the male-dominated Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Foreign Mission Board (FMB). Sullivan's purpose is two-fold. She painstakingly recovers the historical Lottie (Charlotte Diggs) Moon whose challenge to male authority over female missionaries demanding women's full and equal participation in policy and decision making, led to the creation of a separate and independent women's organization, the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). Sullivan's parallel pur-



pose also exposes tensions between public actions and cultural constraints, but with a twist. The "making of Lottie Moon" also examines the creation of Moon as an iconic martyr (the construction of her "death by starvation" reinforced traditional gendered cultural assumptions) that the WMU used as a lucrative promotional and fundraising tool. Carrying her story forward to the last decade of the twentieth century, Sullivan notes that when the SBC sought to wrest control of the profitable "Lottie Moon Story" from the WMU, the women successfully fended off the hostile "take-over" by embracing the mythical Moon instead of the historical Moon. Thus, even as the Baptist women asserted their autonomy, they did so by holding on to the traditional view of women. Proto-feminism apparently had no place within the WMU.

Floridians will find the contribution by Kelly Minor (University of Florida Ph.D) of particular interest. "'Consumed with a Ghastly Wasting': Home Demonstration Confronts Disease in Rural Florida, 1920-1945," examines the efforts of rural women working as Home Demonstration agents within their own communities to eradicate two pernicious diseases associated with rural poverty: hookworm and pellagra. Minor stresses the collaborative strategies of the agents who negotiated among the different priorities and solutions of the state-run Extensive Service Programs; philanthropic organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation; and two New Deal agencies, the Works Progress Administration and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Transcending the class and race-based preconceptions of "outsiders" that linked poverty and race to the prevalence of hookworm and pellagra, these local, rural female agents targeted white and black families with a focused educational message that emphasized the relationship between sanitation and disease. Their successes, Minor argues, is a testimony to the power of female agents as experts, neighbors, and intermediaries.

The collection concludes with Keira Williams' "The 'Modern-Day Media': Susan Smith and the National Media," the 1994 tale from South Carolina of a white, recently divorced single mother who fabricated a car-jacking story with a fictitious black male to cover her own murderous deed—the deliberate drowning of her two young sons. Williams' purpose is less about Smith's use of the racist image of the villainous black male to cloak her crime and more an attempt to examine the shifting public images of Susan Smith crafted by respected members of the media establishment (NBC, CBS, ABC, the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*) and

used effectively by conservative politicians, Newt Gingrich is mentioned frequently, to garner support for the Republican Party's 1994 "Contract for America." As Susan Smith's story fell apart in a matter of weeks under questioning from the law enforcement officials and public scrutiny, the idealized portrait of motherhood—the grieving, white, middle-class, stay-at-home wife and mother—morphed into a caricature of the "unfit" mother—the single, working-class, abusive, self-centered, "over-sexed slut." Williams argues Susan Smith did not fit either image, and the complicated reasons for her actions—a troubled family life and debilitating depression—were lost in the telling. Williams' brilliant examination of the Susan Smith tragedy illuminates the politicization of the hot-button social issues—feminism, abortion, changing sexual mores and practices, and shifts in family structure—that characterized the "culture wars" of the closing decade of the twentieth century.

*Entering the Fray* lives up to the high standard of cutting edge scholarship that has come to characterize the quality of the works presented triennially at the Southern Conference on Women's History and selected for inclusion in UMP's *Southern Women Series*. Audiences, both general and academic, will find this collection fascinating. Public librarians should consider purchasing this collection for readers fascinated with southern history while academic librarians should consider this book essential to collections in southern and women's history. Although *Entering the Fray* would be a useful addition to courses on the Modern South and Women's History, the price of the cloth copy may prove prohibitive for students. Thus, I suggest that the press give serious consideration to offering electronic versions of both *Entering the Fray* and the companion volumes (current and future) in the *Southern Women Series*.

Kathleen C. Berkeley

UNC Wilmington

***Faulkner's Imperialism: Space, Place, and the Materiality of Myth.*** By Taylor Hagood. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. Acknowledgements, notes, works cited, index. Pp.x, 250. \$45 cloth.)

In *Faulkner's Imperialism: Space, Place, and the Materiality of Myth*, Taylor Hagood situates his project in literary theory using, among others, New Historicist, Marxist, and Postcolonial approaches,



which he clearly outlines in his "Introduction." In a scholarly monograph such as this one, the author must ground the text's arguments in literary and theoretical contexts. For readers not well versed in literary history and theory, the introduction may be difficult to slog through, but it gives literary authority to Hagood's text and hardly detracts from the subsequent essays contained in this collection. Hagood presents all readers with intriguing insights into how Faulkner's fiction reinforces and subverts the complex and heterogeneous forces of imperialism. Meticulously researched, *Faulkner's Imperialism* is a compelling read for anyone interested in the material and fictional history of the American South.

