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Books in Brief

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BOOKS IN BRIEF

Michael Gannon's History of Florida in Forty Minutes. By Michael Gannon. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007. 80 pp. Acknowledgments, illustrations, bibliography, audio CD. \$24.95 cloth).

Since Florida has the longest recorded history of any place in the present-day United States, readers might wonder how the University of Florida historian Michael Gannon managed to present *The New History of Florida* (1996) in just 480 pages. His previous *Florida: A Short History* (1993) had condensed Florida's Spanish, British, Spanish, territorial, and statehood eras to only 182 pages. Imagine, in Gannon's latest volume, 494 years of Florida history in just forty minutes—in barely seventy pages of text!

In response to requests from Leadership Florida to put in writing his oft-delivered lecture to its annual statewide leadership class, Gannon has highlighted ten key populations, periods, groups of periods, and factors that shaped Florida history. They include the original inhabitants; the first Spanish settlers; the Franciscan missions; the British; the Spanish restoration and American territorial periods; early statehood, the Civil War, and Reconstruction; the Flagler era; the 1920s runaway land boom; the Second World War; and, finally, air-conditioning, mosquito control, and Veteran Administration loans.

Gannon can say little about each topic in the few hundred words and handful of evocative illustrations given to each era, but that is not the point. Even if Florida history were routinely taught in the public schools, barely one-third of the state's 18 million residents were born here. How many people, for example, can name the five flags that have flown over this land or the two railway barons that laid the path for millions of future settlers?

Too busy to read the history of Florida in forty minutes? The book comes with an audio CD containing Gannon's melodious voice reading his text.

MARK I. GREENBERG
University of South Florida, Tampa

African American Sites in Florida. By Kevin M. McCarthy. (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 2007. xxi, 336 pp. Introduction, photographs, illustrations, conclusion, further reading, index. \$29.95 cloth).

Much of Florida's African American history remains undocumented. In this volume, written by a well-known authority on Florida literature, history, and culture, Kevin McCarthy identifies current landmarks in the Tampa Bay area, and throughout Florida, of which many readers may be unaware. *African American Sites in Florida* is Kevin McCarthy's fourth book exclusively treating Florida's black history. McCarthy also discusses the origins of each Florida county, introducing readers to key events and conditions that shaped its unique history, including Native American and African American interactions.

McCarthy's research both involved field studies and was built upon existing documentation of regional African American history. Through the assemblage of archival research and public records, McCarthy helps the stories and voices of African Americans to find their rightful place in the broader narrative of North American history.

SHERRI ANDERSON
Washington, D.C.

Florida Plantation Records from the Papers of George Noble Jones. Edited by Ulrich Bonnell Phillips and James David Glunt. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006. xl, 596 pp. Introduction to the University Press of Florida edition, glossary, index. \$55.00 cloth).

Originally issued by the Missouri Historical Society in 1927, eight decades later *Florida Plantation Records* remains an essential resource for the study of plantation slavery in antebellum Florida. Containing transcripts of plantation journals, overseers' reports, slave inventories, and other records, it documents life and work at El Destino and Chemonie, two large cotton plantations near Tallahassee owned by Georgia planter George Noble Jones (1811-1876). Jones was an absentee landlord who relied on a series of overseers to manage his Florida estates. The frequent reports and meticulous accounting he required provide uncommonly detailed information about plantation operations, particularly the employment and condition of the slaves who constituted the most valuable part of his property. These records cover the period from 1832 to 1898. The majority date from the 1840s through the 1870s, though there is very little relating to the Civil War years.

Ulrich Bonnell Phillips (1877-1934), the leading historian of American slavery in his day, edited *Florida Plantation Records*, assisted by his doctoral student

James David Glunt (1895-1962), later a professor of history at the University of Florida. The University Press of Florida edition provides a facsimile of the complete 1927 text, with a new forty-page introduction by historian John David Smith of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Smith's introduction provides very useful perspectives on the original work and its creators in the light of current historiography. The 1927 book, which appeared in a limited edition of only five hundred copies, has long been ranked as a rare Florida collectible, and the subsequent 1971 reprint by the New York publisher Burt Franklin is also quite scarce, so the new University Press of Florida edition provides a welcome opportunity for libraries and individuals to acquire a copy of this Florida history classic.

PAUL EUGEN CAMP

University of South Florida, Tampa

Amidst a Storm of Bullets: The Diary of Lt. Henry Prince in Florida, 1836-1842. Edited by Frank Laumer. Foreword by John K. Mahon. (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2006. xxvi, 166 pp. Illustrations, foreword, preface, introduction, epilogue, notes, bibliography, index. \$15.00, paper).

A meticulous transcription of a diary kept by a young army officer serving in the Second Seminole War (1835-42), *Amidst a Storm of Bullets* provides a unique firsthand description of military life in Florida during the longest and most costly of the nation's Indian wars. Of the few personal journals and diaries chronicling the war that have survived, Prince's is arguably the best of its kind in detail and readability. When the University of Tampa Press published the hardcover first edition in 1998, Canter Brown Jr., historian-in-residence of the Tampa Bay History Center, commented, "The Second Seminole War's day-to-day reality can be discovered in no single original source better than through the Henry Prince diary."

