

1967

## Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society  
membership@myfloridahistory.org

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

### Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1967) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 46 : No. 2 , Article 8.  
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol46/iss2/8>

## BOOK REVIEWS

*De Soto Didn't Land at Tampa.* By Rolfe F. Schell. (Fort Myers Beach, Florida: Island Press, 1966. 96 pp. Preface, introduction, illustrations, maps, summary. \$1.95; paperback \$1.00.)

The Florida landfall of Hemando De Soto's fleet in 1539 was at present-day San Carlos Bay on the Gulf coast. De Soto then ascended the Caloosahatchee River and debarked his army at Palmetto Point below Fort Myers. From here, De Soto marched overland to Tallahassee. Mr. Schell holds this thesis in regard to the Florida portion of the exploration of Southeastern United States. In support, he explains the distance measured by a league, true compass bearing and magnetic deviation, depth of San Carlos Bay at given distances from land, displacement of vessels according to their tonnage, capacity of a tun of wine, location of mounds as sites of former Indian villages, and the distance travelled daily by the army.

A legion of historical writers have traditionally advocated the view that De Soto landed at Tampa Bay. Among them, the more renowned are John W. Monette (1848), Albert J. Pickett (1849), Henry R. Schoolcraft (1851), J. C. Brevoort (1866), and James Mooney (1901). The Tampa Bay thesis received a crowning and enduring endorsement in 1939, with the publication of the *Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission*, submitted by John R. Swanton, chairman of the commission. Against this host, Mr. Schell now joins that small group of dissenters, composed of Theodore H. Lewis (1900), Theodore Maynard (1930), and Warren H. Wilkinson (1960), who believe that De Soto landed at another bay south of Tampa.

Commendably, Mr. Schell's book is not a personal, direct attack on the Tampa Bay thesis or its champions. It is rather a logical, restrained, and cool exposition of arguments. There are five basic sources dealing with De Soto's exploration: the narratives of the Gentleman of Elvas, Garcilaso de la Vega, Luis Hernandez de Biedma, and Rodrigo Rangel, and the letter written by De Soto himself. Schell has wrung all the contemporary data pertaining to the landfall, landing, and route. He has used these sources to in-

dicating the distance travelled daily by the army on its way to Apalachee and the itinerary of the thirty cavalymen from Apalachee back to the debarkation point. He has not shortened or averaged distances here and there to make them fit, and this is the strongest base for his thesis.

Other arguments have weaker supports. I missed the connection between tun and the capacity or weight of De Soto's vessels. No mound or some other landmark is mentioned to identify Punta Rassa as Ucita's summer camp. The location of Ucita village itself at Fort Myers is buttressed only by saying that there were Indian mounds there at one time. Despite these weaknesses, Schell's arguments stick, and they provide a plausible case for his thesis. However, he has not attained finality on the subject. Perhaps no one ever will, unless additional and more explicit evidence is found.

Linking events to the sites where they occurred is an arduous task of history, especially in the absence of prominent natural or man-made landmarks to act as indicators. Knowing the setting of events, desirable as this is, is not indispensable to knowing the meaning of events. The meaning transcends almost entirely by appeal to the mind. Thus, it is not contradictory for the National Park Service to commemorate the significance of the Florida exploration in question at the De Soto National Memorial near Bradenton despite the unidentification of the definite landing place.

LUIS RAFAEL ARANA

*Castillo de San Marcos National Monument*  
*St. Augustine, Florida*

*Frank M. Chapman in Florida: His Journals and Letters.* Compiled and edited by Elizabeth S. Austin. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967. vii, 228 pp. Introduction, map, illustrations, epilogue, bibliography, index. \$7.95.)

Of the eighty-one years that Frank Michler Chapman lived, he spent a substantial part of fifty-nine in Florida, eventually making this state his home. In that time, with emphasis on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and in the Gainesville area, Chapman wrote vividly and often of Florida's birds, its landscape, its waters, its variable weather, its people, flora and

fauna, its pleasures, and its appeals. The combination makes for an attractive presentation of a vanished era of the state's natural history. Yet much of it is so fairly contemporary as to be nostalgic; Chapman, world famous as an ornithologist and naturalist, died in 1945.