Interestingly, Hagood uses Thomas Sutpen from *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) to explain his space-place-myth model when he points out that Sutpen's Hundred is part of Thomas Sutpen's imperial plot to create a dynasty. Inside of Sutpen's "imperial plot, however, lie anti-imperial narratives, which find expression in the same mythic plot that affirms the imperial drive" (18). Clytie, Charles Bon, and Rosa Coldfield, for example, are anti-imperial voices just as Sutpen's voice, as "the owner/generator of the imperial narrative is itself hybrid" because he is "both poor white and aristocratic patriarch and colonizer" (18). Faulkner participates in the hybridity of mythmaking by incorporating ancient myth in his fiction, by appropriating and creating the myth of the South, and by using mythic places to create mythic images in readers' minds. The hybridity of liminal spaces and material and mythic places is at the core of Faulkner's fiction, a fiction which reflects layers of American expansionism and culture. Hagood likens these layers to a palimpsest, as seen in *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), that traces Mississippi's history from its native inhabitants to the developers (who Faulkner hated) that reconfigured the landscape. Glimpses of the past centuries are still visible in the narrative world that Faulkner has created.

Hagood uses a vertical (Faulkner's writing) and horizontal (writing by others) intertextual approach in his discussion of Faulkner's fiction to shore up his thesis that the American South has never been monolithic and that even in its colonial and imperial designs the ideology is always more complex than binaries like black and white, rich and poor, male and female, young and old suggest. *Faulkner's Imperialism* expands recent criticism of Faulkner's work as Hagood examines myth, place and space through a post-modern lens. A point worth underscoring is Hagood's assertion

in chapter one that *Go Down, Moses* (1942) and "The Bear" present just how blurred the boundaries are between oppressed and oppressor. Ike McCaslin looks at his grandfather's, father's and uncle's ledgers which serve as historical narratives. Hagood sees these ledgers as "*the narrative of one human encroaching on others only to have his encroachment superseded by yet others*" (69). In the chapter on Faulkner's representation of New Orleans in his fiction, Hagood notices how the Creoles are absent in *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* (1939)—"vanished in the face of the American march toward domination. The frame of empire finally has closed upon its subjects," (117) showing another face of encroachment and the drive toward homogeneity. Yet, in a later chapter formed around the trope of Egypt, Hagood acknowledges Faulkner's move against that homogeneous space where the oppressor has absolute power. For example, in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Quentin Compson (Caddy's daughter) bests her Uncle Jason, and in *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), Lucas Beauchamp has the last word over lawyer Gavin Stevens. When looking at Faulkner's massive body of fiction, readers see power constantly shifting. Hagood looks at how the Arthurian legend in Faulkner's fiction shifts from one knight to another. "Camelot is a place beset, whether by Yankees or poor whites, the latter of whom are likely to move into that very space once its current occupants have been demoted and assert themselves as the new chivalric Arthurian knights" (183). Change is a constant in Faulkner's cosmos even as the past is the present and the present is the past. Hagood allows readers a different and fascinating lens with which to view the continual imperial assaults that Faulkner captures in his fiction.

*Faulkner's Imperialism* is a fine addition to the body of scholarship on Faulkner and a must read for those who enjoy Faulkner's work. The book also gives readers a way to think about other places and spaces that have been affected by colonial and imperial forces. Hagood's critical narrative of Faulkner shows readers that resistance is ongoing and power fleeting, that landscapes shift, and that literary and historical narratives intersect in the most compelling ways.



## End Notes

### FLORIDA FRONTIERS: THE WEEKLY RADIO MAGAZINE OF THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Florida Frontiers: The Weekly Radio Magazine of the Florida Historical Society* is a weekly, half-hour radio program currently airing on public radio stations around the state. The program is a combination of interview segments and produced features covering history-based events, exhibitions, activities, places, and people in Florida. The program explores the relevance of Florida history to contemporary society and promotes awareness of heritage and culture tourism options in the state. *Florida Frontiers* joins the *Florida Historical Quarterly* and the publications of the Florida Historical Society Press as another powerful tool to fulfill the Society's mission of collecting and disseminating information about the history of Florida.

