

THE  
FLORIDA  
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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# *The Florida Historical Quarterly*

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## Florida: The Mediated State

by Julian C. Chambliss and Denise K. Cummings,  
Guest Editors

In a March 2007 *National Geographic* article titled, "Beyond Disney," writer T.D. Allman wrote, "Everything happening to America today is happening here..."<sup>1</sup> The article went on to suggest that Orlando had become a prime example of the "ascendant power of cities' exurbs..." While this assessment was focused on the iconic Central Florida community, the implication that Florida's experience foreshadows the country's future highlights a crucial role the state plays in the broader U.S. experience, a role that this special issue of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* aims to render. Indeed, as Anne Rowe writes in *The Ideal of Florida in the American Literary Imagination*, "In spite of the state's assimilation into the mainstream of American life, *the idea*

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1. T.D. Allman, "Beyond Disney," *National Geographic Magazine*, March 2007, accessed September 5, 2011, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/03/orlando/allman-text>.

of Florida—the subtropical land, idyllic, exotic paradise—continues to be a powerful seductive force.”<sup>2</sup> In recent memory, however, the seductive Florida has been inexorably linked to nightmarish prophecy as concerns about urbanization, immigration, and environmental despoliation have exerted considerable force upon the collective mediation about Florida.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, from presidential politics to the housing crisis, contemporary observers across the country and around the world hope to glean some greater understanding of the broader national story from Florida’s experience.<sup>4</sup> Florida has been and continues to be marked by the interplay between imagined expectation and real experience. This special issue confronts the bifurcated profile Florida occupies in the popular mind with essays that explore some of the distinctive issues that shape popular understandings of Florida as both a geographic place and a symbolic space. While the recent academic works, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams* and *Paradise Lost?* address Florida’s social and environmental histories, and as substantial analyses such as *The New History of Florida* and *Florida’s Working Class Past* explore the intersection of the state’s political and economic concerns, this special issue seeks to re-evaluate Florida’s impact on the broader cultural dialogue about the postwar transformation of the United States with essays that analyze the dynamic between popular cultural outputs and lived reality, thereby illuminating how practices of documenting Florida help shape understandings of time and historical change.<sup>5</sup>

2. Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 6.
3. For a consideration of urbanization, see Bill Belleville, *Losing It All to Sprawl: How Progress Ate My Cracker Landscape* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006). For a consideration of immigration, see Mary E. Odem, Elaine Cantrell Lacy, eds. *Latino Immigrants and the Transformation of the U.S. South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).
4. For a consideration of Florida’s role in national politics, see Susan MacManus and Thomas R. Dye, *Politics in State and Communities* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009). For a consideration of Florida and the U.S. Housing Market, see Howard Wial, “Not the Same Old Jobless Recovery: A Tale of Two Metros,” Brookings Institute, March 2010, accessed September 10, 2011, [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0318\\_jobs\\_wial.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0318_jobs_wial.aspx).
5. Robert Cassanello and Melanie Shell-Weiss, eds., *Florida’s Working-Class Past: Current Perspectives on Labor, Race, and Gender from Spanish Florida to the New Immigration* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011); Jack Emerson Davis and Raymond Arsenault, eds., *Paradise Lost?: The Environmental History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998); Michael Gannon, *The New History of Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996); and Gary R. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008).

Such an approach to harnessing the dualities of Florida in the popular mind offers the opportunity to expand our dialogue about the U.S. experience in part because the state's fortunes have always been shaped by a hemispheric experience. Since the 1990s, social scientists and humanities scholars have brought a global focus to the consideration of the U.S. experience and Florida's role as a gateway to the Caribbean and Latin America. Beyond the characterization of Florida as a contested space, recent scholarship has emphasized interconnected communities, multicultural origins, and blended identities that define the reality of the Florida existence. As such, the relationship between perception and realities in Florida creates a new space for reflective consideration of the changing nature of the national experience.

To mediate is "to act as intermediary agent in bringing, effecting, or communicating," or simply "to convey." Thus, our title for this issue, "Florida: The Mediated State," functions to describe our presentation of how perception interacts with public dialogue to shape the reality defining Florida. We contend that Florida acts as a "means to transmit," as a mechanism for grasping how the United States has expressed its national aspirations in the post WWII American half century.<sup>6</sup>

Florida's rich and diverse geographic gifts have allowed the state to play a defining role in a postwar culture of consumption, leisure, and growth central to discussions and debates about U.S. popular culture. The values associated with Florida's development and the state's many "identities" are not simply regional values or provincial identities; rather, they offer insights into the benefits, challenges, and concerns associated with modern living. In describing Florida as the mediated state, we continue a pattern of inquiry linked to questions of space, community, and identity that scholars have pursued in recent critical assessments of the broad U.S. experience. Space acts as a mediating factor in the relationships that define our national identity. The forms these relationships take—home, neighborhood, suburb, city, state—provide the setting for the formation of social consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

This interpretative analysis associated with postmodern theory allows social scientists and humanities researchers to understand the

6. Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage, 2003), 9-10.

7. Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), xiv.

intersection of space and place associated with a consumptive ethos with deep historical roots in the United States. In Florida, a fractious political climate, a harsh environment, and unstable population complicated this consumptive pattern. As a space of contested control with formable obstacles to development, Florida's *potential* has driven individual and governmental perceptions of the consequences linked to their actions since contact. While recent analysis has challenged the simplicity of Bernard Bailyn's early characterization of "visions of Xanadus" driving British "Florida Fever"<sup>8</sup> in the mid-eighteenth century or Spanish struggles over regulatory authority in late-eighteenth century Florida,<sup>9</sup> the reality of a sparse European population, active Native American opposition, and unsympathetic natural world was that Florida was (and often still is) defined by those with limited experience and imprecise perspectives. Indeed, in considering this early period Daniel Murphree demonstrated that colonial experiences were filtered through "inaccurate assessments written by individuals to promote their economic, religious, or imperial interests."<sup>10</sup>

A multicultural borderland in the early nineteenth century, Florida transitioned to a sparsely populated U.S. territory in 1821 and joined the union in 1845 with fewer than 60,000 residents.<sup>11</sup> Southern politics interrupted any settlement opportunities in the state. A strong supporter of the South's cause during the Civil War, Florida arguably benefitted from the Confederacy's defeat, as the door opened to long forestalled development in the South. In the aftermath of Reconstruction, Florida struggled during the New South transformation. Henry Grady, the herald of the New South, spoke of a southern industrial revolution to promote industrial and urban growth.<sup>12</sup> Yet, this pattern of development concentrated on "shoring up" existing social and economic patterns.<sup>13</sup>

8. Patricia C. Griffin, "Blue Gold: Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna Plantation," in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2000), 14.
9. James Gregory Cusick, "Spanish East Florida in the Atlantic Economy of the Late Eighteenth Century," in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2000), 169.
10. Daniel S. Murphree, *Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783* (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2006), 14.
11. U.S. Census Bureau, *Resident Population and Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1789-2000*.
12. Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970) 71.
13. Lawrence H. Larsen, *The Urban South: A History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 73.



The region's economic changes were more evolution than revolution as the emerging industrial economy continued a pattern of natural resource exportation, retail and commercial activities and agrarian production.<sup>14</sup> Florida was ill suited to capitalize on this new activism. Although the second largest state east of the Mississippi River, it ranked thirty-four of thirty-seven in terms of population and the transportation system remained underdeveloped.<sup>15</sup> Despite or perhaps because of these factors, Florida re-emerged as a space of desire defined by imagined opportunities. As George Pozzetta has documented, the state sought to entice settlers throughout the postbellum period.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, immigrant agents and land promoters lauded Florida as a land of opportunity for white settlers equal to and in some ways surpassing western lands.<sup>17</sup>

Despite these efforts, broader national trends shifted perceptions of Florida beyond the frontier mythos. As Gilded Age excess transformed the country, worries about urban congestion gave rise to a popular conservation movement that glorified natural spaces while at the same time extolling their proper use.<sup>18</sup> Florida's coastal beauty, typified by communities such as Key West, Jacksonville, and Pensacola, served as a real and imagined site to balance these competing views. Indeed, Florida shifted from wild frontier to "unspoiled" paradise in numerous travel narratives written by northern visitors during this period.<sup>19</sup> In the hands of entrepreneurs like Henry Flagler, Florida's natural splendor combined with infrastructure investment, sparked greater interest in the state. Flagler recognized the state's potential as a vacation

14. David R. Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982) 84-86.
15. Raymond Arsenault and Gary R. Mormino, "From Dixieland to Dreamland: Demographic and Cultural Change in Florida, 1880-1980," in *Shades of the Sunbelt: Essays on Ethnicity, Race and the Urban South*, eds. Randall Miller and George E. Pozzetta (Baton Raton: Florida Atlantic University Press, 1989), 161-163.
16. George Pozzetta, "Foreigners in Florida: A Study of Immigration Promotion, 1865-1910," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 53:2 (October 1974): 165-81.
17. Henry Knight, "Southward Expansion: The Myth of the West in the Promotion of Florida, 1876-1900," *European Journal of American Culture*, 29:2, pp 111-129.
18. Roderick Nash, "John Muir, William Kent, and the Conservation Schism," *Pacific Historical Review*, 36:4 (November 1967), 432-434.
19. Jon A. Peterson, "Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.: The Visionary and the Professional," in *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City*, Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver, eds. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 37-55.

destination and, by 1885, had developed the Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine. Consolidating the existing rail system under his control and extending it southward, Flagler created exclusive resort hotels in Daytona and Palm Beach. His efforts re-made the Florida coastline into a playground for the wealthy and not so wealthy.<sup>20</sup>

As the South entered the twentieth century, Florida's cities benefitted from the emergence of timber and textile mills, turpentine plants, and petroleum and shipping to create new jobs and stimulate expansion in ports such as Jacksonville and Tampa. Despite this growth, Florida's popular identity was glamorized in northern newspapers by the manifestation of Miami Beach as a new exclusive destination to match 1920s excess. A speculative real estate market in that decade help to expand Florida mania away from the coast as thousands of investors looked to Florida's tropical landscape hoping to capitalize on its idyllic wonder. Florida's land boom and bust forewarned the Great Depression. In the aftermath, the modern post WWII emergence of the Sunbelt once again returned Florida to the center of popular dialogue as paradise. Yet, unlike previous generations' assumptions of the wealthy dominating the state, in the postwar era the average citizen was encouraged to strive toward living the Florida dream.

In the postwar boom, Florida's transformation was bolstered by the experience of thousands of veterans who returned to the state, drawn by memories of days spent training on its pristine beaches. The demands of postwar Cold War politics encouraged Americans to live a life that extolled the triumphant values of capitalism linked to family, home, and suburban affluence.<sup>21</sup> The postwar political consensus within the United States rested on an overwhelming popular cultural mainstream message that deftly overlooked the inequities of gender and race that forestalled racial and gender minorities from enjoying freedoms. With ideological struggle against the Soviet Union as the external threat and emphasis on guarding community as the internal goal, a normalized holistic narrative provided a framework for the U.S. experience.<sup>22</sup> As a leisure destination open to the vast middle-class that emerged in

20. Flagler Museum, "Henry Morris Flagler," [http://www.flaglERMuseum.us/html/flagler\\_biography.html](http://www.flaglERMuseum.us/html/flagler_biography.html).

21. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), xviii.

22. Leroy Ashby, *With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture since 1830* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 279-80.

the postwar years, Florida was involved in and had an effect on this postwar narrative. The postwar automobile explosion coupled with the postwar leisure patterns meant that Florida's exotic locales and plentiful beaches were open to millions of new visitors.<sup>23</sup>

Florida, of course, is not the only mediated state. In idiosyncratic ways California, Texas, and New York are also often understood and shaped by interplay of imagined and real and are often cited as bellwethers. Indeed, California enjoys similar focus from scholars who see that state as a place where imagination and aspiration work together to inspire action.<sup>24</sup> Broadly, southern and western states have been tightly associated with material transformation linked to the decline of industrial power in the northern "rustbelt" and the rise of the service oriented "sunbelt" economy. The clustering of the former states of the Confederacy with western states in the "Sunbelt" associates regional identification with public sentiments that recognize that the South and the West have been the key growth sectors in the American economy since the end of WWII.<sup>25</sup>

Although perceptions about regional character seem consistent, no single variable unites the Sunbelt, except perhaps economy. In this regard, the South and West share the experience of being re-defined in the midst of a public dialogue whereby the norms of commercial process became tools to construct political reality. For scholars this process of definition and embellishment through mass culture is tied to a sense of abundance that historian David Potter suggests was defined through advertising in the

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23. John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 116-117.
  24. See Kevin Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future of Los Angeles* (Brooklyn and London: Verso, 2006); and Sonia Maasik and Jack Solomon, eds., *California Dreams and Realities: Readings for Critical Thinkers and Writers* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St.Martin, 2004).
  25. See David C. Perry and Alfred J. Watkins, "Regional Changes and the Impact of Uneven Urban Development," in *The Rise of the Sunbelt Cities*. Eds. David C. Perry and Alfred J. Watkins (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977): 19-54; Carl Abbott, *The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); David R. Goldfield and Howard N. Rabinowitz, "Epilogue: The Vanishing Sunbelt," in *Searching For the Sunbelt: Historical Perspectives on a Region*, Raymond A. Mohl, ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990); and Robert Fisher, "The Urban Sunbelt in Comparative Perspective: Houston in Context," in *Essays on Sunbelt Cities and Recent Urban America*, Robert B. Fairbanks and Kathleen Underwood, eds. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990).

postwar period.<sup>26</sup> For Florida, this abundance is built upon an already distorted perception. Our contemporary discussion of the perceived and the real Florida then seeks to bridge the gap between the conceptual landscape created in the postwar period and complexity of the material reality created by the unique social, political, and economic circumstances that have affected the Florida experience. By providing a space for thoughtful consideration of the popular reflexive ideas associated with modern Florida, we create an opportunity to understand both the continual evolution of the idea of the state and the state itself. In adopting this approach, we challenge and expand more traditional examinations of Florida by linking the state's imagined spaces to critical assessments of those forces that are shaping the popular mind.

Herein, we present three essays coupled with two shorter ruminations whose ideas coalesce around this larger conceptual framework. In this quintet, perception and reality are refracted through a variety of eyes: historian, literary scholar, environmental historian, architectural theorist, new media rhetorician. The two shorter essays further punctuate the power created by popular ideas about Florida double in service in their ability to invoke—and indeed, welcome—an imagined Florida while simultaneously and powerfully affecting real contemporary times and shaping the future. These synthetic narratives embrace the myriad elements associated with how we experience Florida and by extension how we might apprehend the broader U.S. experience.

"Florida: The Mediated State" begins with Alison Meek's investigation of the relevance of the television program *Miami Vice* in counteracting the negative media image of Miami in the 1980s. Specifically, the essay explores the historical context of the negative media image of Miami in the early 1980s, the original concerns held by Miami's tourism officials regarding a weekly show focusing on Miami's seedier underside, and the ways in which *Miami Vice* provided an alternative image to a crime-ridden tourist destination. Meek, an historian of Cold War America and American popular culture, astutely demonstrates that *Miami Vice* did have an impact on counteracting the negative media image of Miami, but the counteraction was not as widespread or as long lasting as Miami's tourism officials had hoped. In this regard,

26. David Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 176-177.

Meek's essay, while underscoring the complexity of South Florida's profile, illuminates how the desires of real individuals—e.g., from Miami's tourism officials to state boosters to television viewers—intersect with a fictional serial written for prime-time American broadcast television in order to alter consumer perception about Florida.

The specificity of Meek's focus on South Florida resonates with David Miller Parker's comparative analysis of the twin discourses in American thought that present Southern California and South Florida as areas displaying the consequences of American excess and poor planning. Noting that Southern California and South Florida have remarkably similar histories, Parker reminds us that both locales lagged behind the northern part of their states in terms of development, both were the beneficiaries of land booms promoted by civic boosters, both became known initially as centers of citrus production and tourism, and both spent their boom years as predominantly Anglo-Saxon cities distinguished from the rest of the U.S. by temperate weather and eccentric populations. Southern California developed its current identity immediately after World War II, while South Florida fully entered the popular mind after Castro's takeover of Cuba in 1959. While the discourse on dystopian Southern California has diminished in recent years, the discourse on South Florida (and increasingly Florida as a whole) has grown. The ethnic makeup of South Florida dominates much of this narrative, but a significant portion of it rests on the novels of Carl Hiaasen, a native Floridian and a longtime columnist for the *Miami Herald*. As Parker argues, Hiaasen is more concerned with the environment and the sins that rapacious developers have committed against it, although Hiaasen finds an equally appealing target in the people who the developers have attracted to South Florida. Parker's analysis of Hiaasen's novels reveals that Hiaasen writes from a genuine concern for the ecosystem of Florida, and that his popular comedic yet critical writings have come to represent Florida for many in contemporary America.

Mindful of the root of dystopian fear, Charlie Hailey's "Florida Porch Reverie" invokes the cherished ideas represented by the porch as a social space offering a site for exchange and engagement with the environmental paradise linked to Florida. Ultimately, the dangers associated with Florida's despoliation rest upon the challenge that degenerative forces pose to both our mental and physical well-being.

Hailey looks at the porch as frontier space. For him, the porch is a contemporary space still critical to understanding suburban identities, climatic imperatives, and domestic experiences. In Florida, the porch is also a space for writers. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote from the porch—it's a scene of imagination and a frame for perceiving the world. For Harriet Beecher Stowe, the porch was a site for displaying the public persona of a writer—steamboats passed by her house in Mandarin, Florida, so that tourists could glimpse her (simulated) writing on the front porch. Fascinated, Hailey muses in terms of the Florida landscape and in the context of Stowe's early arguments for fresh air in domestic space. Porches and sleeping porches play an important role, too, in Zora Neale Hurston's stories (Hurston links the sleeping porch to gender and it is Arvay's "space of belonging" in *Seraph on the Suwanee*), at her Eatonville home, and as a site for documenting music and oral histories. And Hemingway's elevated porch framed his view of Key West's lighthouse. From the other direction (outside-in), the porch mixes the formal with the informal—in New Urbanism (e.g., Seaside, Celebration, etc.) the commodification of the porch yields an idea of fresh air and community. In all cases, the porch is an interface between public-private, real-imagined, viewer-viewed, and person (viewing)-place. Literally and figuratively, the porch links the nineteenth-century frontier with twentieth-century suburbanism.

The loss of paradise formerly so accessible makes Hailey's exploration of the porch a meaningful segue to Leslie Poole's essay, within which she recounts the literary, collaborative, and creative processes that led to the development of the 2007 PBS documentary, *In Marjorie's Wake*. The many ways in which the St. Johns River of Florida over time has shaped culture—literature, art, and music—are celebrated in this film that re-creates an historic trip that Pulitzer-prize winning author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings once made on the river in 1933. Following the river from its marshy headwaters in Central Florida to the Ocklawaha River more than 100 miles away, Poole as traveler follows the path Rawlings wrote about in her "Hyacinth Drift" chapter of *Cross Creek*. As an historian, Poole provides unique insight by recounting the creative journey of the making of the documentary film and in doing so educates and informs us about the ways Rawlings' work and the St. Johns River remain inspirations capable of drawing people together and helping to forge a sense of place that is critical to the state's ongoing assessment and activism concerning environmental fears.

As point of contrast and contestation, the final short essay by Jeff Rice, "Miami Stories," ideologically resonates with the others in that it concerns the interplay between the imagined expectation and the real experience of Florida, yet takes a different tack entirely in its self-reflexive confrontation between hermeneutics—the interpretation of written texts—and invention. For Rice, any imagined Florida or real Florida is essentially bound up in the act of writing which, as he has argued in his oeuvre, is best understood and practiced as a form of invention. To stage his theory, Rice takes us on an associative (mental) and written journey (putatively about Miami) that includes stops at popular culture's landmarks—music lyrics, novels, television episodes, movie scenes, short stories. When these are combined with facts, his own lived experiences, and "internal representations"—those that may never be fully expressed but can be felt—Rice's landmarks can be read as touchstones of history that is oftentimes hidden as such, or "secret," to borrow his term—history that is there yet must be mined and then claimed through the act of writing. While Rice attempts to account for or represent other, associative, temporal moments often overlooked or left behind by more conventional processes, he overturns commonplace and reveals how individual lived experience and the act of writing are in essence open invitations to many imagined Floridas, all that are concomitantly and inextricably tied to real, lived experience yet, he cautions, each just out of reach of totalizing narrative. Of course, the greater lesson from his performance is that he's not merely addressing Miami. Or Florida. Writing moments—as his and each of these essays variously yet differently illustrate—are about our postwar U.S. experience.

## Murders and Pastels in Miami: The Role of *Miami Vice* in bringing back Tourists to Miami

by Alison Meek

In the 1950s, Miami, Florida, earned a reputation as a tourist destination for its “arresting combination of sun, sand, and sea.”<sup>1</sup> But by the late 1970s and early 1980s, that image had changed dramatically. Instead of sandy beaches and year-round warm tropical rays of sun tanning pasty tourists, Miami developed an image in the national and international media centered on drug cartel shoot-outs, Cuban refugees, and race riots. To make matters worse, in the eyes of Miami’s tourist honchos, a new NBC weekly series focused on the city was set to debut in the fall of 1984. Michael Mann’s *Miami Vice*, a show about cops violently taking on Miami’s seedy underbelly, sent city officials into near panic. But before long, as the show became a cultural phenomenon at home and abroad, Miami’s tourist officials began to change their tune: within a year, *Miami Vice* was touted as the show that saved Miami’s image.

The question that begs investigation is whether or not *Miami Vice* was indeed the great cure-all to Miami’s tourist woes that it was

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1. Gary Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), 92.



held up to be. Did *Miami Vice* bring tourists back to Miami, or were there other factors involved in the turn-around in the 1980s?<sup>2</sup> What impact did this television drama, which was on the air from 1984-1989, actually have in terms of the media image Miami and South Florida projected?

The public perception of South Florida was, by the late 1970s, in serious trouble. For most, South Florida was known as "God's waiting room,"<sup>3</sup> a place "where the elderly went to cash Social Security checks, play shuffleboard, and die."<sup>4</sup> Even more troubling, Miami was earning a reputation for murder and mayhem. A March 1978 *Time* magazine article described the region as a "Pot Smugglers' Paradise,"<sup>5</sup> as South Florida had become the corridor through which flowed marijuana and cocaine coming to the U.S. from Colombia and elsewhere. In July 1979, "Cocaine Cowboys" turned the Dadeland shopping mall into a new version of Dodge City. Two men were killed in a shootout over drugs and four innocent bystanders were injured.<sup>6</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* wrote of

2. In the 1990s, Miami was hit with a new rash of bad publicity as foreign tourists from Britain, Canada, and Germany began to be murdered on the streets of Miami. See for example Peter Small, "Miami Tourists 'a target', police say," *Toronto Star*, January 25, 1993, A2, regarding Canadian tourists being killed, and "Miami killing jolts state's tourist trade," *St. Petersburg Times*, April 7, 1993, 1B, for the killing of a German tourist.
3. David Zeman, "Music to Miami's Ears," *Miami Herald*, October 27, 1989, Local, 1B.
4. T.D. Allman, *Miami* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 9-10.
5. "Pot Smugglers' Paradise," *Time*, March 13, 1978. According to the DEA, "By 1979, the South Florida illegal drug trade was the state's biggest industry and was said to be worth \$10 billion a year wholesale." Department of Justice, DEA Museum: A Tradition of Excellence, 1975-1980. [www.usdoj.gov/dea/deamuseum/dea\\_history\\_book/1975-1980.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/deamuseum/dea_history_book/1975-1980.htm)
6. The Dadeland massacre was reportedly ordered by Griselda Blanco, whose drug operators were those dubbed the "Cocaine Cowboys." This particular shoot-out was designed to take out soldiers of a rival Colombian cocaine gang run by El Loco, Conrado Valencia Zalgado. As described by Carl Hiaasen, El Loco "was the original cocaine cowboy - a drug runner, machine gunner, bond jumper, high roller, master of disguise. In his prime, he made Pacino's Scarface look like Tommy Tune." Carl Hiaasen, "Justice deposes the ruling king of cocaine wars," June 4, 1985, *Kick Ass* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1999), 104. See too: DEA, A Tradition of Excellence, 1975-1980, and Department of Justice, US Drug Enforcement Administration: DEA Congressional Testimony, July 16, 1997. [www.usdoj.gov/dea.pubs/cngtrtest.ct970716a.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/dea.pubs/cngtrtest.ct970716a.htm). As pointed out in the *Christian Science Monitor*, one drug dealer had so much excess money (his was a \$1 billion a month operation) that he carpeted his stables and routinely washed his horses down with whiskey. Richard Luscombe, "The Ultimate Makeover," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 31, 2006, 2.

a "drug trade that is out of hand, with gangs of dealers ... routinely shooting each other in South Florida."<sup>7</sup> As a result, ordinary South Florida residents emptied gun stores seeking protection. Bumper stickers urged citizens to "Help Fight Crime: Buy Guns." And one bank offered its new customers not the traditional toaster but cans of pepper spray that could easily be carried in one's pocket or purse.<sup>8</sup> More problematic, wrote David Rieff in his 1987 *Exiles, Tourists and Refugees in the New America*, was that "the media had a field day. Reporting on a bunch of Colombian [drug] dealers peppering each other with Uzis and Mac-10s at every stoplight and across every shopping mall in Dade County was a lot more fun than a story about the SALT talks."<sup>9</sup>

In June 1980, a riot erupted in Liberty City after 33-year-old black insurance agent Arthur McDuffie was reportedly killed by five white police officers. An all-white jury subsequently found the officers not guilty of murder. When the fires were finally put out after a riot in which "attacking and killing white people was the main objective," 18 were dead and over 1000 arrested.<sup>10</sup>

If things were not bad enough, Fidel Castro in 1980 decided to take the United States up on its offer to "give me your tired, your poor ... the wretched refuse of your teeming shore," by opening up the port of Mariel to Cubans who wanted to leave. As an added bonus, Castro emptied out his jails and sent along to the United States thousands of "misfits and criminals" who soon began "invading South Miami Beach's welfare hotels, mugging its elderly Jewish retirees, robbing its delicatessens [and] turn[ing] the Deco district into a drug peddlers' paradise."<sup>11</sup>

In November 1981, James Kelly authored a *Time* magazine cover story titled "Paradise Lost?". Instead of images of palm trees, blue skies, and pounding surfs, Kelly instead proclaimed that the

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7. David Nylan, "Florida striving to live with success," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1981, D1. In an attempt to counter this flow of drugs into South Florida, the federal government set up a South Florida Drug Task Force charged with bringing together officials from Customs, DEA, the Coast Guard and the Treasury Department. Put in charge of overseeing the task force was Vice President George Bush.

8. James Kelly, "Absolute War in our streets," *Time*, November 24, 1980.

9. David Rieff, *Exiles, Tourists and Refugees in the New America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), 28.

