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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Daniel Murphree, Book Review Editor

Climate and Catastrophe in Cuba and the Atlantic World in the Age of Revolution. By Sherry Johnson. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. Acknowledgements, appendices, maps, notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. Pp. xii, 328. \$39.95 cloth.)

Climate and Catastrophe by Sherry Johnson is truly an outstanding interdisciplinary work that combines the data and methodologies of the social sciences and hard sciences to analyze the "Age of the Revolution" (1748-1804) within a historical framework. From the beginning, the introduction is elegantly written, introducing clear objectives of the book: to explain how climate and catastrophe affected colonial Cuba. In her work, she establishes a "correlation among climate, environmental crises, and historical processes" to develop an alternate hypotheses for "change in the Atlantic basin" (20). The book weaves the data and information developed from historical climatology into our current understanding of the turbulent political and economic history of the Caribbean and Americas, in particular Cuba in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is not a traditional environmental history that discusses how human behavior affected climate change. Instead, Johnson evaluates how climate and catastrophe, largely hurricanes and drought brought on by El Niño and La Niña cycles (the "evil twins," as she calls them), "affected humans' economic, political, social, and cultural behavior" (6).

Climate and Catastrophe is being released at a key moment in our history as climate deniers and climate scientists heatedly debate the consequences of rising temperatures and human behavior on the climate. Johnson's key contribution is to say "climate matters" in historical and current studies. Most historians have probably at one point noticed the volume of official

and personal letters, reports, and diaries that mention or discuss fluctuating climate conditions within a region. In the past, it might have been difficult to historically trace how climate mattered given the scant data. But since the 1980s, Johnson and others have benefited from the body of climate data that has been collected from core ice and ocean floor samples, and tree rings. The incorporation of these scientific findings within a humanities and historical context is remarkably well done in this book.

But Johnson is not alone in providing readers an understanding of how climate affects food security, economics, national policies, and social change. Beginning in the twenty-first century, Mike Davis in *Late Victorian Holocausts* (2002) examined how the El Niño/La Niña cycles affected the world's food security, particularly in Brazil, China and India; and how the concept of the "third world" was a creation manifested from the experience of mass famine and deprivation during the Victorian period. Historical studies of climate in Latin America are relatively new to the field. In 2010, Amílcar Challú, John Coatsworth, and Ricardo Salvatore (editors) in *Living Standards in Latin American History* (2010) highlighted how climate, especially the drought and hurricane cycles, affected food security, and in turn, heights of the people and the welfare of the poor, especially in rural areas. Similarly, Mark Carey in *In the Shadow of Melting Glaciers* (2010) examined the historical effects of climate and glaciers, and the catastrophic glacier disasters of the twentieth century that affected the rural people of the Andes. Like Challú and Carey, Johnson is pioneering the study of historical climatology in Latin America. All these works are highly valuable to Latin American studies and contribute to our understanding of how climate, disaster, food security, social status quos, and poverty are inter-related in the longer view of history.

Historians of Florida will be interested in reading how St. Augustine became a vital gateway between the United States and Cuba in the late eighteenth century. Despite a "deadly combination of disastrous weather and epidemic disease" from 1773 to 1776, foreigners were not permitted to trade directly with Cuba (122). But there was imperious need for the United States to provide foodstuffs and provisions to the Caribbean. Hence, the port in St. Augustine became a "conduit" by which North Americans could continuously provide needed provisions to Cuba. The commercial trunk lines were between Havana, East Florida, and the northern United States. The author's prose is graceful and accessible to a wide audience, including the general public, undergraduate and graduate students, and the scholarly community of historians, social and climate scientists. The work proceeds in a chronological order, placing together key historical events with major climate catastrophes. For a quick

view, the book's first appendix provides a chronology of the El Niño/La Niña cycles paired alongside major historical events from 1749-1800. The book is a page-turner as the story is a fascinating drama of climate disaster, politics, economic change, rebellion, and revolution. Johnson's work and methods should be cited and tried by future historians who examine the topics of climate, food security, disaster, governmental policy, and markets in the Americas. Overall, *Climate and Catastrophe* is a valuable contribution to the field of history.

Yovanna Pineda

University of Central Florida

Southern Prohibition: Race, Reform, and Public Life in Middle Florida, 1821-1920. By Lee L. Willis (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xi, 224. \$24.95 paper.)

Lee Willis' *Southern Prohibition* is a wonderful new contribution to the growing study of the temperance and prohibition movement in the American South. Willis recognizes that though dismissed in the past as a puritanical and regressive movement, the impulse for prohibition legislation was in fact a unique reform impulse driven by a complex matrix of political, social, religious, gender, race, and class issues, and he does a nice job of sorting through the various undercurrents of the movement. Willis' study limits itself geographically to the counties comprising Middle Florida, but effectively uses the developments in this region as a window onto the larger path towards legal prohibition that the state as a whole traveled from the antebellum period until it achieved statewide prohibition in 1918, just ahead of the rest of the nation. Most of Middle Florida had alcohol use restrictions more than a decade prior to the statewide legislation, and Willis traces the story of how that area was transformed from wet to dry.

In the territorial period, early temperance advocates faced a significant challenge trying to change the prevailing culture of drinking among white men. Prohibitions against selling liquor to Native Americans and slaves, however, were successfully enacted. Evangelicalism came to Middle Florida somewhat late, but experienced a surge in 1842 when revivals fueled the push for temperance. The Washingtonians—an antebellum working-class temperance organization—took the early lead pushing for prohibition in the Middle Florida counties, followed by the Sons of Temperance by the end of the 1840s. The remainder of the antebellum period saw greater efforts on the part of “respectable” whites to tame social life

through stricter licensing laws and the gentrification of hotels and taverns. The late 1850s and the subsequent Civil War was a setback to prohibition in Florida, as it was elsewhere across the South, but the outcry against the saloon revived by the 1880s. Concerned about the perceived disorder of society, Middle Floridians began to call for legal prohibition. In 1904 Leon County went dry, and most of Middle Florida soon followed suit. The last holdout was Franklin County, where a large Roman Catholic population helped stave off local option until 1915. Willis teases out the various factors at work in Franklin County, including a growing African American population and concomitant white fears and racial tension, greater white devotion to the glorified memory of the Confederacy and the Lost Cause, and the increased number of black saloons in Apalachicola. When the county outlawed the sale of alcohol in 1915, the process of drying out Middle Florida (and most of the rest of the state) was accomplished.

