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## ***On the Bethel Trail* by Enoch Douglas Davis**

James W. Silver  
*University of South Florida*

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*On the Bethel Trail*. By Enoch Douglas Davis. (St. Petersburg: Valkyrie Press, 1979. 139 pp. Bibliography, Index, Appendix. \$4.95)

Taken as professional history, this paper-cover account of St. Petersburg's racial experience is poorly organized and simplistic, but as an involved participant's rambling delineation of a remarkable human rights struggle, it has scrapbook integrity. The reader understands at once that the author is a Baptist preacher who assumes the intervention of God into man's affairs, strengthening righteous causes.

Born in rural Georgia of religious parents, Enoch Douglas Davis migrated to St. Petersburg in the middle 20's and started his ministry at Bethel Community Baptist Church in 1930. It is obvious that in the intervening half century, Davis not only pursued the fundamentalist gospel but sought intellectual and spiritual guidance as to problems of black people from such as Moses, Paul, Walter Rauschenbusch and Benjamin Mays. When the time came he was prepared for quiet civil rights action in his search for a decent society. He literally took St. Petersburg for his church.

Mr. Davis divides his discursive narrative into four periods: the Depression, World War II through the great desegregation decision, the decade or so before 1967 of furious activity and lasting achievement, and the last ten years when he seems to have emphasized the consolidation of gains. There's a little of everything in his jumble of history—personal reminiscence, private dreams, handed-down anecdotes of suffering, heroism and joy, biographical sketches, tales of extreme Florida weather, atrocity stories and accounts of humiliation and persecution, tidbits from other people's histories (extraneous and pertinent), and numerous sermons such as "Social Implications of the Teaching of Jesus."

Davis is a righteous man working courageously and successfully for equality in democracy in education, in housing and public facilities, and in the upgrading of jobs as well as employment itself. As he put it, he "decided to put God ahead of the local pattern of discrimination." Which seems to be exactly what he's done. Now and then he hears "voices from above calling me upward." He should one day get a good reception. He has already proven down here that the church and black achievement are one.

*James W. Silver*

*The Florida Wars*. By Virginia Bergman Peters. (Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1979. 333 pp. Preface, illustrations, \$22.50.)

The United States has been to Cambodia and Vietnam before. As Virginia Bergman Peters says in her book, *The Florida Wars*, "What happened in Florida (between 1810 and 1858) has startling resemblances to more recent troubles which our nation has endured in Vietnam and Cambodia. The places in which American soldiers found themselves fighting had names unpronounceable; the conditions of battle were baffling; the arguments for and against the actions taken were as confusing and the moral questions raised as embarrassing; the costs were as comparatively great in national treasure, human lives and property; and the results, in some ways, as inconclusive."