10. Allman, 22.

11. *Ibid.*, 28. This influx of Cuban refugees, on top of those already in Miami due to Castro's revolution, created a potent racial tension in Miami between Hispanics and African Americans that, at times, erupted into violence.

new South Florida image was "of a policeman leaning over the body of a Miamian whose throat has been slit and wallet emptied;" of drug boats speeding across Biscayne Bay; and of a "tidal wave of refugees." As for the drugs, "so much dope was seized [3.2 million pounds of marijuana, in 1980, with a street value of \$1.3 billion and 2300 pounds of cocaine worth \$5.8 billion] ... that the police began trucking it to the Florida Power and Light Co. to burn in its generators." Drug kingpins, with their "billions in narco bucks," were living the high life in Miami, buying up, luxury cars and prime Miami real estate with cash. As for the violence, Kelly enhanced an often referenced image: there were so many bodies in "the Miami morgue that [the] Dade County Medical Examiner ... has rented a refrigerated hamburger van to house the overflow." Kelly also cited the FBI's list of the most crime ridden cities in the U.S., which included three South Florida cities in the ranking: Miami in first place, West Palm Beach in fifth, and Fort Lauderdale in eighth. Residents of South Florida felt under siege. One resident stated that "I've been through two wars and no combat zone is as dangerous as Dade County." Thus, it was no surprise that residents were stocking up on "attack dogs, alarms [and] ... even armored cars."<sup>12</sup>

Miami city officials were mortified at this media image of their city as the "murder capital of the world,"<sup>13</sup> and looked for ways to counter this negative publicity. They got rid of their previous tourism campaign of "See it like a Native" when this began to be parodied with residents seeing "it" through the barrel of a gun.<sup>14</sup>

12. James Kelly, "Paradise Lost?", *Time*, November 3, 1981. All of this talk of murder rates and Miami being a dangerous city led a criminal justice professor at Florida International University, Dr. William Wilbanks, to question the scope of this crime wave. The result was an in-depth study published by Wilbanks in 1984, titled *Murder in Miami: An Analysis of Homicide Patterns and Trends in Dade County (Miami) Florida, 1917-1983*. Wilbanks' general thesis is that much of the panic in Miami was caused by media hype, and that the statistics about Miami's murder rate not only needed to be placed in an historical context, but also be placed in context with "the aggregate nature of homicides in the country" as a whole. William Wilbanks, *Murder in Miami* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), xiv.
13. A quote from the *London Daily Press* in James Kelly, "Absolute War in Our Streets," *Time*, November 24, 1980.
14. As Helen Muir points out, some "jokesters" altered posters to read "Miami. Siege it like a Native," and "Miami. It's a Riot." Moreover, Muir highlights another incident that cannot have helped Miami's image: a visit of Mother Teresa to the city to "feed the hungry." Helen Muir, *Miami, USA*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 284.

Instead, they came up with a rather benign slogan of "Miami is for me," that played up Miami's cultural attractions—a new zoo, cruise ship ports—while poking fun at Miami's competitors ("Boston is too chilly, Frisco was too hilly, I got so bored in Philly, Miami is for me").<sup>15</sup>

The sensitivity to Miami's image problem came through clearly when the *draft* of an article to be published in the *The Economist* made its rounds into the memo boxes of Miami's tourism guardians. It was not just what the article might say about Miami ("a rather unfashionable tourist resort and retirement home for middle-class refugees" and a "future Miami, circa 1992, as a city where shoot 'em up gangs of political thugs have replaced the machine-gun wielding cocaine cowboys of recent years"), but the timing of the article as well. It just so happened that the release of the article would coincide with a travel agents' convention being held in Miami. The Miami Chamber of Commerce responded to the draft of a possibly negative article that had yet to appear in its final print version by canceling a banquet that was to have been held to celebrate the author of the article when it was assumed that the article would be positive and gushing. In addition, the Florida Department of Commerce nixed \$35,000 worth of ads they had previously okayed to run in the British news magazine.<sup>16</sup> Ironically, the article that was actually published in the *The Economist* contained nary a negative word about Miami, and indeed, applauded Miami for its emergence as a leading city of international commerce.<sup>17</sup>

Such a small slight was nothing compared to a real crisis that hit Miami and headlines in December 1982—the Overtown race riots, which left two dead and 26 injured—that coincided with the annual Orange Bowl Parade. Following a \$1 million ad campaign

15. Janis Johnson, "Make Mine Miami," *Washington Post*, January 17, 1982, Travel section, F1, 2 and 3.

16. Dan Fesperman, "Trouble in Paradise: British critiques piques Miami leaders," *Miami Herald*, October 13, 1982, D1 and 2.

17. Andrew Neil, "The Last Frontier," *The Economist*, October 16, 1982, 16. Neil writes of Florida: "South Florida is strange. Instead of coping with recession, its politicians are grappling with growth. .... South Florida is America's last frontier, Miami its last frontier city. Geography, culture and politics are all playing their part in this transformation from real estate to international city state. ... Florida has the best business climate in the United States, with among the lowest per capita taxes in the country, few unions, a sympathetic state government and cheap labour. Mix that in with Miami's geography and its Cubans and you have a potent brew to explain South Florida's emergence onto the world stage."

to get tourists back to Miami, Dade County's tourist director had hoped that Miami was about "to see some light at the end of tunnel."<sup>18</sup> Instead, *Time* magazine readers, for example, were treated to headlines such as "Miami's New Days of Rage."<sup>19</sup>

For many, the impact of Miami being known as "the murder capital of the world," was evidenced in a steady decline in tourists. Between 1980 and 1984, domestic tourists to the Greater Miami area had declined from 6.7 million visitors to 5.3 million. Even more concerning was the drop in international tourists, whose numbers plummeted by 13% and 15% over the same years.<sup>20</sup> Miami tourist officials were quick to blame these figures solely on the negative press reports about their city.<sup>21</sup>

It was into this ever-growing paranoia over Miami's image that Michael Mann announced plans to begin filming a new police drama set in South Florida. The origins of *Miami Vice* are traced back to a two-word memo that Brandon Tartikoff, the President of NBC's entertainment division, passed along to Mann: "MTV cops." Heading up the project were film director Michael Mann (*Thief*, *Manhunter*, *Heat*, *The Insider*, and *Ali*, among others) and producer and creator Anthony Yerkovich (*Hill Street Blues* and a *Starsky and Hutch* script writer). Yerkovich was particularly drawn to the seedy underbelly of Miami, which he thought of "as sort of [a] modern-day American Casablanca" with its Cuban refugees and reputation as a drug capital in the U.S. "There is," Yerkovich said, "a fascinating amount of service industries that revolve around the drug trade—money laundering, bail bondsmen, attorneys who service drug smugglers,"<sup>22</sup> all of which could be sinisterly included into various plot scenarios.

18. Edward Cody, "Orange Bowl Parade Proceeds as Miami Racial Violence Cools," *Washington Post*, January 1, 1983, A1.
19. Kurt Anderson, "Miami's New Days of Rage," *Time*, January 10, 1983.
20. Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1980-2002, Miami-Dade County Overnight Visitor Counts. Statistical information provided by the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau.
21. While bad press may indeed have accounted for some of this decline, there should also be a finger pointed at the declining British pound in relation to the US dollars. Quite simply, some Britons, who made up a large percentage of foreign tourists to South Florida, could not afford to travel abroad. Pacific Exchange Rate Service, Foreign Currency Units per 1 US dollar, 1948-2006, <http://fx.saunders.ubc.ca>, and Mike Sante, "TV show will hurt S. Florida tourism, travel agents warn," *Miami Herald*, January 9, 1985, Broward edition, 1Br and 8Br.
22. Richard Zoglin, "Cool Cops, Hot Show," *Time*, September 16, 1985. See too, Jeffrey Schmalz, "Sun Sets on Show that Redefined a City," *New York Times*, May 18, 1989, A1 and 14.

The show, starring Don Johnson as Sonny Crockett and Philip Michael Thomas as Ricardo Tubbs, was reportedly modeled after two real Metro-Dade undercover narcotics detectives, Tommy O'Keefe and Dennis Reddington. Edward James Olmos was tapped as Lt. Martin Castillo.<sup>23</sup> The pilot, which premiered on Sunday, September 16, 1984 (before moving to its regular Friday 9pm slot), cost nearly \$5 million to make. Each subsequent episode in its 107 episode history cost somewhere between \$1 and \$1.3 million to produce, with a big percentage of that money going to secure the rights of the rock songs that became the show's distinctive sound track.<sup>24</sup>

In its first year, *Miami Vice* placed 46th in the ratings, though it found an audience during reruns in the summer of 1985, was nominated for 15 Emmy awards, and managed to attract a closer look by the media (including *Tiger Beat*, which dedicated an entire special edition to *Miami Vice*).<sup>25</sup> It also began to attract big name guest stars, including those not normally associated with television roles. In 1985, G. Gordon Liddy, of Watergate fame, played "a retired right-wing renegade General illegally recruiting American mercenaries to fight alongside the Contras in Nicaragua."<sup>26</sup> Even Vice President George Bush was approached to play himself to showcase President Ronald Reagan's war on drugs.<sup>27</sup>

23. David Buxton, in his book, *From The Avengers to Miami Vice*, nicely sums up the main characters, writing: "Sonny Crockett is white, divorced, an ex-alcoholic beach bum of dubious antecedents, who lives in elegant negligence on a houseboat with his pet alligator, and drives a Ferrari Daytona.... Ricardo Tubbs, a 'dude' of mixed black-Hispanic descent, a charmer with a diamond in his ear, who has moved to Miami after the killing of his policeman brother in a gangland murder... Castillo (a veteran of both the Civil Rights marches and the Vietnam war) and their fellow team-mates, the working class Southern ethnic Switek and Zito (both Elvis fans) and the policewomen, Trudy (black) and Gina (Cuban)." David Buxton, *From The Avengers to Miami Vice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 143-144.

24. Howard Cohen, "Miami Vice Anniversary," *Miami Herald*, July 21, 2004.

25. Scott Blakely, "For NBC, 'Miami Vice' has become a Virtue," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 9, 1985, 4. See too, Steve Sonsky, "Bye, Pal!," *Miami Herald*.

26. Steve Sonsky, "Bye, Pal! Carl Hiaasen compiled a 'Hip Celebrity Guest Star on Miami Vice' list which included: Ted Nugent, who was shot by Tubbs, basketball player Bill Russell who "blew his brains out ... Frank Zappa [who] got thrown in Biscayne Bay ... Lee Iacocca [who] got to watch a car blow up, but it was a Lincoln, not a Chrysler," and Bianca Jagger, who was also shot by Tubbs. Carl Hiaasen, "Death way of life for Miami Vice," *Ottawa Citizen*, May 17, 1986, G6. Also see Buxton, 150.

27. Don MacPherson, "Quebecers do time on *Miami Vice*," *The Gazette* (Montreal), January 28, 1986, B3.

Despite assurances from the show's creators and the city government's previous attempts to lure film and television production to South Florida,<sup>28</sup> when the show first debuted in September 1984, many Miami officials "suffered a collective case of apoplexy."<sup>29</sup> Rather than promoting an image along the lines of the *Wonderful World of Disney*, there were fears that Miami's existing negative image would only be "validated by a prime-time chronicle of drug wars, serial murders, shopping mall drug wars and assorted other mayhem."<sup>30</sup> Some connected with the Tourism Development Council were upset by the show's pilot in which Crockett and Tubbs hunt down a Colombian drug dealer with ten people killed in the process.<sup>31</sup> Proponents of Miami tourism also disliked a courtroom scene in which the power goes out due to a power failure. When the power comes on, the man on trial sees that every court official, from the judge to the court reporter, was facing him with guns drawn.<sup>32</sup> A Miami-Dade police officer hired to be a technical adviser to the show quit in protest due to a *Miami Vice* script that he believed was "demeaning to all the men and women in law enforcement." The script called for scenes in which an officer physically attacked a suspect and an informer was allowed to use drugs in the presence of two undercover agents.<sup>33</sup> There was even a push to get the name of the series changed to something more benign.<sup>34</sup>

Some Miami journalists thought their city's fathers were overreacting and making more of the problem than they should. Bill Cosford, in the *Miami Herald*, admitted that "[t]he official worry

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28. A similar controversy erupted previously over the filming of the Al Pacino film *Scarface* (1983). After complaints from city officials about the movie's images of violence and connections to South Florida, and their demands for input on the script, the makers of the film simply decided to pack up and move film production back to California. Marc Fisher, "Top Metro Officials skip 'Vice' preview, don't want to censor," *Miami Herald*, July 25, 1984, Local, B1 and B5.
29. "City Finding that Everything is Nice in Land of Vice," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 27, 1985, B2.
30. Mary Voboril, "'Miami Vice' may be a virtue for Dade tourism," *Miami Herald*, January 30, 1985, 1B.
31. Dory Owens, "Tourism officials want to study the impact of TV show," *Miami Herald*, September 18, 1984, 1B.
32. "TV Previews: Miami and Punky," *Wall Street Journal*, September 15, 1984, C4, and *Miami Vice* DVD, Season 1.
33. Jesus Rangel, "Producers Soothe Miami's sensitivity about TV filming," *New York Times*, August 2, 1984, A10.
34. Associated Press, "City Finding that Everything is Nice in Land of 'Vice'," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 27, 1995, B2.

list is substantial: The title will send out a negative impression. Some scenes may make cops look bad. There's too much violence. It makes Miami look sinful. People will see it and not want to come here." But Cosford pointed how much good *Hawaii Five-O* had done for tourism there, and worried more about the image of city officials publicly fretting over a television show, writing,

*Miami Vice* is making us look very bad indeed. Not because the show is offensive—it's somewhere between *Scarface* and *Hawaii Five-O*, with a bit of rock-video glitz around the edges—but because too many of our leaders seem to be offended by it...The image that we project with a festival of hand-wringing is that of a place that cannot fix its own problems because it will not grow up...Thus the clear message...we are sending out: We are afraid. We want *The Sound of Music On Biscayne Bay* or nothing else.<sup>35</sup>

By the end of the first season, however, city officials began to sing a completely different tune when it came to the impact of *Miami Vice* and its promotion of Miami and South Florida. Civic boosters clued into the stunning visual impact of the opening credits alone, with its cut away shots of lush palm trees, pink flamingos, crashing surf, blue skies, orange sunsets, glass office buildings, and white beaches. And then "someone noticed that Miami tourism had gone up 10 percent since the show went on the air."<sup>36</sup>

As a result of the show in general, Miami did garner positive headlines and stories. There was a rather glowing AP story published under the title "Most everyone in Miami finds virtue in Vice," in the *Akron Beacon Journal* in November 1985. "Miami Beach comes back from its 'slum and num' era," touted Toronto's *Globe and Mail* in February 1986. "Miami on the move," proclaimed *Newsday* on March 15, 1987. The *CBS Morning Show* spent a week in South Florida in January 1986, and despite the unfortunately frigid temperatures, executives from various tourism councils basked in

35. Bill Cosford, "We're hot on the trail of 'Vice'," *Miami Herald*, August 2, 1984, 1L and 3L. Michael Mann himself complained about this in an interview with the *Washington Post*, saying that Miami officials had adopted an "attitude that was absurdly provincial. They wanted some goody-goody boring show that no one would watch." Art Harris, "Of 'Vice' and Mann," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1985, Style, Section B, 1 and 11.

36. Steve Sonsky, "Miami Viced," *Miami Herald*, April 7, 1985, Amusements, 1L and 5L.



the positive images of Florida being broadcast daily.<sup>37</sup> Even the *Miami Herald* took pleasure in telling its readers in April 1986 that, according to the *Public Relations Journal*, "Miami has become so hip and so hot that it's now almost a promoter's dream."<sup>38</sup>

"Almost," however, is the significant qualifier, because for each positive article on Miami, there were a seemingly equal number of negative articles. "We're back to the Jesse James' days: Miami plagued by Expressway Bandits," proclaimed the *Los Angeles Times* on August 18, 1985. "Stalking killers: Two homicide sleuths win some, lose some on the streets of Miami," appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* on October 16, 1985. "Real Miami vice: no glamour in deadly drug war," was published in Montreal's *The Gazette* on December 20, 1985, while "Murder, Florida style: is the Sunshine State developing an identity as America's most bizarre killing ground?" was found in the *Boston Globe* on May 7, 1987.

Drugs continued to be a major headache for officials in South Florida. In 1985, the U.S. Coast Guard made a record bust of nearly 2000 pounds of cocaine with a street value of \$575 million.<sup>39</sup> And in 1986, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* published an article with the title "Despite special South Florida task Force, law authorities 'just can't stop the drugs,'" arguing that rather than the 65% to 70% of the nation's cocaine that was previously shipped through South Florida, that percentage now reached upward of 75% to 80%.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, at least four additional factors caused continued heartache for Miami's boosters and seemingly, in their minds, negated the good press of *Miami Vice*: Carl Hiaasen; a 1987 *New York Times* article; a change in Florida gun laws; and the broadcast of a 48 Hours in-depth investigation titled "Miami fights back."

Carl Hiaasen, a twice weekly columnist for the *Miami Herald* whose articles were often published in newspapers across the United States and Canada, proved himself to be a constant thorn in the side of Miami's tourism officials who wanted nothing but stories

37. The *Miami Herald* provided full coverage of the show. See its January 28, 1986 edition, including stories such as: Steve Sonsky, "Smile South Florida," *Living Today*, 1B; Doug Adrianson, "Some Snapshots from America's 'slickest city,'" *Living Today*, 1B; and Beth Dunlop, "Miami's skyline gets top billing," *Living Today*, 3B.

38. Debbie Sontag, "Journal hails Miami's rebirth," *Miami Herald*, April 24, 1986, *Neighbors*, 17.

39. "American Notes: Drugs: Two Record Breaking Busts," *Time*, May 20, 1985.

40. "Despite special South Florida Task Force, law authorities 'just can't stop the drugs,'" *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 6, 1986, 17.

of sunshine and orange blossoms. Hiaasen, instead, continued to write articles with such titles as "Miami's special and it needs its own standards," in which he compiled a specific stress test to be undertaken by Miami residents, including such questions as: "On the average, how many nights a week are you awakened by the sound of gunfire? A. Every night (10 points); B. Four nights a week or fewer (5 points); C. I just sleep right through it (1 point)." Additional titles included "Auto trunks are no place to park bodies;" "Shop closing may trigger gun panic;" "In tourist haven, mayor sticks to guns;" and "Take heart, Miami murder is mundane."<sup>41</sup> In the mid-to-late 1980s, Hiaasen also published several best-selling novels including *Tourist Season* (1986), *Double Whammy* (1989), and *Skin Tight* (1989). As explained by Sheryl James of the *St. Petersburg Times*, it was in fact Hiaasen's novels that proved to be the real problem for tourist gurus. "For years," she argues,

Miami civic booster-chamber types could pretend to ignore him. He was just a *Miami Herald* columnist, the typical muck-raking, brilliant and distressingly apt big city scribe who considered it his responsibility to save South Florida from sin, corruption and environmental catastrophe... Only Miami area folks were exposed to his stories about greed, drooling developers, right-wing Cuban zealots, guys who cheat, for God's sake, in fishing tournaments, Super Bowl riots, mountains made of garbage and incompetent doctors who rely on bribes not skill, to practice. What city doesn't have its minor problems? But in 1986, Hiaasen wrote his first solo novel, *Tourist Season*. It was a suspiciously funny crime story about a columnist who kills tourists, mainly by feeding them to crocodiles or stuffing them in suitcases. The novel was set in South Florida... These novels do not please the Greater Miami Area Chamber of Commerce. People in New York, Chicago, San Francisco are reading these books. They're laughing. They're seeing South Florida's back side from the knowing eyes of a native. What's worse, Hiaasen is going on all these national talk

41. Carl Hiaasen, "Auto trunks are no place to park bodies," January 21, 1987, *Kick Ass*, 130-132; "Shop closing may trigger gun panic," March 1, 1989, *Kick Ass*, p. 49-51; "In tourist haven, mayor sticks to guns," June 27, 1990, *Kick Ass*, 53-55; and "Take heart, Miami murder is mundane," *Miami Herald*, January 14, 1991, Local, IB.

shows, talking about overdevelopment, rampant crime, drugs, soiling Miami's tourist image. On one talk show, 'he talked about how we lead the nation in dead bodies in trunks,' complains Miami Mayor Xavier Suarez. 'It sounded like a true statistic.' Which it isn't. Is it?<sup>42</sup>

Six years after *Time* magazine questioned whether South Florida had become "Paradise Lost?" yet another feature story in yet another national publication caused tremors throughout Miami. This time, the piece, written by Robert Sherrill and published in the *New York Times* Sunday magazine in July 1987, asked "Can Miami Save Itself?" The subtitle of Sherrill's story made an even more blunt point: "A City Beset by Drugs and Violence." Sherrill, a resident of Tallahassee and former reporter for the *Miami Herald*, raised many of the same issues that had been raised six years earlier by *Time* magazine: drugs and drug murders, crime rates, refugees and "Castro's great revenge," race riots and white flight. For Sherrill, all this created not just a problem for tourism, but had a significant impact on attracting and keeping corporations in the Miami area.<sup>43</sup>

In response, 17 top city officials, from the City Council to the police department to tourism officials, met for a strategy meeting to figure out how to downplay the impact of what they called a "grossly exaggerated" article. Most were furious that the article was simply a replay of old issues and that a photo accompanying the article, reportedly showing a drug take down, was actually a

42. Sheryl James, "The book on Florida: Columnist Carl Hiaasen's novels speak volumes about our state," *St. Petersburg Times*, December 3, 1989, 1F. Interestingly, as pointed out by Gene Seymour of the *Los Angeles Times*, "Despite the area's long history of sleaze, slime and somewhat gothic violence, it's only been in the last decade or so - with, of course, no little help from ... 'Miami Vice' ... that South Florida has achieved the kind of dubious status as leading literary scene of the crime once shared by New York and Los Angeles." With writers such as Edna Buchanan, Carl Hiaasen, John Katzenbach, Elmore Leonard, and James W. Hall, "social satire is more important than who-done-it; absurdity defuses grit, sociopaths sprout like tropical weeds. And the setting crawls all over the plot, insisting, like a big-bellied, cigar-smoking tourism promoter, that South Florida is no mere backdrop." Gene Seymour, "Crazy from the heat: in mystery novelist Carl Hiaasen's Florida, crocodiles eat tourists, eco-terrorists kidnap the Orange Bowl Queen, and Mickey Mouse is Filthy Vermin," *Los Angeles Times*, November 17, 1991, 24.

43. Robert Sherrill, "Can Miami Save Itself?," *New York Times*, July 19, 1987, Sunday Magazine, SM18.

four-year-old staged advertisement for Westinghouse's aircraft division.<sup>44</sup>

For observers of both the article and of the reaction exhibited by tourism officials, the problem was not with Sherrill's article; it was, once again, with the knee jerk reaction by Miami's city officials. As one *Miami Herald* editorial writer argued, "the reaction of the local establishment [was a] study in community paranoia." He found Sherrill's article to be "balanced" and "fair" and "Besides, rough exposure in the media is nothing new for Miami. Hell, this is an interesting city, hot copy, steamy, glamorous, violent. Always was. Always will be."<sup>45</sup>

Carl Hiaasen added his two cents, writing that "If anything, Sherrill was merciful for not dwelling more on current events," which he then laid out: ongoing police scandals in which Miami cops have been "implicated in drug-rip-off-murder schemes...a new group of international narco assassins" who have moved to Miami, and a debate over "whether animal sacrifices were permissible in Hialeah." Hiaasen concluded by taking a swipe at hyper-sensitive city officials, writing: "For the record, Bob Sherrill's article does not portray Dade County as the sludge pit of the universe, so take your medicine and calm down. There's nothing wrong with civic pride, but civic panic is embarrassing."<sup>46</sup>

Dave Barry, also a writer at the *Miami Herald*, had a similar sarcastic reaction. "The overall impression created by the cover was," writes Barry, "*Sure Miami can save itself! And some day trained sheep will pilot the Concorde!*" The article, in Barry's opinion, pointed out problems Miami faced including "rampant...violent crime and poverty and political extremism and drugs and corruption and

44. One city manager referred to the article as "a piece of trash." Others complained that the article did not cover the good things about Miami, including its ballet, its newly constructed library, and its symphony orchestra. Jeff Leen, "Miami leaders bash NY Times story," *Miami Herald*, July 18, 1987, Front Section, 20.

45. Charles Whited, "Can Miami save itself? Maybe not," *Miami Herald*, July 18, 1987, Local News, D1 and D2. The editorial goes on to point out the contradiction in city officials loving *Miami Vice* for its "Scenic local splendors shown between shootouts," and the reality of what Miamians themselves faced on a daily basis. The great irony for Whited, however, was the fact that the article was to be published "during this week, when even more Miami cops were indicted in a variety of drug crimes, from robbery to extortion to murder conspiracy."

46. Carl Hiaasen, "Local leaders need to foster pride, not panic," July 20, 1987, *Kick Ass*, 132-134.

ethnic hatred." On the upside? "Voodoo is legal." The reaction of Miami's civil leaders was that

of cool maturity, similar to the way Moe reacts when he is poked in the eyeballs by Larry and Curly. Our leaders held emergency breakfasts and issued official statements pointing out that much of the information [in the article] was Ancient History dating all the way back to the early 1980s, and that we haven't had a riot for what, *months* now, and that the whole drugs-and-violence thing is overrated. Meanwhile, at newsstands all over South Florida, crowds of people were snapping up all available copies of the *New York Times*, frequently at gunpoint.<sup>47</sup>

Third came the decision by lawmakers in Tallahassee in late 1987 to change Florida's gun laws. Under this new law (actually the repeal of an existing 1893 law), any resident of Florida, except "convicted felons, certified psychotics, and twice convicted drunks,"<sup>48</sup> would now be permitted to carry a handgun without obtaining a license first, so long as the gun was carried in plain view. Newspapers across the country had a field day with this new image. *Time* published two articles on the subject: "Pistol Packers: The wild West, Florida-style," and "Florida: Goodbye, 'Gunshine.'" The *Chicago Sun Times* proclaimed "Florida's pistol packin' lunacy," while the *Washington Post* warned of "Pistol-Packin' Populace: Florida up in arms." The *Washington Post* cited comedian Eddie Murphy making his Florida audiences pass through metal detectors. The paper also quoted a Miami resident who said, "I'm going back to Montana. It's too dangerous here."<sup>49</sup> When lawmakers finally did close this loophole, Hiaasen again responded in his typical acerbic style, writing:

47. Dave Barry, *Dave Barry's Greatest Hits* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1988), 60-61. Barry's revenge was to write a mocking comparison piece on whether New York can save itself. His conclusion? "Who cares?"

48. Neal R. Peirce, "Gun law hurts Florida's image," *St. Petersburg Times*, November 16, 1987, 12A.

49. Myra MacPherson, "Pistol-Packin' Populace," *Washington Post*, October 22, 1987, E1 and E2. See too, Christina Garcia, "Pistol Packers," *Time*, September 28, 1987, time.com, "Florida," *Time*, October 19, 1987, and Editorial, "Florida's pistol-packin' lunacy," *Chicago Sun Times*, October 4, 1987, 14. Not surprisingly, Carl Hiaasen jumped into the fray with articles such as "Praise the Law, and Quick, Pass the Ammunition," (October 2, 1987) in which he writes that "Florida's new gun law, also known as the Mortician's Relief Act, officially makes us the most dangerous state in America...Only gun dealers and the most radical of population-control advocates are celebrating today." Carl Hiaasen, *Paradise Screwed* (New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 2001), 208.