Willis pays close attention to the role that African Americans played in the push for prohibition in the aftermath of Reconstruction. Many leading figures in the separate black churches that emerged after the Civil War looked to prohibition not as a form of social control, as many whites did, but as a form of social improvement for southern black men. Willis also reveals that in Middle Florida, unlike other parts of the South, women played a less significant role in the early push for prohibition. They were excluded from the meetings and rallies of both the Washingtonians and Sons of Temperance, and even through the end of the century continued to be marginalized in the campaign for alcohol reform. He finds, however, that women played a greater role in Apalachicola than they did in Tallahassee.

Willis intriguingly expands the scope of his inquiry beyond the prohibition of alcohol from time to time in the book, looking at the use of and attack upon other psychoactive substances such as caffeine, opiates, and tobacco. This aspect comes and goes throughout the narrative, providing just enough to whet the appetite of the reader for more information about how the use of these substances grew in Florida and how some, such as laudanum and morphine, were eventually outlawed by the state. Another tantalizing component of Willis' work is his use of archaeological evidence from saloons and stores, some of it going back to the territorial era, as well as his use of maps from fire insurance companies in Tallahassee and Apalachicola that reveal the distribution of saloons, dance halls, and other establishments at the turn of the century. Willis is to be commended for his use of such evidence in his study, though one might wish he had done even more with it, using archeological and other evidence to help paint a clearer picture of the nature of these drinking and entertainment establishments. Were they—as their critics at the time charged—“dark,

damnable dens of degradation," or were they simply innocent centers of conviviality? Prohibition advocates frequently used liquor bottles as evidence that saloons (especially those catering to African Americans) sold low-quality liquor packaged in bottles with suggestive labels that enraged the passions of those who consumed it and fueled drunken violence (particularly towards white women). Is there anything in the archeological evidence that might support or contradict that claim?

It is hoped that Willis will continue to mine these sources to see what they might teach us about drinking in the South and the campaign to end it. *Southern Prohibition* certainly does much to educate us about the course of prohibition reform in Middle Florida and, by extension, throughout the state and the South. Students and teachers of southern history, Florida history, and southern religion will greatly appreciate the book and be indebted to Willis for his contribution.

Joe L. Coker

Baylor University

The American Dreams of John B. Prentis, Slave Trader. By Kari J. Winter. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xiv, 180. \$59.95 cloth; \$22.95 paper.)

Kari J. Winter's *The American Dreams of John B. Prentis, Slave Trader* is an interesting yet imperfect book that examines the important Prentis family of Virginia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Using the Prentis Family Papers at the College of William & Mary, Winter explores "the development and clash between the dream of equality and the dream of wealth as they shaped three generations of a prominent Virginia family" (1). The author focuses primarily on John P. Prentis (1788-1848), the second son of the highly regarded state jurist Joseph Prentis. Although raised in a refined and educated clan, the younger Prentis chose a path different from the rest of his family by becoming an artisan laborer who embraced a "working-class identity" as well as a slave trader who transported thousands of African Americans into the Deep South. The book is at its best when Winter narrates the family's eighteenth century rise to prominence and its trials and tribulations during the nineteenth century. But the author's conclusions—frequently derived through postmodern analysis—are often unconvincing and unsupported by the evidence presented. Thus, the true significance of the Prentis family upon Virginia and southern history remains unclear.

American Dreams begins with the family's Virginia founder, William Prentis (1699-1765), who arrived in the colony in 1715 as an orphan and indentured servant. Purchased by the Williamsburg merchant and physician Archibald Blair, young William quickly learned the ins- and-outs of colonial trade. After serving his term, he worked diligently, accumulated property, and eventually bought a controlling-stake in Blair's store. Prentis became a highly-regarded, wealthy, and respected "gentleman" in the colonial capital, all of which allowed him to marry Mary Brooke, a member of a prominent gentry family. William and Mary's children continued the family's march up the colony's political and economic ladder. William Jr. (1740-1824) became publisher of the *Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer* and served four terms as mayor of Petersburg. His youngest brother, Joseph, (1754-1809) read law at William & Mary, became a member of the House of Delegates, and served as a judge on the state's General Court. The first two generations of the Prentis family not only fully embraced the ideals of the Enlightenment, but they also accepted the realities and contradictions of their world. Although proponents of the liberal principles of the American Revolution, for example, they nevertheless supported and greatly profited from slavery throughout the eighteenth century.

Winter devotes the bulk of her attention to Judge Prentis's four children, particularly his second son, John. While his older brother and two sisters wholly accepted the fundamental assumptions and values of the tidewater gentry, John initially embarked upon a different path: a career as a skilled artisan. Indeed, John traveled to Philadelphia in 1805 to apprentice with a Quaker carpenter. The experience exposed the young Virginian to a dynamic urban culture as well as radical antislavery sentiments. As a result, he briefly flirted with abolitionism and wrote his father letters expressing a growing distaste for human bondage. After his apprenticeship, however, John returned to Virginia where he settled in Richmond and abandoned all notions of black freedom. Unfortunately, Winter does not explore in any detail Prentis's decision to return to the South and his rejection of abolition. In the Old Dominion's capital, he established a carpentry business, married a woman named Catherine Dabney, and became a slave trader. He entered the latter business on a large scale after the Panic of 1819 and continued trading slaves until his death in 1848. Winter concludes that John Prentis's life story "involved abandoning his innate sense of justice and equality in favor of a frenzied investment in violence, exploitation, and dehumanization" (2).

