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***Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783* by Daniel S. Murphree**

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Life in the segregated South was characterized by silence and denial. As Evans reminds us, white communities were governed by, and white supremacy was perpetuated by, codes of silence and surveillance. In order to fully understand the complexities of southern history and culture, scholars must attempt to unravel the ways in which dichotomies of race, gender, and class created and perpetuated acts of silence that in turn could both shield people from and expose them to inequality and indignity. In the second chapter, which focuses on McCollum's courtroom experiences, Evans unravels the discursive formations of religion and law that surrounded McCollum's "silence-filled" trials. Full exposure of Adams's relationship to Ruby and her wealthy, bolita-operator husband; the extent of local officials' involvement in illegal gambling and other dubious activities; and a frank discussion of McCollum's motives for shooting her abuser would have levied a serious blow to white supremacy and patriarchy. Thus, court officials and politicians sought, with the complicity of Live Oak's black and white residents, to shape and censor the testimony to conform to an acceptable narrative and to shore up a corrupt and nefarious system. The third chapter provides fascinating insight into the relationship between Zora Neale Hurston and William Bradford Huie, both of whom covered the case for northern black newspapers, published articles and a book on the McCollum-Adams case, and tried unsuccessfully to establish a connection with McCollum and to uncover the "real" story of the murder.

As the book's title underlines, the study focuses on the silencing of Ruby McCollum by legal and community members, but Evans considers also the reasons why McCollum herself may have chosen not to or been unable to articulate her version of events, perhaps as a means of self-preservation to avoid execution. Nonetheless, as Evans notes, "Ruby McCollum is—and has always been—what the words of others have made her" (14). Despite the author's best investigative efforts (for example, in the search for her burial site as detailed in the conclusion), McCollum remains an enigmatic figure—and perhaps aptly so.

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Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783.
By Daniel S. Murphree. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006. x, 188 pp.
List of maps, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00 cloth).

Daniel Murphree asserts that for more than two and a half centuries whites (Europeans) constructed an identity for Florida Indians that changed little from the time of the early Spanish *entradas* until the American Revolution. Colonial Florida offers a good venue to explore this idea because it was the area of the earliest, longest,

and most constant interaction between Indians and Europeans. Colonial Florida encompassed much of the Southeast, reaching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, from the Florida Keys to well into today's Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Murphree contends that colonial-era Europeans and Euro-Americans (whites born in the Americas) perceived and described Indians in terms that we today would consider "racist." But racism, he says, did not fit the mind-set of the colonials. Their "racialization" of the Indians was not done to "gain social, legal, or political privileges (9), which are the goals of racism. "Racialization consisted of the articulation primarily in written form of collective European perceptions regarding the character, behavior, spirituality, intellectual capacity, and physical appearance of the native peoples of the Floridas" (8). For example, through racialization, Europeans came to associate Indians' skin color with laziness.

Experiences and impressions of early colonial adventurers recounted in works published in Europe provide the material for the author to trace European perspectives. Murphree looks to well-known works, such as Garcilaso de la Vega's story of the expedition of Hernando de Soto (published 1605) and Antonio de Herrera's *General History* (1601). James Adair, an English trader in the Gulf South, and a perennial favorite, naturalist William Bartram, provide their observations for the end of the period under study. Bartram, however, falls outside of Murphree's criteria. American-born Bartram's travel account was published in 1791 in Philadelphia in the new United States. Other descriptions come from whites who spent many years in the Floridas—French and Spanish colonial officials and missionaries. Their descriptions appeared in reports and other communiqués seen by few eyes. Thus the writings of the short-term observers were more widely disseminated than those with repeated, long-term contact with the Indians.

Murphree asserts that Spanish, British, and French opinions differed little from one another, and that through racialization Europeans "achieved common ground" (123). He claims that Europeans saw Indians as part of the natural environment and as barriers to European plans. When Europeans' schemes foundered or failed, Europeans scapegoated the Indians as the cause of failure. Europeans employed written words to erect psychological borders between themselves and Indians. Through this "othering" process, Europeans diminished the individuality of tribes and clans and facilitated the relegation of Indians to an inferior though undefined category.

Murphree poses an interesting approach to questions about identity formation. The process of identity formation by whites living in the Americas has been well explored, usually focusing on how colonials living in the Americas saw themselves in comparison to their contemporaries in Europe. Murphree takes a different approach and looks at the path of the colonials' relation to the Indians, concluding that "racialization helped colonists define their own identity in the Floridas" (10). But, he does not address that for most colonials the relation to things European was far more important. On both sides of the Atlantic, items, ideas, and persons originating

in Europe almost always were considered socially superior to things American. Murphree combines similar remarks made over three centuries about Indians to illustrate unchanging attitudes, but he does not deal with the changing attitudes and behaviors of the Europeans making the observations. The early explorers left a European world where religion ordered daily life and international relations. Three centuries later, Reason and the modern state had replaced religion's role in shaping European perspectives on both sides of the Atlantic. For the early Spanish in Florida, religion was the defining element. Heretics were worse than heathens, making wrongheaded Europeans worse than uninformed Indians. Europeans' methods in Florida changed as well. "Conquistadoring" ended with Juan Pardo's 1568 expedition into the southeastern interior.

We must ask if the Europeans' constructed views of Indians differed much from their constructed views of "others." Yes, Europeans demeaned the skin color and the indolence of Indians, but Europeans employed the same language toward other Europeans. An anonymous British spy of the 1740s described the Spanish in Florida to be "of swarthy complexion," adding that the women were "very brown." Lack of industry brought disapproval toward any group. Murphree quotes French official Villantray de la Sauvole, who noted in his journal that the Indians of the Louisiana-Florida region were easily manipulated because "they are very lazy" (77). South Carolina governor Nathaniel Johnson in 1719 called the Spanish in Florida "very lazy, raw fellows." His successor, Sir Francis Nicholson, complained that his own Carolinian soldiers were "inactive and morose and lazy and mutinous." Did the negative remarks arise because Indians and soldiers were not "improvers," not changing the land for profit?

Murphree takes a fresh and interesting approach, but the discussion is not full enough for his conclusions to be convincing. The problem may be the short length of the book at 158 pages. More information about the most important published works is needed for the reader to assess the works' influence and understand their audience. Who, in fact, had access to the publications and who read them? It is unclear just who is doing the racializing: high officials in Europe making imperial decisions, Europeans traveling through Florida, residents in Florida? This is an important distinction if current identities indeed remain little changed after five centuries as Murphree claims on his book's first page.

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Losing It All To Sprawl: How Progress Ate My Cracker Landscape. By Bill Belleville. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006. xx, 199 pp. Foreword, acknowledgments, preface, introduction, photographs, bibliography. \$24.95, cloth).