Recent broadcasts of *Florida Frontiers* have included visits to the Fort Lauderdale History Center, the Historic State Capitol Building, the Ponce Inlet Light Station, and Historic Ybor City. Profiles of Stetson Kennedy, Patrick Smith, Clyde Butcher and Betty Mae Jumper have been featured. The 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DeLuna expedition, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Winter Park Bach Festival, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jacksonville's Ax Handle Saturday, and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mosquito Beaters Annual Gathering have been documented. Upcoming programs will include discussions about religion in Florida with Michael Gannon, reflections on the natural environment of Florida in the works of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, a dramatic portrayal of Pedro Menendez, and poetry from the Second Seminole Indian War.

Florida Historical Society Executive Director Ben Brotemarkle is producer and host of *Florida Frontiers*, with weekly contributions from assistant producers Janie Gould and Bill Dudley. From 1992-

2000, Brotemarkle was creator, producer, and host of the hour-long weekly radio magazine *The Arts Connection* on 90.7 WMFE in Orlando. In 2005, Gould became Oral History Specialist at 88.9 WQCS in Ft. Pierce. Since 1993, Dudley has been producing an ongoing series of radio reports for the Florida Humanities Council.

The program is currently broadcast on 90.7 WMFE Orlando, Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. and Sundays at 4:00 p.m.; 88.1 WUWF Pensacola, Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.; 89.9 WJCT Jacksonville, Mondays at 6:30 p.m.; 89.5 WFIT Melbourne, Sundays at 7:00 a.m.; 88.9 WQCS (HD2) Ft. Pierce, Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.; and 90.7 WXEL West Palm Beach, Sundays at 7:00 p.m. Additional public radio stations are expected to add *Florida Frontiers* to their schedule in 2011. The program is archived on the Florida Historical Society web site and accessible any time at [www.myfloridahistory.org](http://www.myfloridahistory.org).

*Florida Frontiers: The Weekly Radio Magazine of the Florida Historical Society* is made possible in part by the Florida Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Jessie Ball duPont Fund; and by the Brevard County Board of Commissioners through the Brevard Cultural Alliance, Inc.

### **FLORIDA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY PODCASTS**

The *Florida Historical Quarterly* has entered a new era of media. Dr. Robert Cassanello, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Central Florida and a member of the *FHQ* editorial board, has accepted a new role as the coordinator for podcast productions. In conjunction with the Public History programs at UCF, Dr. Cassanello will produce a podcast for each issue of the *Quarterly*. Each podcast will consist of an interview with one of the authors from the most recent issue of the *Quarterly*. The podcasts are uploaded to iTunes University and are available to the public at <http://publichistorypodcast.blogspot.com/>.

Dr. Jack E. Davis on his article "Sharp Prose for Green: John D. MacDonald and the First Ecological Novel," which appeared in Volume 87, no. 4 (Spring 2009).

Dr. Michael D. Bowen on his article "The Strange Tale of Wesley and Florence Garrison: Racial Crosscurrents of the Postwar Florida Republican Party" appeared in Volume 88, no. 1 (Summer 2009).

Dr. Nancy J. Levine discussed the research project undertaken by her students on the Hastings Branch Library that appeared in Volume 88, no. 2 (Fall 2009).



Dr. Daniel Feller, 2009 Catherine Prescott Lecturer, on "The Seminole Controversy Revisited: A New Look at Andrew Jackson's 1919 Florida Campaign," Volume 88, no. 3 (Winter 2010).

Dr. Derrick E. White, on his article "From Desegregation to Integration: Race, Football, and 'Dixie' at the University of Florida," Volume 88, no. 4 (Spring 2010).

Dr. Gilbert Din was interviewed to discuss his article "William Augustus Bowles on the Gulf Coast, 1787-1803: Unraveling a Labyrinthine Conundrum," which appeared in Volume 89, no. 1 (Summer 2010).

Deborah L. Bauer, Nicole C. Cox, and Peter Ferdinando on graduate education in Florida and their individual articles in Volume 89, no. 2 (Fall 2010).

Jessica Clawson, "Administrative Recalcitrance and Government Intervention: Desegregation at the University of Florida, 1962-1972," which appeared in Volume 89, no. 3 (Winter 2011).

### **FLORIDA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY JOINS JSTOR**

The *Florida Historical Quarterly* is now available to scholars and researchers through JSTOR, a digital service for libraries, archives, and individual subscribers. JSTOR editors spent more than a year digitizing *FHQ* volumes 3-83; it became available to academic libraries and individual subscribers in August 2009. The *FHQ* will be available within a 5-year window. Recent issues of the *Quarterly* are available only in print copy form. JSTOR has emerged as a leader in the field of journal digitization and the *FHQ* joins a number of prestigious journals in all disciplines. The *Florida Historical Quarterly* will continue to be available through PALMM, with the same 5-year window.