What really got [lawmakers] worried in Tallahassee was all the nasty publicity. They simply couldn't sit still while yet another network news correspondent stood under the palm trees and talked about Dodge City, 1987. This sort of thing is bad news, because it's bad for the tourist business...[M]any lawmakers weren't responding to the thought of more dead bodies in the county morgue, but to the thought of empty hotel rooms at Disney World...Only in Florida does tourism take primacy over human life.<sup>50</sup>

But this image of Dodge City did not disappear and instead was reinforced in March 1988 when Dan Rather and other CBS reporters descended on Miami to film a *48 Hours* segment titled "Miami Fights Back." Again, the seedy underbelly of Miami was laid bare for all to see: an elderly ex-Marine stabbed and robbed of his \$300 pension, a raid on a crack cocaine house in Overtown interrupted by an Uzi being fired, packed jails and courthouses, Coast Guard boats hunting down drug shipments on Biscayne Bay, corrupt Miami cops, gun stores and gun ranges, and a run-down Liberty City.<sup>51</sup> Not surprisingly, the reaction of the powers that be in Miami was the same as always. Even Steve Sonsky of the *Miami Herald*, not one for jumping on the booster panic wagon, thought the show went too far in its portrayal, writing that "If you want to make sure your Aunt Nellie from Newark skips the trip South this year, have her watch...*48 Hours* and vouch for the accuracy of its video voyage into a hellish heart of darkness. She'll never come visit again. Nor might anyone else."<sup>52</sup>

If Miami was unable to escape this negative press, what then, if anything, was the impact of *Miami Vice's* five-year run on television in challenging this negative and rather scary image of Miami? Before looking at the show's impact on tourism specifically, it is worth briefly pointing out a few of *Miami Vice's* innovations, for they themselves helped create an image, a vibe, of a new Miami that arguably translated into a tourism revival.

50. Hiaasen, "Handgun forces perceive safety in revised law," October 12, 1987, *Paradise Screwed*, 210.

51. "Miami Fights Back." *48 Hours*, CBS News, March 17 1988.

52. Steve Sonsky, "*48 Hours* Paints a dark, unfair portrait of Miami," *Miami Herald*, March 17, 1988, Living Today, 1B and 3B. See too, Carlos Harrison, "Miami airs outcry over *48 Hours*," *Miami Herald*, March 18, 1988, Local, 1C.

First, if Brandon Tartikoff wanted an "MTV Cops" show, Michael Mann had his own production standard for his new show: "no earth tones." Mann imagined a show filmed on location around Miami, playing off of Miami's natural palette, and dazzling its viewers with a focus on "aqua water, the pink and lavender stucco architecture, the sand and white of the sea spray" that highlighted the "local color of South Florida ... [from] flamingo pink [to] lime green."<sup>53</sup> This was a new stylized cop show. As an article in the *New York Times* argued in 1989 as the show concluded its final season, "it was the ultimate triumph of style over (controlled) substance. But that style was seductive; it had an emotional life of its own. Dead bodies fell into pools, in perfect red blossoms, like begonias in David Hockney paintings."<sup>54</sup> The series was filmed much like a feature film, utilizing lighting, editing, and music in a way that made clear that this was not your parents' *Gunsmoke* or even your uncle's *Streets of San Francisco*. But more than that, it was a vivid, Technicolor weekly tour guide of Mother Nature's greatest day-glo smorgasbord eye candy that was Miami.

Second, thanks to the musical direction of Jan Hammer, *Miami Vice* brought MTV style, sounds, shots, and synthesized music to prime-time network television. Hammer, a native of Czechoslovakia, made music a character on the show, and used music (up to 33 minutes per episode) to fill in for dialogue, or to set a mood. Songs such as Phil Collin's "In the Air Tonight" (played during a scene with Crockett and Tubbs driving silently at night in a black convertible) or Glenn Fry's "Smuggler's Blues" were used effectively to enhance a story line in a way that had only previously been done in feature films.<sup>55</sup> While this trend continued to set a standard on subsequent television shows such as *China Beach* and *The Wonder Years*, it was, for *Miami Vice* viewers, an up-to-the-minute play list of the current pop hits, and it made Miami seem light years away from the sounds of Lawrence Welk coming from your grandparents' record player.

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53. Michelle Smith, "The heat is on," *Houston Chronicle*, July 17, 1985, I; and Richard Zoglin, "Cool Cops, Hot Show," *Time*, September 16, 1985.

54. Stephanie Brush, "3 TV Shows that Captured a Decade," *New York Times*, June 4, 1989, A1.

55. Patrick Goldstein, "Miami Vice opts for MTV Look," *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 1984, Part IV, 1 and 4; Sally Bedel Smith, "Miami Vice," *New York Times*, January 3, 1985, C20; Richard Zoglin, "Cool Cops, Hot Show," *Time*, September 16, 1985; and *Miami Vice* Season I DVD Extras: The Music of Vice.

Third, many alive in the mid-1980s remember all too well the "hottest cops on television" and the "Miami Vice look" inspired by the show. While the clothes worn by the actors were simply far too expensive (to say nothing of impractical) for real vice cops working in Miami's heat and humidity, *Miami Vice* brought a redefined European cool elegance to American men, and made Miami a competitive hot spot for fashion photographers.

The color scheme of "no earth tones" applied equally to the fashions worn by Crockett and Tubbs as "No khakis, no tans" was the mantra for the wardrobe department.<sup>56</sup> The pastel colors of the city and of the show's set designs were mirrored in the jackets, shirts and pants worn by its leading men, though of course, socks were a taboo for Crockett, as were belts. The first time that Crockett is seen in the pilot, he is wearing a white linen suit with a sky blue t-shirt underneath. Most of the fashions were bought from designer houses in Europe, including Armani, even before the clothes themselves hit store shelves. Thanks to Don Johnson and Philip Michael Thomas, Miami men and American men were openly becoming fashionistas. In the words of a senior vice president of Bloomingdales, "The show has taken Italian's men fashion and spread it to mass America."<sup>57</sup> A costume designer on the show went even further, arguing that *Miami Vice* "made pale pink pants acceptable for going out attire. Before, men only wore grays, blacks and browns, but now, because of *Miami Vice*, almost any men's store in the country will offer pastel alternatives."<sup>58</sup>

As for the impact on tourism, what was changing, thanks largely to *Miami Vice*, was the image of Miami and the type of tourist now attracted to the city. Little had actually changed in Miami, but as illustrated in the *Washington Post*, "for years, this city has battled an image as a breeding ground of crime, drugs, racial tensions and tacky squalor. Now, a television show has come along that depicts it as a *stylish* breeding ground of crime, drugs, racial tensions and

56. Michelle Smith, "The heat is on," *Houston Chronicle*, July 17, 1985, 1, and "The hot new 'Miami Vice' look," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 29, 1985, 17.

57. Richard Zoglin, "Cool Cops, Hot Show," *Time*, September 16, 1985.

58. Neil Feineman, "Setting Trends in color on 'Miami Vice,'" *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1985, Style, Z5. It was not just average Americans turning to these new fashion trends. As reported by the *Los Angeles Times*, Burt Reynolds appeared on "The Merv Griffin Show" "in a fetching array of peaches and pinks." Bettijane Levine, "Pink is for pussycats - and the tough guys cops on 'Miami Vice,'" *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 1985, Fashion, E1.



tacky squalor. And suddenly, Miami is fashionable."<sup>59</sup> This view was summed up to the delight of Miami's tourism officials in a January 1988 article in *Newsweek* titled "Miami: America's Casablanca." The article described Miami as a "jazzy hectic mix of ethnicity, newfangled prosperity and foreign intrigue." It was an article that looked to the promise of Miami's future, rather than focusing on its troubled past. The article did not gloss over any of Miami's troubles, writing that Miami was supersaturated with cocaine, but it was wholesale, not retail. Murder was still an issue, still one of the nation's murder capitals, but the article concentrated more on the context of these murders and what was being done about it. Moreover, instead of concentrating on the Cuban refugee problem, the focus was on the wonderful cultural influence Cubans had brought to Miami, and more importantly, how Miami was emerging as the crossroads for international finance and commerce between the United States and Latin America.<sup>60</sup>

Where the show, perhaps most specifically, began to have an impact on tourism was by putting the spotlight on Miami Beach's Art Deco district. While preservationists had been working tirelessly for years to salvage what they could of this once top resort destination,<sup>61</sup> they faced a constant uphill battle. Then, along came *Miami Vice*, and the tides changed. Mann himself specifically chose to film much of the series in Miami Beach and featured such Art Deco buildings as the Carlyle Hotel and the Miami firm Arquitectonica's Post Modern "pink house" located on Biscayne Bay.<sup>62</sup> In 1986, Joel Sleed of *The (Montreal) Gazette*, pointed out how "The once-faded building facades of this once-faded neighborhood are again becoming alive, swimming in a rainbow assortment of pastels. The interiors of many apartment buildings, hotels, restaurants and shops have been gutted, redesigned and rebuilt or completely renovated. [On the weekends], young people in their 20s and 30s...congregate at newly opened restaurants, cafes, bars and discos."<sup>63</sup>

59. Martha Brannigan, "Success of Flashy 'Miami Vice' TV Show May be rubbing off on Troubled Miami," *Washington Post*, August 5, 1985, 23.

60. Tom Morghanthau, Erik Calonijs, Charles Lane, David Gonzalez, and Cheryl Miller, "Miami: America's Casablanca," *Newsweek*, January 25, 1988, 22-29. The quote regarding Miami as "jazzy..." is found on page 22.

61. For a terrific, and detailed, history of this subject, see M. Barron Stofik's *Saving South Beach*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005).

62. Steve Garbarino, "One Mann's Miami," *St. Petersburg Times*, June 22, 1987, 10.

63. Joel Sleed, "Miami flirts with casinos as tourists 'rediscover' city," *The Gazette (Montreal)*, November 29, 1986, 17.

Because the producers of the show appreciated the Art Deco feel of Miami, restoration plans received a new lease on life: "the oldest hotels at the south end of Miami Beach, once earmarked for demolition, are now part of the Art Deco Historic District. Hundreds of aficionados from all over the country trek there daily to observe the stylistic trends of the 30s. Owners have cooperated by painting buildings tropical pink, chrome yellow, sky blue and other bold and playful colors, sometimes all on the same building."<sup>64</sup>

A second impact that *Miami Vice* had in terms of tourism was that the show did well in continually capturing the "coveted and elusive Yuppie crowd" who actually stayed home Friday nights to watch Crockett and company.<sup>65</sup> Seemingly overnight, "south Florida got young."<sup>66</sup> Miami was now "a city of suntanned youth, not solely retired elderly people."<sup>67</sup>

Even more stunning in terms of impact was the returning number not only of international visitors, but more importantly, of well-heeled international visitors. The year 1986 alone saw an increase of 23% of those from beyond the United States visiting Miami, a 5% increase in 1987, a 14% increase in 1988, and a 16% increase in 1989.<sup>68</sup> Helen Muir, citing the Miami bureau chief of Reuters, pointed out that "Europeans are fascinated by the scene and are not thrown off by the drugs and crime."<sup>69</sup> However, it needs to be pointed out that while *Miami Vice* and its portrayal of a new, hipper Miami may have played a role in attracting tourists, other factors, as equally intangible, may have contributed to this rise in international, primarily, European visitors. First, the U.S. dollar declined sharply in relation to European currencies, making travel to the U.S. simply more affordable.<sup>70</sup> Equally significant, it was in the 1980s that issues surrounding terrorism—plane hijackings and ship hijackings—made Miami look relatively peaceful and safe in comparison.

64. Rhonda Amon, "Miami on the Move," *Newsday*, March 15, 1987, 04.

65. Steve Sonsky, "Miami Vicced," *Miami Herald*, April 7, 1985, Amusements, 1 and 5.

66. Stephanie Brush, "3 Shows that captured a decade," *New York Times*, June 4, 1989, A1.

67. Jeffrey Schmalz, "Sun Sets on Show that Redefined a City," *New York Times*, May 18, 1989, A1 and 14.

68. Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1980-2002, Miami-Dade County Overnight Visitor Counts.

69. Muir, 285.

70. For statistics on the value of the U.S. dollar, see Pacific Exchange Rate Service, Foreign Currency Units per 1 US dollar, 1948-2006.

Lastly, and in conclusion, it has been argued by a number of observers that perhaps the greatest impact of the five-year run of *Miami Vice* was the illusion it created about a new Miami, a Miami that even Miamians began to believe in. The television version of the city was a sanitized version of Miami, a Hollywood version of Miami. It truly became a case of life imitating art as city officials and tourism officials tried to take the new image of *Miami Vice* and run with it.<sup>71</sup>

Michael Mann himself, at a national meeting of the American Institute of Architects in 1987, said that the city showcased on *Miami Vice* and the real Miami are "only distantly related. We created a terrain and called it Miami. Our Miami is sun baked and hot. The streets are always shiny, wet and black at night. It seems to leak fast money, fast cars, fast clothes and fast women. It's dangerous. That's what we set out to do."<sup>72</sup>

But perhaps Steve Sonsky, the *Miami Herald's* television critic, summed it up best at the end of the show's run: "Mann took one-tenth kernel of Art Deco/post modernist truth, and edited it to make it seem the whole burgh looked like this way. Eventually, more of it did. *Miami Vice* reinvented Miami in the eyes of the world - that was no surprise. What was unusual was how *Miami* then bought into this vision - how a city reinvented itself in the stylized, glamorized image that a TV show had of it."<sup>73</sup>

It was an image that would come crashing down in the early 1990s when foreign tourists, especially, it seemed, British, Canadian, and Germans tourists, were murdered at an alarming rate on the streets of Miami simply for getting lost in the wrong neighborhood or driving an identifiable rental car. But for a few years, in the late 1980s, thanks to *Miami Vice* and the media attention the show attracted to the city, for good or for bad, Miami seemed to once again be known as a tourist destination with its new definition of an "arresting combination of sun, sand, and sea."<sup>74</sup>

71. See for example, Jeffrey Schmalz, "Sun Sets on Show that Redefined a City," *New York Times*, May 18, 1989, A1.

72. Steve Garbarino, "One Mann's Miami," *St. Petersburg Times*, June 22, 1987, 1D.

73. Steve Sonsky, "Bye, Pal!" *Miami Herald*, May 21, 1989, Amusements, 1K.

74. Mormino, 92.

## Is South Florida the New Southern California?: Carl Hiaasen's Dystopian Paradise

by David M. Parker

Florida and California have from their entry into American culture been considered by writers to be enchanted states, the places to which Americans can escape to a more exotic reality than is represented by the colder North and East. As early as the American Revolution, then-Spanish Florida was known for its unspoiled terrain and its lush beauty. Harriet Beecher Stowe extolled its exotic qualities, while Stephen Crane wrote of the contrast between the harsh outside world and the escapist qualities of the state. California, by contrast, has been seen as a paradise, a found Eden, and like Florida, a place whose beauty never palls since the Gold Rush brought Americans west in the 1840s. While Florida was tropical, writers saw California as Mediterranean. Still, other writers found that even the natural beauty could not mask

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the American civilization that intruded on it, and this began a debunking discourse in reference to these two exotic regions.<sup>1</sup>

Southern California specifically has for some time represented the consequences of American excess to writers in various genres. Even before Nathanael West, in *The Day of the Locust* (1939), indicted the region for its materialism and its apparent disregard for American values, and certainly afterward, Southern California has been presented as a sprawling dystopia inhabited by narcissistic self-indulgent people who deserve the consequences of fires and earthquakes. Increasingly, South Florida has been presented as a similar planning disaster which deserves the consequences of weather for the same reasons. This is the environment in which Carl Hiaasen, a native Floridian and a longtime columnist for the *Miami Herald*, sets his fiction. Hiaasen was born in 1953, grew up in rural Broward County, began writing an underground newspaper in high school, graduated from the University of Florida's school of journalism in 1974, and joined the *Miami Herald* in 1976. He joined the paper's investigative reporting unit in 1979, and began to write columns in 1985, at first three times a week. Hiaasen started writing widely acclaimed novels in 1986; with the success of the novels, he cut back his column to once a week, and currently is still writing for the *Herald*.<sup>2</sup>

1. For Florida, see Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), *passim*. For California, see Franklin Walker, *A Literary History of Southern California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), *passim*; Lawrence Clark Powell, *California Classics: The Creative Literature of the Golden State* (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1971), ix-xiii; Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 417-419; and David Wyatt, *The Fall into Eden: Landscape Imagination in California* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), xvi-xix, 207.
2. For the presentation of a dystopian Southern California, see Richard G. Lillard, *Eden in Jeopardy, Man's Prodigal Meddling with his Environment: The Southern California Experience* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966); Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990), 20-22, 30-46; Mike Davis, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York, Vintage Books, 1999), 5-91; and William Fulton, "Home Sweet Home: Pursuing Dreams in a Land of Fire," *New York Times Week in Review*, November 2, 2003, accessed July 25, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/02/weekinreview/the-nation-home-sweet-home-pursuing-dreams-in-a-land-of-fire.html>. For Carl Hiaasen, see Joanne Kenen, "Carl of the Wild," *American Journalism Review* 15, no. 8 (1993), 25-31; Mireya Navarro, "At Home with Carl Hiaasen: Can Success and Satire Mix?" *New York Times*, July 4, 1996, accessed February 16, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/04/garden/at-home-with-carl-hiaasen-can-success-and-satire-mix>. "Hurricane Hiaasen," *People Weekly* 53 no. 19, 139-144 (May 15 2000); and CBS News, "Florida: A Paradise of Scandals," Carl Hiaasen interview with Steve Kroft, *60 Minutes*, April 17 2005, accessed July 25, 2011 [http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/04/15/60minutes/main688458.shtml?source=search\\_story](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/04/15/60minutes/main688458.shtml?source=search_story).

Southern California and South Florida have remarkably similar histories. Both areas lagged behind the northern part of their states in terms of development, both were the beneficiaries of land booms promoted by civic boosters, both became known initially as centers of citrus production and tourism, and both spent their boom years as predominantly Anglo-Saxon populated cities, distinguished from the rest of the country by temperate weather and by the fact that they appear to attract an unusual number of eccentric people. The tropes for expressing this are remarkably similar: about the eccentric people in Southern California, for example, Frank Lloyd Wright said "Tip the world over on its side and everything loose will land in Los Angeles," a statement so profound that Saul Bellow repeated it without specific attribution in his novel, *Seize the Day* (1956). Hiaasen describes this as the "sludge theory" of American geography, observing that "If you pick up the country and tilt it, all the sludge would pool in a peninsula at the lower right-hand corner." Southern California developed its current identity immediately after World War II, while South Florida entered the popular mind after Castro's takeover of Cuba in 1959 and even more so by the 1980s; in fact, the commentary following the Mariel boat lift of 1980, in which thousands of Cuban exiles chaotically and unexpectedly arrived on Florida beaches, identified it as even more foreign and exotic than Southern California has ever been rendered. As T.D. Allman explains it, Miami has from the beginning been "a place where some arrive searching for wealth and happiness, and others are there waiting to sell them land, polish their shoes and pick their pockets."<sup>3</sup>

While the ethnic makeup of South Florida plays a significant role in its representation in popular culture, it is not the sole focal point of Carl Hiaasen's critique. Hiaasen, like Nathanael West, finds an appealing target in the people who the developers have attracted to South Florida. He is, however, also concerned with the environment and the sins that rapacious developers have committed

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3. William Deverell, Greg Hise and David C. Sloane, "Orange Empires: Comparing Miami and Los Angeles," *Pacific Historical Review* 68, no. 2 (1999), 146-147; Kathy Kolnick, "Orange Empires: Miami and Los Angeles, February 27-28, 1998," *Urban History Newsletter* 21(1999), 7; Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1996), 11, Kenen, "Carl of the Wild," 25; T.D. Allman, *Miami: City of the Future* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), quote on 123; Joan Didion, *Miami* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); David Rieff, *Coming to Miami* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987).

against it. Where Southern California is plagued with earthquakes, fires and resulting landslides, South Florida has hurricanes, and both regions have experienced land development encroaching into wilderness spaces. Hiaasen is especially concerned with water and land issues, and it is this aspect of Hiaasen's writings on which this analysis will focus.

Hiaasen's work has entered the scholarly world in the context of the crime novel, and there is certainly good reason to group him with the likes of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. A distinct tradition of Florida crime writing, well documented in the anthology *Crime Fiction and Film in the Sunshine State: Florida Noir* (1997), partially originated in journalism, as clearly reflected in the work of Edna Buchanan, the Pulitzer prize-winning police reporter for the Miami Herald from 1973 to 1991. Buchanan has published ten crime novels and two works of nonfiction, has appeared on *60 Minutes* and has been played by the late Elizabeth Montgomery in TV versions of her work. Hammett and Chandler, however, did not have Hiaasen's ecological conscience, perhaps because they wrote in a different era. Chandler's Los Angeles is a city of artifice, not necessarily a city destroyed by rapacious developers (as the pianist Oscar Levant famously said twenty years later, "Strip away the phony tinsel of Hollywood and you find the real tinsel underneath"), and Hammett wrote about the San Francisco Bay Area, not Los Angeles. Studies of Hiaasen's earlier work have concluded that Hiaasen's major concern is with the grotesque aspects of South Florida and "what's been done to the environment in pursuit of money." Hiaasen himself has described Florida as "a paradise of scandals teeming with drifters, deadbeats and misfits drawn here by some dark primordial calling like demented trout."<sup>4</sup>

In his first novel, *Tourist Season* (1986), Hiaasen examines the impact of drifters, deadbeats and misfits on the fragile ecosystem of Florida. Skip Wiley, the criminal mastermind in this book, is a newspaper columnist with an extreme desire to rescue Florida

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4. Liahna K. Babener, "Raymond Chandler's City of Lies," in *Los Angeles In Fiction: A Collection of Essays*, ed. David Fine (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 127-149; Oscar Levant, *The Columbia World of Quotations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), #35538; Julie Sloan Brannon, "The Rules are Different Here: South Florida Noir and the Grotesque," in Steve Glassman and Maurice J. O'Sullivan, eds., *Crime Fiction and Film in the Sunshine State: Florida Noir* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997), 56; CBS News, "Florida: A Paradise of Scandals," April 17 2005.

from its overdevelopment, one of the characteristics of the region's history. Hiaasen explains:

For thirty years, beginning around the turn of the century, South Florida grew at an astonishing pace . . . Where there was no land, they dredged it from the bottom of Biscayne Bay, manufactured an island, named it after a flower or a daughter or themselves, and peddled it as a natural oasis . . . Those wheeler-dealers who didn't blow their brains out after the Hurricane of '26 or hang themselves after the real-estate bust were eventually rewarded with untold wealth, [and] these characters are regarded as the true pioneers of South Florida.

Wiley forms a terrorist organization called *Las Noches de Diciembre*, the other members of which are a virulent and violent anti-Castro Cuban émigré who has failed at bomb-making, an aggrieved Black retired running back for the Miami Dolphins, and a Seminole Indian. The group develops a plot to make south Florida less attractive to the flood of tourists. It consists of a string of sensational murders (two of them involve feeding the victims, alive, to Pavlov, one of a very few surviving North American crocodiles) capped by the kidnapping of the queen of the Orange Bowl Parade, all of which are designed to garner significant and sensational media coverage. Of course, the adventures of *Las Noches de Diciembre* are over the top in excess, but the adventures of Skip Wiley in *Tourist Season* detail the frustration that the overdevelopment of Florida can cause in a native who has seen too much of it.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear that Hiaasen intends his novels to expand upon material he has covered as a columnist for the *Miami Herald* to a wider audience than the *Herald's* readers. For example, in his weekly columns Hiaasen has been highly critical of the stranglehold he believes the sugar industry has on Florida politics. This critique appears in his novels as well, even those which do not, as we will see below, have ecology as their central focus. In *Strip Tease* (1993), a novel about the difficulties of assessing morality in the political

5. Carl Hiaasen, *Tourist Season* (New York: Warner Books, 1986), 232, 315, 351-354. For additional analysis of this work, see Peter Jordan, "Carl Hiaasen's Environmental Thrillers: Crime Fiction in Green Peace," *Studies in Popular Culture* 13 (1990), 68; Gary Mormino, "Sunbelt Dreams and Altered States: A Social and Cultural History of Florida, 1950-2000," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2002), 19.



sphere of South Florida, Davey Dilbeck, a member of Congress and chairman of the subcommittee that regulates price supports for sugar, becomes a suspect in an assault case at a strip club. Dilbeck is being bankrolled by Big Sugar, and the attorney who keeps him out of trouble does this in part because one of the attorney's tasks is "making sure that Big Sugar's price supports passed Congress with no snags." The Congressman goes to strip clubs with Christopher Rojo, a member of a family who runs a sugar-cane operation but who had never visited the site where sugar is produced (in fact, Hiaasen shows us Rojo's first visit to the sugar fields, in the company of the congressman and two strippers).<sup>6</sup>

Sugar, however, is not the only thing that's fouling Lake Okeechobee. In Hiaasen's *Basket Case* (2002), an obscure rock musician with a cult following dies mysteriously and Jack Tagger, our journalist hero, decides to find out what really happened; Tagger ultimately has to hire a boat to make a hostage exchange in the middle of the lake. Hiaasen describes the recreational facility where the heroes rent the boat: a supply camp for fishermen that "has fallen on hard times. Farms and cattle ranches have dumped so much [manure]-fouled runoff into [Lake Okeechobee] that miles of prime bass habitat have been transformed into impenetrable cattail bogs. The decline in sport fishing commerce has been exacerbated by water levels so treacherously low as to discourage navigation by high-speed fanatics with 175-horsepower outboards." There is enough water, however, for the bad guys in the airboat to crash, which kills both of them. Between Big Sugar and Big Cattle, the ecosystem of South Florida does not stand a chance.<sup>7</sup>

Each one of Hiaasen's novels contains an environmental and ecological critique of South Florida, although his perspective has changed during the course of his writing and his environmental critique has differing points of origin. While *Tourist Season* was about population growth befouling South Florida, the irresponsible behavior in *Sick Puppy* (2000) has its genesis in greed. The novel begins with a Fort Lauderdale-based lobbyist, Palmer Stoat, shooting a rare African black rhinoceros at point-blank range at the Wilderness Veldt Plantation, a safari ranch near Ocala.

6. Diane Stevenson, ed., *Kick Ass, Selected Columns of Carl Hiaasen* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1990), 380-404; Carl Hiaasen, *Strip Tease* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 13-15, 64, 98-99.

7. Carl Hiaasen, *Basket Case* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 271-282.

The aged rhinoceros, who had been the featured attraction at an Arizona roadside zoo, wore a fiberglass horn because its real horn had been sawed off and sold to a Chinese herbalist in Panama City. On the way back to Fort Lauderdale, Stoaat throws the remnants of his Burger King lunch out the window. This enrages the novel's protagonist, one Twilly Spree, "an unemployed twenty-six year old college dropout with a brief but spectacular history of psychological problems," who had inherited several millions of dollars, and maintained a well-developed concern for the environment. Spree, after arranging to have a garbage truck dump its load into Stoaat's convertible BMW (which had its top down), kidnaps Stoaat's Labrador Retriever to use as ransom for his demands concerning the larger project on which Stoaat is working.<sup>8</sup>

That project is a development called Shearwater Island, a seaside community, which was to be developed on Toad Island, a community of 217 people at the mouth of the Suwanee on the Gulf Coast. In order for construction to proceed, the developers needed funding for a bridge and a comprehensive biological survey. The bridge funding is dependent on political maneuvering and hidden kickbacks, some of Hiaasen's favorite political *bêtes noires*. The survey is conducted by a new biology Ph.D. from Cornell, Steven Brinkman, who had "chosen the private sector for its higher salaries and opportunities for advancement." Brinkman's supervisor, Karl Krimmler, would have been happy to hear that no wildlife at all lived on the island since all the developers saw in nature were "bureaucratic obstacles." Brinkman finds no endangered species, but hundreds of oak toads, "so many [you'd] never catch them all," and Krimmler explained that the toads will be buried with a bulldozer instead. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Toad Island, led by Nils Fishback, the landscape architect of the first project planned for the locale, "the Towers of Tarpon Island," have done almost everything they could to develop the island themselves, but all of these projects had failed (Hiaasen explains that a "cheerlessly detailed history [of each of the schemes is] available for scrutiny in the bankruptcy files of the federal courthouse at Gainesville."). This time, the Toad Islanders circulated a petition that suggested they were environmentalists—it even quoted *Walden*—but they worried that such an appeal could attract legitimate conservation organizations that would make the

8. Carl Hiaasen, *Sick Puppy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 3-11.

developers increase their offer for the land. When financing has been obtained for the bridge and the last of the toads have been plowed under, the Toad Island "protesters" hold a press conference to announce that the Shearwater Island Company had caved in to their demands. These demands included a mitigation program that required replanting three acres of new trees for each acre of the island that was developed—although the developers were not legally required to plant the trees on the island as long as they were planted somewhere in Florida. Palmer Stoa had designed this scam. Florida, in *Sick Puppy*, is a piece of land where every inch must be made to make a profit for someone, an indictment of the rapaciousness of development and a prime example of dystopia.<sup>9</sup>

Even the dog that Spree kidnaps in the novel is given a pedigree that is related to the environment. He was a gift from Dag Magnusson, the president of the Magnusson Phosphate Company, whose mine in Polk County was about to be shut down by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) "for polluting a commercial lake with chemical runoff, [which] was so vile that it exterminated all life forms larger than amoebas." Stoa could not find a congressman who would intervene, but he was able to put Magnusson in touch with a regional EPA administrator with a weak spot for trout fishing. After Magnusson brought the administrator to a private stretch of river in Montana where he "nailed his first twenty inch rainbow," the EPA settled with Magnusson Phosphate, "which ultimately agreed to pay a \$3,900 fine and erect large warning signs on the shores of the poisoned lake." Stoa named the dog "Boodle" as a joke, since he was a gift for having arranging a bribe.<sup>10</sup>

Spree, with the help of Skink, a former governor of Florida (and one of several recurring characters in Hiaasen's books), convinces the current governor, Dick Artemus, to exercise a line-item veto on the funds set aside for "the Toad Island-Shearwater Bridge and highway improvement project." While hunting, Stoa is finally trampled by a rhinoceros, older and even more feeble than the one Stoa shot at the beginning of the book, who had just gored Robert Clapley, the other promoter of the project: Hiaasen notes in the epilogue,

9. Hiaasen, *Sick Puppy*, 27-43.

10. *Ibid.*, 83-84.

