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Yesterday's Sarasota by Del Marth

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public officials, and laws regulating campaign expenditures. These governmental reforms were facilitated by a strong capitol press corps which "no state in the South and perhaps none in the nation can match." Special praise is given to the *St. Petersburg Times* for its fine coverage of legislative action in Tallahassee and its investigative reporting which "may be unmatched in the country."

Of particular interest to residents of the Tampa Bay area is Bass and DeVries' description of the role played by William C. Cramer and Pinellas County in the growth of the state Republican party. Cramer took over control of the county Republican party in 1950, and in 1954 became the first Republican Congressman elected from the state since 1875. Also of interest to Tampa Bay residents is the coverage of Tampa's Latin community, although Bass and DeVries' treatment is somewhat superficial.

The last three chapters of the book examine the "fading revolt" by Southerners in the U. S. Congress, the "unrealized potential" of organized labor, and a concluding chapter on the future of Southern politics. The chapter on labor is only four pages long, and the authors would have been better off had they developed the chapter more or left it completely out. The concluding chapter is merely a repetition of the other chapters in the book, and there is little attempt to forecast future trends. Only the chapter on Congress provides useful information in describing the loss of regional distinctiveness among Southern Congressmen.

Although the book provides an incomplete treatment of some issues and, while in some places it is too anecdotal and in other places it ignores important scholarly works, Bass and DeVries have written a book that will have a lasting place in the literature of the South. The authors succeed in detailing the major transformation in Southern politics and, for the most part, they succeed in providing a vivid economic, historical, and sociological portrait of the region. There has been no better book on Southern politics in decades than *The Transformation of Southern Politics*, and it will undoubtedly be a long time before anyone else can match the effort of Bass and DeVries.

Darryl Paulson

Yesterday's Sarasota. By Del Marth. (Miami: Seemann Publishing, Inc., 1977. 160 pp. Illustrations and photographs. \$7.95.)

Let it be freely admitted from the start that this review of the recently released paperback edition of Del Marth's *Yesterday's Sarasota* narrowly misses being a conflict of interest.

That needs explaining.

When the hard-cover edition of the book was in its planning stage about six years ago, Marth came to the Sarasota County Historical Commission, of which the reviewer was then chairman, and asked for help. He wanted to make use of old photos and historical data from the commission's files, and he hoped we might lead him to sources of information he might have otherwise missed in his extensive research.

We were delighted to oblige; it was one of the functions for which the facility had been created in the first place. And when the book came out, we felt we were able to applaud it with reasonable impartiality.

Nothing in that earlier edition has been cut or changed in bringing out the new one except the softer cover and the lower price. It opens with a straight, narrative chapter of roughly 5000 words, in which the pre-photographic history of the area is stressed. But the bulk of Sarasota's story in the 160-page book is told through the long, fact-packed cutlines that accompany about 250 black-and-white pictures.

In those fascinating views and their skillfully written captions, Marth traces Sarasota's bumpy course from a sleepy fishing village of modest pretensions to one of middle-class sophistication. For all its growth in fits and starts, Sarasota is shown to be not yet a big city but threatened with all the disadvantages of one if it and its environs let loose the fierce grip on the quieter, simpler ways of an earlier day.

The story is revealed with warmth and charm, tenderness and compassion. If the community is shown with some of its warts, Marth allows them to be worn with dignity. The arrogantly proud pose of John Ringling surveying his domain; the pleasure of the small boy standing in his calf-drawn cart in 1906; the self-consciousness of the gusseted ladies crossing a muddy street; the smiling triumph of the fisherman with his catch. All these and so many more Marth brings to us with affection and humor.

The book is not without fault. It lacks an index, for one thing. For another, factual errors have crept in, just as they have crept into every regional history ever published. Regionals are primarily the stories of individuals in their day-to-day activities, not of broad movements on a perpetual calendar, and there is frequently no written documentation to pin down dates, people and events. When the recorder of local happenings must rely on shaky memories, unintentional bias or editing and the fuzziness that develops in chronicles passed from one generation to the next, it is a wonder that there are not more errors than the three or four spotted in *Yesterday's Sarasota*.

Time was when publishers shunned regional histories because of their limited sale. Invaluable local histories would never have seen the light of day if dedicated citizens had not dug deep to pay for them.

But those times are changing, particularly in fast-growing Florida. Thousands of newcomers, who know where they moved from, are now anxious to know more about the place to which they have come. The result is a broader market for regional history.

It is rare when a history for the layman is not only informative but is fun to read; yet that is what Del Marth has achieved, with grace and professionalism, in *Yesterday's Sarasota*.

Richard Glendinning