John's career choices—first, in a manual laboring profession, and, second, as a slave trader—caused tensions within the family, especially with his elder brother Joseph Jr. (1783-1851), a lawyer in Suffolk, Virginia. Joseph

embodied the key attributes of Virginia's nineteenth century elite: he was refined, well-educated, a landowner, and a member of a highly-respected learned profession. Apparently embarrassed by their brother, Joseph and his sisters often avoided visiting him whenever in the state capital. John himself alternatively championed his "working-class" identity and yet felt his social inferiority in comparison with his older brother. Winter does an excellent job not only discussing these family dynamics, but also exploring the larger social prejudices John confronted as a slave trader in the antebellum South.

While Winter's narrative is strong, her conclusions about the Prentises are problematic. Because the author frequently examines their experiences through a postmodern lens, she makes a number of assertions without (in this writer's mind) adequate evidence to support them. Toward the book's end, for example, Winter asserts that John Prentis likely engaged in sexual relations with female slaves throughout his life. Yet there is almost no evidence of this. The author further concludes that John's "invocations of love" for his spouse Catherine in his last will and testament "worked to secure his wife's collaboration" in his sexual dalliances. His final words of affection supposedly "reminded her that a dignified, virtuous, and affectionate wife tolerates and accommodates her husband's weaknesses, sexual and otherwise. As a prudent wife, Catherine Prentis most likely turned a blind eye to John's fancies, refusing to know what she knew" (163). In short, Prentis's statement of love for his wife proved that he had sexually exploited his slaves and that his wife acquiesced to his actions! While all historians need to speculate when the written record is silent, Winter's suppositions reach conclusions that appear well beyond the evidentiary record.

In sum, *American Dreams* is a book historians of antebellum Virginia and the South will want to read in order to learn more about this prominent family as well as to gain insights into the life of an aggressive and unapologetic slave trader. But Winter's larger conclusions about the clan should be approached with caution.

Phillip Hamilton

Christopher Newport University

The Quarters and the Fields: Slave Families in the Non-Cotton South. By Damian Alan Pargas. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. Acknowledgements, table, notes bibliography, index. Pp. xi, 320. \$69.95 cloth.)

In *The Quarters and the Fields: Slave Families in the Non-Cotton South*, Damian Alan Pargas offers readers a comparative examination of the ways in which ex-

ternal forces and slaves' own actions combined to shape slaves' family life in the antebellum South. Pargas contends that a comparative approach reveals that different factors, rooted primarily in the nature of agricultural production in a region, created a variety of family experiences among slave populations. He argues that "... this book will demonstrate that slave families in different agricultural regions were confronted with different boundaries and opportunities, and that family life was thus very much a plural phenomenon in the antebellum South" (11). Pargas maintains further that recognizing this plurality is crucial to finding the "middle ground" in the debate among historians over the degree to which slaves were able to exercise agency in their family lives. Synthesizing a number of studies done over the past several decades and offering original research as well, *The Quarters and the Fields* compares and contrasts three regions: Fairfax County, in northern Virginia; Georgetown District, in lowcountry South Carolina; and St. James Parish, in southern Louisiana. Each represents a different agricultural region (grains and other foodstuffs, rice, and sugar, respectively), and thus, different kinds of work and social landscapes.

Pargas's comparative approach is effective in illustrating the relationship between agricultural production and the dynamics of family life among slaves as it differed across regions. He demonstrates, for example, that the economic misfortunes of planters in Fairfax County, Virginia, compelled them to turn from tobacco to commercial production of wheat and corn. This change in crops resulted in a reduction of slave populations on plantations and farms, and the use of gang labor, or time-work labor that began at sun-up and continued until sundown. Economic pressures meant that planters were likely to sell their slaves or to hire them out on long-term contracts. These factors made it difficult for slave families to live co-residentially or to spend regular time together, and made long-term or permanent separations a consistent part of slave family life in the region. In contrast, booming rice production in Georgetown District, South Carolina, led to the creation of vast plantations, most with over one hundred slaves. Rice planters employed a piece-work system wherein slaves labored at a specific task or set of tasks until they were done; what time was left in the day was the slaves' own. In addition, because of the profitability and relative stability of the rice market, planters did not regularly sell or hire out their slaves. When they died, Georgetown planters tended not to divide up their estates, or if they did, the demand for labor was so high in the area that slaves were sold locally. Slaves in the Georgetown District thus experienced relatively more stability in their family lives than their counterparts in Fairfax County, Virginia. Georgetown slaves tended to marry and live co-residentially, family members spent time together in the hours of the day not spent working for the master, and the threat of separation existed but did not often become a

reality. Although not addressed here, in each area of family life examined, Pargas also offers a third case in St. James Parish, Louisiana.

The author's use of sources merits comment. Pargas notes that "Because slave marriages were not legally recognized, few nineteenth-century sources document family ties at all" (143). In the past decade, African Americans' Civil War pension records have been brought to light as an invaluable source for the study of slaves' family and community life from the perspective of slaves themselves. Because those who pursued pensions were often required to explain and affirm family relationships, Civil War pension records document family ties among slaves and shed light on the issues of marriage strategies and forced separations emphasized in this study. Many thousands of these records, produced in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, can be found in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

Although scholars in the field may not find much that is new here, the comparative approach and the synthesis of a number of important regional studies is very useful in emphasizing the value of examining the contexts within which slave families existed and operated. The effort to offer the middle ground in the debate over slave agency is less useful, primarily because the middle ground already seems to exist. The many regional studies that help to inform Pargas's research, such as those by Charles Joyner and Ann Patton Malone, among others, represent precisely the widespread understanding among historians that a diversity of factors—both internal and external—shaped different family experiences. Implicit in this is a sense that the relationship between agency and external factors cannot be definitively measured.