With the death of Robert Clapley, the Zurich-based SwissOne Basic Group withdrew all lines of credit for the Shearwater Island Development Corporation, which immediately folded. At a bankruptcy auction arranged by Clapley's estate, his extensive waterfront holdings on Toad Island were sold to an anonymous buyer, who eventually renamed it Amy Island and deeded every parcel for preservation. No new bridge was built.<sup>11</sup>

The buyer, of course, was Twilly Spree, who named the island after his mother, and the environment has its revenge on the greedy developers.

The Shearwater Island scam is a recurring theme in Hiaasen's novels as part of his concern for the destruction of undeveloped real estate in Florida for commercial profit. The ending of *Tourist Season*, for example, takes place on Osprey Island, which is being cleared for condominium development; the characters race to get off the island before the preset dynamite which has been wired to explode at dawn explodes. In *Lucky You* (1997), Hiaasen shows his readers that very little involving land preservation in Florida is as simple as it may appear. Part of the novel is focused on a plot of land called Simmons Wood, which had been maintained as a private hunting reserve since 1959 by one Lighthorse Simmons, whose family had been early settlers of the area. When a hunter, however, mistook Simmons for a six-point buck and shattered his kneecap with a bullet, Simmons never set foot in Simmons Wood again, and had the area zoned commercial. However, he could not bring himself to sell it for sentimental reasons. After his death, his heirs, who had no use for the property, were quite willing to sell it to be turned into whatever the buyer wanted it to be.<sup>12</sup>

In *Lucky You*, Jo Layne Lucks, who has one of two winning lottery tickets worth \$14 million, is a nurse who works as a veterinarian's assistant. The main plot of the novel revolves around an attempt by thieves to steal the ticket. Jo Layne started to explore Simmons Wood after divorcing her husband, a lawyer who had

11. Hiaasen, *Sick Puppy*, 338. For Skink, the name assumed by Governor Clinton Tyree, see Brannon, "The Rules are Different Here," 58-59, and Jordan, "Carl Hiaasen's Environmental Thrillers," 66-67. Skink appears in almost all of Hiaasen's novels; his first appearance is in *Double Whammy* (1987; New York, Warner Books, 2005), and Hiaasen describes him and his history on pages 107-112.

12. Hiaasen, *Tourist Season*, 358-378; Carl Hiaasen, *Lucky You* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 101-103.

been convicted of fraud, taken a job as a toll taker on the turnpike, and who had then been arrested "for stealing a jumbo-sized bag of change." She recorded the various types of wildlife she saw in a notebook, and became enamored of the "cooters," baby turtles that perched on the rocks and logs of the creek that ran through the property. When the "For Sale" sign went up on the highway, she bought the largest aquarium she could find and started rescuing the turtles, because "she couldn't bear the thought of them being buried alive by bulldozers." Just like the frogs on Toad/Shearwater Island, nature has to give way to development—paradise ruined by dystopian development.<sup>13</sup>

The machinations of land development are not quite as central to *Skinny Dip* (2004) as they are to the plots of *Sick Puppy* and *Lucky You*, but the plot of *Skinny Dip* is driven by the consequences of land development in the Everglades. Hiaasen is perhaps more concerned with the fate of the Everglades than with any other aspect of the ecology of Florida, and *Skinny Dip* gives him the chance to explain what sins have been committed in the expansion of Florida real estate west and south into the river of grass. He describes a process by which successive generations of "land developers, bankers, railroad barons, real-estate promoters, citrus growers, sugar tycoons and . . . the politicians they owned," beginning with one Hamilton Disston in 1896, go broke attempting to drain the swamp. What could not be dried, paved or planted to support agriculture, industry and housing construction has been transformed into channels and reservoirs by the Army Corps of Engineers to protect these enterprises from too-frequent flooding. This was tolerated until a series of droughts scared "even the most slatternly" politicians into extolling the Everglades as a national treasure, and appropriated \$8 billion to restore the purity of its waters. Unfortunately for those concerned with the environment in the novel, 90% of the 'glades had been developed or converted into agricultural plots before the national park could be established. *Skinny Dip* is about the purity, or lack thereof, of the water in the Everglades, and the importance to agribusiness of showing that the Everglades have not been as befouled as Lake Okeechobee has been.<sup>14</sup>

Samuel Johnson "Red" Hammernut, a large-scale vegetable grower, hires Charles Regis Perrone ("Chaz"), the holder of an

13. Hiaasen, *Lucky You*, 41-43.

14. Carl Hiaasen, *Skinny Dip* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 90-91.

M.A. in marine biology from the University of Miami soon after Hammernut's farm makes the headlines of a newspaper as "LOCAL FARM CITED AS GLADES POLLUTER." Hammernut then makes a major donation to Duke University's Wetland Center, and Chaz is enrolled in its Ph.D. program. Upon Chaz's graduation, Hammernut pulls more strings and gets Chaz a job as a state biologist, "testing water purity in a particular sector of the Everglades Agricultural Area." This particular sector abuts Hammernut's thirteen thousand acres of lettuce, cabbage, tomatoes, corn, radishes, escarole and parsley; its continued profitability is why Hammernut invested in Chaz's education. Unlike Steven Brinkman, Chaz is more committed to his employer than he is to the ideals of science. When he thinks that his wife, known as Joey, had seen him forging the water data, he throws her over the railing of a cruise ship, and assumes that this has killed her. But Chaz is mistaken—he forgot that Joey was a champion swimmer in college and she does not die.

Joey survives by hanging on to a floating bale of marijuana, and is rescued by Mick Stranahan, an investigator who had been retired by the State Attorney's office for killing a "duly elected [but crooked] judge." After Hurricane Andrew destroyed the stilt house in Biscayne Bay he had bought with part of the buyout money, Stranahan becomes the caretaker of a concrete house somewhere in the northern Keys. While Chaz dutifully enlists the Broward County police, particularly a Detective Karl Rolvaag, to search for Joey in an area of the ocean where he thinks the ship was located, Stranahan helps Joey figure out how to make Chaz squirm. When we meet Rolvaag, incidentally, he's bringing a box of live rats home to his two pet pythons; the snakes will constitute one of the subplots of the novel.

Meanwhile, Chaz goes on with his water-management job in the Everglades, which he finds "hot, buggy, funky-smelling and treacherous." Hiaasen puts him in a bright yellow Humvee, which Hammernut bought him for his expeditions, and tells us that the color was intended to scare away any panthers that he might encounter, even though the panthers were nearly extinct and colorblind to boot (in a 2008 column in the *Miami Herald*, Hiaasen reports that the panthers, numbering between 80 and 100, are "hanging on longer and in larger numbers than anybody had foreseen). Hammernut also arms Chaz with a two-iron to fight off alligators. We see Chaz take a sample of tea-colored water from a monitoring station and place it in his vehicle, and we learn that

he is thinking "What a steaming [cesspool] this is. To think the taxpayers of America are spending 8 million dollars to save it." We then learn that Hammernut keeps him on, because within an eight month period after Chaz was hired, phosphorus levels in the runoff from Hammernut Farms had dropped from 302 parts per billion ("more fertilizer per gallon than . . . the state's largest cattle ranch and sugarcane grower combined") to about 9 parts per billion, "a level so low that regulators removed Hammernut Farm from their target list of outlaw polluters." This demonstrates how high the stakes were in keeping the fictitious readings secret, and why Chaz found it necessary to throw Joey overboard.<sup>15</sup>

The Everglades becomes a minor character during the rest of *Skinny Dip*. Rolvaag finds a fingernail in the bale of marijuana Joey had been clinging to and decides she is alive while Stranahan executes a blackmail sting on Chaz, saying he saw the incident on the cruise ship, and incidentally, that he knows about the phosphorus tests and that Hammernut had paid for the Humvee. Stranahan also tells Ricca, the woman Chaz had been cheating on Joey with, that he saw the incident, and, when Chaz tries to make this up to her, Ricca refuses to see him. When Chaz finally convinces Ricca to go for a ride with him, they drive into the Everglades, and after trying to scare her, Chaz shoots her in the leg. Unfortunately for Chaz, Ricca can swim too, and she finds herself under the protection of Skink, the former governor, in the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Skink helps her to the nearest highway, where a Jeep is waiting for her. Rolvaag "solves" the case (after taking some water samples himself, which revealed illegal phosphorus levels of 317, 327 and 344 parts per billion) leaves the Fort Lauderdale force and goes home to Minnesota after he releases the pythons into the Everglades—Hiaasen's comment on all the non-native species that have crowded the indigenous flora and fauna of South Florida out of their natural habitats.

At one point in *Skinny Dip*, Stranahan arranges to have a fleet of helicopters buzz Chaz on his water collection rounds, and Joey is on one of the helicopters with Stranahan:

15. Hiaasen, *Skinny Dip*, 75-77, 125-127. For the Florida Panther, see Hiaasen, "Remembering the Florida panther's champion," *Miami Herald*, June 29, 2008. Incidentally, a minor character in the "Gibtown" episode of the television series *Glades* (which aired July 17, 2011) is a marine biologist who has been doctoring the pollution levels in the Everglades, a sign that Hiaasen's view of Florida is increasingly the view being presented to the rest of the nation.

Stranahan spotted three small deer bounding to the shelter of a tree island, and it occurred to Joey that—except for the occasional garbage-looting raccoon—these were the first truly wild animals she'd seen since moving to Florida. She's always been curious about the Everglades, but Chaz had refused to take her along on field trips ... That he never spoke of the place, except to gripe about the snakes and the insects, was even more stunning to Joey now that she'd finally seen it for herself. How could Chaz—a biologist—for God's sake—not be dazzled?

Hammernut prepares for the blackmail meeting by loading \$500,000 into a suitcase with a transmitter, which makes it easy to track down after the exchange with Chaz, who steals it. Hammernut recovers the money, but Chaz escapes into the Everglades where he encounters Skink, who remembers everything Ricca told him. As Skink marches Chaz further into the swamp, Chaz wonders where this will all end, and Skink says to him "Did you ever study Tennyson? I'm guessing not. 'Nature red in tooth and claw.' That's a very famous line." Chaz asks, "I'm not going back to Boca Raton, am I?" and Skink's reply is "No, Dr. Perrone, you are not."<sup>16</sup>

Hiaasen explains that the reason that the murder of the Everglades does not get much attention is the fact that the damage caused by the fertilizers pouring into the Everglades is not especially telegenic. It operates by disrupting the food chain and replacing the habitat of native birds and wildlife with aquatic plants that "thrive on the torrent of phosphorus" spilled into it by agricultural fertilizers. Despite a federal restoration project, and the "grudging cooperation" of sugar growers and corporate farmers, the Everglades, in 2004, was still dying at the rate of two acres a day.<sup>17</sup>

The Everglades makes another appearance in *Nature Girl* (2006), this time as an arena in which a young man, half-Seminole, tries to live like his Indian ancestors, and a woman with anger management issues attempts to teach a telemarketer a lesson during the course of an eco-tourism vacation. Unlike *Tourist Season* and *Skinny Dip*, in which we entered the Everglades from the (over) developed east coast of Florida, *Nature Girl* is set in Everglades City and the Ten Thousand Islands at the north end of the wetlands and

16. Hiaasen, *Skinny Dip*, 251, 351-355.

17. *Ibid.*, 334-335.



the characters are accustomed to the setting. Sammy Tigertail, who spent the first fourteen years of his life with his white father as Chad McQueen, always lived there. Honey Santana, on the other hand, grew up in Miami, where she felt "suffocated and disoriented." The night of her senior prom, Honey, drove her date's car due west to the Naples beach, on the west coast of Florida, to escape Miami's suffocating urban sprawl. On the way back, they stopped "near a kidney-shaped pond where a large alligator was wolfing down a purple gallinule." While gathering beer cans around the pond, Honey met the man who would become her husband, her child's father, and her ex-husband, Perry Skinner. She married him three weeks after their first meeting (they later divorced), and took up residence in Everglades City (population as of 2009: 616).<sup>18</sup>

At the start of the book, Honey, who has just quit a job with a lecherous fishmonger, Piejack (she attacked him with a crab mallet after he grabbed her breast), is considering a career in ecotours like her friend Bonnie, who takes tourists out to Cormorant Key: "Driving home from Marco this afternoon I noticed a string of bright yellow kayaks crossing the bay, and I thought: What a heavenly way to spend the day, paddling in the sunshine through the mangroves." She is interrupted in this reverie by a telemarketer, who she provokes into calling her a "dried-up old skank." Honey tracks down the telemarketer using a reverse telephone directory. She then calls the offending telemarketer at home masquerading as another telemarketer selling lots west of Naples for a made-up company called Royal Gulf Hammocks, throwing in "a breathtaking ecotour through the Ten Thousand Islands in kayaks." Miraculously, the telemarketer agrees to her proposal because he wants some time off from his wife with his mistress, and the plot takes place around the ensuing events.<sup>19</sup>

Sammy Tigertail is perhaps an even more interesting character in this novel. His father drove a Budweiser truck, and was a regular customer at the Miccosukee service plaza where Sammy's mother worked in the gift shop. She reluctantly lets his father keep him because she had misgivings about raising a half-white son on the reservation. That arrangement ended when Sammy's father died suddenly and his stepmother drove him directly from the funeral back to the reservation. At fifteen, after a childhood in

18. Carl Hiaasen, *Nature Girl* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 88-89.

19. *Ibid.*, 7, 41, 56-57.

a subdivision in Broward County, he was now a Seminole, and a Tigertail, descended from one of the great chiefs: "except for his Irish blue eyes, he looked full-blooded." He set out to become a more complete Seminole by listening to his elders tell stories, and realized he envied them for having grown up buffered by the swamp. Now, however, Sammy lived amongst hotels, casinos, and big money. Since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Bryan v Itasca County* (1976) that states had no authority to tax the business enterprises of Indian tribes, the Seminoles had become rich, and his uncle Tommy was now a gambling tycoon.<sup>20</sup>

We meet Sammy as he is dumping a dead body in Lostmans River. The body, a white man named Wilson, had died of a heart attack on an airboat Sammy was piloting. Sammy naturally called his uncle, Tommy Tigertail (the Seminole character whom we met in *Tourist Season*), who advised Sammy to get the body off the reservation. Sammy read this as "dispose of the body permanently," put Wilson in his rental car, rented a crab boat and headed for a snook hole he knew on the river. After disposing the body and returning the crab boat, Sammy called Tommy to tell him he was going away for a while because he "wasn't spiritually ready to deal with tourists."<sup>21</sup>

It seems that Sammy had thought about this retreat from civilization for years. His father had bought him a copy of a report commissioned by the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of Ethnology in 1880 "to enquire into the condition and to ascertain the number of Indians commonly known as Seminole," in an attempt to make sure Sammy knew about his Indian ancestors. Its author, the Reverend Clay MacCauley, described the Seminoles as "strong, fearless, haughty, and independent" and doomed to submit, eventually, to the civilization of the white man. Sammy, as Hiaasen writes, "planned grandly to recast himself as one of those indomitable braves who resisted the intruders, or died trying." He encounters a group of Florida State University students camping out on the island, steals one of their canoes and sets off (accompanied by one of the young female campers who insists on going with him), to find a new island, this time uninhabited. When Gillian, the young woman, asks what she should call him, he says "Thocklo Tustenuggee," his great-great-great-grandfather's Seminole name.

20. Hiaasen, *Nature Girl*, 35-37.

21. *Ibid.*, 3-5.

They then head off to Dismal Key, two miles outside the Everglades National Park boundary.<sup>22</sup>

Sammy's plot and Honey's plot intersect when they both end up on the same island. In a complex plot involving kidnapping, rescues of various kinds, helicopters and gunshots, Sammy ends up, along with Honey's ex-husband Perry Skinner, saving Honey from Piejack, who has turned out to be exceptionally evil. Sammy had never believed that all white men were evil, since his own father had been honest and loving. Then, there was his uncle's unusual white friend, Wiley, the tourist-hating protagonist of *Tourist Season*. Tommy Tigertail said that Wiley "wanted to save Florida as desperately as any Seminole, and that he'd gone mad trying." When Sammy asked what had happened to Wiley, Tommy said "The great Maker of Breath had given [Wiley's] spirit to an old bald eagle," a reference to the circumstances of Wiley's death on Osprey Island as he was attempting to get a young bald eagle to fly away when the island was cleared by dynamite. At the end of *Nature Girl*, where the plot sorts itself out, Sammy returns to the Ten Thousand Islands to dump Piejack's body, where he finds an old eagle and wonders if the bird might be the ghost spirit of Wiley. Given the matter of Wilson's car, Sammy's half brother Lee delivers him gasoline and provisions since it would be premature for him to go back to the reservation, and they work out drop sites and a schedule: "Aware that his half brother's wilderness skills were not as advanced as a full-blooded Seminole, Lee had also provided a compass, a dive watch, a NOAA marine chart and a bag of flares." Sammy is more complex than many of Hiaasen's other protagonists, and the fact that he is the nephew of one of the members of *Las Noches de Diciembre* further complicates him. Sammy spends the novel trying to work out the complicated relationships between his white father and his Seminole ancestry, and between living in Broward County, on the reservation, or in the Everglades itself. Hiaasen provides no conclusions for this, except to let us know that Sammy had not decided what to do if Gillian, who left the Everglades in a helicopter with one of Honey's telemarketers, came back to look for him.<sup>23</sup>

Steve Croft of *60 Minutes* has reported, "Hiaasen . . . takes the raw material of Florida, and then molds and shapes it into comic mystery novels, often with only minor embellishments." Hiaasen himself has

22. Hiaasen, *Nature Girl*, 50-52, 72-73, 84-87, 100-105.

23. *Ibid.*, 110-111, 298-299.

observed that the plot of *Strip Tease* had been based on the exploits of Congressman J. Herbert Burke, who was arrested in 1978 for "behaving badly at a topless club in Fort Lauderdale," and the fact that Kendall Coffey, at the time the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, was arrested for biting the arm of a stripper and abruptly went into private practice shortly before the film version of *Strip Tease* was released made Hiaasen feel like he had been "plagiarized by real life." As evidence that he must compete with the news, Hiaasen cites the story of Elian Gonzales, and comments that it's natural, if not obvious, that O.J. Simpson, when he could no longer afford to live in California, ended up in Florida. When he saw the photographs of the drivers licenses carried by some of the 9/11 hijackers on television, and they were Florida licenses, Hiaasen's response was "Where's the one place in the United States where the bar of bad behavior is so high that nobody's gonna notice these guys?"<sup>24</sup>

Recently, Hiaasen reviewed a book, *Fool's Paradise: Players, Poseurs, and the Culture of Excess in South Beach* (2009) by Steven Gaines, notorious for his previous work on the Hamptons (*Philistines at the Hedgerow: Passion and Property in the Hamptons* [1998]). The conclusion of the review sums up Hiaasen's fascination with South Florida: "It's not the fault of Gaines that, from gorgeous airheads to slimy swindlers, *Fools Paradise* is populated by characters straight from central casting. That's the story of Florida. As any journalist can attest, just because a place is shallow, corrupt and infested with phonies doesn't mean it's dull." This has been echoed by the current television critic of the *Miami Herald*, Glenn Garvin. In a recent review of the Bravo television series, *The Real Housewives of Miami*, Garvin writes that the show may erase the image of *Miami Vice* in the mind of the television viewer, replacing it with the indisputable achievements of South Florida: "Our indolent trashiness. Our indolent superficiality." Shades of Oscar Levant and the real tinsel underneath the fake tinsel of Hollywood! Isn't that the national critique of Southern California in the popular mind as well? Paradise for the initial settlers, rendered dystopian by the trashy, superficial and venal people who succeeded them.<sup>25</sup>

24. CBS News, "Florida: A Paradise of Scandals," April 17, 2005; Carl Hiaasen, "Real Life: That Bizarre and Brazen Plagiarist," *New York Times*, April 17, 2000, E1.

25. Carl Hiaasen, "On the Beach," *New York Times*, February 22, 2009, BR1; Glenn Garvin, "Real Housewives of Miami: You'll put your eyes out. Ears too," *Miami Herald*, February 22, 2011, accessed July 25, 2011, <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/02/22/2077425/real-housewives-of-miami-youll.html>.

Carl Hiaasen's environmental critique is drawn in stark black and white, almost Manichaean terms, and there are very few people who are neutral. The ex-governor Skink is perhaps the purest of the lot, as he has gone back to nature and has a great deal of difficulty coping with city life. Jack Tagger, Jo Layne Lucks, Twilly Spree, Joey Perrone, Mick Stranahan and Honey Santana, and even Steven Brickman, are rewarded because they have done no harm to nature, and they are very much Hiaasen's own creations. The villains, who tend to be landowners, sugar barons, large farmers, politicians and lobbyists, are very broadly drawn, and, as Hiaasen has often said, are drawn from life. Hiaasen's fictional Florida is dystopian for the sheer awfulness of many of his characters and what they have done to the land, and it is paradise, as it had been for the earliest writers about Florida, for the remaining unspoiled or reclaimable areas where nature and people can coexist peacefully.

## Florida Porch Reverie

by Charlie Hailey

I hate to leave my calm isle of Patmos where the world is not and I have such quiet long hours for writing.  
(Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1872)

Through the width of the living room, she could see the enchantment of the porch, but she saw it as from afar and in a vision. Like John on the island of Patmos. A golden land of refuge where all would be peace, but from which she was now expelled. (Zora Neale Hurston, *Seraph on the Suwannee*)

Calvin Stowe once conversed with Goethe on his Florida porch. His wife Harriet Beecher Stowe, well-known author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, set up this context when she first explored Orange Park in the spring of 1867 and found an enthralling climate and landscape inclined to mix the actual with the imagined. By 1868 the Stowes purchased a house on the St. Johns River in Mandarin and by 1872 completed renovations, most significantly the porch. For Harriet, this open-air space—she called it her “veranda”—harbored dreams and visions for writerly inspiration. On the porch,

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Calvin reads, translates, and hallucinates while Harriet listens and writes, "spinning ideal webs out of bits that he lets fall here and there."<sup>1</sup> You might have interrupted one of these moments as you drew near the porch in a stereoscopic view widely circulated in the 1870s, arriving like the wayward tourist who has walked up from the landing on the St. Johns River. The porch fills the middle ground, framed on the right by a magnificent live oak's trunk, its unseen canopy measuring your approach. To the left, Calvin has put down his reading, and Harriet—head tilting pensively—casts an oblique, preoccupied view back across the river. The porch's columns frame two other vignettes of domestic life: in the middle bay, a woman and a girl look up from their game of cards, and further to the right another woman quietly sews, her rocking chair turned to face an empty seat.

Staged for a national public, this scene conflates the quotidian with the extraordinary through the porch, which binds author to setting. Before paying seventy-five cents and boarding the Jacksonville steamboat *Mary Draper* for the possible glimpse of the author, tourists may have also read *Palmetto Leaves* where Harriet writes: "No Dreamland on earth can be more unearthly in its beauty and glory than the St. Johns in April."<sup>2</sup> In one sense, she knows the porch is a place to see and to be seen—an array of other stereoviews attests to the theatrical rearrangements of the family on the porch—and in another sense, the steamboat tourist and stereoscope viewer come to see not only Stowe's iconicism but also the strange familiarity of a domestic life cast within an open-air paradise that has been written and rewritten in image and in text. Its presence not always evident and often latent in her writings, tourist and reader may not realize—until they have arrived—that they are really looking for the porch. Florida's salubrious climate has furnished the writing porch and the written porch; and for Stowe, this is heaven on earth.

Apparent in her writings on fresh air, Harriet also knows the vital paradox of an open and closed domestic environment and its inspiration for writing climate into her narratives. Her principles of domestic science, published concurrently with her first Florida

1. Harriet Beecher Stowe to George Eliot, February 8, 1872, *The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1890), 464.
2. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1968), 155.

sojourn, call for opening doors, windows, and flues. Stowe's porch fulfills these healthful imperatives for fresh air, particularly in Florida, "for in these regions the veranda is the living room of the house."<sup>3</sup> The porch, where control is relinquished just as shelter is provided, also frames a domestic ecology that embraces the necessity of wildness—Wendell Berry's idea that "the natural forces that so threaten us are the same forces that preserve and renew us."<sup>4</sup> In Florida, the Stoves would certainly have recalled their family home in Cincinnati where "an airy veranda" held within the house's L-shaped turn affords protected experiences of the "fierce gales of autumn," views of the "tossing of spectral branches", and sounds of the "roaring of the wind through the forest." Her Florida porch similarly matches climatic vulnerability with an environmentally charged process of leisure and creativity: "I am writing as a pure recreative movement of mind, to divert myself from the stormy, unrestful present."<sup>5</sup> Jasmine blooms at one end of the porch, orange blossoms scent the shaded air, and hens cackle "drowsily." Amid this plenitude, Stowe speculates how the semi-tropical climate might have transformed Calvinism, how immersion in an orange grove might have stimulated Hawthorne; and how she had originally planned to establish a network of churches along the St. Johns, the author's utopian town plans and schemes instead contracting to the porch's ideal climate.

When the Stoves arrived in 1868, William Bartram had already identified the paradisiacal qualities of Mandarin, Florida: "How happily situated in this retired spot of earth! What an elysium it is!"<sup>6</sup> Harriet overlays her own frontier and climatic narratives. The author packs her gear—"I am going to take my writing desk down to Florida"—and takes up residence in Florida while the northern climate completes its "heroic agony" of freeze and thaw. Going south rather than west, she and her husband nonetheless followed the frontier of a slowly increasing population, with the official 1860 census line and its two person per square mile density lying

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3. Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *An American Woman's Home* (1868); Harriet Beecher Stowe to George Eliot, May 11, 1872, *The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, 469.
  4. Wendell Berry, *Recollected Essays* (San Francisco: North Point, 1981), 313.
  5. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1897), 86, 342.
  6. William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (Philadelphia: James and Johnson, 1791), 105.