### **FLORIDA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY NOW ON FACEBOOK**

Join the *Florida Historical Quarterly* on Facebook. The *FHQ* Facebook page provides an image of each issue, the table of contents of each issue, an abstract of each article (beginning with volume 89, no. 3). There will be a link to the *Quarterly* podcasts and the Florida Historical Society.

### **SPECIAL THANKS**

The editors of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* thank the interns who assisted in fact checking and footnote checking for 2010-2011:

Clay Phillips (MA program in History) and Kyle Krytzer and Matthew Darroch, both Undergraduates in History at the University of Central Florida. Special thanks goes to James Schnur, Special Collections, Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, University of South Florida, St. Petersburg, who contributed the "Florida in Publications." Finally thanks goes to the anonymous referees and the members of the editorial board who provide expertise and guidance in selecting articles for publication, and the many volunteers who reviewed new books for our readers.



**FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
2011 AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**CHARLTON TEBEAU AWARD**

For a general interest book on a Florida history topic

Zack C. Waters and James C. Edmonds

*A Small but Spartan Band: The Florida Brigade in Lee's Army of  
Northern Virginia*

(The University of Alabama Press)

**REMBERT PATRICK AWARD**

For a scholarly book on a Florida history topic

Jane G. Landers

*Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*  
(Harvard University Press)



**PATRICK D. SMITH AWARD**

For a book of fiction on a Florida history topic

William Culyer Hall

*The Trouble With Panthers*

(Florida Historical Society Press)

**HARRY T. AND HARRIETTE V. MOORE AWARD**

For a book relating to Florida's ethnic groups or dealing with a significant social issue from an historical perspective

Julian M. Pleasants and Harry A. Kersey, Jr.

*Seminole Voices: Reflections on Their Changing Society, 1970-2000*

(University of Nebraska Press)

**STETSON KENNEDY AWARD**

For a book based on investigative research which casts light on historic Florida events in a manner that is supportive of human rights, traditional cultures, or the natural environment

Irvin D.S. Winsboro

*Florida's Freedom Struggle: The Black Experience from Colonial Time to the New Millennium*

(Florida Historical Society Press)

**JAMES J. HORGAN AWARD**

For a book on Florida history and heritage intended for young readers

Harvey E. Oyer III

*The Adventures of Charlie Pierce: The Last Egret*

(Middle River Press)

**SAMUEL PROCTOR AWARD**

For an outstanding oral history project substantially about Florida

Julian M. Pleasants and Harry A. Kersey, Jr.

*Seminole Voices: Reflections on Their Changing Society, 1970-2000*

(University of Nebraska Press)

**ARTHUR W. THOMPSON AWARD**

For the most outstanding article in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*

Nicole C. Cox

"Selling Seduction: Women and Feminine Nature in 1920s  
Florida Advertising"

Volume 89, no. 2, (Fall 2010): 186-209.

**HAMPTON DUNN BROADCASTING AWARD**

For electronic media, such as radio and television, recognizing  
outstanding audio or video programs, announcements or other  
works promoting or expanding knowledge of Florida history

The Jacksonville Historical Society

*Ax Handle Saturday—50 Years Later*

Bill Retherford, writer and producer

**CAROLYN MAYS BREVARD AWARD**

For most outstanding essay or research paper on Florida history  
produced by an undergraduate student at a college or university  
in the United States

Chad Brockoff

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

"Fighter Pilots and Fastballs: The Sarasota Army Air Field and  
World War II-Era Spring Training"

**GOVERNOR LeROY COLLINS AWARD**

For most outstanding essay or research paper on Florida history  
produced by a postgraduate student in a master's or doctoral  
program at a college or university in the United States

Jason A. Memmer

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

"Torah! Torah! Torah! Pearl Harbor and the Emergence of  
Florida's Modern Jewish Community"



**JOHN H. HANN AWARD**

For new scholarship on the colonial era (pre-contact through 1821) in the fields of history or historical archaeology

Peter Ferdinando

"A Translation History of Fontaneda"

(*Florida Historical Quarterly*, Fall 2010, Vol. 89, No.2)

**DAVID C. BROTEMARKLE AWARD**

For creative expressions of Florida history other than books

Judge Scott J. Silverman

The Eleventh Judicial Circuit Centennial Committee

A Reenactment of "The State of Florida vs. Alphonse Capone,  
Case No. 621, July 10, 1930"

**MARINUS LATOUR AWARD**

For outstanding volunteer in a local historical society, library, museum or other Florida history-related program or organization

