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***Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth since World War II* by Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice, Editors**

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This reference book should appeal to a variety of readers, who will find some of the more obscure novels ever written: Millard C. Horton's *Joan of the Everglades* (1922) and Edward Stratemeyer's *The Moving Picture Girls Under the Palms* (1914). Readers should have great fun in wandering down the eddies and currents of Florida literature. One will discover that the Rev. Michael Smith wrote the state's first novel in 1830, *The Lost Virgin of the South*. Or that James Fenimore Cooper's novel *Jack Tier* was placed in Florida, written in 1848 about filibustering off the Florida coast.

Readers interested in the Tampa Bay area will be pleased to know that the region has served as a setting for hundreds of novels. St. Petersburg, by Gardner's count, has been depicted in twelve such works, including *A Knight Comes Flying*. This 1931 melodrama involved a World War One ace who crash lands his plane in a Pinellas orange grove, only to discover that the grove's owner is a damsel in distress, victimized by rum-running gangsters. Sarasota has been the setting of fourteen novels, whereas Sanibel, LaBelle, Immokalee, Ruskin, Bartow, and Bradenton serve as the backdrop of one book each. Tampa has been popularized in print forty-one times. Tampa's two most acclaimed novels are by Rex Beach and José Yglesias. Politically and culturally, they accentuate Tampa's diversity. Whereas Beach migrated with his family from Michigan to Florida in the 1880s, Yglesias was born in Ybor City in 1919. Beach achieved popular acclaim for his nostalgic renderings of the Florida cattle trade in *Wild Pastures* (1935), where Yglesias sings an elegy to the Latin barrio of his youth, a bittersweet memory etched in *The Truth About Them* (1971) and *A Wake in Ybor City* (1963).

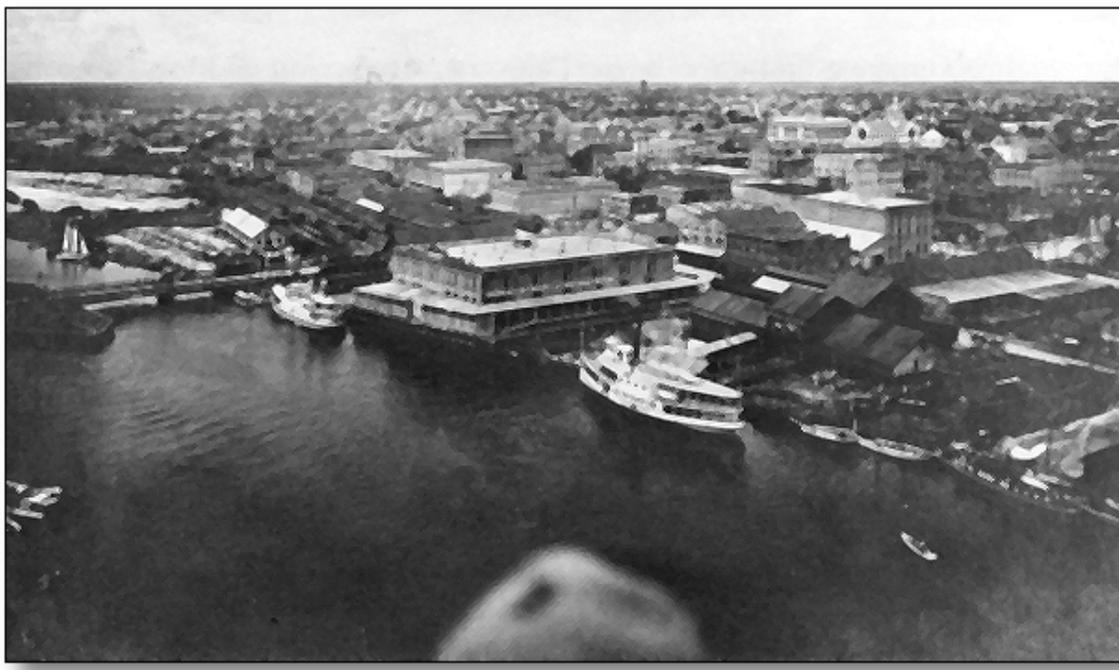
One wishes Gardner had gone beyond the mere indexing of literature and authors and offered readers additional information, such as how many novels or plays featuring a Florida setting have won Pulitzer Prizes. (The answer is two: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' *The Yearling* (1938), and James Gould Cozzens' *Guard of Honor* (1948), although one might claim Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) violated Florida's territorial waters.)