Those new to the field, particularly graduate and undergraduate students, will find the study helpful in seeing a broader picture of family life under slavery and, as Pargas puts it, the "boundaries and opportunities" that shaped diverse family experiences among antebellum slaves.

Elizabeth Regosin

St. Lawrence University

Zora Neale Hurston's Final Decade. By Virginia Lynn Moylan. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. Illustrations, photographs, acknowledgements, notes, select bibliography, index. Pp. 144. \$24.95 cloth.)

Zora Neale Hurston's role as an anthropologist, author, promoter, and performer continues to generate interest among academic scholars and

members of the general public. Although Hurston remains a popular topic for academic books and articles in peer-reviewed journals, there are still aspects relevant to Hurston's research, writings, and activities in Florida which need further exploration. As Virginia Lynn Moylan, author of *Zora Neale Hurston's Final Decade*, points out, previous biographical books about Hurston such as *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (1977) by Robert Hemenway as well as Valerie Boyd's *Wrapped in Rainbows* (2003) provide accounts of her life. Nevertheless, information relevant to Hurston's last ten years was not the focus or emphasis of these two texts by Hemenway and Boyd. Therefore, Virginia Lynn Moylan's *Zora Neale Hurston's Final Decade* stands as a valuable addition to scholarship about the author. Moylan's book provides a more detailed account and analysis of the latter years of her life. Utilizing information from interviews, correspondence, and Hurston's texts, Moylan captures the complex life and activities of Zora Neale Hurston.

Moylan's book features an "Introduction," which locates the biography's significance in relationship to other texts about Hurston's life, a section called "Zora Neale Hurston: A Biographical Sketch, 1891-1948," seven chapters chronicling different time periods of Hurston's career, the "Conclusion," "Acknowledgements," "Notes," "Select Bibliography," and an "Index." There are also photographs. In "Zora Neale Hurston: A Biographical Sketch, 1891- 1948," Moylan provides a summary of Hurston's earlier life. She begins this section by commenting that "Given Zora Neale Hurston's inextricable ties to the state of Florida, it was only fitting that she would spend her final decade on its sandy shores" (7). This introductory section chronicles her birth in Alabama, her early life in Eatonville, Florida, and her experiences in Baltimore, Washington DC, and Harlem. The section also includes information about her role in the Harlem Renaissance and relationships with authors such as Langston Hughes and her patron Charlotte Osgood Mason. Moylan also addresses the publication of Hurston's books such as *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (1934), *Mules and Men* (1935), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), *Tell My Horse* (1937), *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939), *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942), and *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948). In addition, Moylan includes information about Hurston's failed romantic relationships and health. The section illustrates her dedication to traveling, writing, and engaging in research.

In the subsequent chapters, Moylan shows how the periods from 1948-1960 provided Hurston with continued challenges, setbacks, and obstacles which she constantly faced and encountered. Chapter 1 ("In Hell's Basement: Harlem, 1948-1949"), chronicles the devastating false molestation allegations against Hurston which harmed her status as a rising figure in American literature and culture in 1948. Chapter 2 ("Sun-

shine and Southern Politics: Miami, 1950") chronicles Hurston's time spent in Florida, where she earned income through employment doing household labor, contributed to the *Saturday Evening Post*, and engaged in political activism in support of George Smathers, a Florida politician who became a member of the United States Senate representing Florida. Chapter 3, which is called "Sarah Creech and Her Beautiful Doll: Belle Glade, 1950-51," documents Hurston's support of her friend Sarah Creech's efforts to offer consumers a doll whose appearance would be a more accurate and realistic depiction of African Americans at a time when many of the dolls reinforced stereotypes about African Americans. Additionally, Hurston worked during this period on an unpublished novel about Madame CJ Walker called *The Golden Bench of God*, and engaged in research at Creech's home for her book about Herod the Great.

In Chapter 4 ("Herod the Sun-Like Splendor: Eau Gallie, 1951-1956"), Moylan charts Hurston's unsuccessful effort to get "The Golden Bench of God" published, and in Chapter 5 ("Death on the Suwanee: Live Oak, 1952-1953") Moylan addresses Hurston's reporting about a famous Florida case involving a black female named Ruby McCollum who was accused of killing a white male doctor with whom she had been romantically involved. In Chapter 6 ("A Crisis in Dixie: Eau Gallie, 1954-1956"), Moylan also provides details on Hurston's stance on the race relation politics of the 1950s and Hurston's perspective on racial desegregation. Chapter 7 ("The Last Horizon: Fort Pierce, 1956-1960") comments on Hurston's employment in a Florida library, her role teaching for Lincoln Park Academy, her continued attempt to get her book about Herod the Great published, her declining health, and funeral. Moylan's "Conclusion" aptly points out the continued influence of Hurston and provides an overview of her contributions to American culture, history, and literature.

Moylan's book challenges the notion that Hurston's life was one of inactivity during the last ten years. By placing emphasis on the period of 1950-1960 (the year Hurston died), Moylan documents Hurston's research, writing, investigative skills, political activism, and perspectives on civil rights. Moylan's discussion of the time Hurston spent as a librarian and a teacher also illustrates the variety of roles Hurston played and her attempts to support herself financially. Virginia Moylan's biography is a needed contribution to Hurston scholarship due to the well-developed and researched account of Hurston's last ten years, a period which has received less critical attention than other earlier periods prior to the publication of this biography.

Sharon L. Jones

Wright State University

Flashes of a Southern Spirit: Meanings of the Spirit in the U.S. South. By Charles Reagan Wilson. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, index. Pp. xviii, \$59.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.)

