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James B. Crooks



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REVIEW ESSAY

by JAMES B. CROOKS

Florida's Heritage of Diversity: Essays in Honor of Samuel Proctor. Edited by Mark I. Greenberg, William Warren Rogers and Canter Brown Jr. (Tallahassee, Fla.: Sentry Press, 1997. xiv, 245 pp. Acknowledgments, introduction, notes, contributors, index. \$24.50 hardcover.)

IT is appropriate that this volume stresses Florida's heritage of diversity because Samuel Proctor in his many contributions to this state's history explored, wrote, taught, edited, and celebrated its rich variety of people and institutions. During his fifty-plus-year relationship with the University of Florida and his thirty years editing the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Proctor nurtured research and edited histories of Native Americans, African Americans, immigrants, women, Jews, and other Floridians ranging from poor crackers to millionaire businessmen. Proctor also pioneered the use of oral history in this region, edited twenty-five facsimile volumes of rare books on Florida for the Florida Bicentennial Commission, and sparked the historical curiosity of thousands of University of Florida students. It is to his scholarly studies of Florida's history that this *festschrift* is dedicated.

Herein thirteen scholars have mined pieces of this history, from St. Augustine in the second Spanish colonial period to Hispanic Miami/Dade in our own postmodern era. In between are four chapters focusing on the experiences of African Americans in Florida, three examining women's roles, one each on Native Americans and a Jewish immigrant, and one more broadly surveying Florida's experience during World War II. There is no overriding theme other than the "heritage of diversity." Inevitably certain chapters stand out above others.

Perhaps the most interesting chapters are the three on women's experiences. In "Cracker Women and Their Families in Nineteenth Century Florida," James M. Denham continues his

James B. Crooks is professor of history at the University of North Florida.

studies of Florida's rural "plain folk" previously published in the *Quarterly*.¹ This time, however, his focus is on the experiences of women, a subject often overlooked by contemporaries and later scholars. When not ignored, women frequently were perceived by outsiders as poor, worn out, or prematurely aged. There were few obvious heroes among these cracker women. In reality, however, these women worked hard and achieved much for their families. In addition to feeding and clothing them, they nursed husbands and children through accidents and sickness, educated to the extent possible young children, fed chickens, milked cows, and helped make ends meet in a subsistence economy. Hard times, imbalanced diets, minimal medical care, and primitive hygiene took their toll on these women's appearances and vigor. Yet when the men were away gathering cattle or fighting Yankees, these women did it all: planting and harvesting, hunting and butchering, mending and repairing, keeping their families intact. Professor Denham concludes about these rural women: "[T]he more we know about them, the more we realize their essential contribution to their society" (27).

Edward F. Keuchel presents "Sister Mary Ann: Jacksonville's Angel of Mercy," a portrayal of an illiterate refugee child from the Irish potato famine who came to America, entered the convent of the Sisters of Mercy, and moved to St. Augustine in 1859. Sister Mary Ann's vocation was not teaching. Instead she nursed Confederate and Union soldiers during the Civil War. Moving to Jacksonville after the war, Sister Mary Ann nursed poor and sick children at St. Mary's Orphanage and convicts at the county jail. She provided special holiday meals for all of her clientele, survived the yellow fever epidemics of 1877 and 1887, and nursed typhoid-afflicted soldiers at Camp Cuba Libre in Jacksonville during the Spanish-American War. Sister Mary Ann's achievements did not go unnoticed within the church or community. Over the course of forty-five years, she became known as "Jacksonville's Angel of Mercy," not just for her good works, but also for the way she did them: with good humor, sensitivity, dignity, hope, and practicality, concerned always to be "her brother's keeper" (109).

1. James M. Denham, "The Florida Cracker Before the Civil War as Seen Through Travelers' Accounts," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 72 (April 1994), 455-57.

