

12-1-1984

***Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region,
1607-1980*** by David R. Goldfield

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Recommended Citation

Ingalls, Robert P. (1984) "*Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980* by David R. Goldfield," *Tampa Bay History*. Vol. 6 : Iss. 2 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory/vol6/iss2/10>

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coffee table book which might also have been an excellent visual history of Florida's capital around the turn of the century.

Michael Thomason

The Other Side of the River: Historical Cape Coral. By Betsy Zeiss. Privately published. 1983. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. Pp. vii, 215. Cloth.

The Other Side of the River: Historical Cape Coral is an interesting, albeit rambling, account of the life of the early settlers on the north side of the Caloosahatchee River. Two-thirds of the book is devoted to a look at the development of the broad area reaching from Pine Island Sound to Alva and other upriver settlements. The last eight chapters sketch the history of Cape Coral. The time span covered by the book is from the late 1800s to the 1980s.

A lack of background material and definite geographical information gives rise to difficulties in getting an overview of the area and in locating homesteads, ranches, schools, etc. of earlier periods on today's maps. The range covered in the book is so widespread that some of the information does not seem to be relevant to the history of Cape Coral.

The principal source material used was the reminiscences of the early settlers and their descendants. These are invaluable in the preservation of local history, and they provide an aura of authenticity and a dash of color to the book. However, they need to be reinforced, amplified and coordinated with events from historical sources. The reader would have received a clearer understanding of the area's history if the author had followed a more orderly, chronological account of events and growth.

Chapters fifteen through twenty-three give a delightful glimpse of how Cape Coral began, its early struggles, and its growing pains as it became a city. The author touches lightly but accurately on how drastically the land was changed as development began: "Early days at Cape Coral found a plethora of wildlife and a paucity of people. Those who were there manned draglines and dredges, land movers and graders, and they leveled the earth's silhouette of picturesque pines and stubby palms against a bleak, wintry sky to a skinned, barren, and truly desolate scene. They created canals where none had been....They disturbed rabbit warrens and fox dens and rattlesnakes living in the dense growth and ditches bordering Harney Point Road." (pp. 150-151) However, the author does not deal with many of the serious problems and legal questions involving sales promotions and law suits.

The book closes with an upbeat look at the continuing growth of the city and gives a veiled promise of a rosy future.

Alberta C. Rawchuck

Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980. By David R. Goldfield. Baton Rouge. 1982. Louisiana State University Press. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 232. Cloth. \$20.00.



Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.

Measured by the percentage of the population living in the cities, the South long lagged at least a generation behind the rest of the country in urban growth. Whereas the majority of Americans lived in cities by 1920, the South did not reach that mark until 1950. This lag has also figured in the study of southern cities which have only recently attracted the systematic attention of historians. As with every other aspect of southern civilization, urban historians have had to confront the question of distinctiveness. Are southern cities simply delayed copies of their northern and western counterparts or are they somehow different?

David R. Goldfield, one of the pioneers in this field, tackles this question in his book, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980*. As the title suggests, Goldfield sees the southern city as “a unique environment within our national midst” (p. xi). Beginning with the observation that “the southern city is different because the South is different,” he argues

persuasively, “In that region, the city is much closer to the plantation than it is to Chicago and New York” (p. 3). In the “lengthy essay” which follows, the author explores the impact of three features related to the plantation economy that have dominated both the southern countryside and urban life since the founding of Jamestown. According to Goldfield, the worlds of both the cotton field and the skyscraper were shaped by the rural traditions of staple agriculture, race relations and a colonial economy exploited by outsiders. Goldfield’s provocative and readable exploration of these themes draws on an excellent grasp of wide-ranging sources which he discusses in a bibliographic essay.

Anyone curious about what Goldfield’s hypothesis has to do with Florida will be glad to learn that he recognizes the diversity that has existed within the South. He observes, for example, that Florida cities such as Tampa and Jacksonville owed their growth to something other than King Cotton. However, while serving other masters, these cities shared the regional pattern of a dependent economy and a biracial society. The ways in which sunbelt cities may have recently begun diverging from this historic pattern remain to be investigated.

Goldfield’s insightful overview of several centuries of southern urban history should interest both informed scholars and general readers.

Robert P. Ingalls

Edge of Wilderness: A Settlement History of Manatee River and Sarasota Bay. By Janet Snyder Matthews. Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1983. Caprine Press. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Cloth. Pp. 464. Cloth. \$21.50.

Janet Matthews has written what is destined to become the definitive, narrative history of the Manatee River-Sarasota Bay region. She ranges in her coverage from the mound people of about 5000 B.C. to the Sarasota “assassins” of the mid-1880s. The author has mined a wealth of primary sources, permitting the individuals who are coping with the forces of change to speak for themselves. Especially effective is the deliberate omission of “[sic]” when quoting such material. This permits the basic datum of recorded history – the individual – to speak without interpretive alteration.

The author is to be commended for her detailed coverage of the establishment of the Spanish ranchos (fish camps) which existed during the British period. This sets the scene for her narrative of the arrival of American William Bunce during the U.S. territorial period. This influential pioneer of Hillsborough County developed an economically profitable rancho at the mouth of the Manatee River. Unfortunately, Bunce's enterprise was subjected to the vicissitudes of the Second Seminole War as were his “mixed blood” workers, who were the victims of both Indian raids and the disgraceful and discriminatory government policy administered by General Thomas Jesup.

Janet Matthews is at her best when evaluating the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 and its relationship to the influx of new settlers into the Manatee River-Sarasota Bay area. Her analysis of the motivations of the middle Florida planters such as the Gamble brothers, the Braden brothers, and William Wyatt, who became the pioneers of the sugar cane and cattle industries on