

1-1-2009

Crackers in the Glade: Life and Times in the Old Everglades by
Rob Storter and Betty Savidge Briggs

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Recommended Citation

Jepson, Michael (2009) "*Crackers in the Glade: Life and Times in the Old Everglades* by Rob Storter and Betty Savidge Briggs," *Tampa Bay History*. Vol. 23 : Iss. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory/vol23/iss1/8>

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rivers, a few deeply recovered organic specimens have yielded dates ranging from approximately 18,000 to 30,000 years old” (115).

In the last two chapters of the book, Purdy addresses the challenges confronting archaeologists studying the Paleoindians and briefly recommends future research directions. Particularly intriguing is her question, “Is it a coincidence that beveled ivory points from Florida are identical to those of the Upper Paleolithic 30,000 years ago in the Old World?” (121). The book’s bibliography is an excellent inventory of the key research in the field and serves as a guide to anyone who requires a greater depth of understanding of this formative period in the peopling of Florida.

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Crackers in the Glade: Life and Times in the Old Everglades. By Rob Storter and Betty Savidge Briggs (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007. Paperback edition. xxiv, 127 pp. Foreword, introduction, maps, photographs, illustrations, notes. \$22.95, paper)

In anthropology, there are several different terms for the kind of knowledge revealed through *Crackers in the Glade*. Various referred to as “folkways,” “traditional knowledge,” or “traditional ecological knowledge,” this type of understanding is often contrasted with more scientific and formal knowledge. Yet we often have neither formal nor traditional knowledge with which to understand the ecology or lifeways that surround us. In this edited volume of memoirs by her grandfather Rob Storter, Betty Savidge Briggs gives us both visual and written documentation of life and times in the old Everglades.

Throughout this wonderfully edited volume, Storter provides not only his knowledge and vision of a vast and often unforgiving environment, but insight into a wilderness culture that few will experience again. His memories and the accompanying drawings provide a glimpse not only of a bountiful land, but also of the culture of an enduring frontier life that still resonates with some residents of a few small fishing villages near the Florida Everglades. Recognizing the fragile nature of his environment and its quickly vanishing way of life, Storter chronicles both with fascinating detail in his journals.

This portrait of a pioneering life in Southwest Florida is a testament to the resilience of the early settlers of this land. The harsh environment forged a tough and hardy group of people who depended upon each other and a faith that played an important role in many ways. He traveled many miles to attend a semi-annual Pentecostal retreat where he met his first wife in 1916, only to see her pass away the following July while at the same retreat. Amazingly, he met his second wife at the

same semi-annual retreat a few years later.

This record of daily life in coastal Florida provides insight into a changing landscape and society in transition as modern inventions began to transform a way of life. As a lifelong fisherman and hunter, Storter describes the transition from a subsistence lifestyle of the past to the more industrial and commercial means of livelihood of the present. Unfortunately, with this transition he must also describe the slow demise of the ecology and environment he so admired and loved.

Using his “primitive” artwork that goes beyond a merely stylistic portrayal of the environment, Rob depicts many aspects of daily life with exquisite detail. His drawings with written descriptions resemble the field notes of an ethnographer, as Storter detailed not only the landscape in which he lived but the culture as well. Drawings of plants and animals along with descriptions of their use and misuse provide a hint of the bountiful resources that were once a part of vast sea of grass. Whether in a drawing of a roseate spoonbill or of swimming away from an alligator, these depictions offer a priceless snapshot of the past.

The memoirs of Storter’s second wife Marilea add a more complete picture of family life as she describes the necessities of providing for invalids and the sick, fetching groceries, making ketchup and canning tomatoes, or the perils of pregnancy and childbirth. Life in the Everglades was hard for both sexes, and the addition of Marilea’s memoirs are integral to an understanding of families, friends, and the various roles of both females and males growing up in those times.

Few individuals have the foresight and ability to chronicle their daily lives with such talent and attention to detail. Some writers and artists spend many years learning to accomplish what Rob Storter has provided through his journals and artwork, and Floridians are lucky to have the benefit of his memories and drawings. Whether Storter’s work represents formal or informal knowledge, it makes an immense contribution, with beauty and grace, to an understanding of both the Everglades and its culture during the early years of settlement in that harsh land.

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Florida’s Working-Class Past: Current Perspectives on Labor, Race, and Gender from Spanish Florida to the New Immigration. Edited by Robert Cassanello and Melanie Shell-Weiss. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. xii, 286 pp. List of acronyms, foreword, acknowledgments, editors and contributors, index. \$69.95, cloth)

Florida’s Working-Class Past: Current Perspectives on Labor, Race, and Gender from Spanish Florida to the New Immigration offers an engaging collection of essays that explore the richness of Florida’s labor history. Spanning an enormous breadth