By contrast Ruth Bryan Owen, daughter of three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan and Mary Elizabeth Baird, grew up in material comfort with a supportive family who saw her through college and law school (she was the first woman admitted to the Nebraska bar). Historian Sally Vickers describes Owen's unparalleled political education received while accompanying her father on three presidential campaigns. After World War I, she moved to Coral Gables with her husband, an invalid veteran, where she volunteered extensively in Miami's civic and professional life. Like her father, Owen became an eloquent public speaker and travelled the national Chatauqua circuit as one of its most popular orators.

In 1926, Owen ran and lost a close Democratic primary race for the U.S. House of Representatives. She repeated her effort two years later, personally travelling 16,000 miles over her district's eighteen counties and speaking as many as seven times in one day. This time, in the largest voter turnout in the district's history, she won fifty-seven percent of the vote. In November, while Herbert Hoover carried the state in the presidential race, Owen won her district overwhelmingly. She served effectively for two terms in Congress but lost her re-election bid in 1932 in part because of her continued support of Prohibition. Subsequently President Franklin Roosevelt appointed her U.S. Minister to Denmark, the first woman to represent the U.S. abroad as head of a diplomatic legation. She served President Harry Truman as an alternate delegate to the United Nations. With her intelligence, eloquence, and energy, Ruth Bryan Owen served her state and nation well in a manner comparable to her sister Floridians May Mann Jennings, Eartha M. M. White, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Marjory Stoneman Douglas.

In contrast to the excellence of the women's history essays, those examining the African American experience suffer in comparison to similar studies collected in *The African American Heritage of Florida* (1995), edited by David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers. Only Canter Brown Jr.'s chapter, "Prelude to the Poll Tax: Black Republicans and the Knights of Labor in 1880s Florida," compares favorably, adding to our understanding of the disfranchisement movement in the state.

In other states of the Old Confederacy, an alliance of white and black Populists challenged the economic and political hegemony of planters and New South businessmen in the early 1890s. In Flor-

ida, the challenge to economic dominance, according to Brown, came almost a decade earlier in a coalition of organized labor and blacks.

The mid-1880s saw a complex of changes underway. Though African Americans still played political roles at the local and state levels (nineteen blacks sat in the 1885 legislature), a new generation of white political leaders were determined to maintain white supremacy and dominate state government. Meanwhile in the growing cities, a new generation of skilled black workers—carpenters, bricklayers, dock and mill workers—challenged the political leadership of older black clergy. On the national scene, the Knights of Labor had gained prominence in a successful strike against railroad mogul Jay Gould. Local workers, many already unionized, contacted the Knights and invited them to recruit in Florida. At the time, they were the only national union that welcomed immigrants, African Americans, and women into membership.

The Knights successfully organized workers in Florida's larger cities and several smaller towns. A black Republican-Knights coalition won municipal elections in Pensacola, Key West, and Jacksonville. But the successes did not last. White Republicans withdrew their support and began to create an alternative "lily-white" party. African Americans split: some supported the workers' interests while others advocated for moral reforms such as temperance and criticized the compromises and corruption of the political arena. Nationally, the Knights fell from prominence almost as quickly as they rose due to a weak organizational structure, factional disputes, and ineffectual leadership.

In Florida, white Democrats in the legislature ended local black Republican-Knights governance by repealing city charters, first in Pensacola, and then in Key West and Jacksonville. Next they enacted a poll tax and "a complicated and confusing 'eight ballot-box system' for elections" (80), effectively disfranchising poor and illiterate voters. By 1890, white Democrats had effectively squashed black political power setting a precedent for other southern states to disfranchise and impose Jim Crow. Brown clearly portrays the complexity of forces leading to the victory of white supremacy and the exclusion of black political power.

The other articles that focus on African American history are adequate but less successful. David J. Coles' "They Fought Like Devils': Black Troops in Florida During the Civil War" does not measure up to Daniel L. Schafer's longer, more thorough and sen-

sitive essay, "Freedom Was as Close as the River: African Americans and the Civil War in Northeast Florida," in the Colburn and Landers volume. Coles' brief presentation (twelve pages) goes beyond northeast Florida, but only superficially. The Olustee battle is well covered (one-half the essay), but a map of the battleground and its approaches would have been helpful.