Gary R. Mormino

Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth since World War II. By Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice, Editors. Austin, 1983. University of Texas Press. Maps, Tables. Pp. x, 344. Cloth. \$25.00

Historians, as Howard N. Rabinowitz points out in his essay on Albuquerque, unlike journalists and politicians have focused scant attention on the "causes and consequences of the (Sunbelt's) remarkable postwar expansion" (p. 255). The essays included in Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice's anthology, *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II*, broaden significantly our understanding of the historical dimensions of America's Sunbelt phenomenon. This volume provides a thought provoking introduction to the similarities as well as the diversity that characterize Sunbelt cities in the United States.

As the editors indicate in their introduction, increasing use of the term Sunbelt has not been accompanied by a commonly accepted definition of the term. Coined by Kevin Phillips in 1969 in *The Emergent Republican Majority*, the "Sunbelt idea" has come to mean "a mix of economics, conservative politics, and demographic change generally associated with the



A view of Tampa in 1912, facing northeast, with the Hillsborough River in the foreground.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.

observation that the southeastern and southwestern sections of the country have been growing and prospering more than the Northeast or Midwest in recent years” (p. 3). But beyond this general sense of what comprises a Sunbelt area, little agreement seems to exist over the boundaries of the Sunbelt. As a result, the actual components of the Sunbelt change from author to author and this lack of scholarly consistency has hindered general understanding of the dynamics of the Sunbelt experience.

In *Sunbelt Cities* the editors have defined the Sunbelt as that part of the United States that falls below the 37th parallel, a line roughly stretching along the top of North Carolina westward across the country to the Pacific Ocean. The states included in this area have increased their population by 112.3 percent since World War II, reversing a century-old pattern of South to North migration. And within the states comprising the Sunbelt, the metropolitan areas provide striking illustrations of the demographic explosion. To explore the dimensions of the urban Sunbelt experience the editors chose twelve cities—Atlanta, Miami, New Orleans, Tampa, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Oklahoma City, San Antonio, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, Phoenix and San Diego—for examination. Selected for “their size, regional importance and historical significance” (p. 1), these cities all experienced a postwar boom fostered by federal spending—especially defense—a friendly business climate, and an attractive quality of life.

The twelve essays are preceded by an interpretative introductory essay written by the editors. This introduction not only sets out the scope of the volume but also places the various articles in historical context. The editors discuss the definitional problems associated with the term Sunbelt

and explore the various factors that have triggered metropolitan growth in the Sunbelt. They also, based on the twelve case studies, reflect on two important challenges now faced by Sunbelt cities as these growth areas enter a new phase of development. One challenge centers around the failure of the central cities to keep pace with suburban growth through annexation. The second threat to metropolitan Sunbelt stability rises from increasing assaults on the established leadership by minorities and neighborhood organizations for more political and economic participation. In the years ahead leaders of Sunbelt cities will have to learn to accommodate these challenges.

Although the editors left the organization and emphasis of each article at the discretion of the author, all contributors were to concern themselves with economic growth and the political changes wrought by the elevation of their particular city to Sunbelt status. Taken as a whole the volume more than fulfills the editors' desire "to provide readers with convenient and authoritative introductions to the histories of these major sunbelt cities and their suburbs" (p. 2). As with any collection, however, the essays are of an uneven quality and demonstrate a variety of strengths and weaknesses. The essays on Atlanta, Miami and San Antonio offer readers useful discussions of the impact of minorities on the overall development and character of these Sunbelt communities. In his article on Tampa, Gary R. Mormino explores the changing levels of power and participation of minorities in Tampa's metropolitan development, and at the same time traces the emergence of an urban environment along Florida's gulf coast. In doing so, he examines the ambiguities that surround those communities propelled into Sunbelt status without a clearly defined urban tradition to anchor the rapid growth associated with the Sunbelt area's development. Arnold R. Hirsch's piece on New Orleans highlights the problems faced by a well-established metropolis, shaped by more than two centuries of development, as it adjusts to its position as a Sunbelt community. The articles on Houston, Albuquerque, Oklahoma City, Phoenix and San Diego provide more than adequate discussions of each city's development, initial accommodation to growth, and strategies (or lack of) for facing the challenges of the future. Martin V. Melosi superbly discusses the experiences of two distinct yet related urban centers, Dallas-Fort Worth. Finally, only David L. Clark's article on Los Angeles is disappointing. Clark has packed his essay so full of information that one loses sight of his point. Nonetheless, overall the volume represents an important addition to the literature on America's Sunbelt.

Patricia Moone Melvin