Few scholars are better positioned than historian Charles Reagan Wilson to reflect on the prospects for southern studies. His academic accomplishments include a landmark study of the Lost Cause, co-editorship with William Ferris of the monumental *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (1989), and countless wide-ranging essays on southern history. Wilson's latest collection of essays reflects his abiding interest in the broad terrain of southern religious culture.

Wilson centers his turn through southern studies on the theme of "spirit." More specifically, he desires "to point the attention of scholars of southern studies to the relationship between the workings of the spirit and southern identity" (217). The theme of spirit waxes and wanes throughout the book's twelve chapters, each of which has appeared elsewhere in published form. Still, spirit is a worthy nomination as a heuristic device for southern studies going forward. Scholars within this highly interdisciplinary field likely never again will find, or even seek, a full-fledged central theme. Yet, even as some southernists try to move beyond interpreting the South through a black-white racial lens, it is worth noting that a bona fide biracial approach to southern studies actually is very much a work in progress. Spirit offers a promising angle.

Wilson resists a precise definition of what he admits "can be an abstract concept," choosing instead to explore the subject through its numerous manifestations (2). Varieties of southern spirit are manifold: one might focus on gospel music, literary creativity, Holiness and Pentecostal worship—or even, to put a different riff on spirit, bourbon whiskey. Perhaps Wilson's strongest evidence for the existence of southern spirit is the fact that an intriguingly diverse array of southerners has voiced its existence. Wilson cites soul singer Al Green, southern liberal James McBride Dabbs, arch-conservative Richard Weaver, and many other believers in a distinctive southern spirituality. Being spirit-filled or spirit-haunted long has had something to do with being southern.

Essay topics include the post-Reconstruction "invention of southern tradition" and, in a subsequent essay, the ongoing tensions between that white-constructed tradition and efforts to celebrate viable biracial memory in the South. For Wilson, the modern "myth of the biracial South" is no less powerful than the older myth of the Lost Cause, which has experienced a popular rebirth (94). Eager to bridge both racial and class

barriers within southern studies, Wilson proposes that scholars shift from identifying a "Southern Literary Renaissance" to considering a broader "Southern Cultural Renaissance," which featured Muddy Waters as well as his fellow Mississippian William Faulkner (121). In another essay, Wilson implicitly makes a case for including the apocalyptic art of revivalist McKendree Robbins Long in that renaissance.

Essay collections almost inevitably struggle to hold their center. Yet even readers who might be unfamiliar with Wilson's reputation will recognize that they are in the hands of veteran guide to the South. Wilson is an exceptionally widely-read and careful scholar who can ably tackle subjects ranging from Thomas Nelson Page to James Agee and Elvis Presley. The latter icon is treated as "a revealing and perhaps even an emblematic figure in southern culture" (180). Even if the spirit does not shine in all of the book's essays, collectively they offer a useful primer on the state of southern studies. Wilson evinces an admirably irenic attitude toward younger scholars. While he is something of a methodological traditionalist, he is comfortable with the postmodern turn in southern studies.

Indeed, if there is a true believer in southern studies, it is Wilson, as a thoughtful autobiographical essay at the end of the volume makes clear. Scholars have rightly interrogated the essentialism that lies behind any regionalist approach. However, by focusing on southern spirit as "both constructed and performed," Wilson offers a path around debates over what is invented and real, reified and protean, about the South (ix). It is a path appropriate to a historian of religion. Scholars who "read 'southernness' as a construction," he argues, "often fail to grasp the moral meanings that individuals from many ideologies in the past invested in the term" (59). He wants southernists to keep this gravity in mind as they address topics such as globalization and the South's relationship to the Caribbean. The South is an idea, to be sure, but a meaningful one. The region has spirit precisely because so many self-identified Southerners have believed that it does. Add Wilson to that list.

Steven P. Miller

Webster University

Reubin O'D. Askew and the Golden Age of Florida Politics. By Martin A. Dyckman. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, Pp. xiii, 320. \$29.95 cloth.)

Don't read this book if you think that Florida governors just keep getting better. Don't read it if you believe that Democratic and Republican

legislators have always been deeply divided, unwilling to cross party lines in search of the greater good. And don't read it if you assume Florida never experienced a Golden Age of progressive governmental reform. Because this book will prove you wrong on all three counts.

Martin Dyckman does a masterful job of recounting the life and times of Reubin O'Donovan Askew, Florida's illustrious governor from 1970 to 1978. The author, a retired associate editor and award-winning columnist for the *St. Petersburg Times*, explains why Askew was a transformative figure in both Florida and Southern politics. While the book focuses on Askew, it also provides insightful portraits of other Florida politicians. Two of the most important are Richard Pettigrew, a liberal Democrat who served as Speaker of the House during Askew's reign, and his Republican counterpart, Don Reed, the House Republican leader. They had a friendship transcending party differences that contributed to the passage of dozens of bills on which they agreed even if their own party members did not. Other legislators followed their examples, forming cross-party friendships that are rare today.

Florida in the 1970s was distinguished by "progressive politics and a constructive two-party system," writes Dyckman (1). The crucial developments underlying this era of governmental reform were federal court decisions and policy enactments—namely, the federal decision to end segregation of public facilities, the federal outlawing of discrimination at the polling place, and not least, the federal court-mandated reapportionment of the state legislature, which ended the eight-decade reign of rural legislators in Florida. The latter prompted a political and cultural transformation; almost overnight the legislature went from having the political and cultural values of rural north Florida, to one that spoke to the needs and concerns of urban south Florida. The reapportionment decision gave rise to this transformation, but it would not have been possible "without the remarkable once-in-a-generation leadership of a man who had left the legislature to defy the seemingly impossible odds against his winning the governor's office," the author says of Askew (2).