Alma Clyde Field

Outstanding Volunteer

Florida Historical Society

**JILLIAN PRESCOTT MEMORIAL LECTURESHIP**

Dr. Larry E. Rivers

President, Fort Valley State University

"The Florida Civil War You Never Hear About"

**CAROLINE P. ROSSETTER AWARD FOR  
OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN FLORIDA HISTORY**

Dr. Carolyn Williams

Professor of History

University of North Florida

**DOROTHY DODD LIFETIME ACHEIVEMENT AWARD**

Dr. Gene Lyon  
Florida Historian

**FREDERICK CUBBERLY FLORIDA HISTORY AWARD**

Brianna Leatherwood  
"Florida's Territorial Rights and Border Controversies:  
Successes, Failures, and Consequences of the United States' and  
Spain's Diplomatic Negotiations"  
Junior Historical Paper  
Bellevue Middle School (Escambia)  
Teachers: Barbar Jacobs and Haley Close

**FLORIDA HERITAGE AWARD**

"Saving the Everglades: Economic Prosperity vs. Mother Nature  
Junior Individual Web Site  
Milwee Middle School (Seminole)  
Teacher: Jessica Day



### GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE *FLORIDA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY*

The *Florida Historical Quarterly* is a peer-refereed journal and accepts for consideration manuscripts on the history of Florida, its people, and its historical relationships to the United States, the Atlantic World, the Caribbean, or Latin America. All submissions are expected to reflect substantial research, a dedication to writing, and the scholarly rigor demanded of professionally produced historical work. Work submitted for consideration should not have been previously published, soon to be published, or under consideration by another journal or press.

Authors should submit three copies of the manuscript to the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Department of History, CNH 551, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida 32816-1350.

Manuscripts should be typed and double-spaced (excluding footnotes, block quotes, or tabular matter).

The first page should be headed by the title without the author's name. Author identification should be avoided throughout the manuscript. On a separate sheet of paper, please provide the author's name, institutional title or connection, or place of residence, and acknowledgements. Citations should be single-spaced footnotes, numbered consecutively, and in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Tables and illustrations should be created on separate pages, with positions in the manuscript indicated.

In a cover letter, the author should provide contact information that includes phone numbers, fax number, email address, and mailing address. The author should provide a statement of the substance and significance of the work and identify anyone who has already critiqued the manuscript.

Illustrations must meet the following guidelines: pictures should be 5x7 or 8x10 black and white glossy prints; prints will be returned after publication. Images may be submitted in EPS or PDF electronic format at 300 dpi or higher. Xeroxed images cannot be accepted. All illustrations should include full citations and credit lines. Authors should retain letters of permission from institutions or individuals owning the originals.

Questions regarding submissions should be directed to Connie L. Lester, editor, at the address above, or by email at [clester@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:clester@mail.ucf.edu) or by phone at 407-823-0261.

## Florida History in Publications, 2010

*Compiled by James Anthony Schnur*

### Books

Alderson, Doug. *Encounters with Florida's Endangered Wildlife*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010.

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Alfieri, Anthony V. "Post-racialism in the Inner City: Structure and Culture in Lawyering." *Georgetown Law Journal* 98 (April 2010): 921-966. [Focus is on Miami.]

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Davison, Marita A., and John W. Fitzpatrick. "Role of Human-Modified Habitat in Protecting Specialist Species: A Case Study in the Threatened Florida Scrub-Jay." *Biological Conservation* 143 (November 2010): 2815-2822.

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*The  
Florida Historical  
Quarterly*

**Comprehensive Index, Volume 89**

#

*The 57 Club: My Four Decades in Florida Politics*, by Frederick B. Karl,  
reviewed, 270.

**A**

"A Translation History of Fontaneda," by Peter Ferdinando, 210.  
Acker, Lauren B., review by, 396.

"Administrative Recalcitrance and Government Intervention:  
Desegregation at the University of Florida, 1962-1972," by Jessica  
Clawson, 347.

*American Railroad Labor and the Genesis of the New Deal, 1919-1935*, by  
Jon R. Huibregtse, reviewed, 111.

Anderson, Eric Gary, review by, 533.

Angley, Patricia B., review by, 540.

**B**

*Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline in the Union Army* by Steven J. Ramold,  
reviewed, 389.

- Bauer, Deborah L., "'...in a strange place...': The Experiences of British Women during the Colonization of East & West Florida," 145.
- Behnken, Brian D., review by, 268.
- Berk, Juliene, *Call Her Blessed*, book note, 134.
- Berkeley, Kathleen C., review by, 538.
- Bernath, Michael, *Confederate Minds: The Struggle for Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South*, reviewed, 263.
- Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South* by Marie Jenkins Schwartz, reviewed, 387.
- Bowled Over: Big-Time College Football from the Sixties to the BCS Era*, by Michael Oriard, reviewed, 402.
- "A Boy and His Fawn: Parallel Animals in *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport* and *The Yearling*" by Kathryn Seidel, 423.
- Brinkley, Douglas, *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America*, reviewed, 266.

