Back Home: A History of Citrus County, Florida by Hampton Dunn

Mary Lou Harkness
University of South Florida

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Seminoles, blacks and poor whites. As she points out, these groups generally had “neither the time nor the skills to leave behind a written record” (p. 5). She has done a great deal of research, however, and does an excellent job of bringing her sources together in a fluid and engaging narrative. Davis, a journalist by profession, has principally chronicled the past. From a historian’s point of view, the study lacks in-depth interpretation. This may be unfair criticism of a book that is intended to bring light to a mostly unexplored topic. This Davis does with skill, and she deserves accolades for her achievement. Public Faces-Private Lives is an important source for anyone wishing to learn more about women's history, Victorian family life or the pioneer experience in Florida.

Ellen J. Babb


Hampton Dunn wrote this book as part of the 1976 Bicentennial celebration; it has been reprinted with “no changes, additions, or deletions.” As he states in the preface, writing the history of the county where he was born and raised (in Floral City) was a true labor of love. The love and pride are evident in many personal anecdotes.
Hampton Dunn and his twin sister Hazel were born in the Citrus County town of Floral City in 1916.

Photograph from Back Home: A History of Citrus County by Hampton Dunn.
The book is arranged chronologically beginning with the early European explorers in the sixteenth century but with reference to the archeological discoveries which indicate the presence of animals during the Ice Age and of Indians not long after. The twenty-one chapters bring the history up to 1976, the year of publication. The author has assembled a tremendous number of facts, reminiscences, and anecdotes – such a number that the volume serves better as a reference book than a smoothly flowing narrative. He mentions so many people who were Citrus County residents for all or part of their lives that the reader comes to believe that no citizen of the county has been omitted. This impression is supported by the twenty-four page index which is mostly comprised of names and which adds, of course, to its value as reference.

A valuable and delightful addition to the book are the 188 pages of illustrations, including maps, sketches, studio portraits, and snapshots. These pictures tell their own story of Citrus County as it moved from the days of stiffly posed families to the era of photo-journalism.

Although the book's greatest appeal is to Citrus County residents and others who have a personal concern in the region, it is a valuable resource for anyone interested in Florida history.

Mary Lou Harkness