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## Book Notes

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## Book Notes

*Florida Paper Money: An Illustrated History, 1817-1931.* By Ronald J. Benice, edited by Fred Reed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2008. Pp. 207. Preface, introduction, images, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth.)

Ronald J. Benice, a retired mathematician and telecommunications director and Fred Reed, editor of *Paper Money* and *Show Me the Money* have collaborated to produce a very useful volume on banknotes and scrip that circulated in Florida from the colonial period through the Great Depression. As Benice notes, “paper money ties together the history and economic development” of the state through boom times and monetary panics (3). The earliest note is an 1817 specimen of Amelia Island currency issued by Gregor MacGregor for his short-lived Republic of the Floridas. The remaining 764 notes featured in the book cover a range of time and geography that make the images and text useful to a variety of readers.

Clear black and white images demonstrate the variation in artistic complexity from the very simple 1829 territorial note (8) and the 1933 City of Palm Beach scrip (183) to the more elaborate and artistically pleasing bank notes and railroad and insurance notes of the mid-nineteenth century. In addition to the images, Benice has assigned Sheldon scale rarity designations to the notes in a manner that he admits are “estimates” that “represent a consensus of opinion among knowledgeable collectors and dealers, as well as an analysis of 30 years of auction records and inventories of collections owned by individuals and museums” (2).

The short histories that are included in each chapter situate the notes and scrip within the context of legal and economic changes that can be seen in the images of ocean shipping, railroads,

agriculture and manufacturing engraved on the face of paper money. Private collectors, museums, and scholars will find the catalog of Florida's paper currency useful for verifying notes and understanding the role of money in the state's economic history. The book can be purchased from the publisher's website at [www.mcfalandpub.com](http://www.mcfalandpub.com) or by telephone at 800-253-2187.

*Delray Beach.* By Dorothy W. Patterson and Janet M. DeVries. Postcard History Series. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008. Pp. 128 pages. Acknowledgments, introduction, maps, and images. \$19.99 paper.)

This volume of Delray Beach postcards is the latest entry in the popular Arcadia Publishing list of local histories. A brief sketch of postcard history introduces readers to a genre that traces its American origins to the Civil War, when William Henry Jackson drew battlefield scenes on cards and mailed them to his family. The first picture postcards appeared at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893; postage for mailing the cards was 2 cents, an "exorbitant" fee at the time. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Americans were happily collecting picture postcards that commemorated vacations, special events, and daily life. Patterson and DeVries draw on the private collections and the archives of the Delray Beach Historical Society and the Boynton Beach City Library to create a 70-year history of the community through picture postcards.

The earliest cards dating from the 1910s show both the rural nature of the settlement and the expectations for development of the area. Railways, automobiles, new construction, and the organization of social clubs are presented in the fashion of contemporary city boosterism. The agricultural nature of the economy is evident in images of tomatoes, pineapples, and gladiolus, the principal crops of Delray. Pictures of packinghouses and the Florida East Coast Railway station complete the image of an agricultural community.

In town, the progressive nature of the community is evident in the construction of spacious two-story school buildings, modern church buildings to accommodate expanding congregations, and a booster club house to promote city growth. Side-by-side with home-town development of entertainment venues, department stores, and banking facilities, the postcards document the impact of tourism on the town. From early isolated beach pavilions to

boat marinas, boardwalks, and luxury hotels, the postcards chronicle the impact of leisure activities and tourism as first trains and then highways make Delray Beach accessible to vacationing Americans. Some of the more unusual postcards in the collection are cartoon cards from World War II that depict army life and the crowded conditions of the era.

Like other books in the Arcadia catalog, *Delray Beach* is an informative and enjoyable “read.” Tourists, home-town residents, history buffs, and scholars can learn a lot about the community from the images that local photographers created to explain their lives to the world.

*Historic Photos of Florida Tourist Attractions.* Text and captions by Steve Rajtar. (Nashville, TN and Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 2008. Pp. vi, 205. Acknowledgments, introduction, photographs, notes on photographs, bibliography. \$39.95 cloth.)

Steve Rajtar, a Floridian by way of his educational decisions and the author of thirteen books on hiking and history offers a well-designed pictorial history of the Sunshine State’s tourist attractions in the period before Florida and theme parks became synonymous terms. His selection of images that range from springs, ocean beaches, and tropical gardens to luxury hotels, golf courses and museums is eclectic in a way that mimicks the state and its tourism history. Giant cypress trees competed with snake milking and alligator wrestling for the dollars of vacationing Americans wandering the back roads of Florida in the days before Disney. Historic homes of Thomas Edison and Ernest Hemmingway vied with the faux experiences of Petticoat Junction and Pioneer City. Exotic plants and animals have always been a staple of the Florida experience, and the images selected by Rajtar make clear the centrality of the state’s biodiversity in the development of tourist attractions. Performing porpoises, brightly feathered birds, and alligators conjured up images of the an edenic experience for vacationers. When combined with lush vegetation, water attractions and scantily clad women, the appeal proved irresistible—at least until 1971.

Rajtar attributes the decline and disappearance of most of the attractions chronicled in his book to two closely related causes.

The construction of interstate highways diverted traffic from the two-lane roads. Tourists no longer wandered in out-of-the way places where they could stumble upon the curious and excentric. Now they sped to “tourist destinations” unaware of what lay beyond the billboards that urged them on to the theme parks. The 1971 opening of Disney’s Florida theme park provided the second cause of the demise of many attractions. As Rajtar notes, tourists no longer “headed to Florida anymore to see what they could find” (x). Indeed, they weren’t headed to Florida at all; rather they were headed to Disneyworld, a place that happened to be surrounded by Florida. In this delightful picture book, Rajtar invites us to “Come reminisce about times when it took less to amuse, less to amaze, and far fewer dollars to pay for it all” (x).

*Silver Springs: The Underwater Photography of Bruce Mozert.* By Gary Monroe. (Gainesville, Fla: Preface, acknowledgments, introduction, photographs. Pp. v, 138. \$29.95 cloth.)

For over forty-five years Burce Mozert created underwater photographs to advertise Silver Springs to American vacationers. An endless array of stunts attest to his quirky sense of humor—a female model posed as a cook at a watery wood-burning stove, a bathing-beauty applying sun tan oil before relaxing in a lounge chair, and a “witch” floating on a broomstick stand out among the hundreds of images he produced. Meticulously planned and executed the underwater photographs can now be enjoyed by the millions of tourists who remember their own visits to the springs.

As Gary Monroe notes in his introduction, Silver Springs has been attracting appreciative visitors for thousands of years. Pre-Columbian natives, Spanish explorers, Seminoles, settlers, entrepreneurs, and tourists have marveled at the crystal clear water of the springs. Throughout the nineteenth century travel journals praised the transparent water and the “sub-aqueous landscape” (4). By the 1880s Gilded Age tourists regularly visited the springs, brought to the site by rail and boat. The heyday of Silver Springs tourism came in the two and a half decades following World War II, when a booming economy brought working class and middle class vacationers to the Sunshine State.

Robert Bruce Mozert’s career as the photographer at “Florida’s Original Tourist Attraction” began somewhat serendipi-

tously. In 1938 enroute to photograph women's fashion accessories in Miami, Mozert abandoned his assignment for a job at Silver Springs. For the next four decades, he shot publicity images, movie stills, and photographs for national magazines. Monroe describes his photographs as "Florida vaudeville, shtick for the camera and for mass consumption" (31).

Readers will enjoy the full page black and white images and Monroe's lively and informative commentary. For those readers who remember the Mozert years, the book is a special treat.