## C

- Cahill, William P., and Robert M. Jarvis, *Out of the Muck: A History of the Broward Sheriff's Office, 1915-2000*, reviewed, 406.
- Call Her Blessed*, by Juliene Berk, book note, 134.
- Castillo, Thomas A., review by, 111.
- Chapman, Roger, review by, 121.
- Clawson, Jessica, "Administrative Recalcitrance and Government Intervention: Desegregation at the University of Florida, 1962-1972," 347.
- College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era*, by Kurt E. Kemper, reviewed, 124.
- Confederate Minds: The Struggle for Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South*, by Michael Bernath, reviewed, 263.
- Connerley, Jennifer Lockard, review by, 255.
- Cooper, Ron, review by, 126.
- Cox, Nicole C., "Selling Seduction: Women and Feminine Nature in 1920s Florida Advertising," 186.
- Crawford, George B., "Murder, Insanity and The Efficacy of Woman's Role: The Gwendolyn Hoyt Case," 51.
- Creek Paths and Federal Roads: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves and the Making of the American South*, by Angela Pulley Hudson, reviewed, 385.



- "Cuban Exiles in Key West during the Ten Years' War, 1868-1878," by Antonia Rafael de la Cova, 287.

## D

- Davies, John, review by, 257.  
de la Cova, Rafael, "Cuban Exiles in Key West during the Ten Years' War, 1868-1878," 287.  
Desena, Jamie, book note by, 132, 133.  
Din, Gilbert C., "William Augustus Bowles on the Gulf Coast, 1787-1803: Unraveling a Labyrinthine Conundrum," 1.  
Doyle, Patrick W., "Uninvited Guests: A Night at Cedar Point Plantation," Documents and Notes, 375.  
Dumbuya, Peter A., "Thomas de Salieres Tucker: Reconciling Industrial and Liberal Arts Education at Florida's Normal School for Colored Teachers, 1887-1901," 26.

## E

- Edwards, Pamela C., review by, 394.  
*Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic*, by Ashli White, reviewed, 257.  
*Entering the Fray: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the New South*, edited by Jonathan Wells and Shelia Phipps, reviewed, 538.

## F

- Faulkner's Imperialism: Space, Place, and the Materiality of Myth*, by Taylor Hagood, reviewed, 540.  
Feinster, Crystal N., *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching*, reviewed, 396.  
Ferdinando, Peter, "A Translation History of Fontaneda," 210.  
Fisher, Lindford D., review by, 252.  
"Freezes, Fights, and Fancy: The Formation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the Florida Citrus Industry," by Scott Hussey, 81.  
"From Adventure Travel to Leisure Tourism: The Florida Letters of William Drysdale in *The New York Times*, 1884-1893," 537.  
Fromm, Annette B., review by, 404.

## G

Gentry, Judith F., review by, 109.

Glass, Ernestine, and Susan Wright, editors, *Passing in the Works of Charles W. Chesnutt*, reviewed, 535.

Gould, Jamie, review by, 266.

Gragg, Larry, *The Quaker Community on Barbados: Challenging the Culture of the Planter Class*, reviewed, 255.

## H

Hall, Joseph M., Jr., *Zamumo's Gifts: Indian-European Exchange in the Colonial Southeast*, reviewed, 252.

Hagood, Taylor, *Faulkner's Imperialism: Space, Place, and the Materiality of Myth*, reviewed, 540.

Hersey, Harry, Jr., and Julian Pleasants, *Seminole Voices: Reflections on Their Changing Society, 1970-2000*, reviewed, 404.

*The Highwaymen Murals: Al Black's Concrete Dreams*, by Gary Monroe, book note, 132.

Hobson, Geary, Jane McAdams, and Kathryn Waliewicz, *The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing after Removal*, reviewed, 527.

Hollis, Tim, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising*, book note, 133.

Hudson, Angela Pulley, *Creek Paths and Federal Roads: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves and the Making of the American South*, reviewed, 384.

Huibregtse, Jon R., *American Railroad Labor and the Genesis of the New Deal, 1919-1935*, reviewed, 111.

Hussey, Scott, "Freezes, Fights, and Fancy: The Formation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the Florida Citrus Industry," 81.

## I

"...in a strange place...': The Experiences of British Women during the Colonization of East & West Florida," by Deborah L. Bauer, 145.