Stereoscopic view of "Mrs. H.B. Stowe's House, Fla., Mandarin." (*New York Public Library, Robert N. Dennis Collection*).



"Residence of Mrs. Stowe" in Sidney Lanier's *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate and History* (1875); Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with St. John on Patmos* (1640), *Art Institute of Chicago*.

just south of Jacksonville. When Harriet writes that she and Calvin "have set up our tent," she references North American traditions of frontiers and also links porch to frontier and ideas of wilderness. Frederick Jackson Turner, raconteur of the nation's retreating margins, concurrently pitched his own tent on the back porch of a Cambridge house. Like Turner, Harriet limns the freedoms between wildness and domestication—the "quaint rude wild wilderness"—just as she extols a writer's necessary distance—the mail comes only twice a week—but ultimately it is how "the world recedes" that provides her with inspiration and peace. The porch becomes a residual frontier.

In this contracted space that remains, Harriet grows a foundational myth formed around the porch's construction. After steadily improving "the hut by lath and plaster," she oversees the addition of the "wide veranda all round." But this return to origins is not merely about creating an outdoor living area suitable for Florida's climate. The porch must also be "built around the trunk of a tree," which holds great significance for the family certainly as a metaphor for the home's refurbishment—"we added on parts...as a tree throws out its branches"—but also as the symbol of vertically defined, mystical frontiers. The tree's twenty-five foot girth weighs an earthly connection, and its eighty-foot canopy traces the extension heavenward, just as the porch's river prospect—hyperbolically described by Harriet as five miles shore to shore—measures the horizontal distances between her frontier position and the "great world we are out of." And it is the porch that structurally links house to tree, functionally and organically connecting dwelling to climate and landscape—fresh, strange, and vivid—and narratively and spiritually tying earth to heaven. Its gutter wrapping the trunk, the porch embraces the tree and appears "as if it were half-tree, or something [that] had grown out of" it. The tree-porch affords a connection to the sublime as well as the spiritual. Calvin Stowe's fellow traveler Goethe had already written, "Multiply, pierce the huge walls which you are to raise against the sky so that they shall ascend like sublime, overspreading trees of God," a sentiment echoed by Harriet's assertion that their tree-porch spreads "like a firmament."<sup>7</sup>

The porch invariably looks out, and the church window that would later be constructed to commemorate the Stowes' presence in Mandarin conjures this view from the porch, but the author's association of tree and porch signals an upward and inward turn. Another Florida porch, existing only in written form, affirms this essential interiority. Arvay Meserve's sleeping porch in Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Seraph on the Suwannee* (1948) provides an introspective space of retreat and recollection. An amalgam of Hurston's porch experiences across Florida from Eatonville to Cross City through Polk County, Arvay's porch is climatically charged as a place "built for coolness" and for witnessing seasonal change, hearing the first whippoorwill's song or alligator's bellow. It is also narratively critical as the main character's space of belonging where

7. *The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, 469.

eventual empowerment and sense of ownership make this “high kick for a low cow” an episodic refuge from the world’s evils. The seraphic space of the porch builds Arvay up and makes “her more inside of things.” As a writer, Harriet finds calmness and peace in the porch’s other world; and Arvay, at first cast out from its magical space, later gains access to this “golden land of refuge.”<sup>8</sup>

Both Stowe and Hurston find their porches to be critical thresholds in the pursuit of heaven on earth, and both authors compare these places to the Greek island of Patmos. When St. John was exiled to Patmos, he found a place of retreat and a site for receiving visions that would be recorded in Revelations. Writing in 1896, Harriet’s brother Charles Beecher, who had moved to a house south of Tallahassee, sets the scene in an early chapter of his book *Patmos* (1896): “Let us conceive ourselves with the aged exile in Lonely Patmos, the silver Aegean gleaming about us. We are gazing on the clouds before the break of day. They assume the form of a portal through which a trumpet voice issues.... We are ‘in heaven,’ but we have not quite left the earth.”<sup>9</sup> Renderings of John’s insular life depict the saint writing, sometimes isolated on an impossibly small islet, often visited by a heavenly figure—a connection frequently made through overhanging branches. In Poussin’s version, John occupies the romanticized landscape of Greek temple ruins; and in a woodcut representative of the early 16<sup>th</sup>-century editions, John sits under an oak tree near a river with wooded banks. As veritable islands of Patmos, the two porches make room for confluences of the wild and the heavenly, places made visceral on earthly frontiers and sublime through empyreal associations.

Like the island, Stowe’s porch also becomes a scribe’s retreat, with the necessary proximity to river’s frontier, oak’s firmament, and orange blossom’s scent and the necessary distance from northern climate and the demands of celebrity. This placement within the bounds of the picturesque—not the Greek ruins themselves but the forces behind the ruins, in this case the Florida landscape’s own natural entropy—heightens the interior enchantment of the porch. Just as Arvay’s movement toward the sleeping porch, away from a stultifying and anxious domestic life, provides the well-

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8. Zora Neale Hurston, *Seraph on the Suwannee* (New York: Harper, 1990), 239-249.
9. Charles Beecher, *Patmos, or the Unveiling* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1896), 16.

ventilated and seraphic space of refuge, Harriet's latitudinal shift southward and lateral shift outward from the airless house make possible the setting for her writerly and spiritual imagination. At the same time she arrives in Florida, another frontier-dweller first reaches Yosemite. John Muir follows a trajectory similar to Arvay, Harriet, and other porch-dwellers when he writes from the California wilderness, "going out, I found, was really going in."<sup>10</sup>

Going out to go in. Climatic exposure to think. The wild joy of meditation. Waking dreams need the ambiguity of out and in, here and there, and madness and control. The Florida porch is a place for reverie. What the island is for St. John, the cabin is for Thoreau, the Black Forest hut is for Heidegger, and the garret is for Bachelard, the porch is for Florida's writers, explorers, exiles, mystics, philosophers, and phenomenologists. When the porch sheds nostalgia and simulation, it offers possibilities for rethinking frontiers of lived experience. When the porch retains its occupiable depth, and not a compressed image of porch, it is possible to daydream. The writer's porch and the written porch mix the climatic with the climactic, as other writers of the American South have demonstrated within the porch's latent frontiers: Eudora Welty's sleeping porches signal seasonal change and coming-of-age, Walker Percy's moviegoer completes his "search" and "certifies" places through Louisiana's porches, and Scout eavesdrops from under the porch in *To Kill a Mockingbird's* rights of passage. But on the Florida porch—with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Harry Crews, Ernest Hemingway, Hurston, and Stowe—subtlety of seasons, sublimity of landscape, and empyreal skies house a unique narrative atmosphere. Climatic imperative becomes environmental reverie, and place actual meets place imagined.

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10. John Muir, *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*, ed. Linnie Marsh Wolfe (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 439.

## ***In Marjorie's Wake: A Film Voyage Into Florida's Nature Consciousness***

by Leslie Kemp Poole

As the premiere of the documentary ended and the lights went up, its filmmakers held their breath and wondered: Would *In Marjorie's Wake* accomplish the task they had hoped for—to bridge the new Florida with the old, linking the literary musings of one of the state's most celebrated authors with a true concern for its vanishing paradise? The audience's enthusiastic applause—and subsequent comments—gave them hope.

"I've always wanted to take that trip" was a common refrain from the audience. "How do I get there?" was another. And, finally, "I knew Marjorie and Dessie!"

There was true delight as armchair viewers "joined" in the hour-long documentary's retracing of a 1933 voyage taken by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and her woodsy pal Dessie Smith into the heart of Florida on the St. Johns River. The two had traveled in Smith's 16-foot wooden boat on a nine-day trip meant as adventure for Smith and solace for Rawlings. Refreshed from the journey, Rawlings returned to her home in rural north Florida and later wrote of it in a magazine article and a chapter in her much-loved 1942 book *Cross Creek*.

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Seventy-four years later, that journey was retraced and discovered anew by a movie crew—and the film's audiences—who viewed it from the lens of new concerns about the river's health and Florida's environmental crises. Following the narrative offered by Rawlings, one of Florida's most acclaimed authors, and contrasting it with a modern viewpoint and experience of the 310-mile river, the film merged the real and imagined in an effort to create a discourse about the past and the future.

Film and documentaries are frequent and important mediums for bringing history to the public's attention. In *History on Film/Film on History* (2006), Robert A. Rosenstone argues that history on the page and on the screen are similar in their reference to "actual events, moments, and movements from the past" while also partaking of the "unreal and the fictional" since both are created "out of sets of conventions" that suit their human makers. Films can be important conveyors of history, he states, and deserve a place in the field.<sup>1</sup> The Rawlings film was a hybrid in many ways: it included words from her works, archival film footage and photographs from her life, interviews with people who knew her, and new photography of the river today and the people found on it.

*In Marjorie's Wake* is a documentary that works on several levels: as a travelogue about the St. Johns River, as a salute to author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and as a meditation on Florida's past and future," wrote *Orlando Sentinel* television reviewer Hal Boedeker.<sup>2</sup> The documentary, which debuted in 2007, was the culmination of five years of planning, filming, and fund-raising by the board and volunteers of Equinox Documentaries, Inc., a small, non-profit group located in Orlando, Florida. The dedicated board was composed of avid environmentalists whose fields, ranging from law to writing to filmmaking, merged together to bring the project to

1. Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), 1-2. For more discussion about history and film, see Robert Brent Toplin, *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of the American Past* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Bill Nichols, "History, Myth, and Narrative in Documentary," *Film Quarterly*, 41:1 (Autumn, 1987), 9-20; B. Ruby Rich, "Documentary Disciplines: An Introduction," *Cinema Journal* 46:1 (Fall 2006), 108-115; and Dirk Eitzen, "When Is a Documentary?: Documentary as a Mode of Reception," *Cinema Journal*, 35:1 (Autumn, 1995), 81-102.
2. Hal Boedeker, "Journey into Florida's past with 'Yearling' author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings," *South Florida Sun Sentinel*, April 17, 2008, accessed April 24, 2008, <http://Sun-sentinel.com/features/lifestyle/sfl-tvmarjoriesbapr17,0,979005.story>.



At a morning stop on the docks in Sanford, Florida, Tom Postel, Videographer, films Leslie Kemp Poole and Jennifer Chase as they interview Tommy Vincent, a local newspaper photographer, about his experiences on the river. *Image courtesy of Bill Randolph, Photo-J-Images.*

fruition. All were Rawlings fans; none had ever been involved in a project as large and complicated as this, particularly in raising the \$166,000 needed for production costs. The money came from foundations, grants, and individual donors—most of whom openly shared their love of Florida and Rawlings. “The Lastinger Family Foundation decided to support *In Marjorie’s Wake* because it promised to be a beautiful blend of historical and environmental preservation presented through the St. Johns River adventures of one of America’s most well-known authors,” said Allen Lastinger. “And we were thrilled with the final product.”<sup>3</sup>

The film’s consideration of Florida’s past and future came at a critical time as the state faced its future in the first decade of the twenty-first century. With an estimated weekly population increase of at least 6,000 people during the past 62 years, the state’s population by 2009 reached more than 18 million people. Although the state experienced its first population decline since World War II that same year, the 58,000 people driven away by a

3. Bob Giguere e-mail to author, September 26, 2011; Allen Lastinger e-mail to author, January 18, 2008.

tough economy was still a blip in the last century's growth. Many predicted that Florida could have as many as 47 million residents by 2050, leading to greater demands on natural resources.<sup>4</sup> Of the state's current residents, only one-third were native born, meaning that future battles about water, land use and funding will be decided by people who may consider other areas of the United States—or other countries—their true homes.<sup>5</sup> As *St. Petersburg Times* columnist Howard Troxler noted, "In the past few decades, as Florida's population exploded, we built a state of strangers."<sup>6</sup>

How those "newcomers" experience the state is often colored by how they envision it before crossing its borders. From the time of the Spanish explorers to early naturalists to modern tourists, people have flocked to Florida in quests of their dreams. Granted, the conquistadors never found their sought-after riches but many others came to appreciate Florida as an Edenic paradise of subtropical beauty found nowhere else in the world. "From its founding as an imperial outpost to its modern identity as a tourist empire, Florida has evoked contrasting and compelling images of the sacred and profane: a Fountain of Youth and a Garden of Earthly Delights, a miasmatic hellhole and scuzzy wasteland," wrote historian Gary Mormino. In his opinion, "A powerful symbol of renewal and regeneration, Florida's dreamscape constantly shifts. Where once the land and climate were sufficiently inspiring to bewitch artists and travelers, now gated condominiums, age-restricted communities, and theme parks constitute that firmament."<sup>7</sup>

4. Mark Derr, *Some Kind of Paradise: A Chronicle of Man and the Land in Florida* (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1989), 339; Raymond A. Mohl and Gary R. Mormino, "The Big Change in the Sunshine State: A Social History of Modern Florida," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 425; "Florida Population Drop is First in 63 Years," *AOL News*, August 17, 2009, accessed October 3, 2009, n.a.?, <http://news.aol.com/article/florida-population-drop-is-first-in-63/625955>.
5. Howard Troxler, "A Wish That Floridians Demand Only the Very Best," *St. Petersburg Times*, January 2, 2002, [http://www.sptimes.com/2002/01/01/news\\_pf/Columns/A\\_wish\\_that\\_F...](http://www.sptimes.com/2002/01/01/news_pf/Columns/A_wish_that_F...) (accessed February 14, 2008).
6. *Ibid.*
7. Gary Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 2-3. For additional Florida histories that explore attitudes about the state, see Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida*; Derr, *Some Kind of Paradise*; John Rothchild, *Up For Grabs: A Trip Through Time and Space in the Sunshine State* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985); David Nolan, *Fifty Feet in Paradise: The Booming of Florida* (San Diego and New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1984).



Ironically, the state has suffered mightily from these imaginings. Booming tourism, suburban growth, and demand on natural resources that swelled in the decades after World War II brought the state into a crisis mode, leaving many worrying if there will be enough water in the next few decades to satisfy millions of residents as well as the state's unique flora and fauna. Although Florida's image has been tarnished repeatedly by land booms, busts, and scandals, it alternatively has been reinvented by contemporary media as a modern world of wealth, fast living, and pastel-clad police detectives who drive fast cars and racing boats.<sup>8</sup> Some believe that it is imperative that Floridians learn the intricate truth about the state's fragile natural systems before it all disappears into an endless cookie cutter urban landscape that Miami novelist Carl Hiaasen has likened to "Newark with palm trees."<sup>9</sup>

Alarms about Florida's headlong conflict between growth and nature have been raised by the state's environmental community for decades in many public places and spaces. Although the written word and news articles are invaluable ways to inform the public, in the world of nature one of the most effective means of reaching an audience is through visual media. That nature films are very popular with audiences is evident in the number of shows and cable television channels dedicated to that genre. Movies about animals have even drawn millions of people to the cinema, as evidenced in the 2005 documentary *March of the Penguins*. The film, which shows the travails of life for Emperor penguins in the Antarctic, became one of the highest grossing films of the year, proving that people are willing to pay for nature-based shows that alternately entertain and inform.<sup>10</sup> Equinox Documentaries produced *In Marjorie's Wake* as part of its continuing belief that film projects about nature will attract such audiences and, in the process, educate Floridians about the state's fragile ecosystems. The greater hope was that it would continue the organization's mission to impart a sense of place that may reshape armchair enthusiasts into environmental activists.<sup>11</sup>

8. Alison Meek, "Murder and Mayhem: Miami Vice's role in Restoring Miami's Image." Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association/American Cultural Association National Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 2009.
9. Carl Hiaasen, *Tourist Season* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1986), 24.
10. Elizabeth Blair, "March of the Penguins' a Box Office Surprise," *NPR Morning Edition*, October 31, 2005, accessed January 8, 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4982232>.
11. Equinox Documentaries, accessed September 22, 2011, [http://www.equinoxdocumentaries.org/about\\_equinox.php](http://www.equinoxdocumentaries.org/about_equinox.php).

A number of recent films have focused on Florida, including documentaries about the St. Johns River and the imperiled Everglades. In *The River Returns*, a 2005 film, scientists and explorers are depicted traveling above, on, and below the 310-mile St. Johns River to represent its many facets and raise concern about its future. It is part of a series called *Water's Journey* that also has examined the health and beauty of Florida's Everglades and its spring system.<sup>12</sup> In early 2010, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Jacksonville hosted a showing of nine short documentaries that focused on people whose lives revolve around the St. Johns River, creating a "cultural portrait" of it—an acknowledgement that the river is important in human lives as inspiration and as income.<sup>13</sup>

These films reflect Florida State University English professor Anne E. Rowe's assessment that, "Perhaps in no other state have the conflicting goals of growth and preservation from destruction of the very natural resources that have attracted people been so apparent as they are in Florida." The state's subtropical setting, which has attracted filmmakers for nearly as long as the movie industry has existed, continues to evoke "an imaginative response" as an "enchanted country" unlike no other, she wrote.<sup>14</sup>

As Rowe also noted in *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (1992), the success of Rawlings' writings in *Cross Creek* reflects its appeal "to anyone who has longed for the idyllic, pastoral escape from humdrum life."<sup>15</sup> Rawlings' paradisiacal portrait of the rural community and her experiences there "echoed for twentieth-century readers those same enchanting qualities that had appealed to Americans for so many years."<sup>16</sup>

This idea of a simpler, bucolic Florida in an earlier time is something many state residents craved as a rapidly increasing population has created urban sprawl that consumed the state's natural features in the growth boom since World War II. Most

12. Water's Journey—Everglades, accessed March 7, 2011, <http://www.theevergladesstory.org/store/>; Water's Journey—The River Returns: Stories of the Great St. Johns, accessed March 7, 2011, <http://www.riverreturns.org>.

13. Steve Patterson, "River Runs Through Film Screenings Today," *The Florida Times-Union*, January 9, 2010, accessed March 7, 2011, <http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2010-01-09/story/river-runs-through-film-screenings-today>.

14. Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 138.

15. *Ibid.*, 112.

16. *Ibid.*

residents, whether native or relocated, can recite the names of favorite natural places that have succumbed to the bulldozer. Although Floridians consistently rank the need for growth management as a high priority, few believe that local and state leaders are controlling the irreversible conversion from sand to asphalt. A recent news poll showed that almost half of Floridians surveyed think life in the state has worsened in the last five years and thirty-seven percent think it will continue to diminish in the next five. Their chief concerns: high property taxes, underperforming public schools, insurance prices, and ineffective growth management. One-third of those polled said they would "tell a loved one or friend not to move to the once-vaunted Sunshine State, and one in five is seriously considering moving elsewhere," according to the news report.<sup>17</sup> This is not a new sentiment as Floridians since the latter part of the twentieth century have regularly voiced their concerns about rampant growth and voted in favor of land-purchasing programs to preserve natural areas. The irony, then, is that the state's Edenic beauty—or perhaps the paradisiacal idea—that has lured so many people in the last century is now threatened by their very presence, making the state "a victim of its allure," according to Mark Derr, author of *Some Kind of Paradise: A Chronicle of Man and the Land in Florida* (1989).<sup>18</sup>

"During the past twenty years, while state politicians have enacted legislation they claimed would protect the environment and control growth, the state has experienced the most dramatic population increase in its history and acceleration of a precipitous decline in the quality of its water and the viability of its land," writes Derr, who believes protecting natural resources should be a priority of state leaders and voters. "Once used up and despoiled, it is paradise no more."<sup>19</sup>

That, then, is the reality of Florida. But as Rawlings so eloquently reflected in her works, the state *does* have a treasure chest of natural beauty—the idyllic paradise exists and can be experienced. For Rawlings, as with many contemporary residents, the St. Johns River trip was a search for renewal and recreation—indeed, re-creation

17. Maya Bell, "Survey Results Reveal Residents' Growing Discontent With Life in Florida," *The Orlando Sentinel*, January 14, 2008, accessed January 15, 2008, <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/education/orl-lidsurvey1408jan14,0,4143967.story>.

18. Derr, *Some Kind of Paradise*, 13.

19. *Ibid.*, 389.

as she took the voyage as respite from her troubled marriage that soon would end in divorce. It was a long way from the blissful life she and her husband imagined when they moved to the rustic hamlet of Cross Creek five years earlier.<sup>20</sup>

Rawlings and Smith<sup>21</sup> had become fast friends soon after the writer and her husband Charles made the adventurous move to Florida from Rochester, New York, to pursue the literary life.<sup>22</sup> The couple bought a white, wooden house flanked by orange groves whose fruit, they hoped, would supplement their incomes from writing.<sup>23</sup> They soon learned that reality was harsher than they had imagined. Neighbors, long accustomed to growing their own produce and hunting to sustain themselves, worried that the young pair would not survive because their groves were in poor shape, so they urged area resident Smith to give the couple lessons in rural provisioning.<sup>24</sup> Raised in the area's dry, sandy scrublands, the self-reliant Smith was the perfect tutor. She taught Rawlings to fish and shoot a gun and often accompanied the couple on fishing and camping trips, remaining friends with both of them for many years.<sup>25</sup> Smith was a witness as the Rawlings's marriage crumbled: Charles was bored and wanted to pursue magazine stories elsewhere, while Rawlings had achieved early success with her novel *South Moon Under*, a tale of life in the Florida backwoods published in 1933.<sup>26</sup> One spring night that year, a lonely Rawlings and sympathetic Smith spent a night at Smith's camp at nearby Ft. McCoy, having dinner, drinking moonshine, and talking about getting away from the Cross Creek farm for a while.<sup>27</sup>

"Once I lost touch with the Creek," Rawlings wrote, "I had hardships that seemed to me more than one could bear alone. I

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20. Gordon E. Bigelow, *Frontier Eden: The Literary Career of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), 16-17.

21. For the purpose of this essay, Rawlings' river companion is identified as Dessie Smith, her maiden name. During the course of her lifetime, Smith was married many times, using several surnames. At the time of her death, she was Dessie Prescott.

22. Bigelow, *Frontier Eden*, 4-8.

23. Rodger L. Tarr, ed., *Max and Marjorie: The Correspondence between Maxwell E. Perkins & Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 2.

24. Dessie Smith, interview by author, September 23, 2001; Heather McPherson and Leslie Kemp Poole, "A Real Character," of *The Orlando Sentinel* (*Florida* magazine), March 12, 1995, 11.

25. McPherson and Poole, "A Real Character," 10-11.

26. Bigelow, *Frontier Eden*, 16-17.

27. Smith, interview by author, September 23, 2001, Crystal River, Florida.

loved the Creek, I loved the grove, I loved the shabby farmhouse. Suddenly they were nothing. The difficulties were greater than the compensations. I talked morosely with my friend Dessie."<sup>28</sup>

Smith suggested they take a trip she had long dreamed of—"down" the north-flowing St. Johns from its headwaters in Central Florida to the Ocklawaha River, and then upriver to a landing near Smith's camp. Late at night, buoyed by alcohol, Rawlings agreed, and then tried to back out the next day.

"So I said, 'Marge, I've had a yen to go out on the St. Johns from its head to where it turns off there to the Ocklawaha' and I said, 'How about it? Wouldn't you like to do that?'" recalled Smith. "Then the next morning it didn't seem like such a good idea, but I wouldn't let her back down on me because I knew by that time that she was a good cook and a fine companion, even on the hunting, so I kept her feet to the fire."<sup>29</sup>

While Smith set about preparing for the trip, Rawlings wrote to her book editor, Maxwell E. Perkins:

I plan to take possibly a very foolish trip, beginning this coming Wednesday or Thursday. Another woman—an amazingly capable sportswoman—and I are going down the St. John's river by rowboat with outboard motor... I know that the first 100 miles at least lie through an utterly forsaken marsh country dotted with palm islands, and I can't help being a little afraid that false channels may get us into trouble until the river broadens and develops definite banks. But as a Cracker friend says, "No fool, no fun." All this strenuous out-door stuff is new to me since coming to Florida. I've taken to it naturally, but my chief claim to capability in such matters lies only in being game for anything. So wish me luck.<sup>30</sup>

The women left on March 9 and returned nine days later, having experienced the adventure of a lifetime.<sup>31</sup> They had been lost in a marsh and found their way, dealt with a leaky boat that Smith patched with torn strips of her shirt, camped every night, cooked their own food (some of which Smith had shot or hooked),

28. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Cross Creek* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 354.

29. Smith, interview by author, September 23, 2001.

30. Tarr, *Max and Marjorie*, 95.

31. Tarr, *Max and Marjorie*, 98-99.

and met a host of interesting people along the homeward path. Rawlings' tale was a narrative about getting back into the current of life, of re-centering one's self through a trial and appreciation of nature and, ultimately, finding inner peace.

Rawlings wrote that she "found a forgotten loveliness in all the things that have nothing to do with men" upon her return. "Because I had known intimately a river, the earth pulsed under me. The Creek was home. Oleanders were sweet past bearing, and my own shabby fields, weed-tangled, were newly dear. I knew, for a moment, that the only nightmare is the masochistic human mind."<sup>32</sup> Six years later, her love of Florida and writing renewed, Rawlings won the Pulitzer Prize and the admiration of the nation's readers with *The Yearling*, her tale of the hardscrabble world of Florida's scrublands.

How accurate was Rawlings' account, especially given that she excelled at fiction? Decades later, Smith, who died in 2002, would attest to the truthfulness of "Hyacinth Drift"—except for the episode for which the chapter is named. According to Rawlings, the two women became lost on their first day in the marshy expanse of the upper river. Exhausted, they beached their boat and set up camp.<sup>33</sup> Refreshed the next morning, Rawlings took a new look at the river and both women realized that their path could be determined by following hyacinths—non-native flowering plants that drift on the river's surface and often cause navigational tangles. "Forever after, where the river sprawled in confusion, we might shut off the motor and study the floating hyacinths until we caught, in one direction, a swifter pulsing, as though we put our hands close and closer to the river's heart," she wrote.<sup>34</sup>

It is a lovely scene, filled with romance and floating purple flowers. But it never happened. According to Smith, who piloted the boat, she never followed hyacinths, knowing that their path could be influenced by winds. Instead, she crumpled up leaf debris and released it under the water to find the river's flow.<sup>35</sup> Smith, however, did not mind Rawlings' fictional account and remained one of the author's greatest fans. "I always said Marge could describe a magnolia and I could smell it. She was that good."<sup>36</sup>

32. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 370.

33. *Ibid.*, 358.

34. *Ibid.*, 359.

35. Smith, interview by author, September 23, 2001.

36. McPherson and Poole, "A Real Character," 10.

Smith is featured prominently in the documentary, telling stories about the trip. Film producers Bill Belleville and Bob Giguere, however, chose not to use her account of the navigational dilemma, instead featuring Rawlings' flowery—and perhaps false—recollection. The film also digresses from the original trip in several other ways, reflecting, in part, modern conveniences. Rather than travel in a wooden boat, the crew used three boats, including a houseboat where the camera and film crew slept. Several nights were spent in borrowed homes or hotels—owing to the fact that the river's edge is now privatized and no longer available for spontaneous camping. Instead of relying on hyacinths or leaf debris, the crew used GPS systems and maps to find the way and was aided by cellular telephones and computers with wireless internet, providing a source of contact with the outside world that the women could never have imagined. The film also compresses the nine-day trip into a week, although it must be noted that Rawlings' account does not illuminate the entire nine days.