Just what was accomplished? By the time Askew left office in January 1979, Florida had replaced its obsolete 1885 constitution; reorganized the judiciary and executive branches; made the Governor, rather than the Cabinet, responsible for the state budget; stopped cities from discharging raw sewage into the environment and created effective and enforceable pollution controls; established a pioneering system of water-management districts; enacted restrictions on development and requirements for land-use planning; begun the purchase of environmentally sensitive land; limited campaign contributions and required effective disclosure of campaign contributions; passed an open-meetings law and strengthened the public-

records statute; registered lobbyists; stopped the commercial dredging and filling of bays and estuaries; enacted a tax on corporate profits; made the judiciary nonpartisan; and provided for appointed, rather than an elected, appellate judicial branch; created an ethics commission and required public officials to disclose their financial assets and liabilities. The list goes on.

The failures from the standpoint of progressive reform during this period were few. The state refused to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, dooming its prospects for becoming part of the U.S. Constitution. The 1977 legislature made Florida the only state that forbids gays and lesbians from adopting children. And the tax base remained heavily dependent on retail sales and residential construction, making state revenues acutely dependent on swings in the national economy. Askew as governor opposed the first two of these and sought to remedy the third.

Dyckman takes the reader from Askew's birth to a single mother in Muskogee, Oklahoma, to his mother's decision to relocate the family in Pensacola, where she worked as a hotel housekeeping supervisor, to his election first to the Florida House in 1958 and then to the Florida Senate in 1962, to his "improbable victory" against overwhelming odds as Florida governor in 1970, to his hard-fought reelection campaign in 1974 and his flirtation with running for president in 1976 and again in 1984.

Throughout we see Askew as a man of strong moral fiber, willing and able to fight the good fight for what he thought was right, which usually meant fighting against corporate interests for the sake of the proverbial little guy. Former House Speaker Fred Schultz described him as "very strong-minded and sometimes wrong, but never in doubt" (44). His fortitude arose in part from early childhood influences, including religion. Though raised in a strict Christian Scientist household, he became a Presbyterian while in law school yet remained loyal to Christian Science's teachings against alcohol and tobacco. The governor's mansion was famously dry during his tenure.

In chronicling Askew's career, Dyckman demonstrates the skills and sensibilities of a dedicated journalist. He's at his best when explaining the subtleties of who was pushing whom to do what in the governor's hard-fought victories and defeats. Only someone who was there, as Dyckman was, tracking events on a daily basis, could provide such a nuanced account. He is less adept, however, in explaining the meaning and implications of all he reports. The book draws upon no academic theories and poses no overarching questions, save for asking—and showing—how this era of governmental reform was made possible by Reubin Askew's courageous role as governor.

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The Architecture of Alfred Browning Parker: Miami's Maverick Modernist.

By Randolph C. Henning. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. Acknowledgements, illustrations, selected works, notes, index. Pp. xxiv, 400. \$50 cloth).

The University Press of Florida has produced a handsomely designed and exquisitely illustrated record of the work of Miami modernist architect Alfred Browning Parker (1916- 2011). Born in Boston, Parker migrated to Florida at the age of 9, studied under Robert Weaver at the University of Florida's School of Architecture, and after sojourns in Sweden, Mexico, and Cuba, and a stint in the navy during World War II, returned to become Florida's most renowned designer. This impressive volume of his work is replete with close to 400 images, including elegant black and white photographs from the 1940s and 1950s by esteemed architectural photographer Ezra Stoller, delicately rendered hand-colored perspectives and crisply drawn plans by the architect, and more recent color images produced by one of his sons, Bo Parker. It provides a visually stunning portrait of a lifetime's achievement spanning the years 1942 to 2000.

The book is neatly organized into four sections—visually defined by color codes—clearly tracing the trajectory of Parker's design development, while simultaneously reinforcing his commitment to the formal, social, and environmental characteristics of modernism, despite the growing international trends towards postmodernism. In his desire to introduce Parker's work to a larger audience, author Randolph C. Henning has paid a touching personal tribute to a long-admired fellow Florida architect. He begins by leading the reader through a biographical sketch, followed by intimate portrayals of a wide swath of work consisting primarily of private homes, but also religious, institutional, and commercial buildings, and a proposal for the World Trade Center. These succinct narratives provide illuminating details about individual projects such as the client/architect relationship, site and material specifications, and construction costs and methods. In presenting this information, Henning allows us a view into the architect's *modus operandi*, revealing his close consideration of the Florida landscape, sensitive responses to natural terrain and vegetation, and a commitment to efficiency, economy and the nuances of everyday living in a hot and humid environment. Dramatic photographs illustrate designs that connect building and landscape through the sensitive use of local materials, linking a living room with an outdoor terrace through a continuous ceramic floor for example, and through devices such as louvered wood shutters, specifically "persiana doors" imported from Cuba, which replace walls with permeable screens

and, when juxtaposed with rows of smaller windows on an opposing wall, open up the building to breezes, while serving as barriers against hurricane winds.

This interest in creating buildings that work sensitively with the land was a characteristic that first attracted Henning to Parker, whose work he saw as expressing an ethos similar to that found in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, whom he passionately admired. Parker himself acknowledged the influence of the Florida Southern College Campus, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright between 1938 and 1959, and comprising the largest collection of his buildings in the world. Wright's ability to adapt his designs to the local environment earned his early work the title "organic architecture" because these low, heavily rectangular buildings with cantilevered roofs, anchored to the earth by central chimneys, seemed to evolve out of his native Prairie landscape. Parker's work operates under similar principles, although within the Florida landscape they appear lighter and more tropical with their concern in spilling out into the lush vegetation and engaging with breathtaking views. Henning emphasizes Parker's indebtedness to Frank Lloyd Wright both in his commitment to "organic architecture," and also as the recipient of Wright's mentorship and public praise—an unusual gesture for an architect of Wright's standing. But perhaps Wright felt a certain empathy for Parker whose personal life, not unlike Wright's, was both full and somewhat complicated with four marriages and five children. Like Wright, Parker was a keen publicist, lecturing and publishing widely on his architectural ideas.