"This Incomperable Land," by Maurice O'Sullivan, 417.

*Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860* by Michael O'Brien, reviewed, 530.



## J

- Jarvis, Eric, "'Secrecy Has No Excuse': The Florida Land Boom, Tourism, and the 1926 Smallpox Epidemic in Tampa and Miami," 320.
- Jarvis, Robert M., and William P. Cahill, *Out of the Muck: A History of the Broward Sheriff's Office, 1915-2000*, reviewed, 406.
- Jensen, Richard, review by, 261.
- Johnson, Martin P., review by, 263.

## K

- Karl, Frederick B., *The 57 Club: My Four Decades in Florida Politics*, reviewed, 270.
- Kemper, Kurt E., *College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era*, reviewed, 124.
- Krauthamer, Barbara, review by, 387.

## L

- Levy, Philip, "'The Most Exotic of Our Cities': Race, Place, Writing, and George Allan England's Key West," 469.
- The Life of Ruth Bryan Owen: Florida's First Congresswoman and America's First Woman Diplomat* by Sarah Pauline Vickers, reviewed, 399.
- Lowery, J. Vincent, review by, 535.
- Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940*, by Amy Louise Wood, reviewed, 116.

## M

- Manatee Insanity: Inside the War over Florida's Most Famous Endangered Species*, by Craig Pittman, reviewed, 126.
- Marrs, Aaron W., *Railroads in the Old South: Pursuing Progress in a Slave Society*, reviewed, 261.
- Martin, Charles H., review by, 124.
- McAdams, Jane, Geary Hobson, and Kathryn Waliewicz, eds., *The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing after Removal*, reviewed, 533.
- Mendez, Jesus, "From Adventure Travel to Leisure Tourism: The Florida Letters of William Drysdale in *The New York Times*, 1884-1893," 437.

Mendoza, Alex, review by, 402.

Merrill, Dennis, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America*, reviewed, 272.

Miles, Tiya, review by, 106.

Miller, Eric H., review by, 270.

Monroe, Gary, *The Highwaymen Murals: Al Black's Concrete Dreams*, book note, 132.

Morrissey, Tom, *Pirate Hunter, A Novel*, reviewed, 259.

"The Most Exotic of Our Cities': Race, Place, Writing, and George Allan England's Key West" by Philip Levy, 439.

"Murder, Insanity and The Efficacy of Woman's Role: The Gwendolyn Hoyt Case," by George B. Crawford, 51.

## N

*Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America*, by Dennis Merrill, reviewed, 272.

Newman, Louise M., review by, 399.

Nooe, F. Evan, review by, 385.

## O

O'Brien, Michael, *Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860*, reviewed, 530.

O'Sullivan, Maurice, "This Incomperable Land," 530.

*Old South, New South, or Down South?: Florida and the Modern Civil Rights Movement*, by Irvin D. S. Winsboro, reviewed, 119.

Oriard, Michael, *Bowled Over: Big-Time College Football from the Sixties to the BCS Era*, reviewed, 402.

*Out of the Muck: A History of the Broward Sheriff's Office, 1915-2000* by William P. Cahill and Robert M. Jarvis, reviewed, 406.

## P

Pacheco, Ferdie, *Tales from the 5<sup>th</sup> ST. Gym: Ali, the Dundees, and Miami's Golden Age of Boxing*, reviewed, 114.

*Passing in the Works of Charles W. Chesnutt*, edited by Susan Wright and Ernestine Glass, reviewed, 535.



- The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing After Removal*, edited by Geary Hobson, Janet McAdams, and Kathryn Walkiewicz, reviewed, 533.
- Phipps, Shelia, and Jonathan Wells, editors, *Entering the Fray: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the New South*, reviewed, 538.
- Pierce, Daniel S., *REAL NASCAR: White Lightning, Red Clay, and Big Bill France*, reviewed, 129.
- Pirate Hunter, A Novel*, by Tom Morrissey, reviewed, 259.
- Pittman, Craig, *Manatee Insanity: Inside the War over Florida's Most Famous Endangered Species*, reviewed, 126.
- Pleasants, Julian and Harry Kersey, Jr., *Seminole Voices: Reflections on Their Changing Society, 1970-2000*, reviewed, 404.

## Q

- The Quaker Community on Barbados: Challenging the Culture of the Planter Class*, by Larry Gragg, reviewed, 255.