*In Marjorie's Wake* also pays homage to other early travelers whose writings extolled the beauty of Florida's wild areas. Perhaps the best picture of early Florida wildlife is found in Quaker botanist William Bartram's account of his 1774 and 1775 excursions to the state, recounted in his 1791 book of a lengthy title but commonly referred to as Bartram's *Travels*. Journeying on the St. Johns River in a canoe with a makeshift sail, Bartram set out to gather botanical specimens for a wealthy British collector. Along the way, he discovered a spiritual oneness with the land and water he encountered. The film recounts Bartram's description of a spring of "crystalline water" with a "paradise of fish" that seemed to "exhibit a just representation of the peaceable and happy state of nature which existed before the fall, yet in reality it is a mere representation."<sup>37</sup> Bartram's romantic and fanciful descriptions of some animal behaviors and his accounts of human development along the river have been criticized as inaccurate. However, when

37. William Bartram, *The Travels of William Bartram*, Mark Van Doren, ed. (New York: Dover, 1928), 150-51. For more about Bartram and his travels see William Bartram, *Bartram's Living Legacy: The Travels and the Nature of the South*, ed. Dorinda G. Dallmeyer (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010); Daniel L. Schafer, *William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2010); Marjory Bartlett Sanger, *Billy Bartram and His Green World* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1972); Francis Harper, ed. *The Travels of William Bartram; Naturalist's Edition* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

biologists study state landscapes, they often turn to Bartram for the most reliable descriptions of the early Florida environment.<sup>38</sup>

Rawlings was familiar with Bartram's work and perhaps also with the glowing descriptions of Florida penned by poet Sidney Lanier. Of the Ocklawaha River, the waterway Rawlings and Smith would take from the St. Johns to head home, Lanier had written in 1875:

The stream, which in its broader stretches reflected the sky so perfectly that it seemed a riband of heaven bound in lovely doublings along the breast of the land, now began to narrow: the blue of heaven disappeared, and the green of the overleaning trees assumed its place. The lucent current lost all semblance of water. It was simply a distillation of many-shaded foliages, smoothly sweeping along beneath us. It was green trees, fluent.<sup>39</sup>

Lanier also repeated the claims of Florida's healthful environment, something regularly touted by tourist officials to lure folks to the state. He wrote "consumptives are said to flourish in this climate" and noted that there are stories of "cadaverous persons" who, after a few weeks of living in the state, returned to "ruddy face and portentous appetite."<sup>40</sup> Ironically, Lanier's trip to Florida a year later failed to cure his fatal tuberculosis.<sup>41</sup>

Lanier was describing the lush vegetation that he encountered along the river, but his words, in one of the state's earliest travelogues, were meant to lure tourists. That is why railroad interests published the book, which contains descriptions of some parts of the river that Lanier never visited.<sup>42</sup> Lanier was paid \$125 per month to visit Florida and produce a guidebook—no doubt to entice folks into buying rail tickets.<sup>43</sup> A year later, Lanier wrote *Sketches of India*—a guidebook about a country he never visited.<sup>44</sup> The real? The imagined? In Florida it is often hard to tell.

38. Lars Anderson, *Paynes Prairie: The Great Savanna: A History and Guide* (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, 2001), 135-136.

39. Sidney Lanier, *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History*. Facsimile Reproduction of the 1875 Edition. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 21.

40. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination*, 36.

41. *Ibid.*, 37.

42. Bill Belleville, *River of Lakes: A Journey on Florida's St. Johns River* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 61.

43. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination*, 34.

44. "Sidney Lanier," Encyclopedia of Alabama, accessed January 27, 2011, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-2907>.



Rawlings, directed in large part by her New York editor Max Perkins, recognized the appeal that rural Florida held for the nation's readers, most of whom were unlikely to see it anywhere but in their imaginations. She visited many of her neighbors, taking notes about their stories of life in the scrub and studying their vernacular style, used extensively in her books' dialogues. Although she altered the tales culled from local residents to fit her narratives, she often acknowledged the sources of her information. To create the vivid bear hunting scenes in *The Yearling*, Rawlings listened to Barney Dillard of Volusia spin his yarns of the backwoods and she borrowed the story of a young boy raising a deer from another local resident. These methods filled her seven books including the autobiographical *Cross Creek* (1942)—mostly a series of essays about life in the small village, a cookbook using recipes she borrowed and developed, and five novels. Two major Hollywood movies were based on her books as well. Gregory Peck was entirely too handsome and tall to play the father character, Penny Baxter, in *The Yearling* film, but nevertheless got the role in the 1946 film that also starred a much-too-slim Jane Wyman as his wife. The film was shot partly in rural Florida, but the interior scenes were pure Hollywood back lot, attempting the illusion of a wooden cabin marvelously devoid of biting insects.

The 1983 film *Cross Creek*, starring Mary Steenburgen, won mostly favorable reviews and earned four Academy Award nominations, including nods for supporting actor and supporting actress. Ostensibly the story of Rawlings' life, it veered from reality by ignoring her first marriage and the fact that she came to her grove house with her husband.<sup>45</sup> The frail, sweet-faced Steenburgen hardly fit the true image of Rawlings, who was short but stocky and could drink, hunt and curse with the best of her backwoods neighbors. In a review for *The New York Times*, film critic Janet Maslin noted that the film has some "artificiality," including scenes in which "Marjorie apparently paints, cleans and patches" the "ramshackle hut" on her own and that an impoverished woman "wears a dress made from potato sacks though she *still* appears to have a tidy manicure..."<sup>46</sup>

45. Janet Maslin, "Film: 'Cross Creek,' A Writer's Life." *The New York Times*, September 21, 1983, accessed January 27, 2011, <http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?res+9E06EFD81138F932A1575AC0A965948260>.

46. *Ibid.*

Rawlings lived to see and act as advisor to *The Yearling* film. To help filmmakers with it, Rawlings made notes on a large map of the scrub locale where she set the book, suggesting real sites, including a large sinkhole and a nearby spring run, for filming her fictional tale. Here was a true mixing of reality and imagination: a Hollywood movie based on a work of fiction that was informed by an actual landscape and true stories recounted by local people to Rawlings.

Rawlings died in 1953, long before Florida's environmental problems would become evident to all. Even so, she made some observations in her 1942 *Cross Creek* that show her rising environmental awareness. She noted that several species of wildlife were becoming rare, including the Limpkin, a wading bird, and the Florida panther, the latter of which is now extremely endangered. In *Cross Creek Cookery*, also published in 1942, Rawlings acknowledges that black bears, once plentiful in Florida, "are becoming scarce. I see no reason for destroying the remaining ones, since they live so far from any domestic clearing that they are no longer a menace, as formerly, to stock."<sup>47</sup> She then admits that she has enjoyed "thoroughly" eating bear meat and offers two recipes for it.

Also in 1942, Rawlings began to realize the "finite nature of the resources available for human consumption" and agreed to write an article on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service for *Colliers* magazine "alerting citizens about the need to conserve lumber." In the 1943 article, titled "Trees for Tomorrow," Rawlings railed against the clear-cutting of southern longleaf pine forests by timber companies, justified "at the time by the need to support the war effort." Her response to this argument: "We are fighting today for many valuable things. We must fight also at this critical moment to preserve the God-given forests without which we should be helpless atoms on a sterile earth."<sup>48</sup>

When the *Colliers* article came out, Rawlings was asked by a member of Congress to write more articles about the timber industry. She demurred, but wrote to her second husband, Norton Baskin, who was serving abroad in the American Field Service:

47. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Cross Creek Cookery* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 110.

48. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 166-167, 243, 246; Florence Turcotte, "For this is an Enchanted Land: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and the Florida Environment." (paper presented at the annual meeting of American Society for Environmental History, Tallahassee, FL, February, 29, 2009), 12.

"I feel if I could be of help in such a critical matter, perhaps I ought to. My literature is painfully likely not to be deathless, but I might go down in history as the gal who saved the nation's trees!"<sup>49</sup>

Rawlings never joined the rising corps of conservation-minded activists who worked hard to save Florida's landscape, including local Audubon societies, garden clubs, and women's clubs. Instead, she devoted her time to writing about the people and landscapes that she encountered. In today's world, however, enthusiastic readers as well as concerned environmentalists look to her descriptions of a rural world long past for information as well as inspiration. The author's fame also lives on in the many editions of her works, published in numerous countries in various languages. She also is celebrated annually at a conference held by the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society, a dedicated group of aficionados with membership as far-flung as Japan. Organized in 1987, the group includes a number of aging folks who remember Rawlings, often from their childhoods. The Society aids in the publication of the *Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature*, which offers academic articles, poetry, fiction, and reviews "in the spirit of or regarding the life and work" of Rawlings. The group's website also offers teaching and internet resources.<sup>50</sup>

That Rawlings' home has become a park is another sign of her continuing popularity. The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Historical Site, part of the Florida Park Service, features her airy, Cracker-style wooden home and grounds where visitors can imagine the author at work and play. A manual typewriter sits on a screened porch, the spot where Rawlings often wrote, her typing audible to neighboring homes. Ducks and chickens roam the area near a rebuilt barn and a large magnolia tree is still visible from her kitchen window. Rangers dressed in clothing reminiscent of the 1930s offer regular tours and during certain times of the year, fire up Rawlings' kitchen and follow her recipes. In 2007, the property was designated a National Historic Landmark, and a year later, Rawlings was featured in a commemorative stamp by the U.S. Postal Service. In 2009 the author was honored as a "First Floridian" by the state's governor.<sup>51</sup>

49. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 12.

50. The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society. accessed January 27, 2011, <http://rawlingssociety.org/society.html>.

51. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park accessed January 27, 2011, <http://www.floridastateparks.org/MarjorieKinnanRawlings/>.

Five decades after her death, Rawlings still attracts people to the small town of Cross Creek. For many Floridians, her writing and tales of rural life strike a deep chord. As the documentary trip progressed down river, its filmmakers regularly met people who not only were familiar with Rawlings' work, but also identified themselves as fans. Many were native-born Floridians who loved the river and natural areas that the author described in her eloquently dreamy prose. Others flocked to her home in search of the rapidly disappearing Florida created before air conditioning, mosquito control and interstate highways. As historian Mormino notes, the architectural style of the Rawlings' home developed as a necessity to deal with the peninsula's "alternating seasons of heaven and hell."<sup>52</sup> Residents once "adapted their lives to the heat" but this changed dramatically in the second half of the twentieth century with the advent of air-conditioning technology and rising prosperity that allowed Floridians to buy it.<sup>53</sup>

Climate-controlled homes also may add to the increasing amount of time Floridians spend indoors, losing contact with the natural lands that drew them to the state. It is a condition afflicting Americans everywhere, particularly younger generations that are estranged from nature, living sedentary lives in front of televisions and computers in suburban neighborhoods where little green space is available. Author Richard Louv has labeled this condition "nature-deficit disorder," which he says can have deleterious mental and physical effects. His remedy: more time in the outdoors.<sup>54</sup>

Residents with sedentary lifestyles and little experience in the open air are unlikely to appreciate the difference between a real and imagined Florida. The odds of understanding or loving the state's natural systems dim as their environments center more on modern technology than on the great outdoors. This reality is not lost on Lynn Curtis Koehnemann, an adjunct professor at Gulf Coast State College and Chipola College in the Panama City, Florida, area. In her online "Florida Geography" class, Koehnemann's students are required to watch *In Marjorie's Wake*, which serves as a virtual field trip into a natural setting. She reports that for these students, many of whom come from mobile military families stationed at

52. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 234-35.

53. *Ibid.*, 235-37.

54. Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005), 3.



An Ibis catches his breakfast in the early hours along the St. Johns River. *Image courtesy of Bill Randolph, Photo-J-Images.*

nearby facilities, Rawlings helps impart a much-needed sense of place. “It’s a good way to introduce them to Florida history and the Florida environment to make them care about it,” Koehnemann said, adding that Rawlings’s works are fine descriptions of “natural Florida and native Florida. She has always been special to me in that way.”<sup>55</sup>

These are issues that concern many state environmentalists as well as Bill Belleville, co-founder of Equinox Documentaries. Belleville is an award-winning Sanford, Florida, author who has written extensively about Florida’s natural systems, including a book about the St. Johns River. He also has recounted how unchecked growth eventually made him leave his beloved wooden house that resembled Rawlings’ Cross Creek home. In *Losing It All To Sprawl: How Progress Ate My Cracker Landscape* (2006), Belleville noted the toll that haphazard growth has taken: average regional driving commutes have grown to 54.2 miles per day, which means more fuel spent, higher costs, “more land paved, more pollution emitted.”<sup>56</sup>

55. Lynn Curtis Koehnemann, telephone interview by author, February 3, 2011.

56. Bill Belleville, *Losing It All To Sprawl: How Progress Ate My Cracker Landscape* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006), 128.

of marine life, including many types of fish and a family of otters. Here was Bartram's "enchanted (sic) and amazing crystal fountain"<sup>65</sup> that he described in an eloquent language that would inspire several European poets:

This amazing and delightful scene, though real, appears at first but as a piece of excellent painting; there seems no medium; you imagine the picture to be within a few inches of your eyes, and that you may without the least difficulty touch any one of the fish, or put your finger upon the crocodile's eye, when it really is twenty or thirty feet under water.<sup>66</sup>

There are serious concerns that this spring, along with many like it in the state, may not be able to withstand the growth pressures that have dramatically changed Florida's environmental complexion in the last century. Most of the majestic longleaf pine ecosystem that once carpeted the state is gone, a victim of old lumber practices that did not call for replanting the slow-growing trees. Gone also are half of the wetlands that were drained to create "improved" lands.<sup>67</sup> Springs also are in trouble, showing increasing numbers of pollutants in their waters, but they may be in greater danger from humans who will be looking for more water resources to serve the insatiable thirst of rapidly expanding populaces. Conflict already has erupted between communities and counties that border the St. Johns River—now eyed as the future source of water once underground supplies are depleted or dirtied. Seven Central Florida counties, which collectively grew from a population of 3 million in 2000 to 3.6 million in 2008, are facing a water crisis in the next five years and are now looking at siphoning millions of gallons of water from the river.<sup>68</sup> That has upset many municipalities along the lower river, including the Jacksonville metropolis, which may be left with a waterway that is saltier and carries less volume, affecting flora and fauna and industries that depend on them.<sup>69</sup>

65. Mark Van Doren, ed., *Travels of William Bartram* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), 149.

66. *Ibid.*, 151.

67. Clay Henderson, *The Floridas* (San Francisco: Brown Trout Publishers, Inc., 2005), 14, 19.

68. Ron Word, "North, Central Florida Fight Over Water," *OrlandoSentinel.com*, January 14, 2008, accessed January 15, 2008, <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/sns-ap-water-wars,0,7417439>.

69. *Ibid.*

Concerns about pressures on Florida's water supplies and ecosystems are not new. In 1929, botanist John Kunkel Small warned about an impending crisis in *From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy*, a book whose title says it all. While change is a natural process that typically moves in a slow, orderly, and constructive style, "man's methods are crude and rapid, and result in great disorder," Small noted. "This is indicative of Florida's tomorrow. Yesterday a botanical paradise! Tomorrow, the desert!"<sup>70</sup>

Near its end, the film journey turns up the Ocklawaha River, a narrow, winding waterway through a jungle-like hardwood forest. The two women had boated this way to a landing near Smith's cabin, but today that voyage is impossible to accomplish because of a dam erected in the 1960s as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' ill-advised plan to dig the Cross-Florida Barge Canal across north Florida. The canal project, begun in 1964 and touted as a means to create safe shipping of goods across the state, was designed to connect the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, using the Ocklawaha River as part of its path. To accomplish this, the Corps built many man-made structures, including the dam, which destroyed sixteen miles of the river and flooded 9,000 acres of riverine forest. River lovers, however, rose up in opposition to the project and soon were joined by many academics and environmentalists in arguing that the project would damage the area's water supplies and natural habitats. After their coalition, organized as the Florida Defenders of the Environment (FDE), filed a federal lawsuit, President Richard M. Nixon in 1971 halted the canal construction, the first time a grassroots uprising had stopped a massive public works project in the United States. Activists, particularly the Gainesville-based FDE, immediately began pressing to remove the dam and restore the Ocklawaha River, but to date have been unsuccessful in that effort.<sup>71</sup>

70. John Kunkel Small, *From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy* (Sanford, FL: Seminole Soil and Water Conservation District, 2004), 62.

71. Florida Defenders of the Environment. "The Case for Restoring the Free-Flowing Ocklawaha River: Section 1," accessed September 22, 2008, <http://www.fladefenders.org/publications/CaseForRestorationSect1.html>. For the history of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal see Steven Noll and David Tegeger, *Ditch of Dreams: The Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Struggle for Florida's Future* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009); Nelson Blake, *Land into Water – Water into Land: A History of Water Management in Florida* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1980); Luther J. Carter, *The Florida Experience: Land and water policy in a growth state* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University

Stopping at the dam, cameras at the top of the structure filmed the devastation beyond its concrete walls—a huge ghostly reservoir devoid of any signs of life or the recreational boaters that business types claim make the reservoir vital to the local economy. What had begun as Lanier's "distillation of many-shaded foliages" ended up a nightmare, illustrating the analysis of author John McPhee who writes that conservationists abhor dams, perhaps because "rivers are the ultimate metaphors of existence, and dams destroy rivers. Humiliating nature, a dam is evil—placed and solid."<sup>72</sup> Engineers had perceived the project to be a modern paradise—a shipping channel across the state—but instead it became an environmental boondoggle, a technological testimony to the shortsightedness of exploitation of nature in the name of imagined profits.

After shooting ended, forty-four hours of film were edited to fifty-five minutes for the documentary. Some of that extra footage will be available through internet use on the Equinox website as part of "Online Equinox Adventures," an interactive educational curriculum initiative now in development. In the meantime, the film has finished its PBS run but can be seen at occasional special events. The DVD, available through Equinox, has been obtained by a number of schools and libraries for educational uses as well. With these uses, Giguere says, the film may continue to start Floridians upon the path to finding a sense of place and an appreciation of the state's natural features and the art, music, and literature inspired by them.<sup>73</sup>

Many wonder whether the project will backfire, speculating that a film extolling the beauty of the river may draw *too many* people to its waters, clogging it with boat traffic, noise, debris, and pollution. Perhaps the same argument could be made of Rawlings' works—that they added to the literature that praised the state's natural beauty and ultimately lured people to visit or relocate. It may be ironic, but that is a possibility the filmmakers were willing to take, intending that the film will inspire preservation efforts

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Press, 1974); Raymond F. Dasmann, *No Further Retreat: The Fight to Save Florida* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971); Leslie Kemp Poole, "Florida: Paradise Redefined – The rise of environmentalism in a state of growth," MLS Thesis, Rollins College, 1991; and Margaret F. MacDonald, "'Our Lady Of The Rivers': Marjorie Harris Carr, Science, Gender, and Environmental Activism," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 2010.

72. John McPhee, *Encounters With the Archdruid* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971), 158-59.

73. Giguere, e-mail to author, September 26, 2011.



or, at the very least, propel viewers to take a trip on the St. Johns, read Rawlings' books, or simply get out of doors and look at nature anew.<sup>74</sup>

Hopefully, future generations will find a way do all of this while living out Rawlings' vision: "It seems to me that the earth may be borrowed but not bought. It may be used, but not owned. It gives itself in response to love and tending, offers its seasonal flowering and fruiting. But we are tenants and not possessors, lovers and not masters."<sup>75</sup> Rawlings found a way to convey the loveliness of Florida through her exquisite words and *In Marjorie's Wake* now seeks to do the same for a modern generation, melding literature and history with the medium of documentary film to illuminate and motivate. The real and the imagined Florida join together on the screen in an effort to create a much-needed discourse about the state's environment—past, present, and future. As the film shows, the voyage ahead may be winding and often difficult to navigate, but the beauty to be found there makes it necessary and well worth taking.

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74. Ibid.

75. Rawlings, *Cross Creek*, 380.

## Miami Stories

by Jeff Rice

In his song *Miami 2017*, Billy Joel imagined Miami, Florida, as a refuge for an impending apocalypse. In the narrative, or diegesis, Joel builds, Miami is never mentioned. But as Joel describes how dangerous New York has become in this futuristic scenario, the city's citizens, we are led to believe, will once again flee south, just as the song tells us they did almost eight years earlier. Joel sings:

They burned the churches up in Harlem  
Like in that Spanish Civil War  
The flames were everywhere,  
But no one really cared  
It always burned up there before.<sup>1</sup>

When New York and nearby New Jersey residents, such as my own family, flocked to South Florida after World War II, they were not fleeing a burning city. Instead, they were participating in a mass migration in search of better jobs, cheaper housing, and warmer weather. "In 1959," Jeffrey Gurock writes, "approximately 43 percent of Miami Jews came from New York City, a proportion that slightly exceeded the percentage of American Jews living in New York after the war."<sup>2</sup> My family, who came from northern

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1. Billy Joel. *Miami 2017*. *Songs in the Attic*. Sony, 1998.
2. Jeffrey S. Gurock, *American Jewish Life, 1920-1990* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 107-108.

New Jersey and Brooklyn, were among those Jews who left New York for Miami in the early 1950s. Some of those Jews were recent residents of New York; they had, a few years earlier, fled their own devastation, the Holocaust of Nazi Europe. So, too, had Billy Joel's family.

In 1980, I was ten and living in the Miami suburb of Kendall when Liberty City, a neighborhood near the heart of the city, burned and experienced the devastation of a riot. Insurance salesman Arthur McDuffie's death at the hands of several police officers, who eventually were acquitted of murder, set the city ablaze. Our sixth grade classes at F.C. Martin were canceled because of the general fear of danger. If Miami had "burned up there before," to echo Joel, it had not been for twenty years at least, dating to some point in the 1960s when American cities burned in response to other racist beatings, or to the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. During the political turmoil of the 1960s, singer Wayne Cochran was not concerned with racial inequity, but instead, in his canonical song, *Going Back to Miami*, sang about returning to the city for a girl. He was not fleeing New York's devastation, like Joel's anonymous protagonist, but merely trying to get back to his baby. We may never know where McDuffie was going when he was stopped and beaten, and we may never return to the moment when he allegedly fled police. But his brutal beating eventually led to "more than 1,400 riot related arrests" and "\$125 million in property damage and losses."<sup>3</sup> Going back to a baby, heading South, these responses pale in comparison to the damage that racial discrimination generates when a man is murdered for speeding. When asked by *The Miami News* to respond to the rioting, Muhammad Ali, a former resident of Liberty City in the 1960s, too, fell short of grasping the totality of McDuffie's murder, but noted that, "This is a heavy thing. It's difficult. It makes my fight comin' up with Holmes looks so easy."<sup>4</sup> After the riots, Thomas Boswell, Ira Sheskin, and Carroll Truss interviewed residents of Liberty City and other African-American neighborhoods in order to understand local responses to the event. Two thirds of Richmond Heights and over three quarters of Liberty City respondents noted that "it's almost impossible for

3. Jerome Skolnick and James Fyfe, *Above the Law: Police and Excessive Use of Force* (New York: The Free Press, 1983), 182.

4. Bill Brubaker, "Ali's Plea to Old Neighborhood." *The Miami News*. May 20, 1980. Front page, 8A.

a black to get a fair trial in Dade County."<sup>5</sup> In other words, the prevailing attitude was that only those with ethnic membership to a select, white club could get justice.

I have not been back to Miami in 15 years. And I do not care to go back, a declaration that my wife, who loves the South, finds mysterious, particularly since I have spent the last nine years living in climates where snow is frequent in the winter. My reasons have nothing to do with weather, migration stories, or the continuing problems of racism, but are more likely connected to an internal representation that I hold, but cannot fully express. As Roland Barthes might ask, "How do you describe something that does not represent anything?"<sup>6</sup> Such a moment, thing, or memory possibly only can be expressed. In the memory that I have of some placed called "Miami," I can create what Michel de Certeau calls a spatial story by revisiting Miami as a series of associations that I return to for the purpose of invention, and not for purposes of representation. In that sense, I am exploring a way to write about the city that I grew up in, in a way that does not, as Fredric Jameson requires, always historicize<sup>7</sup>, but instead fleshes out patterns and associations as a narrative. In the age of new media, associations replace logical argumentation as a method of persuasion, and offer alternatives to historical accounts and representation. These associations may appear as networked moments, fragments, and isolated details juxtaposed into a larger narrative. In a series of associations that begin with this preamble of movement, race, and death, I am not trying to persuade a reader to believe in something called Miami, Florida. Instead, as Gregory Ulmer might note, I am trying to present a feeling as text. The basic premise of Ulmer's digital diegesis is the concept of the felt; the moment of feeling that weaves together a variety of ideas.<sup>8</sup> Miami, for me, is a train of associations, thoughts, and movements. It is a type of feeling, not a representation nor an argument. That feeling begins with a pop song and a moment when I was 10.

5. Thomas D. Boswell, Ira Sheskin, and Carroll Truss, "Attitudes, Causes, and Perceptions: The 1980 Black Riot in Dade County (Miami), Florida," *The Florida Geographer* 20 (1986) 1-15.
6. Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 61.
7. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).
8. Gregory Ulmer, *Internet Invention: From Literacy to Electracy*. (Boston, MA: Longman, 2003), 36.

In 1963, James Brown, known for declaring more than once that he's "got the feeling," begins a live performance of his single "Night Train" by introducing his list of cities that the night train visits with the declaration, "Miami, Florida." The song "Night Train," and in particular, this shout-out to Miami, is what Mark Winegardner's gangsters hear in the novel *The Godfather's Revenge* (2006), as they are about to be killed by the mob.<sup>9</sup> The mob and Miami have a specific and commonplace connection: 1963 Miami. Four days before being assassinated, John F. Kennedy visited Miami. Four days later, Kennedy would be dead, and there would be no rioting. 1963 is a year that I know well. 1963 was the focal point of my book *The Rhetoric of Cool* (2007), which critiques my discipline's (rhetoric and composition) commonplace understanding of the field's rebirth narrative. A commonplace indicates a site of already known knowledge; it circulates a topos. To immediately invoke Kennedy's assassination in a discussion of 1963 would be to call upon a familiar point or meaning. In my book, I did not write about the Kennedy assassination. Instead, I focused on a club-like mentality that viewed writing in narrow terms, one that opted to historicize this narrow vision as contemporary pedagogy by neglecting other spaces of meaning already in circulation in 1963. A rigid temporal historical reading, I showed, failed to account for, or represent other, associative, temporal moments. Historical readings can be, I demonstrated, too inclusive and exclusive.

Miami's commonplace might be sunshine or tourism. The commonplace moment from 1963 is Kennedy's assassination. Few speak of Kennedy's Miami visit outside of conspiracy theorists who claim Kennedy was supposed to be killed in Miami by the mob. Had I known about the visit or the conspiracy when I was writing my book, I might have included it in *The Rhetoric of Cool* in order to exemplify another missed, compositional moment (i.e., conspiracy as a form of writing). *Digital Detroit* (2012), my second book, deals with the concept of secrecy (a form of conspiracy) as central to networked rhetoric (in one chapter, Detroit's Maccabees building is explored for its historical basis of The Maccabees secret society). The devastation felt after Kennedy's death is, no doubt, equitable to what Billy Joel describes occurring in 2017. Despite the nation's feeling of loss in 1963, I ask, what is the secret of Kennedy's visit as a

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9. Mark Winegardner, *The Godfather's Revenge* (New York: Putnam Adult, 2006), 488.

moment of writing, even if that moment is not historical writing but rather the practice of invention? Like all secrets or conspiracies, that answer could be devised by a formula: 2017 minus 1963 = 54. Whatever 54 means, it could help serve a type of writing whose focal point is not just juxtaposition (a rhetorical principle I proposed in *The Rhetoric of Cool*), but mystery, secrecy, and conspiracy. Uncover the meaning of 54, we might say, and you have performed, instead of a historical writing about a city, a secrecy writing. Such would be the conspiracy method of figuring out an answer, much as conspiracy theorists claim to know Kennedy's death by a series of formulas or equations that supposedly equal logical reasoning.