This unusual book, a collection of his and contemporary observations, while it offers a premium appeal to birders, has contents so varied as to evoke general interest and entertainment. Included, for instance, are a collection of clippings from Chapman's mother's scrapbook recounting experiences of the last yellow fever epidemic (1888) which made of Gainesville (where mother and son made their winter home) "like a City of the Dead." The concluding clipping completes the dramatic, moving, and sometimes recriminating presentations with the discovery by an American commission in Havana of the mosquito as the plague's source. Another sequence begins with an exchange of letters between Chapman and William Brewster, the elegant gentleman-ornithologist of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in which arrangements were made for a drifting trip in the spring of 1890 in a house-scow down the Suwannee River. Chapman's personal physician, Dr. Charles Slover Allen of New York, a quiet and retiring man, was the third member. Side trips, replete with ornithological and other nature-packed experiences, were made in canoes and are described by Brewster in a day-by-day journal. Altogether the expedition listed 116 species of birds of which sixty-four were collected. Somewhere during the trip the formal "Dear Mr. Chapman" and "Dear Mr. Brewster," which had marked their early friendship and correspondence, expired; Chapman became "The Fiend" and Brewster "The Sahib." The nicknames go unexplained, but Mrs. Austin speculates that Chapman may have earned his as a practical joker and Brewster his because of his "personality and character."

Both Chapman and Brewster were articulate men-given to striking phrases-who made what they wrote easily comprehensible. These attributes are shared by Mrs. Austin, who in compiling and editing this book deftly links together its parts to give all of them continuity and meaning. Her tremendous research and affection for the subject is apparent throughout. Except for one typewritten letter all of the material had been handwritten, making for a formidable transcribing effort. Mrs. Austin is an active

associate member of the staff of the Florida State Museum and writes a weekly nature column, "Wild Adventure," for the Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*. Her interest was whetted when, in 1963, while preparing a paper on the explorations of nineteenth century ornithologists, she acquired the Chapman journals and letters, and with a grant from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund, was able to explore the archives of the American Museum of Natural History.

Mrs. Austin suggests that Chapman, who was to become chairman of the Department of Ornithology at the American Museum of Natural History, quit his banking position in New York for Florida outdoor life and the pursuit of his scientific interest because he lacked rugged health. His earliest activities are detailed in a nearly day-by-day journal beginning in November 1886, and ending in April 1887. Last of the "Journals" cover his winter-spring activities 1932-1933 and 1933-1934 when he lived in Little River, now a part of Miami. His journeys and his written accounts of them, replete with living descriptions and occasional anecdotes of his experiences, extended to all parts of Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Cuba.

Mrs. Austin's book is supplemented by a chapter by her husband, Oliver J. Austin, Jr., "The Birds of the Gainesville Region, Then and Now." Dr. Austin, curator of ornithology, is author of *Birds of the World*.

JOHN D. PENNEKAMP

*Miami, Florida*

*History of Dunedin*. By W. Lovett Douglas. (St. Petersburg: Great Outdoors Publishing Company, 1965. 170 pp. Foreword, photographs. \$1.50.)

Mr. Douglas, born in the community three years before Dunedin was incorporated, has been an active and important participant in its growth and government. This has facilitated his recording a factual and lively record of a small, quiet but distinctive, seashore city on Florida's Gulf coast.

The most interesting reading in Mr. Douglas' book is his picture of rural Florida pioneer days and people-their hard life,

their simple pleasures and joys, and their few avenues of livelihood. It is fortunate that he centers on these early days; he records a distinctive era, not yet sufficiently documented. His format and arrangement makes for agreeable reading and easy reference. In the first few pages the writer notes the essential facts of Florida's discovery, its becoming a state, and the formation of Pinellas County (Dunedin occupies an inconspicuous area in its western midsection). A chronological statistical record of Dunedin from its incorporation until current times is reported, but the author fails to tie his community into the most densely populated county of the state and one of the great metropolitan areas of the nation.

Having attended to these chores with good workmanship, Mr. Douglas begins to have fun, and he skips about as his fancy and interest directs. Sometimes he gets rather far afield, and there is little organization with either dates or subject matter. For instance, he discusses the "accepted" method of poisoning coons in 1874, notes the first settler on Clearwater island, tells how to catch tarpon, and he describes the establishment of Fort Harrison at Clearwater in 1841, a minor incident of the Second Seminole War. He also talks about early automobiles and the first railroad in the area. There are major omissions in this work. Dunedin, Clearwater, and St. Petersburg were all founded in the same decade, their locations were fundamentally similar, and all were well suited to grow into a town or city. Today (1967), eighty years later, Dunedin has fewer than 10,000 people, Clearwater over 60,000, St. Petersburg over 200,000. The author makes no effort to tell why there is this kind of differentiation. The recent history of Dunedin is perhaps its most exciting, and includes a move to incorporate into Dunedin the two great Gulf islands adjacent to it, which could turn the town into a notable residential and tourist community.