Larry Rivers' essay, "Baptist Minister James Page: Alternatives for African American Leadership in Post-Civil War Florida," examines the life of a preacher before and after emancipation and carefully shows that he was not an apologist for whites though many AME contemporaries believed so. Page served two Reconstruction governors and helped organize Tallahassee's premier black congregation, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church. Another brief presentation of twelve pages, Rivers' chapter does not compare with his substantial presentation in the Colburn and Landers collection, which adds substantially to our understanding of master-slave relations in antebellum Florida.

The fourth chapter, "Mob Violence in Tallahassee, 1909," by Ric A. Kabat and William Warren Rogers, again is adequate but suffers in comparison with Steven F. Lawson, David R. Colburn, and Darryl Paulson's, "Groveland: Florida's Little Scottsboro," and Jeffrey S. Adler's, "Black Violence in the New South: Patterns of Conflict in Late Nineteenth Century Tampa," both in Colburn and Landers. Tallahassee's incident of mob violence in which an African American accidentally shot and killed a white sheriff, confessed, and was lynched before he could be hanged shows how the wheels of justice, despite intentions to provide due process, failed once again in early-twentieth-century Florida. A similar case in Jacksonville in 1919 also resulted in the lynching of two alleged black killers, indicative of the attitudes and temper of the times.

Shifting focus, Harry A. Kersey Jr. has spent most of his scholarly career writing about the experiences of Florida's Seminole Indians, most recently in his book, *An Assumption of Sovereignty: Social and Political Transformation Among the Florida Seminoles: 1953-1979* (1996). His chapter, "The Florida Seminoles, 1880-1990: Cultural Survival, Political Revitalization, and the Exercise of Sovereignty," describes the transition from a subsistence economy of hunting, trapping, and trading in the fifty years after 1880; the reservation-era New Deal programs that provided limited economic support, a degree of self-government, and protection of their cultural integrity; the formal organization of the Miccosukee and Seminole

Tribes after World War II; and the reassertion of sovereignty and development of economic autonomy since the 1970s.

In the later period, the Seminoles successfully introduced the profitable Florida tax-free "smoke shops" and high stakes unregulated reservation bingo. By the mid-1980s, the Seminole Tribe's multimillion dollar annual income helped fund tribal health, education, and social welfare programs, and assisted the expansion of business ventures in tourism and commercial real estate. Yet with their enhanced wealth, the Seminoles have retained much of their cultural identity as Indians living in their own communities, speaking their own language, and practicing traditional arts and crafts. Professor Kersey concludes that "ongoing tribal revitalization, encompassing both cultural opportunity and dynamic social change, provides contemporary Florida Seminoles with an opportunity to realize the best of both worlds" (96). One hundred years ago, Florida's Indians probably numbered less than a thousand. One wishes that the author had provided a recent tribal count to offer perspective on the significance of the Seminoles' forty million dollar annual budget "with its large monthly dividend distributed to individual tribal members" (95).

An illustration of the Jewish experience in Florida is Mark Greenberg's "Tampa Mayor Herman Glogowski: Jewish Leadership in Gilded Age Florida," which challenges the national image of rising anti-Semitism in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century American life. Greenberg writes: "The primacy of racial, not ethnic, distinctions in the region positioned Jews within dominant white culture and eased divisions between immigrants and native populations" (67). This statement was also true in Jacksonville where Jewish immigrant and Civil War veteran Morris A. Dzialynski was elected mayor in 1881 and later municipal court judge.

Greenberg presents the success story of businessman-turned-politician Herman Glogowski. Born in Germany in 1854, he immigrated to America, moving to Gainesville in 1870 where he began a career in general merchandise. Though successful, Glogowski saw even greater opportunity in Tampa with the construction of Henry Plant's railroad and moved in the early 1880s. Success as a gentleman's clothing merchandiser led to leadership roles in Tampa's Masonic Order, German-American Club, and Board of Trade. In 1886, Tampa voters elected Glogowski mayor, a position he held for four terms. He provided support for economic development, confronted major problems of health and sanitation, and fostered the

growth of Tampa's police and firefighting services. During these years, Tampa grew from a village of 720 residents in 1880 to almost 16,000 by the end of the century. Glogowski was instrumental in these early stages of a New South city.