In one circulated photograph of Kennedy's Miami visit, Kennedy is riding in an open convertible (as he did in Dallas four days later) and a woman extends a hand for him to shake. The handshake, among other things, suggests the presence of secrecy or secret handshakes, as in secret clubs whose meanings are often based on how one shakes a hand for entrance. In Miami, we might call this the "old boys club" mentality, a way of thinking that stretches from Carl Fisher's development of the city in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to politics and criminal activity. In the book of short stories *Miami Noir* (2006), Tom Corcoran's contribution, "One Man's Ceiling," describes a group of gangsters who set up in a two bedroom apartment in Kendall and call their home "The Old Boys Club."<sup>10</sup> Famous mobsters, such as Al Capone and Meyer Lansky, led old boys club lives and lived in Miami in not so secret lives. Lansky, it is said, favored the pastrami at the Jewish deli Wolfie's. So, too, it seems, did actor Mickey Rourke, who claims that he would eat there after amateur boxing matches he participated in as a kid. Gangsters may not have created boxing in Miami, but according to the documentary *Muhammad Ali: Made in Miami* (2008), the city and its image of organized crime played a pivotal role in Cassius Clay's transformation into Muhammad Ali. In 1964, Clay surprisingly beat Sonny Liston in Miami Beach. Shortly afterward, Clay changed his name to Ali. Some people have questioned whether the fight was fake or legitimate (i.e., a conspiracy so Liston could bet on himself and pay off a debt to the mob). In one particular photo from the Miami 5<sup>th</sup> Street Gym where Clay trained prior to the fight, Clay raises his hands as a sign that, in the club like mentality of boxing,

10. Tom Corcoran, "One Man's Ceiling," in *Miami Noir*, ed. Les Standiford (New York: Akashic Books, 2006), 119.

he is the greatest. Ali's secret was his ego. At the weigh-in for the Liston fight, Ali made his ego clear and yelled, "I predict that tonight somebody will die."<sup>11</sup>

During his first afternoon in Miami in 1968, as detailed in *Miami and the Siege of Chicago: An Informal History of the Republican and Democratic Conventions of 1968* (1968), long time Ali admirer Norman Mailer strolls the hall of the Republican National Convention and imagines an old boys club whose members include John Wayne, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and Richard Nixon. Mailer, as egotistical as Ali, imagines himself as the centerpiece of any club he writes about. "That evening at the Fountainbleau," he writes, "on the night before the convention was to begin, the Republicans had their Grand Gala, no Press admitted, and the reporter by a piece of luck was nearly the first to get in."<sup>12</sup> Mailer found himself within a specific club mentality of politics, but also of being on the "inside," of knowing the metaphoric handshake of access. Jackie Gleason, too, represents this Miami club mentality. The non-Jewish Gleason moved to Miami just as the northern migration of the 1950s ended. Gleason juxtaposed golf and entertainment as old boy networks that would promote his 1960s celebrity status and TV show. In an October 5, 1962 *Life* feature on Gleason, the celebrity is seen on the golf course, waiving his hand in his canonical "And away we go" gesture. And in a 1969 report published in the *Montreal Gazette*, Gleason is quoted as telling a crowd of 35,000 teens who gathered at the Orange Bowl about another special club, that of Christianity and wholesome living. Gleason tells the teens that "he believed their movement against filth and obscenity would mushroom across the nation, and 'perhaps across the world' saving everyone for eternal life after death."<sup>13</sup> According to some sources, Miami was an alternative name (from the Chippewa) for the American colonists' preferred name for the people they encountered and later killed. It meant "naked." Vice was in this space from the start, it seems. From Native Americans to Gleason's brimstone warnings.

Mailer enjoys the old boy club convention center and the political vices it offers. While training in Miami, Cassius Clay was denied the right to *try on shirts* at Burdines (an act which would have

11. Original Muhammed Ali vs Sonny Liston Weigh in. 1964. VHS <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaTbr5TrnHA> [accessed July 4, 2011].

12. Norman Mailer, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Signet, 1968), 31.

13. Malcolm Balfour, "Gleason Predicts Increasing Decency," *The Montreal Gazette*, March 25, 1969, p. 43.

briefly exposed him as naked), and thus is exposed to the old boy club mentality of 1960s racism, a racism that, as Miami founder Carl Fisher desired, once forbid Jews from living in the city. This issue of clubs and exposure begs the question: why was Kennedy left naked (exposed) as he toured Miami? Kennedy, of course, was not a part of James Brown's imaginary "Night Train," but rather, traveled in an unprotected motorcade. Exposure, too, is a mystery for what it leaves out, for what is missing in the narrative we try to tell about a city or some other representation. In argument, no matter what we try to prove, something is always missing. In the *Miami Vice* episode "Missing Hours," James Brown plays Lou DeLong, a figure who mysteriously appears during an alien encounter and claims to represent a group called Astrolife. At one point in the narrative, the character Trudy, still searching for her missing husband, sings to Brown's "I Got the Feeling" as it plays in the background. Astrolife is a club for UFO conspiracy theorists. Astrolife, as the Brown character argues, promises members "to get the total truth."<sup>14</sup> That total truth—what is out there—continues to intrigue and shape how we write about given spaces. What more is there to this text or space, we ask? What does this city mean? What else is out there about this city that I can say or write? Our project has been indebted for too long to hermeneutics. The responses we create as to why or how we interpret are often not satisfying. We act as if we know what some totality or total truth means, or that we can argue for or against some force and thus change policy. But our work more likely resembles a minor headline on a 1962 *Miami News* front page: "Ho, Hum Time at Canaveral."

"With the launching of Walter Schirra this morning," the article notes about the astronaut's launch, "manned space flight made the transition from science fiction to routine fact—dangerous and pulse quickening, but still routine."<sup>15</sup> Argument. Interpretation. These, I note, are routine gestures in any kind of writing. My exigency, explored briefly in this essay about a Florida city, is secrecy; it is the Miami secret as writing moment, a moment that finds patterns in temporal dates and various terms. I do not imagine a totality called Miami. There is no totality, as de Certeau or Barthes<sup>16</sup> might say, at stake in a series of associations of Miami that work off of one

14. *Miami Vice*. "Missing Hours," November 19, 1987.

15. Al Volker, "Ho Hum Time at Canaveral." *The Miami News*. October 3, 1962, front page.

16. Barthes; Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).



another. While interpretative or argumentative gestures as moments of exigency may feel dangerous—as Lloyd Bitzer famously declares in “The Rhetorical Situation’s” first sentence—they are now nothing more than routine.<sup>17</sup> Ho Hum moments of rhetorical expression. Interpretation is no secret. It is a commonplace.

If there is a secret to Miami, it might not be, then, a conspiracy motivated 54, but rather something akin to Mailer’s insistence that the writer is the centerpiece of any type of reporting. For me to write about Miami, for instance, I cannot ignore growing up in Kendall or that despite whatever I may write or say about Miami, I am likely to be the centerpiece of that discussion. “I am the reference of every image,” Barthes declares about representation.<sup>18</sup> My rationale for being the centerpiece is neither argumentative nor causal nor even egotistical. I feel that I want to perform this type of exploration because I cannot separate myself from the representation I compose. My rationale, therefore, is a felt one (emotional and textual weaving). This is the secret or conspiracy of writing. What will associations lead to in a given writing? I do not know, so I weave them.

I feel, for instance, that I need to conclude by mentioning one particular Miami disaster, Hurricane David. In 1980, the hurricane stormed through our suburban neighborhood and flooded our streets and canals. We lived in a subdivision owned by a golf country club. At one point, the center, or eye, of the storm passed over our neighborhood. I got out of bed in the middle of the night and saw the water rise and flood the street as it, no doubt, had done many times before, during many previous, devastating hurricanes. Standing at the window, I felt exposed. Against the bars on my bedroom window, the bars my parents had instructed me how to open in case of flooding, the bars I needed to open so that I would be exposed to the outside and so I would not die in a flooded house, I placed my hand. This final gesture is my secret (like a handshake or a raising of the fist) that a pattern, from a childhood memory to a spatial moment to a city’s historical fragments, motivates any kind of writing. The challenge, as I am faced at this moment, is to shape that pattern into this spatial story here as well as in future ones I will compose, explorations of the patterns and moments of any diegesis that resists interpretation and favors invention in its place.

17. Lloyd Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. 1 (January, 1968), 1-14.

18. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography*. Trans. Richard Howard. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 84.

## Book Reviews

*Daniel Murphree, Book Review Editor*

*Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914.* By J.R. McNeill. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Acknowledgements, maps, bibliography, index. Pp. xviii, 371. \$95 cloth, \$24.99, paper.)

Back in 1972, Alfred Crosby's *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* popularized the idea that the European conquest of the Americas owed less to superior weapons and more to superior immune systems. Over the last four decades, scholars have expanded on Crosby's work, and we are now familiar with the role old world epidemic diseases played in decimating Native American populations. Less well understood, though, is why this process of European conquest stopped, and then reversed. First, weak, impoverished Spanish colonies populated largely by *indios*, *negros*, and *creoles* fought off an ambitious British Empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Then in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Americans of all colors declared their independence from European empires, and defeated their former rulers' attempts to re-conquer them. In his latest work, environmental historian J.R. McNeill advances the ironic thesis that some of the very diseases old world colonists used to conquer the Americas worked to restore the independence of the two continents.

Malaria, yellow fever, and the mosquitoes that hosted and spread them came across the Atlantic on the slave ships from tropical West Africa and found a congenial home in the heat and humidity of the Caribbean. Colonization aided their spread as the

water barrels, gutters, sugar pots, and other receptacles introduced by Europeans and Africans building sugar plantations and tropical ports proved the perfect breeding ground for *Aedes aegypti*, the carrier of yellow fever. Europeans had no answer to the diseases they had imported from the old world. Early modern physicians' techniques of bleeding, blistering, and powerful emetics usually did more harm than good. By the eighteenth century, tropical fevers had entrenched themselves in the American tropics, and Europeans feared the region as a death trap.

Tropical diseases did not hit everyone in the Caribbean equally, though—a fact McNeill calls “differential immunity.” People who survived exposure to yellow fever acquired lifelong immunity, while malaria-sufferers built up resistance through repeated bouts with the disease. People born and raised in the Caribbean were much less susceptible, as were those brought as slaves from West Africa, where malaria and yellow fever were endemic. Recent arrivals from Europe suffered the most, leading to people in the southern colonies talking about the “seasoning” new immigrants had to survive, and Caribbean colonists to refer to various tropical fevers as the “stranger’s disease.” Europeans in the tropics could get some protection if they came in small numbers and blended into large native populations—what McNeill refers to as “herd immunity.” Mosquitoes could not find enough non-resistant humans to bite to turn isolated infections into an epidemic. This kind of immunity did not apply when large numbers of Europeans arrived together, occasionally as colonists—but most often as invading armies.

This distinction is the crux of McNeill’s argument. Again and again, European states sent large expeditions to the American tropics only to see the tropical fevers tear through their crowded ships and camps. Spain was able to fend off British aggression during the 18th-century with “seasoned” troops and native-born or mixed race militias, hunkering down behind siege walls and waiting for half the redcoats to die and the other half to give up and leave. This strategy was turned against European imperialists later in the 1700s as native populations rose up in search of independence, and forces sent from Europe to subdue them fell victim to the fevers themselves. McNeill notes the way Cornwallis’s troops struggled with malaria during 1780-1781, finally surrendering at Yorktown when they were unable to muster enough healthy men to defend their lines. Between 1793 and 1804, the slave rebels of Haiti conducted guerrilla operations from the mountains while waiting

for first British, and then French troops in the port towns to fall to the ravages of yellow fever. Native-born *caudillo* independence fighters hid in the malarial swamps and savannas of Venezuela and Columbia to outlast Spanish troops during the 1810s. Unfortunately, McNeill has little to say about Florida beyond noting that the Seminoles were able to resist defeat and removal well into the 1840s because of the unwillingness of American commanders to send troops down the peninsula during the fever-ridden summers. Only the wide-spread use of quinine (and a willingness to accept high casualties from malaria) enabled the U.S. Army to finally conquer Florida.

McNeill's thesis is a bold, far-reaching one, and his thorough research in English, Spanish, and French sources and a sophisticated understanding of epidemiology helps him deflect charges of being an environmental determinist. Poor early modern medical understanding and spotty records limit some of his argument to educated guesses, especially when it comes to malaria. But yellow fever's distinctive symptoms make it much easier to diagnose from early modern sources, and its staggering death tolls are hard to discount. That new world military commanders like Toussaint L'Overture, Simon Bolivar, and Winfield Scott explicitly built their strategies around their understanding of tropical fever adds weight to McNeill's case. *Mosquito Empires* gives a valuable new framework for understanding the biology of colonization and independence in the Americas. Epidemic disease remained a key factor in American geopolitics long after the European conquest.

Lynn A. Nelson

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*Colonial Georgia and the Creeks: Anglo-Indian Diplomacy on the Southern Frontier, 1733-1763.* By John T. Juricek. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xii, 303. \$49.95 cloth.)

John T. Juricek is perhaps best known to scholars of early America as the editor of two volumes of treaties in the *Early American Indian Documents* (1979-2004) series, both of which quickly became indispensable. Denizens of the small world of southeastern Native American history are probably aware that he has also written important articles on the Westos and the Hernando de Soto expe-

dition. In *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks*, Juricek has produced a fine study of English diplomacy in Georgia's early years.

The book progresses chronologically from the 1733 establishment of English Georgia to the 1763 settlement at the end of the Seven Years' War. Creeks and English parlayed concerning a variety of issues, including trade, and Creek relations with the Spanish and French, but the most pressing matters were those related to land. Each of the chapters is packed with detailed information, and the book should prove a valuable reference work. The book's middle chapters are the most valuable and best written: the discussion of the Bosomworth controversy positively crackles, and Juricek's prodigious talents as a researcher and writer are on display here.

Coosaponakeesa, later Mary Musgrove, and later still Mary Matthews and Mary Bosomworth, lived in two worlds. A native of the Creek town at Coweta and daughter of an English trader, she spoke Muskogee and could read and write in English. She ran a trading house, served as an intermediary between the Lower Creeks and the English, and fought a decades-long battle to gain English-style title to lands granted her by Creeks. Though not fully successful in this quest, she did manage to hold on to St. Catherine's Island until her death in 1767. Juricek skillfully weaves Coosaponakeesa's story through several chapters, and uses the fascinating case to illuminate the difficulties in reconciling English and Creek ways. The controversy also presents a different side of James Oglethorpe. Usually lauded for his negotiating skills, Oglethorpe made a serious error when he gave tacit approval to the Creek grant of land to Mary Musgrove. Like all good colonizers, he knew that Indian nations were not capable of such acts, at least from the English legal perspective, and Georgia's relations with the neighboring Creeks went through a series of crises as a result.

Central to Juricek's work is the notion that English and Indians understood territorial sovereignty differently. And while we come to understand English notions like the crucial distinction between territorial sovereignty (which was the king's) and possession and the associated rituals quite well, our understanding of Creek notions of land tenure remains murky. Perhaps this reflects the dearth of source material on such matters, and it is patently unfair to criticize Juricek for the book he did not write. Still, the Creeks that inhabit the book seem unmoored from their cultural context in a way that the English do not. *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks* succeeds because of its author's insistence on the full, frail humanity of English and

Creek negotiators, and their ability to wrest concessions, threaten, demur and compromise, but the cultural basis the Creeks' ideas about diplomacy could have played a larger role in the book.

Juricek has a keen eye for the subtleties of diplomacy, and a rare ability to present multiple interpretations of the same event right next to one another without diluting what he believes to be the most likely scenario. His extensive work with the documents of early Georgia, most notably the treaties, certainly pays dividends in *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks*, and his high level of respect for the documents shines through in each chapter. At times, however, Juricek seems reluctant to speculate beyond the sources: we learn that a delegation of Creeks "granted Mary lands as an Indian, but not by Indian land tenure" (209). Does this indicate the demise of a Creek way of understanding land tenure? Is it recognition that Mary's case was unique? Might it demonstrate that Creek forms were adaptable to a variety of colonial realities? Some readers may view this as simply careful scholarship, while others may see a missed opportunity.

The labels Juricek applies to the biracial people of the Southeast are unsatisfying, and the author admits as much when he references Theda Perdue's *"Mixed Blood" Indians* (2003) to note that so-called "mixed-bloods" were "essentially Indian" (19). The narrative uses a variety of terms in addition to "mixed-bloods": Euroindian, mustee, mestizo, half-Creek, and half-Indian. The search for appropriate terminology continues, and Juricek is honest enough to allow that no term fully captures the multivalent role that biracial people played in the early colonial Southeast.

In recent years, several works have added key pieces to our understanding of the Southeast, and to Anglo-Creek relations in particular: Steven Hahn's *Invention of the Creek Nation* (2004) and Julie Anne Sweet's *Negotiating for Georgia* (2005) offer the most immediate comparison, but Joshua Piker's *Okfuskee* (2004), Robbie Ethridge's *Creek Country* (2003), Claudio Saunt's *A New Order of Things* (1999) and Andrew Frank's *Creeks and Southerners* (2005) are not to be missed either. Taken together, the works portray a Southeast that is diverse, complicated, and confusing, but also one rooted in ancient traditions. *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks* offers a nuanced perspective on one aspect of the English-Creek relationship, accessible enough to assign for advanced undergraduates, but with enough detail to satisfy specialists as well.

*Sweet Cane: The Architecture of the Sugar Works of East Florida.* By Lucy B. Wayne. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. Acknowledgements, illustrations, references cited, index. Pp xiii, 155. \$45 cloth, \$22.50, paper).

Lucy Wayne offers a guided tour through the ruins of the East Florida sugar plantations in *Sweet Cane: The Architecture of the Sugar Works of East Florida*. As a journey to eight publicly-accessible sites, the book is informed and insightful for the historical archaeology of the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century vernacular industrial architecture. The book is well-organized and an engaging and interesting read. The scholarly contribution is the description of the sugar works, with Wayne organizing the local histories and excavations to reveal the patterns from the architectural remains. A larger audience will appreciate how detailed architectural and historical materials are made accessible for an important industry that is commemorated in state parks. Some might use the book while touring the ruins, others can compare other sugar plantations sites to these or contrast the failure of the East Florida industry to sugar's success elsewhere, but in all cases the contextual study of archaeological details is important for building up scholarly knowledge on the historical political economy of Florida.

While the ruins are readily accessible, Wayne points out their misidentification as the remains of ancient Spanish missions. The correct identification as remains of sugar works is less romantic but more significant for remembering a failed industry. The amnesia is not surprising; as Wayne implies sugar's historic imprint on the northeast corner of Florida's cultural landscape was light.

Since Sidney Mintz published *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1986), anthropologists have expanded on the history and social implications of the ubiquitous modern commodity. Wayne notes that sugar came to British Florida after 150 years of production in the Caribbean, and the East Florida sugar works were similar to those of the Caribbean but also influenced by those in coastal Georgia and South Carolina. But it was the American Territorial Period that witnessed increasing attempts at sugar production, expansion that the Seminole wars quickly ended for East Florida. Sugar moved to northwest Florida and the Manatee River but the Civil War ended those attempts at large-scale production. Only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was the Everglades sugar industry developed, far from those previous centers of production.

As a study of Florida's past, Chapter 4 opens with the question: "Was sugar lucrative in East Florida?" The quick answer is no and Wayne points to dislocations, wars, and hopeful opportunities unmet. The first part of the book gives a concise historical context for the sugar industry; the second part is devoted to the architecture of the sugar works of the East Florida plantations.

The bulk of the second part of the book focuses on the sugar works found for the case studies. The examples are situated within the types of sugar works used across the Caribbean, with the main focus going to the trains; in this industry, trains are the series of kettles used for boiling the juice. The two major types are Spanish trains, where each kettle has its own furnace, and the French or Jamaica trains that use a single furnace for all the kettles. The details on trains are important because they are the only material remains from the earliest plantations whose buildings were made of wood.

The eight sites are placed into three chronological categories. The first category consists of plantations with Spanish Trains: Oswald/Yonge Three Chimneys and McHardy. The second is labeled as adaptive: Dummett and Spring Garden. And the third, dated to the 1820s to 1830s, is the ultimate form: Bulow, Macrae, Crugan-DePeyster, and Dunlawton. The descriptions are concise and engaging profiles of the plantations. The photographs and drawings are informative and are effective in bringing the reader a sense of these places.

The images and information in this volume offer a comparative basis for studies of other Florida sugar plantation ruins. There is an impressive number of them across the state, many of which are accessible to the public such as the Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park in Homosassa (in operation from 1851 to 1864) and the Gamble Sugar Mill Ruins in Ellenton (in operation from 1842 to 1864). A similar analysis for those sugar works, following Wayne's framework, would be welcomed.

The archaeology of sugar plantations is a vigorous field that has two main groupings. One seeks the broad themes from analysis of the built environment, artifacts, archives, and peoples of plantations and the other focuses on fine-grained studies of individual plantation development and activities. *Sweet Cane*, as an example of the latter, recognizes the owners of the sugar plantations and the engineers for specific sugar works, with important, well-organized details on the production of sugar and the contingencies of the East Florida industry. Where there are material remains, the book



notes slave cabins and other structures but the reader should not expect details on daily life for the plantations. Similarly, while the number of slaves is listed for several plantations, labor is muted in this study. A more nuanced engagement with the enslaved labor and the brutality of sugar production would have been useful. But this book will be a key resource to build anthropological studies of plantation social life. As an architectural study, *Sweet Cane* is a contribution to the history of Florida's landscape that the scholar can employ for understanding the built environment and regional economic change and the tourist can enjoy for site visits.

Uzi Baram

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*Lowcountry Time and Tide: The Fall of the South Carolina Rice Kingdom.* By James H. Tuten. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xii, 200. \$34.95 cloth.)

The rice industry of the Atlantic South has often been regarded as one of the most striking casualties of the American Civil War. Indeed, after the war agricultural production on the rice plantations that stretched from Cape Fear, North Carolina, to the St. John's River in Florida never returned to its antebellum heights. But as James Tuten reminds us in this economically written and highly readable monograph, the collapse of the lowcountry rice industry was no foregone conclusion in 1865. Planters and laborers alike maintained sufficient hope in the economic potential of rice growing to keep the industry alive into the twentieth century. Perhaps more important, as Tuten argues, lowcountry communities had a significant cultural investment in the industry, a form of capital that sustained rice growers even as profits eluded them.

Antebellum rice growing was a peculiar institution within the peculiar institution. Limited by climate, topography, and tied to a thin strip of land at the edge of the southern Atlantic coastal plain, commercial rice growing lacked the mobility of its cash crop cousin, cotton. Tidal rice culture, relying on daily freshwater floods, required a complex system of dikes, ditches, and banks that took years to build. The environmental limitations and capital requirements of the culture kept the ruling class of the rice kingdom small—there were approximately 250 rice planters in South Caro-

lina in 1860—but the majority of lowcountry residents were slaves, and most of these African American workers toiled in the rice fields. In 1865, despite emancipation and damage done through war and neglect, there remained tremendous human, engineering, environmental, and cultural investment in the growing of rice in the lowcountry.

Tuten opens his work with a brief overview of Atlantic rice culture from its beginnings around 1685, but his story really begins in the 1870s, as planters and laborers worked to adapt their knowledge and the surviving infrastructure of rice production to postwar circumstances. The narrative arc of the first half of the book is familiar; Atlantic rice growers were besieged by an onslaught of economic and environmental problems, from new sources of domestic and foreign competition to the devastating Hurricane of 1893. The strength here is the author's ability to revise the traditional narrative of slow decline into a study of the fits and starts of a postbellum agricultural system that lasted for half a century despite enormous obstacles. Rice production declined sharply between 1859 and 1869 but rose between 1869 and 1879. Earnings never fully recovered, but Tuten emphasizes that future promise rather than current profits motivated growers. In the 1870s and 1880s, the prospect of success was never sufficiently dim to warrant total abandonment.

In its second half the book hits its analytical stride, embarking on a study of the changing agricultural practices of lowcountry rice production. Here the reader is more thoroughly introduced to the last generation of rice planters—those who came of age after the Civil War and inherited rice plantations. Their story is one of adaptation. Rice planters in the 1870s and 1880s attempted to capitalize on the possibilities of postbellum agriculture; the lowcountry was not immune to the New South world of expanding possibilities. Tuten argues convincingly that these planters were “far from the conservative caretakers of ancient methods that they have been presumed to be” but rather were “dynamic adapters” (7). Adaptation came with a price. Planters' new grain drills, mechanical threshers, and conveyor belts saved on labor costs, but such advancements also worked against lowcountry planters by assisting new rice growers in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, whose higher, drier lands facilitated mechanization. Rice planters looked for new sources of income—phosphate mining on rice plantations became common in 1870s—but the most successful ventures relocated planters to cities, making rice production increasingly peripheral to their economic endeavors.

Tuten engages with Peter Coclanis' *Shadow of a Dream* (1989), an economic history of the rise and decline of lowcountry rice production, not arguing against the centrality of economics in agriculture but instead offering a broader understanding of the postbellum rice kingdom. As Tuten correctly asserts, "Agriculture is always a cultural activity," and in this work culture is key (5). After over a century as the economic mainstay of the South Carolina lowcountry, rice production was inscribed into the cultural practices and foodways of the black and white population. Tuten works with ideas similar to those in Sidney Mintz' cultural analysis of the Atlantic sugar trade, *Sweetness and Power* (1985). Lowcountry rice production lasted as long as it did because lowcountry actors could not make economic decisions independent of their cultural context.

Answering the question of "when the rice culture ended?" ultimately depends on the definition of "culture" used. *Rice culture* as agriculture lingered into the 1920s when the last lowcountry grower died, but *rice culture* as the symbols, patterns, and products associated with the rice-growing lowcountry endured the fall of the rice kingdom. In a bit of a twist, Tuten demonstrates how rice culture (through its second definition) persists in the lowcountry, sustained through the nostalgic writings of early twentieth-century rice growers, plantation tourism, and the continued presence of rice as a staple of the lowcountry diet.

This work shines a valuable light on the complex history of the postbellum rice industry, but its more important contribution may be in what it offers to our growing understanding of the ways in which the plantation maintained its cultural importance even as its economic relevance waned. Tuten provides useful insights into the impact of African Americans on postbellum rice culture, but here he could go further. Considering the complex and extensive hydraulic workings of rice plantations, sharecropping had limited potential on rice plantations, necessitating a continuation of centralized plantation operations and the task system. To what extent did the maintenance of a centralized agricultural system encourage black laborers to maintain their intimate connections to rice cultivation? How did black rice growers engage with rice as a cultural symbol? In raising questions like these, Tuten opens up avenues for important further study.

*Reconstructing Appalachia: The Civil War's Aftermath.* Edited by Andrew L. Slap. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. Pp. ix, 379. \$40 cloth).

In his introduction to this volume, veteran Appalachian historian Gordon B. McKinney notes correctly that the post-Civil War era in Appalachia constituted a period of contrasts—"decline and growth, confusion and organization, poverty and riches"—and that fortunately "our understanding of this complex period is deepening" (1). It is a measure of how far the field of Appalachian history has come in recent decades that major historical assessments now exist for the southern states' mountain regions, including *Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays* (1997), edited by Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson, and now Andrew L. Slap's anthology.

Slap and twelve other historians provide deeply researched and generally well-argued topical chapters that offer important revisionist insights into Reconstruction-era Appalachia's cultural, economic, political, and social history. The essays focus more on Appalachia as a region undergoing transition than on traditional understandings of Reconstruction as a political period in American history. They range throughout the Appalachian region (extending north into Pennsylvania) and span chronologically well past 1877. Many of the essays cover topics hitherto unexplored by historians, thereby broadening traditional definitions of Reconstruction and Appalachia. Because several of the authors reach differing conclusions, *Reconstructing Appalachia* provides a primer of sorts for debates among scholars over such proverbial topics as Appalachian exceptionalism, isolationism, modernization, poverty, the region's alleged preindustrial and colonial qualities, violence, and Appalachia's contested identity as a sub-region within the South.