The great figure in Dunedin history was L. B. Skinner, one of the giants of the citrus industry. He invented the very first piece of machinery to handle citrus, the Skinner orange grader, and he followed this with myriad inventions and innovations which helped build a great machinery factory which outgrew Dunedin. And from the Skinner family there evolved in Dunedin the first citrus juice concentrate canning plant, which helped to revolutionize Florida's greatest agricultural activity. Yet in the part of the book devoted to biographies and family histories, Skin-

ner rates a bare two pages: he should have been Center Stage. However, the numerous biographies are obviously included on merit, are written in low key, minus bouquets, and are well done. The pages are sprinkled with many interesting pioneer pictures. Withal, Mr. Douglas renders yeoman service to the task of recording a segment of Florida's colorful, dramatic history. And his task was obviously one of love.

WALTER P. FULLER

*St. Petersburg, Florida*

*Lure of the Sun: A Story of Palm Beach County.* Edited by David A. Forshay and Elizabeth E. Micken. (Lake Worth: First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Lake Worth, 1967. 85 pp. Illustrations. \$2.50.)

The First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Lake Worth has commissioned this excellently done pictorial history of Palm Beach County as a part of its thirtieth anniversary celebration. Through sketches and photographs the story of the county is told from the time Ponce de Leon "might have stopped briefly" on Palm Beach shores to the present day.

In the period following the Civil War when the rest of the eastern section of the United States was either experiencing great industrial expansion or was repairing and rebuilding after the ravages of war, the southeast coast of Florida was still in a state of untamed wilderness. When the first permanent settlers came to what was to be Palm Beach County in the early seventies they found a lush semi-tropical land of great promise; but for this promise to be fulfilled, many hardships had to be endured and many problems had to be overcome.

While no one would deny the fortitude and the contribution of these early settlers, Palm Beach County, as may also be said of all of the southeast coast, owes its present prominence as one of America's favorite vacation lands to Henry M. Flagler and his Florida East Coast railroad. From the beginning the settlers realized that dependable transportation was the one truly indispensable ingredient to their prosperity and the section's growth. It was a hardy tourist who braved the trip from the Indian River district

through either the mosquito infested sawgrass route or through the rough sea by small boat. Moreover, the vegetables and fruits grown for the northern winter market often rotted, destroying a year's labor, for lack of adequate transportation. Flagler's railroad changed all of this and also permitted the great boom that hit South Florida in the 1920s. Palm Beach County participated in the boom, and this volume well portrays this fabulous era when Mizner was "creating" an architecture for Florida and the American elite was playing in the winter sun.

Unfortunately, in some places the text does seem to be less than adequate. It is surprising that the editors chose to include the story of the raid on the court house in Juno which attempted to hold the official records for the north end of the county, but do not mention that an earlier raid on the old court house in Miami had been responsible for bringing the records to Juno in the first place. While there are some minor errors: it was Captain H. D. Pierce's brother-in-law, William Moore, and not Pierce who carried the 1876 election returns to Miami and not to Tallahassee, these are more than made up for in the excellent choice of illustrations. While on the whole the book is well balanced both geographically and chronologically, its greatest failing, it seems to me, is that more emphasis is not placed on the period following the Second World War. While this era may lack the romantic appeal of pioneer days and of the social twenties, it is the period in which the whole face of the county has changed, for better or for worse. In fact, the twenty years following the war have been mentioned only briefly in connection with the 1947 hurricane, the beaching of the *Amaryllis*, and the founding of Florida Atlantic University.

Certainly the First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Lake Worth should be commended for its interest in local history and for what is a magnificent reverse birthday gift for the county. It might be hoped that more firms around the state would follow First Federal's lead.

DONALD W. CURL

*Florida Atlantic University*



*Oranges.* By John McPhee. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1967. 149 pp, \$4.50.)

John McPhee, who is familiar to all of those who have followed for any length of time the meticulous and informative style of the *New Yorker* magazine profiles, has succeeded in bringing to life in an extraordinary fashion, not only a series of orange growers, botanists, pickers, packers, and some orange barons, but in breathing life into many species of the delectable citrus fruits themselves. Indeed the skeptical reader who happens to pick up Mr. McPhee's book for a casual glance is apt to find himself posing as something of an expert on the subject, speaking familiarly of "Pineapples," "Navels," "Valencias," and "Hamlins" as though they were intimate friends of long standing, and unblushingly using such words as "pomology" just as though the braggart had known that this meant "the science and practice of fruit growing" before he, personally, looked it up in Webster's Unabridged.