Henning also rightly recognizes the crucial role played by *House Beautiful* editor, Elizabeth Gordon, in cementing Parker's early success and even in expanding his reputation nationwide. Gordon was so convinced of the uniqueness and value of Parker's work that she dedicated a series of over fifty issues of the magazine, featuring what was called the Pace Setter Program and illustrating Parker's "Tropical Subsistence Homestead," which presented a number of formulaic designs for living in South Florida. This "Tropical Modernism" within which Henning locates Parker's work is a term developed in mid-twentieth century architectural publications and is used to define modern buildings in places as close as the Caribbean, and as distant as Australia and West Africa, where similar concerns with severe climate conditions warrant specific responses in architectural design. The prevalence of such an architectural typology across the globe should not detract from Parker's achievement however, but serves to clarify the significance of his concerns in a broader context.

During his lifetime, Alfred Browning Parker received many accolades, including the Association of Architects (AIA) Florida Chapter

Award of Honor in 1967, and the AIA South Florida Chapter Silver Medal Award in 1975 for twenty-five years of service in architecture. Through Henning's portrayal, Parker emerges as a sympathetic individual interested in architecture as a creative calling, expressed in attempts to conserve natural resources, while providing a service that often included constructing the building himself in order to save costs. As such, his small, efficient practice might be regarded as an early design/build firm, more commonly seen today, in which economics play a significant role in providing an individual, customized design service in a competitive speculative market. The architect's social conscience, his foresight in exploring environmentally conscious design in light of recent architectural trends towards increased sustainability and "green architecture," and his creative talent in engaging a critical regionalism are laudable characteristics the author emphatically champions.

With this easily accessible, beautifully produced book, Rudolph C. Henning has re-inscribed Browning into the register of modern architects alongside fellow mavericks of the San Francisco Bay Area School, the Los Angeles Case Study Houses, and the Sarasota Florida School, whose work deviates from the limited set of principles established by European masters. Thus, Henning makes an important contribution to the growing body of works illustrative of a more nuanced view of mid-twentieth century architectural design.

Jacqueline Taylor

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Pay for Play: A History of Big-Time College Athletic Reform. By Ronald A. Smith. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011. Timeline, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xii, 360. \$80 cloth, \$30 paper.)

The subject of intercollegiate athletics' corrupting influence within higher education, its crass commercialization, and its tendency to foster abuse has captivated academic scholars since we first directed serious intellectual inquiry to the subject. Indeed, it was Ronald Smith who provided some of the sharpest examinations more than twenty years ago with his seminal *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics* (1988). While Smith's earlier volume examined more than merely the struggle for oversight and reform of intercollegiate athletics, his *Pay for Play: A History of Big-Time College Athletic Reform* provides a sweeping and comprehensive examination of efforts since the mid-19th century to bring intercollegiate athletics to heel at the side of its (alleged) academic master.

Smith correctly notes that efforts to “reform” college athletics are as old as the games themselves, dating back to the days when students controlled college sports. As a result, he traces intercollegiate reform through the various phases of the dominant reformers, beginning with the students themselves. Smith notes that faculty (briefly and distractedly), institutions, the media, the NCAA (only half-heartedly), accrediting agencies, and non-profit academic think tanks have all taken a swipe at reforming intercollegiate athletics at one time or another in the last 160 years. No group has endeavored longer at it, however, than college and university presidents, and Smith spends much of his narrative looking at their efforts. To be sure, Smith is no friend of presidential reform, which he correctly eviscerates as ineffective, misguided, and self-interested. Far too often, according to Smith, university presidents are mere “cheerleaders” for their athletic teams, implying that their reformist efforts are, at best, only public relations efforts, and at worst, blatant efforts to protect their own school’s athletic fortunes. As a result, high-profile reform efforts like the non-profit Knight Commission, the NCAA’s Board of Presidents, and most notably, the outright seizure of NCAA control by the presidents, have really accomplished very little.

Smith argues that perhaps the only hope for reform lay in the one group that has involved itself the least in the reform process: faculty. Since abandoning the reform movement in the late 19th century of their own volition, faculty have been largely absent from the debate, held at bay by their own ambivalence or by anxious presidents or athletic directors wary of crusading pointy-headed intellectuals. He also notes that an initial substantive reform effort would be returning to the days of freshmen ineligibility, which would, at the very least, give freshmen a chance to get their academic footing before confronting the tremendous drain on their time represented by big-time commercialized athletics. And determining athletic eligibility by the students’ freshman academic record rather than their high school transcript might also establish a more reputable baseline for predicting collegiate academic success.

The tremendous value of Smith’s work lies in the depth of his archival research, specifically his mining of more than 50 academic repositories. This research allowed him to examine the records of countless college and university presidents, institutions like the NCAA, and records of athletic conferences. Quite frankly, if a memo or letter still exists, Ronald Smith has looked at it. The book also includes a monumental bibliography that runs to 41 pages, providing a definitive snapshot of the state of the field at the time of publication.

As sound as the book’s foundations are, however, Smith’s argument is not without problems. Smith is emphatic that presidents have not en-

joyed any substantive success in creating reform, while suggesting that faculty involvement may yet save the day. He notes the recent efforts of some faculty groups to involve themselves in the discussion, most notably the Drake Group and the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), but he also notes their limited success so far. It is unclear how faculty will be more successful than presidents, having access to fewer resources and less power within the academic world. Secondly, Smith never defines reform. With good reason, Smith points out the hypocrisies, short-comings and self-serving actions involved in incremental reform over the 20th century, but in the process, dismisses them as worthless, or at least tainted. Similarly, in his discussion of the Knight Commission, he notes that what the commission did not address was far more significant than what it did cover, and then proceeds to note the comprehensive list of ills intercollegiate athletics visits upon higher education. The obvious conclusion is that "reform," in Smith's mind, is nothing short of a complete destruction of big-time intercollegiate athletics as we know it, leading not merely to the end of things like spring football practice, specialized admissions for athletes, and preferential facilities on campus, but also gate admission, commercial sponsors, and profligate television coverage. Though the last chapter devotes special attention to the possible benefits of eliminating freshman eligibility, at other times, it seems to impose an all-or-nothing definition of reform. Though such "reform" would be more than welcome by many of us in higher education, it inherently describes any less far-reaching efforts as illegitimate.