Slap notes correctly that the essays resist simple generalizations about the Civil War's aftermath in the trans-Appalachian mountain region. "They suggest that in some places, Appalachia was more integrated with the rest of the nation than was previously thought; in other areas, Appalachia was more isolated than the conventional wisdom has had it. There were places where people sought outside capital, and places where they resisted development." This variance, Slap explains, "reflects the chaos and

upheaval of Reconstruction, one of the most difficult periods of American history; it may also demonstrate the difficulty of defining Appalachia" (43).

Four of the essays examine among the most common of Appalachian research subjects—the nexus of mountain violence and politics. Keith S. Hébert argues that longstanding questions of local autonomy, not Reconstruction per se or race, spirited Ku Klux Klan violence in northeast Georgia. T.R.C. Hutton identifies a different scenario in eastern Kentucky where residual Civil War sectional and racial questions—not local conflicts—sparked guerrilla fighting and left the area decidedly “unreconstructed.” Steven E. Nash maintains that following Appomattox, bitter conflicts in western North Carolina between former moderate Unionists and Conservatives convinced the former to support Radical Reconstruction and to align with the national Republican party. As this shift unfolded, a mountain politician observed with much prescience that “the other war was but the beginning” of what would follow (107). Paul Yandle underscores the connection between Ku Klux Klan violence in western North Carolina and the legislative efforts by former Klansmen in North Carolina’s General Assembly. Both played essential roles in undoing Reconstruction in the Tar Heel State.

Kyle Osborn charts the metamorphosis of the influential and irascible East Tennessee editor and governor William “Parson” Brownlow from an antebellum defender of slavery to a champion of free labor and black suffrage during Reconstruction. John Hamilton Morgan, the subject of Mary Ella Engel’s article, was a zealous missionary who came to northwest Georgia in 1876 to establish a Mormon enclave in the southern mountains. Morgan later established a home among Georgians in the Colorado colony of Manassa—their new Mormon Zion.

Examining West Virginia’s Reconstruction experience, Randall S. Gooden explains the complications posed by ex-Confederates in the young state. Eventually bipartisan coalitions emerged between Republicans and Conservative Democrats who found common ground on intrastate sectional concerns as well as on questions pertaining to railroad regulation, land policy, and economic development. In his essay on the changing geography and political economy of party strength in West Virginia from 1863 through the early twentieth century, Ken Fones-Wolf emphasizes the state’s borderland mentalité. Robert M. Sandow expands the reach of

*Reconstructing Appalachia* into the mountains of Pennsylvania, arguing that many residents there violently opposed the war, especially conscription and emancipation, associating them and Lincoln's government with encroaching extractive and exploitative industries and the on-going loss of local sovereignty.

The final three chapters of Slap's collection treat fascinating aspects of post-Civil War Appalachia in myth, historical memory, and regional identification. They constitute the book's most original and compelling essays.

Tom Lee examines the longstanding "mythologizing process" by East Tennesseans who, during and after Reconstruction, drew on the region's history to construct an identity as independent Unionists and sketched a narrative of heroism and victimization (314). Ignoring Confederate sympathies in the region, as well as divisions within Unionist ranks, East Tennesseans capitalized on the Unionist myth to speed reconciliation and to attract northern investors to the region.

Like Lee, John C. Inscoe also probes the construction of Civil War loyalties during what he terms the "Age of Appalachian Discovery, 1900-1921." According to Inscoe, after 1900, as highland South writers sought aid for and investment in their region, they fashioned a history of Appalachian participation in the Civil War that celebrated pioneer independence and isolation, Anglo-Saxon heritage and, above all, Unionism. Most interesting, Inscoe concludes that Appalachians generally avoided or downplayed the region's role in the war. To have done otherwise, would have "entailed far more inconvenient truths that did not always lend themselves to the image of mountain people these writers worked so hard to create and convey" (343).

Anne E. Marshall uses debates over Confederate symbols in present-day eastern Kentucky to complicate the so-called late nineteenth-century "Unionist Civil War narrative" on the one hand, and the argument of modern scholars that demographics aside, "Appalachia shares a heritage of slavery, racial violence, and oppression with the rest of the South" (351, 363). Along with the other essays in Slap's excellent book, Marshall raises essential questions about Appalachian exceptionalism, especially regarding race and class, and its impact on the region's experiences, identity, and meaning during Reconstruction and beyond.

*Troubled Ground: A Tale of Murder, Lynching, and Reckoning in the New South.* By Claude A. Clegg III. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010. Acknowledgements, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xviii, 248, \$80.00 cloth. \$27.00 paper).

We are in the midst of something of a golden age for lynching scholarship. Amongst broader studies of lynching and spectacle, the roles of women, and the deep historical roots of the practice have been a number of good studies of particular lynchings published in the last few years. Claude Clegg, a historian of African American life who has written on Liberia and the Nation of Islam, has produced one of the best of these case studies, examining the lynching of three black men in Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1906. *Troubled Ground* opens with background information about Salisbury and racial violence in the area. Salisbury, the county seat of Rowan County, sits midway between Charlotte and Greensboro in North Carolina's Piedmont. It differs from half a dozen similarly situated towns only perhaps in the fact that it was the site of a Confederate prison during the Civil War and by the location of the Southern Railway's main repair shops at Spencer, just outside Salisbury. Clegg gives a very clear and concise summary of lynching, which sits comfortably in the framework formulated by Michael Pfeifer: the practice was a response by traditional-minded localists, mostly rural and working-class, who opposed the modernization of the judicial system, with its emphasis on due process. North Carolina actually had an anti-lynching law since 1893, though it had not been used. Clegg spends some time discussing the geography of lynching in North Carolina, noting that Rowan County was near the top of the list of most lynch-prone North Carolina counties. There was quite a history of racial violence against African Americans in Rowan County, most notoriously the lynching of two boys in 1902 for the alleged murder of a white woman.

In July 1906, a white farmer and his wife and two children were murdered as they slept. Within a day, six of their African American neighbors had been arrested. Nease Gillespie worked for the victim, Isaac Lyerly, and he was arrested, along with two of his sons, John and Henry. Jack and Della Dillingham also worked for the Lyerly family. George Irwin just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and was swept up as well. The suspects were spirited out of town just ahead of a mob attack on the Salisbury jail and brought back in early August for indictment. This time, though,

the mob was successful. Weak and uncoordinated resistance by the sheriff and the local militia was not able to prevent Nease Gillespie, John Gillespie, and Jack Dillingham from being dragged to a baseball field (the same site as the 1902 lynching) and hanged from a large oak tree.

What makes the 1906 lynching in Salisbury different from many others and very worth evaluating in print is what it reveals about the relationship between the state and lynching. We are accustomed to think of lynching as something that happened with either the connivance of the state or, at best, its ineffectual objection after the fact. In North Carolina, however, this was changing in the first decade of the twentieth century. Democrats had used blatant racism and violence to shoulder their way back into office in 1898, and once they were in charge, lynching became an attack on state power, which should have been strong enough to secure the racist status quo on its own without the meddling of non-state actors. The governorship of Charles Aycock had seen several lynchings, but also several occasions when the militia was used to prevent lynchings. Governor Robert Glenn, who took office in 1905, was in the process of vigorously investigating and prosecuting those who lynched a white man in nearby Anson County earlier in the summer of 1906 when the Salisbury lynching occurred. Glenn immediately sent several companies of militia to occupy the town, and three men were arrested. One leader of the mob, a bootlegger named George Hall who had no strong connections to Rowan County, was convicted of conspiracy and sentenced to fifteen years, one of the very rare occasions when a white man went to prison for being part of a mob that lynched a black person in the South. Glenn also tightened up the procedures regulating the use of the militia, making it harder for a lackadaisical sheriff to foil the efforts of the militia, as had happened in Salisbury. These early contributions to North Carolina's "progressive mystique" are in marked contrast to the direction of much of the rest of the South, as illustrated by race riots in Atlanta and Brownsville later in the year.

A final point worth mentioning involves the author's connections to the events about which he writes: Clegg was born in Salisbury and lived there in the 1970s and 1980s, yet he had never heard of the lynchings until he saw a photograph in the *Without Sanctuary* collection. Few people he encountered during his research knew much at all about the events of 1906, and there is no memorialization of the lynching in Salisbury. Given this personal



connection to the place, readers might want a bit more extended discussion of the question of why such a big event in the town's history had been forgotten (and it might have been made all the more surprising if Clegg had mentioned that he is African American, since memory of lynching tends to be stronger and more durable among African Americans in the South than among whites). Still, this is a fine book, deeply researched and elegantly written, that tells us some very important things about the relationship between lynching and the modernizing state in the early twentieth century. I am confident it will find a place on bookshelves and syllabi.

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***Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC.***

Edited by Faith S. Holsaert, Martha Prescod Norman Noonan, Judy Richardson, Betty Garman Robinson, Jean Smith Young, and Dorothy M. Zellner. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010. Illustrations, postscript, index. Pp. 656. \$34.95 cloth.)

The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a generation of young people who helped to transform the Civil Rights Movement, is in the process of looking back over a half century of their accomplishments. This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Freedom Rides, a form of protest the student group supported after its initiators, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), were unable to continue after brutal violence in Alabama. The Freedom Rides drew much of their strength from the student sit-ins that spread virally in 1960. In turn, the Freedom Rides fed into the Albany Movement. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Ole Miss crisis, Birmingham Campaign, Freedom Summer, Selma-to-Montgomery March and myriad other vital events will follow fast. This great generation placed their "hands on the freedom plow," as the title of this vibrant, vital book on the world SNCC made as told by the women who made it, makes clear.

These personal accounts by women in SNCC serve at least three purposes: They provide a reminder of the vital role women played in the movement and especially in the student phase of the movement. They also allow autobiographical interpretations to give us a deeper understanding of the motivations, challenges, and feelings of the women who joined the movement. And the cumula-

tive effect is to tell a history of SNCC through the voices of some of its most compelling figures. The result is not only a powerful book about women's agency and the importance of SNCC in helping to challenge white supremacy, but also a revealing work that provides ample source material for future historians of the movement who will be compelled to return again and again to these powerful voices.

In this stage of the development of our understanding of the Civil Rights Movement there should be no doubt whatsoever as to the centrality of women to the struggle. Nonetheless, *Hands on the Freedom Plow* brings together more than fifty contributors who show through their own biographies and their experiences at the grass-roots that women contributed a unique and valuable perspective in a shared struggle of men and women, young and old, black and white. Some of the contributors will be well known to students of the Civil Rights Movement and the 1960s, but many of the voices will be new and represent welcome reminders that confronting white supremacy required more than a handful of prominent and charismatic individuals. Women faced particular challenges, the dual bonds of race and sex, even within the movement. In the words of Judy Richardson, described as "a shy, African American student from Tarryton New York," (348), "what's now called sexism *could* rear its head in SNCC. But it was usually possible to struggle against it – and even win." (363)

These stories in the aggregate also serve to show the importance of individuals, even during a phase of the movement that tried to diminish the role of the individual charismatic leader for a more mass-based struggle. The proliferation of oral histories over the past couple of decades provides rich source material for historians and serves to remind us that the "masses" are not an undifferentiated mob but rather consist of hundreds, indeed thousands of individuals with their own backgrounds and experiences that they brought to sit-ins and marches and Freedom Rides and mass meetings. This book furthers the process of telling those individual stories while placing them within the larger context.

The editors effectively pull together these many individual stories to tell a history of SNCC through the experiences of its woman participants. One of the best ways to understand the group's history is to understand its component parts, the men and women who created and fueled SNCC's rise to prominence and its epochal work. This book helps to tell the history of an organization and a

movement through the eyes of the women who made it. This is the most immediate history of SNCC that we now have because it consists of the rich voices of so many of its participants.

The compelling stories of these women tell the story of SNCC in a powerful and compelling way that will further serve as rich source material for future historians. The editors, who also provide the introduction, postscript, and contextualizing introductions to each section of the book, have provided an invaluable service for historians and for historiography. This book deserves a wide audience. As we look back over a half century of the work of these brave women and their male colleagues, we should be thankful that we have their stories, in their own words, in this magnificent collection.

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***Latin America's Cold War.*** By Hal Brands. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, index. Pp. 385. \$29.95 cloth.)

*Latin America's Cold War* is a clearly written synthesis for scholarly and educated general audiences. It revolves around two central postulates. First, the complexity of Latin America's Cold War drove its volatility and intensity. Second, dynamic interaction between foreign intervention, internal instability, and ideological extremism was responsible for the period's tumult and violence, not "a 'savage crusade' conducted by the United States and local reactionaries" (7). Nor, as some conservative accounts claim, did the Cold War's outcome in the region reflect the triumph of U.S. diplomacy. Specifically, Brands argues, the violent nature of the Cold War in Latin America resulted from mutually reinforcing, Left and Right radicalisms locked in an escalating spiral of conflict and violence. He also contends "the actions of the military regimes [of the 1970s and 80s] were the logical—if exaggerated—response to the leftist radicalism of the period" (127) and calls for scholars to focus on "the ramifications of East-bloc initiatives" rather than U.S. diplomacy (261).

The author situates the study within the literatures of both U.S.-diplomatic and Latin American history. As he argues, U.S. diplomatic history focuses on the U.S. government's view of Latin American affairs; other literature takes Latin American perspectives into account but is not comprehensive. This book contributes to diplomatic his-

tory by placing Latin America at the center of analysis rather than treating it as mere sideshow of superpower conflict. It highlights the agency of Latin American government vis-à-vis regional counterparts, the U.S., and the Eastern Bloc and recognizes the important intersection of “global trends” and “local dynamics” (130). Brands’ use of Latin American, U.S., and GDR archives is commendable; more research is needed on Eastern-bloc diplomacy in Latin America, and he provides directions for further study. His contribution to our understanding of local dynamics is uneven. The author relies on a well-worn binary paradigm of dueling extremisms to account for the violence and instability of the period in Latin America. By centering his analysis primarily on leftist guerrillas and extremist right-wing militaries, he fails to adequately consider unarmed movements for change (i.e. labor unions, squatter movements, student movements, agrarian reform movements) and their importance to domestic politics and Cold War dynamics. Instead, they appear as little more than undifferentiated masses caught between two fires fueled by dependency theory, Liberation Theology, and National Security Doctrine. As Jeffery Gould pointed out in his 2009 *American Historical Review* article, this dueling-extremisms binary paradigm—sometimes referred to as the “dos diablos” thesis—dates to the 1980s. It “equates the radical left and right and blames them equally for the bloodshed and repression that brought ruin to Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s” and lacks substantial basis in the historical record.

Chile is one example. Brands devotes significant attention to Salvador Allende’s Popular Unity (UP) government (1970-1973) to support the binary model and the corollary argument that violent leftist radicalism “called forth” the right-wing military extremism of the 1970s and 80s (97). He states that Allende “joined Castro as a sponsor of revolutionary violence” (106) and “did not discourage such methods” (107). This is an overstatement at best. The radical Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) was not a member of the UP coalition, as the author erroneously claims (106-7, 110). Allende did not proscribe or seek to destroy the MIR—which is not the same as sponsoring revolutionary violence—and the MIR did not undertake armed actions during his tenure. The Revolutionary Coordinating Council (JCR) to which the MIR belonged was established in August 1973 after one right-wing coup attempt in Chile with another rumored imminent. The JCR entered into action after—and in response to—the September 1973 coup. Tension within the Left, between the “revolution from above” and the “revolution from below,” and its role in politi-

cal instability is well documented in Peter Winn, *Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism* (1989). However, during Allende's presidency counterrevolutionary violence significantly outstripped that of the Left; one of the period's most remarkable aspects was not revolutionary violence but rather the Left's restraint. This was due in part to Allende's insistence on the "Chilean road to socialism"—peaceful revolution in democracy—combined with measures to discourage violence amid escalating right-wing provocation. Brands overlooks the Communist Party—one of the most powerful leftist parties—and the mass movements that played a principal role in local dynamics, including takeovers of factories, agrarian estates, and urban lots. As existing literature demonstrates, these cannot simply be ascribed to the "ultra Left" (110). The Chilean case does not support the argument that the radical Left begat the extremist military violence of the 1970s and 80s, and the binary paradigm undermines the study's claim to multilayered complexity, resulting instead in oversimplification and inaccuracy.

Brands' concluding call for "appreciation of symmetry" in polarization, trauma, and foreign involvement is curious given their clearly asymmetrical nature (263). The author's arguments highlight the asymmetry of foreign involvement: "Washington remained the only outside actor willing to take decisive action in the region," and no foreign power "emerged as a meaningful counterbalance to the United States" (148, 150). Polarization and trauma were also markedly asymmetrical where violence was concerned. Available historical documentation attests that rightist military violence dwarfed that of the Left. While ignoring the Left's role in political polarization is inappropriate, explanatory models based on symmetries without basis in the historical record likewise do little to advance understanding of Latin America's Cold War.

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*We Ain't What We Ought to Be: The Black Freedom Struggle from Emancipation to Obama.* By Stephen Tuck. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, index. Pp. 419. \$29.95 cloth.)

The amount of scholarship on the history of African Americans has grown exponentially over the last three decades, steadily

dismantling many of the key paradigms that had long defined the study of black activism: politics versus accommodation, integration versus separatism, and non-violence versus self-defense. Demonstrating that the protest strategies embraced by African Americans have been as varied and diverse as the African American population itself, this proliferation of scholarship certainly speaks to the health and vitality of the field. However, it has also made it extraordinarily difficult to craft one coherent narrative about the African American freedom struggle. But in *We Ain't What We Ought to Be: The Black Freedom Struggle from Emancipation to Obama*, Stephen Tuck succeeds in this task in spectacular fashion, creating a narrative that not only synthesizes much of the recent scholarship in African American history, but also puts forward an original interpretation of the African American freedom struggle that will engage general readers, students and specialists alike.

Focusing on the local rather than the national, and privileging diversity over a monolithic black community, Tuck argues that the essence of the African American freedom struggle can be found "at the local level," in communities across the nation, and that "each state, each town, each neighborhood had its own story to tell" (231). While local activists worked to empower their friends and neighbors and transform the racial status quo in their own backyards, "the black press, black organizations, and black family networks connected local activists with the nation and the wider world" (231). Nationally, Tuck finds that these campaigns translated into the most significant gains for African Americans during times of war – from the Emancipation Proclamation during the Civil War, to World War II, or, for example, when "black activists gained new power to fight for equality," to "gain better jobs and housing, to end discrimination in the army, to seek global freedom, and to challenge racial stereotypes" (209). Even though violent backlashes inevitably followed these wartime gains, Tuck argues that these moments crystallize just how prepared a range of African American activists, soldiers, workers, and local people were to seize every opportunity available to push forward the quest to become full citizens of the republic. As he puts it, "what mattered most at any given moment was not a fresh hankering for freedom—the hankering was always there—but a newfound power on the part of activists to demand it" (8). When placed in this larger context, then, the civil rights activism of the 1960s (in the midst of a "cold" rather than a "hot" war) emerges as not the high water

mark of African American protest, but rather, as a distinctly unique moment of African American activism, one where new strategies of nonviolent direct action attracted the attention of the national and international media.

*We Ain't What We Ought to Be* is an impressive achievement on a variety of levels. Throughout the text, Tuck incorporates recent developments in the field while supplementing gaps in the scholarship with primary research of his own. He gives sustained attention to both the local and the global forces shaping the freedom struggle – whether he is discussing the exploits of African American soldiers during World War I, or placing the civil rights activism of the post World War II era in the context of the Cold War. Tuck reminds his readers that “African Americans fought for freedom in culture as well as politics” (306). And throughout the text, he weaves in analysis of the ways that African American artistic expression and forms of popular culture figured into the larger quest for equality – from the Fisk Jubilee Singers, to working-class cultural icons like Jack Johnson and Bessie Smith, to *Ebony Magazine* (where he notes that Martin Luther King, Jr. published an advice column), the arbiter of elite and aspiring black middle-class society. Finally, Tuck is consistently attentive to the diversity of the African American population, taking into account variations in region, class and gender, and analyzing the impact these differences had on styles of protest. The portrait that emerges is an extraordinary achievement: richly detailed while broad in scope, immensely useful, and destined to serve as the standard survey of African American history for a long time to come.

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*Sunshine Paradise: a History of Florida Tourism.* By Tracy J. Revels. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. Acknowledgements, notes, selected readings, illustrations, index. Pp. x, 208. \$26.95 Cloth.)

In the Introduction to *Sunshine Paradise*, Tracy Revels invites her readers to better understand and appreciate “the long history” of tourism in Florida, especially in making decisions about the industry’s future (4). In one sense, Revels writes especially for the developers, politicians, and citizens of her native state. Yet her en-

gaging narrative and crisp prose make her book readily accessible to any reader interested in tourism generally, as well as the history of Florida, the South, and the United States. And though she relies heavily on secondary sources, by mining decades of scholarship on Florida tourism that has typically focused on a narrower timeframe, Revels offers a welcome synthesis for serious scholars.

She organizes her book chronologically, covering nearly two hundred years, from 1820 to the present. She divides this long history into eight chapters, with each defined by distinctive characteristics of tourism's role in Florida's development during a particular era. And although each chapter tells an interesting story, it is the change and continuity from era to era that should capture the reader's attention. By taking this long trajectory, Revels effectively uses tourism as a reflection of broader economic, social, and cultural changes at work in the United States and the world.

Her first two chapters discuss the origins of tourism in Florida, when travelers, mostly Yankees, ventured into the state for reasons of health or a wilderness adventure. She effectively captures the tentative nature of tourism before the arrival of railroads and monied entrepreneurs. It was a time when tourists were forced to endure inadequate modes of transportation, crude amenities, and mostly reluctant and inexperienced hosts. At the same time, however, Revels makes clear that Florida's natural attractions and inviting winter weather continued to draw increasing numbers of visitors.

The next section of her book covers the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, when tourism began to play an increasing economic role in Florida's development and Floridians further embraced and exploited the potential rewards of attracting winter travelers. Revels devotes one chapter to the era of Henry Flagler and Henry Plant and their familiar enterprises in developing a winter playground for America's wealthiest men and women. Her fourth chapter, "Tin Can Heaven," touches on issues of class and race in her discussion of the democratization of leisure in the United States during the early-twentieth century, when the automobile and family vacation became increasingly common on the American landscape. She ends this episode with a brief description of Florida's land boom and bust in the 1920s.

The Great Depression and World War II serve as an interlude for Revels, before she turns to the second half of her story. It was in the post-war years that tourism, argues Revels, became "the economic engine of the state" (1). Her description of Florida in the



1950s and 1960s paints a nostalgic picture of small-scale and quirky attractions where opportunities abounded for vacationing families and aspiring entrepreneurs. Everything changed in the 1970s with the opening of Walt Disney World. The reader senses the author's regret as she describes the political influence and economic power wielded by the Disney Corporation and a host of other major theme parks that quickly followed. By the 1980s and 1990s, the scale and sophistication of such new attractions as Epcot, Sea World, and Universal Studios set a standard few developers could compete against, and few politicians could resist. And the changing expectations of the average Florida tourist, argues Revels, began to threaten the traditional lifestyles enjoyed by many of the state's residents.

It is in the last three chapters of her book that Revels writes about a period of Florida's history that she and so many of her potential readers experienced. And while she continues to chronicle both positive and negative aspects of the state's tourist industry, the effects become increasingly relevant to what she sees as persistent political and cultural conflicts. For Revels, recent changes in the tourist industry have led to what she describes as a "cultural disconnect" shared by many native Floridians (4). She asks if tourists continue to visit the authentic Florida, or have developers and tourists alike created a purely imaginary destination? For Revels, the consequences are all too real.

In *Sunshine Paradise*, Revels reminds her readers of tourism's profound impact throughout the history of her beloved state. And though she laments the environmental pressures and precarious economic situation created by the state's reliance on the tourist industry, she insists that at least in the near future, "Floridians must make peace with tourism" (151).

Larry Youngs

*Georgia State University*

## 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 Fort Christmas Historic Park and the Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Cultural Complex. Discussions about the St. Augustine Foot Soldiers Memorial and the life of Stetson Kennedy have been featured. We've talked with authors including Martin Dyckman, James Clark, Harvey Oyer III, and Rachel Wentz. We've previewed plans to recognize the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the naming of Florida and the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of St. Augustine. Upcoming programs will cover the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Eatonville, the first incorporated African American town in the United States; and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Zora Neale Hurston novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

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 Orlan-

do. 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 pm.; 88.1 WUWF Pensacola, Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.; 89.9 WJCT Jacksonville, Mondays at 6:30 pm; 89.5 WFIT Melbourne, Sundays at 7:00 a.m.; 88.9 WQCS (HD2) Ft. Pierce, Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.; 89.1 WUFT Gainesville, Sundays at 7:30 a.m.; and 90.1 WJUF Inverness, Sundays at 7:30 a.m. 90.1 WGCU Ft. Myers airs the program as hour-long "specials" for several months of the year. Check your local NPR listings for additional airings. More public radio stations are expected to add *Florida Frontiers* to their schedule in the coming year. 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; the Jessie Ball duPont Fund; the Kislak Family Fund, supporter of education, arts, humanities, and Florida history; and by Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism, representing destinations from Titusville to Cocoa Beach to Melbourne Beach.

### 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).

Dr. Rebecca Sharpless, "The Servants and Mrs. Rawlings: Martha Mickens and African American Life at Cross Creek," which appeared in Volume 89, no. 4 (Spring 2011).

Dr. James M. Denham, "Crime and Punishment in Antebellum Pensacola," which appeared in Volume 90, no. 1 (Summer 2011).

Dr. Samuel C. Hyde Jr., Dr. James G. Cusick, Dr. William S. Belko, and Cody Scallions in a roundtable discussion on the West Florida Rebellion of 1810, the subject of the special issue of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* Volume 90, no. 2 (Fall 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* has reduced the 5-year window to a 3-year window for greater access. More 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 a 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 90, no. 1). There will be a link to the *Quarterly* podcasts and the Florida Historical Society.

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**GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE  
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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).

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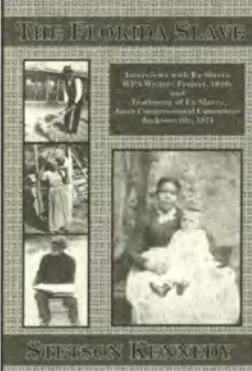
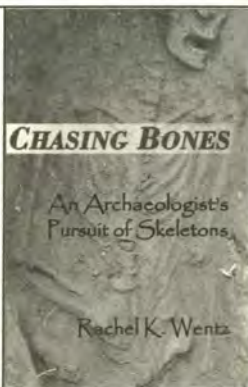
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The Historical Society of Florida, 1856  
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Created in St. Augustine in 1856, The Florida Historical Society is the oldest existing cultural organization in the state, and Florida's only state-wide historical society. The Society is dedicated to preserving Florida's past through the collection and archival maintenance of historical documents and photographs, the publication of scholarly research on Florida history, and educating the public about Florida history through a variety of public history and historic preservation projects. We publish scholarly research in the *Florida Historical Quarterly* and through the Florida Historical Society Press. *Florida Frontiers: The Weekly Radio Magazine of the Florida Historical Society* is broadcast on public radio stations throughout the state and is archived on our web site. The Florida Historical Society headquarters are located at the Library of Florida History in historic Cocoa Village. The Florida Historical Society manages the Historic Rossetter House Museum and the Florida Books & Gifts.

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