As a newly minted brevet second lieutenant, Maine native Henry Prince (1811-1892) began his Florida diary on January 10, 1836, less than two weeks after the war with the Seminoles began. With only two breaks, his Florida service spanned virtually the entire war—the last entry in his diary being April 25, 1842. Lieutenant Prince was an observant, articulate writer who recorded his impressions of life and war in Florida in descriptive, readable prose, often written while the battles and other events he recorded were still in progress. He was also a skilled artist and draftsman who embellished his daily entries with detailed sketches and maps. The entries relating to his several visits to Tampa and the sketches he made of Ft. Brooke and Ft. Foster will be of particular interest to readers in the Tampa Bay area.

Frank Laumer's introduction and epilogue provide useful context, tracing Prince's life before and after the period covered by his Florida diary, and Laumer's

notes provide helpful explanatory detail about the people and places to which Prince refers. The book is well illustrated with all forty-six of Prince's sketches and maps, including views of forts, camps, and other scenes. The cover is particularly attractive, being a full-color reproduction of Florida artist Jackson Walker's painting The Battle of Camp Izard, Day Two, February 29, 1836, which includes an officer representing Lieutenant Prince writing in his diary while bullets chip the pine trees overhead. The hardcover first edition of *Amidst a Storm of Bullets* is now out of print, so this new paperbound version, including the complete text block and illustrations of the original, makes Prince's diary available to Florida historians and general readers at about half the cost of the earlier edition.

PAUL EUGEN CAMP

University of South Florida, Tampa

Ecological Landscapes of the South. By Jack Temple Kirby. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. 361 pp. Preface, photographs, epilogue, endnotes, index. \$29.95, cloth).

Using the mockingbird as an emblem of the American South, Kirby presents a postmodernist's narrative exploration in story and song. His *Ecological Landscapes* roams literary, historical, musical, and cinematic works to yield a personal, reflective examination of a region marked by waves of prosperity and neglect, by cross-cultural encounters and exodus. In surveying vistas from the earliest civilizations to the present day, Kirby perceives a diverse region loosely united in its paradoxical relationship with the land. What does the mockingbird have in common with the Coen Brothers' *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* or the greater South for that matter, but an ability to reconcile difference through homogenization, coupled with a certain degree of indifference?

A Florida resident himself, Kirby begins his analysis of the South's ecological history with the ill-fated de Soto expedition, the Spaniards' arrival in Tampa Bay, and their eventual journey to Mexico through the mouth of the Mississippi. Florida reappears in nuanced homages to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Zora Neale Hurston, and in an account of Henry Morrison Flagler's ambitious efforts in St. Augustine. The ecological devastation of Florida's pine forests through lumbering and the Everglades through canalization, as well as the detrimental introduction of the water hyacinth and nutria into the environment, provide sobering vignettes of one generation's progress becoming another's bane.

KELI RYLANCE

USF Tampa Library Special Collections Department

Down in Orburndale: A Songwriter's Youth in Old Florida. By Bobby Braddock. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007. xii, 271 pp. Acknowledgments, Orburndale, illustrations, photographs. \$24.95, cloth).

Bobby Braddock's memoir *Down in Orburndale: A Songwriter's Youth in Old Florida* upholds the promise of its title. The legendary country music songwriter shares his life experiences of growing up in central Florida's citrus land of Auburndale. His memoir highlights southern life as he carries his readers through his boyhood, adolescence, girls, youthful pranks, adventures around Lake Stella, love, music, and travels throughout the South on his path to success. Bobby Braddock has written multiple hit country songs such as "D-I-V-O-R-C-E," performed by Tammy Wynette; "Time Marches On"; and the contemporary country hit "I Wanna Talk about Me."

CYRANA WYKER

University of South Florida, Tampa

The Spirit of the Bay: Tampa, St. Petersburg, Clearwater. By Steve Otto. (Tampa: Community Media Corp., 2007. 400 pp. Introduction by mayors of Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Clearwater, index to advertisers. Price to be determined.)

In *The Spirit of the Bay*, longtime *Tampa Tribune* columnist Steve Otto captures the essence of life in the Tampa Bay area through both historic and contemporary perspectives. Otto makes the case that from the time of the earliest explorers to this region to that of the transplants who now call the Tampa Bay area home, this is a community built on diversity. This can best be seen today in the rich heritage of the communities featured in the book: Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Clearwater. Otto explores the big-city neighborhoods and beachfront communities of Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties, bringing both their unique character—and unique characters—to life. From the cigar rollers in Tampa to the sponge divers in Tarpon Springs to the carnival culture of Gibsonton, Otto leaves no stone unturned in a book that proves revealing to natives and transplants alike. In addition to the compelling stories and anecdotes offered by Otto, the imagery from page to page should satisfy any photo buff. Vintage black-and-white photographs provide balance to the stunning contemporary images that perfectly illustrate the spirit of Tampa Bay.

TRAVIS PUTERBAUGH

Tampa Bay History Center