According to the blurb on the jacket: "This book is essentially surprising. It is non-fiction, and its subject is the botany, history, and industry of oranges. It was first conceived as a short magazine article about oranges and orange juice, but the author kept encountering so much irresistible information that he eventually found that he had, in fact, written a book." This seems a remarkably modest statement for a publisher to put out, for this reviewer considers that McPhee has done much more than write a book. He has created something in the nature of a thesis, which, except for McPhee's delightful humor-strictly taboo in commercials,-should land him a lifetime sinecure as advertising manager of the Coca-Cola Company, which swallowed up Minute Maids three concentrate plants in Florida and 30,000 acres of Florida orange groves in 1960.

Still, it is doubtful that this Coke job will actually materialize for Mr. McPhee's book makes it clear that he is a lover of the same nectar of the Gods that this reviewer was brought up on, namely, untampered-with fresh orange juice right out of a skin. Unlike Bing Crosby, who bought some 20,000 shares of Minute Maid, Mr. McPhee never will be hired to sing the praises of Coca-Cola-flavored concentrate orange juice served out of a can. It was a dislike of this very trend that triggered off this delightful volume.

Says Mr. McPhee on page 20: "In Winter Haven . . . I took a room in a motel on the edge of an orange grove. Next door was a restaurant, with orange trees, full of fruit, spreading over its parking lot. I went in for dinner, and, since I would be staying for some time and this was the only restaurant in the neighborhood, I checked on the possibility of fresh juice for breakfast. There were never any requests for fresh orange juice, the waitress explained, apparently unmindful of the one that had just been made. 'Fresh is either too sour or too watery or too something,' she said. 'Frozen is the same every day. People want to know what they are getting.' She seemed to know her business, and I began to sense what turned out to be the truth—that I might as well stop asking for fresh orange juice, because few restaurants in Florida serve it."

Heaven knows how large a book the author would have written had he ever discovered that the only orange juice available to the patients in the University of Florida Teaching Hospital at Gainesville is the canned single-strength orange juice—"The ancient kind of canned orange juice"—of which he states: "There are no better consumers of canned single-strength juice, today, than the family of a blue-collar worker, who has a grammar-school education, has several children under six, and lives in a Southern state."

We are grateful to learn that the sales of this juice, according to the citrus commission, went down sixty-five per cent between 1950 and 1965. May this good work continue! It tastes like the oranges were pulped by the sulphate process!

Urged on by Dr. Herman Reitz, director of the University of Florida's citrus experiment station at Lake Alfred, and by such a luminary as William Grierson, a former officer in the Royal Air Force, who "despite the tidal rise of concentrate . . . has been trying to keep growers and shippers interested in fresh fruit," . . . this demon fresh-juice researcher, McPhee, started out on an unequalled compilation of "Orange Men" all on his own.

"The procedure here can be difficult for people who deal with subjective matters like taste and aroma. Before they can publish, they have to prove what they are saying mathematically. The public has very little taste perception, anyway." Bill Grierson informed him, "You must meet Bob Rutledge at the Florida Citrus Mutual. He is a phenomenon. If you come down here, you should

meet phenomena. You must meet Mac-Dr. Louis Gardner MacDowell, the patron saint of concentrate. You should meet Ben Hill Griffin, of Frostproof, Florida-probably the last of the great orange barons. Too bad, most of the interesting people are dead. E. Bean-that was a famous name in oranges once. In Northern cities, grocers used to put up signs advertising 'E. BEAN'S ORANGES HERE.' Bean designed the orange crate, in 1875. He designed the field box, too, the one used in the groves. It weighs fifteen pounds and holds ninety pounds of fruit, or about two hundred oranges. Try slinging something like that around all day! By and large, we're still tied to his damned field box. . . ."

These rather snide commentaries on the part of William Grierson anent Bean's field boxes touched your reviewer in a tender spot, since your reviewer's first job after leaving the army in 1919 was traveling the state in a 1920 Maxwell selling those orange crates and those "damned field boxes," so disparaged by Mr. Grierson, for no less a company than E. Bean & Sons Company, Jacksonville, then owned by the late Frank Cartmel.

The door having been opened to carping by Mr. Grierson, we feel free to close with a few minor errata which the experts have passed on to Mr. McPhee, and for which we hereby absolve the author of this wonderful little book completely: page 14:

. . . Florida growers have a number of locally developed early varieties to choose from, and in the main, they seem to prefer three: The Pineapple orange, the Parson Brown, and the Hamlin. . . ."