Part of Glogowski's success may be attributed to his ability to blend with the white Christian majority in Gainesville and later Tampa. While maintaining his faith and providing leadership in the founding of Tampa's first synagogue, Glogowski also endorsed the closing of stores and saloons on the Christian Sabbath, arguing that keeping them open "violated state law and countered the 'moral and social interests of the community'" (64). Greenberg makes no mention of racial violence, ethnic discrimination in the cigar industry, or labor strife described so well by George Pozetta, Gary Mormino, Durward Long, and Jeffrey Adler in their works.² Glogowski probably subscribed to the majority views in these areas, too.

Probably the most unique essay in this collection is Tracy Jean Revels' "World War II-Era Florida: Changes in the 1940s" because its primary focus is not ethnic, racial, or gender diversity. Yet it too falls short in comparison with Gary R. Mormino's chapter on World War II in Michael Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (1996). Revels traces the militarization of this agricultural-tourist state with the construction of training camps, military bases, prison compounds, and hospitals. By 1945, 172 new military installations had been established, providing a major year-round stimulus to the state's economy. The two million service personnel who trained in Florida provided a catalyst for the state's postwar boom. Then as now, local and state governments were unprepared to meet rapid growth. The 1940s marked the beginning of the modern era in Florida with increased urbanization, economic development, establishment of coeducational universities in Gainesville and Tallahassee, and the creation of the Everglades National Park. Racial discrimination and conflict, however, continued well beyond the decade.

2. Gary R. Mormino and George Pozetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985* (Urbana, 1987); Durward Long, "Labor Relations in the Tampa Cigar Industry, 1885-1911," *Labor History* 12 (Fall 1971) 73-90; and Jeffrey Adler, "Black Violence in the New South: Patterns of Conflict in Late-Nineteenth-Century Tampa" in David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, eds., *The African American Heritage of Florida* (Gainesville, 1995), among others.

Finally, the first and last chapters by Sherry Johnson and Raymond A. Mohl, respectively, focus on "Marriage and Community Construction in St. Augustine, 1784-1804" and the recent "Latinization of Florida." Johnson's examination of royal laws regulating marriage whereby Spanish subjects required permission to marry women of Cuban or Floridian birth shows that during this second Spanish period enforcement began to break down. Increasingly Spanish subjects in St. Augustine successfully petitioned to marry creoles and colonial society began to open. Unfortunately, Johnson does not explain why this change in royal policy took place, though she suggests a shortage of Spanish-born women. Johnson's qualified conclusions left this reader puzzled about the extent of inter-class marriage and its impact upon St. Augustine society.

Mohl's brief essay focuses primarily on the demographics of change in the past forty years. It traces earlier Cuba-Miami and other Cuba-Florida connections during the twentieth century before Castro but says little about the economic, political, and cultural impact upon life in South Florida since 1959. Mohl's essay in Colburn and Landers' collection and his jointly authored chapter with George Pozetta in the Gannon volume offer greater insight and understanding. The book concludes with a biographical essay on the works of Samuel Proctor by Ralph L. Lowenstein.

Reflecting upon the dozen essays in tribute to Samuel Proctor, this reviewer voices disappointment in the overall quality as compared with other recent publications on similar themes. Clearly some chapters make substantial contributions, particularly Denham's, Brown's and Vickers'. Others certainly were adequate, yet compared to recently published scholarship by Schafer, Mormino, Adler, Pozetta, and even Mohl, many fall short. Undoubtedly scholars' schedules, lead times, and publication costs played their part. *Festschriften* are difficult to assemble. Yet the honor remains as these authors dedicate their work to the scholar who has served Florida's history and diversity so well and for so long.