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***Florida: A Pictorial History* by Hampton Dunn**

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BOOK REVIEWS

Florida: A Pictorial History. By Hampton Dunn. Norfolk, Virginia. 1988. Donning Company. Pp. 264. Illustrations. Cloth. \$35.00

Hampton Dunn has the unique ability to write about long past events as if they happened yesterday. His splendid selection of historical photographs that appear in this book are vastly enlivened by the captions, which comprise a chronicle of the important – and sometimes not so important but interesting anyway – events in Florida’s history. For example, he writes, “There was a horse and buggy traffic jam on Lafayette Street Bridge in Tampa the day this picture was taken around the turn of the century” to give life and immediacy to a fairly unexciting photograph. Directly above it is pictured a subdued and dignified group of young women in gym suits with long sleeves and bloomers, labeled “Let’s hear it for the girls’ basketball team of St. Petersburg High School about 1900.”

Dunn divides his extremely sprightly and readable history into eight chapters, seven of them based on time periods and the eighth a look at the present and future. What is most impressive is the variety of his subjects and the easy familiarity with which he treats them. Ranging from Ponce de Leon, “Florida’s first tourist,” who landed somewhere on Florida’s northeast coast in 1513, to Betty Castor, “the first woman ever elected to serve on Florida’s State Cabinet,” Dunn’s remarks are accurate, to the point and well expressed.

The enormous scope of the more than 500 pictures and their captions covers practically every aspect of the State’s known history, from its early nineteenth-century days as a mosquito-infested desert with a few isolated settlements to its explosive growth beginning after World War II.

Perhaps because visual materials are not very plentiful, the period from the 1500s to the early 1800s is sketchily treated, but not much of historical significance happened during these years anyway. The really interesting aspects of Florida’s modern history, centering on its people and places, are what provide the fascination of this book. Looking out at you from its pages are almost mythical figures, such as Seminole Chief Osceola, “a surprised, serious and sullen man” after his treacherous capture by the U.S. Army during the Indian wars of the 1800’s; Henry B. Plant, “the Connecticut Yankee who opened up Florida’s West Coast by bringing his railroad to the area and building grand hotels along the way”; and Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, after whom Broward County was named, one of the State’s “most colorful – and controversial – politicians.” Pictures of places like Silver Springs, Miami Beach and Tarpon Springs in the very early days of their development provide glimpses of what Florida was like in the days of its innocence, when there was plenty of space for animals, fish and orange groves, as well as people.

What Dunn manages to create is the flavor of our state, with all its charms and imperfections, in an unforgettable way. Complete with plentiful quantities of “cheesecake” – what would Florida be without its bathing beauties? – craziness, and an exaggerated attention to the pleasures of life, this illustrated history tells more real truths about us than most scholarly tomes do. For Hampton Dunn, who never took a graduate degree in History or anything else and yet is



Decorated with buntings and flags, Gandy Bridge was ready for its formal opening in 1924. This photo depicts the toll gate on the Tampa side. (Tolls were fifty-five cents for car and driver; additional passengers were ten cents each). The span cut the driving distance by half, and gave Tampa a direct highway to Gulf beaches.

Photograph from *Florida: A Pictorial History*.

President-Elect of the Florida Historical Society, it is a fitting capstone to a productive and distinguished career.

Edgar W. Hirshberg

Indian Mounds of the Atlantic Coast: A Guide to Sites from Maine to Florida. By Jerry N. McDonald and Susan L. Woodward. Newark, Ohio, 1987. McDonald & Woodward Publishing Co. Pp. 162. Photographs. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Paper. \$12.95. (Available from McDonald & Woodward, P.O. Box 10308, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060. Add shipping charge of \$1.50.)

Mounds and earthworks of shell, stone and soil are the only immediately visible architectural remains left of the many different prehistoric human cultures who inhabited the eastern United States over the past several millennia. The different constructions are of different ages and