*Correction:* The Pineapple orange is not an early variety, but is rather a mid-season variety, fully ripening in December and January. Page 15: "Parson Nathan L. Brown was a Florida clergyman who grew oranges to supplement his income; the seedy, pebble-skinned orange that now carries his name was discovered in his grove about one hundred years ago." Page 126: Dr. Louis Gardner MacDowell tells Mr. McPhee: ". . . Nobody saves old trees here. Pink grapefruit developed in Bradenton. Parson Brown oranges in Webster. And so on. Nobody cares. . . ."

*Correction:* Parson Brown's great, great grandson, T. Noble Brown of Webster cares. According to him, Parson Brown was a circuit rider who was given some orange seeds by a friend named Crumm, source unknown. One of these seeds, planted by Parson Brown at the corner of his house two miles out of Webster, grew

up and matured beautifully. Clippings from this tree were taken over to Lake Weir and budded on the trees in the grove of a man named Carney, for which the Parson received the fabulous sum, in those days, of eighty-five dollars. Hence, while the Parson Brown oranges may have been born in Webster, they apparently developed in the Carney Grove on Lake Weir in Marion County.

Just one passing crack at one of the biggest shots of them all, Robert Rutledge, executive vice president and operating head of Florida Citrus Mutual, which exists to create higher profits for grove owners. On page 119, Mr. Rutledge tells Author McPhee: "I was born in an alligator swamp"; Mr. McPhee adds: "The alligator swamp turned out to be a section of Peoria, Illinois." Come, come Mr. Rutledge; our spies inform us that you were actually born in Kansas. Why try to keep it a secret?

*Leesburg, Florida*

BAYNARD KENDRICK

*Pieces of Eight; Recovering the Riches of a Lost Spanish Treasure Fleet.* By Kip Wagner as told to L. B. Taylor, Jr. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1966. 221 pp. Illustrations, maps, diagrams, appendix, index. \$7.50.)

The professional archaeologists probably wish that this book had not been published since it concentrates so much on gold. There is a tendency for the average reader after experiencing this kind of a book to try his luck, either on the sea bottom or on land. With untrained people hunting gold, they destroy important and irreplaceable prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. Much of this has happened already in Florida. However, this is an interesting book. For the romanticist and the dilettante, it presents the ingredients of seeking and finding gold, the sea with all the danger associated with it, contemporary pirates, suspense, adventure, and success.

At least the careful reader should get the idea that it takes time, money, and a lot of skill to be successful in this effort to locate and retrieve lost treasure, and even then, one may not be successful and hit "pay-dirt." All in all, this book is a running, diary-like account put into narrative form of the activities of the Real Eight. It contains a number of very handsome photographs.

HALE G. SMITH

*Florida State University*

*The Early Spanish Main.* By Carl Ortwin Sauer. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966. xii, 306 pp. Foreword, introduction, illustrations, maps, index. \$7.95.)

Dr. Carl A. Sauer is an institution in geography. This distinguished professor emeritus is a man with a long academic career at the University of California who is venerated as a great teacher and author. He has produced many books, and he guided many of his students through their graduate programs.

This book is not an original piece of research but is rather a historical synthesis by a historically-minded geographer who is also an excellent ethnographer. Indeed, it is a first-rate summary of the Spanish Main from 1492 to 1519. At the same time, it must be added that the book's advertisement that Dr. Sauer's "knowledge of land forms, vegetation, fauna, and ethnography has placed the Spanish Caribbean beginnings in a new context" is rather exaggerated. For this early history we have standard sources such as Father Las Casas' famous *Historia*, Peter Martyr's *Decades*, the works of Fernandez de Enciso, Oviedo, Velasco, Alonso de Santa Cruz, and others. Sauer with his keen insight, his academic versatility, and his mature experience is a better candidate to study and interpret these sources than many professional historians.

The book starts with a useful explanation of what was meant by the Spanish Main in 1500, when it became "apparent that a land of continental proportions lay south of the discovered islands." Eventually the whole Caribbean area was known in English as the Spanish Main, "including the sea." Sauer says: "Thus sailing to the Spanish Main became sailing *on* the Spanish Main." Obviously, the Florida peninsula (although not the whole Gulf of Mexico) was part of the Spanish Main, but Sauer has only a few paragraphs dealing with Florida. He believes that Florida was officially discovered in 1513 and not in 1512; he thinks that "the 1512 date may be considered a slip of the copyist." The tale of the Fountain of Youth is correctly identified as coming from the pen of Peter Martyr, and Sauer tells us that "Oviedo dismissed it as a yarn. Being the kind of story that gives spice to history, it had perennial life in schoolbooks." This readable and scholarly book of Sauer's is recommended for every Florida history lover; it gives a necessary background for early Florida history.

CHARLES W. ARNADE

*University of South Florida*