The other issue which Smith unsatisfactorily addresses is commercialization. No one denies that the commercialization of college sports has allowed big money into the discussion, making reform expensive, as well as difficult. However, while Smith does acknowledge in his text Derek Bok's influential essay on the commercialization of higher education in general, he seems to ignore the extent to which contemporary higher education is so thoroughly dependent upon commercial funding for its very existence. In my own state, for example, the legislature now provides only 30% of higher education costs, leaving campuses to make up the difference from students and outside sources. Quite simply, to suggest that intercollegiate athletics forgo commercial sponsorship is to ask more of them than we do right now from the academy in general. These points of contention, however, do not diminish the value of Smith's work. Indeed, they inevitably result from the provocative and analytical scholarship that Smith has most definitely succeeded in contributing.

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Florida In The Popular Imagination: Essays on the Cultural Landscape of the Sunshine State. Edited by Steve Glassman. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010. Pp. vii, 278. \$35 paperback.)

Steve Glassman, a professor of humanities at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, asked colleagues from around the state for essays on *Florida in the Popular Imagination*. Since the popular imagination is not defined, what constitutes that cultural landscape is open-ended. Eighteen essays submitted by librarians, professors, and retired academics deal with art, architecture, cinema, theme parks, treasure hunting, recreation, and destinations. According to Glassman, "Readers should not think the essays are over their heads. Because we are writing about popular culture, I asked the contributors to avoid academic language and write in straightforward, informal American English" (2). This approach indicates that the battle over popular culture as a serious intellectual enterprise still has not been won, despite the groundbreaking work of Rusel Nye, Ray Browne, Allan Trachtenberg, Lawrence Levine, John Kasson, and others. Some contributors took full advantage of the ground rules with clever titles, like the essay on Key West by Margaret Mishol and Michael Perez, "Where Being Gay Isn't a Drag," and Steve Knapp and Sarah M. Maloone's "Snowbirds Seek Southern Solace." Other contributors went with old standbys, such as "Hollywood East."

A sampler of the more invigorating essays might include the following. In "Cuban Miami: Manufacturing Casablanca," Rafael Miguel Montes observes that for many Cuban exiles identity depends on a continuity with the past, a preservation of culture and tradition "that might be viewed by some as a case of cultural paralysis or dogged anti-assimilation" (172-173). The cafes, cuisine, language, Calle Ocho, and enclave contribute to a sense of homeland, even though a return to pre-revolutionary Cuba diminishes with each passing day. Those who create images and illusions, especially travel writers, Montes argues, have missed the complexity of the city in their pursuit of a singular tourist image—"it is not your hometown" (174). Montes critiques the writings of Joan Didion, Alexander Stuart, and David Rieff. In "The Highwaymen and other Black Icons," Edmonson Asgill revises several commonly held notions about a group of painters from Ft. Pierce. He argues that the African American artists studied less with Beanie Baccus than previously assumed, they were motivated by quick money and not a desire to create escapist art, and they did not inadvertently reshape reality and thus contribute to a "mass conspiracy" of illusion. In the shortest essay in the anthology, "Spring Break," the authors attribute the origins and growth of this rite of pas-

sage to major league baseball officials seeing Florida as a spring training venue as early as 1888, a swim meet at Ft. Lauderdale's Casino Pool in 1936, military personnel stationed and schooled in the state, the interstate highway system, cinema, and contraception. There is, however, only passing mention of Black College Reunions, and no reference to Glendon Swarthout's novel, *Where The Boys Are* (1960). Alan Platt's case study, "Motorsports Rev up the Economy," will surprise people who associate Daytona's reputation with "the world's most famous beach" and automobile racing, by arguing that motorcycles, and the related Bike Week, "more than anything else, shaped the perception of Daytona, as a place without standards and without limits" (244). His evidence comes from billboards advertising biker bars, tattoo parlors, motorcycle dealerships, and law firms catering to bikers; the yellow pages listing more than one hundred motorcycle-related businesses; the Wyotech Motorcycle Institute capable of educating 700 technicians annually; residents relocating to Daytona for biker reasons; Volusia County having the highest ratio of motorcycles registered per capita [1:20] in the world; and Bike Week's \$350 million impact. Talk about globalization; stickers for a biker bar, Boot Hill, reportedly have been found on the Eiffel tower and Great Wall of China. The movie *Monster* (2003), a drama about serial killer Eileen Wuornos, contributed its part by emphasizing Daytona's negative features: industrial blight, derelicts behind dumpsters, bankrupt social services, corrupt cops, and menacing bikers.

The book could have used a rigorous editing which would have eliminated self-serving statements, insisted on a definition of popular culture, eliminated redundant and digressive passages, and upgraded the research. There was no justification for Glassman taking a cheap shot to justify his effort: "what I found in that book written by a professor who was touted as the grand old man of Florida history was surprising: hardly anything of interest ever occurred in the Sunshine State. His was easily the most boring history I have ever read" (1). The historian he refers to was writing when white man's institutional history, history from the top down, prevailed, and did not have the benefit of the new social history, history from the bottom up, that came out of the ferment of the 1960s. Leroy Ashby's *Amusement for All* (2006), the most comprehensive survey of American popular culture to date, could have provided direction in collegiality and content. In spite of these drawbacks, *Florida in the Popular Imagination* is an entertaining and educational read.

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