## R

- Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era*, by Clive Webb, reviewed, 121.
- Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* by Jennifer M. Spear, reviewed, 389.
- Railroads in the Old South: Pursuing Progress in a Slave Society*, by Aaron W. Marrs, reviewed, 261.
- Ramold, Steven J., *Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline in the Union Army*, reviewed, 389.
- Real NASCAR: White Lightning, Red Clay and Big Bill France*, by Daniel S. Pierce, reviewed, 129.
- Roll, Jarod, *Spirit of Rebellion: Labor and Religion in the New Cotton South*, reviewed, 394.

## S

- Schafer, Daniel, *Thunder on the River: The Civil War in Northeast Florida*, reviewed, 109.
- Schwartz, Marie Jenkins, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South*, reviewed, 387.

- "'Secrecy Has No Excuse': The Florida Land Boom, Tourism, and the 1926 Smallpox Epidemic in Tampa and Miami," by Eric Jarvis, 320.
- Seidel, Kathryn, "A Boy and His Fawn: Parallel Animals in *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport* and *The Yearling*," 423.
- "Selling Seduction: Women and Feminine Nature in 1920s Florida Advertising," by Nicole C. Cox, 186.
- Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising*, by Tim Hollis, book note, 133.
- SeminoleVoices: Reflections on Their Changing Society, 1970-2000* by Julian Pleasants and Harry Kersey, Jr., reviewed, 404.
- The Servants and Mrs. Rawlings: Martha Mickens and African American Life at Cross Creek," by Rebecca Sharpless, 500.
- Sharpless, Rebecca, "The Servants and Mrs. Rawlings: Martha Mickens and African American Life at Cross Creek," 500.
- Sitkoff, Harvard, *Toward Freedom Land: The Long Struggle for Racial Equality in America*, reviewed, 268.
- Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America*, by Christina Snyder, reviewed, 106.
- Smith, Andrew, review by, 114.
- Smith, John David, reviews by, 389.
- Snyder, Christina, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America*, reviewed, 106.
- Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* by Crystal N. Feimster, reviewed, 396.
- Spear, Jennifer M., *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans*, reviewed, 389.
- Spirit of Rebellion: Labor and Religion in the New Cotton South* by Jarod Roll, reviewed, 394,
- Strain, Christopher B., review by, 119.
- Swanson, Ryan, review by, 129.

## T

- Tales from the 5<sup>th</sup> ST. Gym: Ali, the Dundees, and Miami's Golden Age of Boxing*, by Ferdie Pacheco, reviewed, 114.
- "Thomas de Saliere Tucker: Reconciling Industrial and Liberal Arts Education at Florida's Normal School for Colored Teachers, 1887-1901," by Peter A. Dumbuya, 26.
- Thunder on the River: The Civil War in Northeast Florida*, by Daniel Schafer, reviewed, 109.



- Toward Freedom Land: The Long Struggle for Racial Equality in America*,  
by Harvard Sitkoff, reviewed, 268.  
Turner, D.L., review by 406.

U

- "Uninvited Guests: A Night at Cedar Point Plantation" by Patrick  
W. Doyle, Documents and Notes, 375.

V

- Vickers, Sarah Pauline, *The Life of Ruth Bryan Owen: Florida's First  
Congresswoman and America's First Woman Diplomat*, reviewed, 399.

W

- Walkiewicz, Kathryn, Geary Hobson, and Jane McAdams, eds.,  
*The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing after Removal*,  
reviewed, 532.  
Ward, Evan R., review by, 272.  
Webb, Clive, *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights  
Era*, reviewed, 121.  
Wells, Jonathan, and Shelia Phipps, editors, *Entering the Fray: Gender,  
Politics, and Culture in the New South*, reviewed, 538.  
White, Ashli, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the  
Early Republic*, reviewed, 257.  
*The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America*,  
by Douglas Brinkley, reviewed, 266.  
"William Augustus Bowles on the Gulf Coast, 1787-1803: Unraveling  
a Labyrinthine Conundrum," by Gilbert C. Din, 1.  
Williams, Timothy J., review by, 530.  
Winsboro, Irvin D. S., *Old South, New South, or Down South?: Florida  
and the Modern Civil Rights Movement*, reviewed, 119.  
Wood, Amy Louise, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence  
in America, 1890-1940*, reviewed, 116.  
Woodward, Edward C., review by, 259.  
Wright, Susan, and Ernestine Glass, editors, *Passing in the Works of  
Charles W. Chesnutt*, reviewed, 535.

## X

## Y

Young, Darius J., review by, 116.

## Z

*Zamumo's Gifts: Indian-European Exchange in the Colonial Southeast*, by Joseph M. Hall Jr., reviewed, 252.









# The Florida Historical Society

The Historical Society of Florida, 1856  
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1871  
1872

(77)