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***Ditch of Dreams: The Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Struggle for Florida's Future* by Steven Noll and David Tegeder**

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The Columbia Restaurant was the place to be seen in Tampa, and no more so than in the 1950s, as the illustrations chosen for this volume so vividly depict. This was the heyday of the glamorous floor show at the Columbia, of exotic dining in the Patio Room, and dancing in the Don Quixote Room to the music of Cesar Gonzmart's Continental Orchestra. Politicians, the State Elks Association, Hollywood movie stars, and hundreds of honeymooners and families on vacations made their way to the Columbia, including my own parents. My mother remembers enjoying a "very fancy" meal with my father, and taking home a matchbook and menu to mark their special evening in February 1947. I imagine them dining on one of the Columbia's specialties – pompano en papillot, paella Valenciana, or steak capuchina – and ending their meal with a creamy flan, a bowl of coconut ice cream, and a café con leche. The restaurant has never lost its appeal for those in love. In 2004, *Southern Living* magazine chose the Columbia as its "favorite romantic restaurant."

Perhaps because the events it documents occurred so recently, the last section of the volume, "The Fourth Generation, 1980-2005," lacks the historical context and analysis of the rest of the book. Although the final chapter feels a bit weighted down by family drama, these stories do reveal the challenges of running a family business. Each generation placed "family first" but also understood the heavy responsibility of being born into a restaurant family; and spouses learned what it meant to be married to the family business. Ultimately, this is the poignant story of an American family shaped by their Cuban and Spanish heritage and their love for the worlds and people of Florida, whom they so deeply touched through a magical creation of food and entertainment.

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Ditch of Dreams: The Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Struggle for Florida's Future. By Steven Noll and David Tegeuder. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. xi, 394 pp. Foreword by Raymond Arsenault and Gary R. Mormino, introduction, maps, photographs, illustrations, appendix, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95, cloth)

The story of the Cross Florida Barge Canal reads like an epic, a tale spanning centuries and filled with avarice, courage, determination, hubris, and a heroine out of central casting. Steven Noll and David Tegeuder leave no stone unturned in their outstanding rendering of this most peculiar episode of Florida's often-shameful environmental history. Theirs is a masterful work, a prodigiously researched account that serves as the final word on the subject. But the authors aim higher still, as they posit that "the history of the Cross Florida Barge Canal . . . is not just another story

about modern Florida – in many respects it is *the* story of modern Florida” (7).

It is difficult to quibble with this broad assertion. The first Europeans to settle in Florida began immediately to search for a way to bifurcate the peninsula’s unique geography, setting in motion a quest that still haunts the state today. The reasons given in the sixteenth century remain unchanged into the twenty-first: a canal would aid in defense and boost commerce. Noll and Tegeder brilliantly recount the various incarnations of these twin enticements proffered by canal boosters, even as the context for the canal changed. Adolph Hitler, Fidel Castro, the Great Depression, and the Great Society each figured in the calculations of those who fervently fought for a waterway across the state. But until the 1930s, supporters were stymied by not only Florida’s hydrology but also its lack of political muscle, their efforts meeting defeat time and again.

Noll and Tegeder excel at exploring the political momentum required to get a canal approved. They skillfully weave together the various threads that stretched from the newspaper office of Bert Dosh in Ocala to the congressional offices of Charles Bennett in Washington, D.C. When the Roosevelt administration finally approved a ship canal in 1935, backers in north Florida rejoiced – only to see the project wither under the exacting scrutiny of anti-New Deal Senator Arthur Vandenburg. Precious little of the ship canal was built before the money ran out, but a route had been selected, one that would connect the St. Johns River to the Gulf of Mexico via the Oklawaha and Withlacoochee rivers. This decision would have a far-reaching impact on the future of modern Florida.

When the canal was reborn in the 1960s as a barge canal, having been blessed by the Army Corps of Engineers with a positive cost-benefit ratio, a small band of like-minded people in and around Gainesville took notice and did what they could to alter the course of the canal. Led by David Anthony and especially Marjorie Carr, “the housewife from Micanopy,” this group evolved into the Florida Defenders of the Environment, and by 1971 they persuaded the Nixon administration to halt construction of the canal in the name of saving the Oklawaha River. Noll and Tegeder show that some canal opponents such as John Couse came to their convictions through a more conservative vision that opposed federal boondoggles. Others, tied to the railroad and citrus industries, had their own agendas. Still, the authors assert that “on a deeper level, many of the assumptions behind canal construction were parallel in some ways to America’s experience in Vietnam” (199), an analogy that helped frame the battle over the canal.

Although Carr and others successfully terminated the canal, their efforts met with a cruel irony. Their main goal had been to prevent the destruction of the Oklawaha River, one of the most beautiful in the hemisphere, but in that they failed. The Rodman Dam (later renamed the Kirkpatrick Dam) interrupted the free flow of the river, and despite the intense efforts of many, including Bob Graham and Jeb Bush, the dam remains in place today. Noll and Tegeder, to their credit, do not shy away from this controversy but dutifully document the sometimes maddening

process that allowed for the dam's continued existence. Therein lies the real strength of this book: it captures the promise and the paltriness of modern Florida, where an artificial lake can become a treasured "ecosystem" deserving protection, while the natural, the real, must languish despite the best efforts of the well-intentioned.

The Kirkpatrick Dam stands as one of the canal's most visible legacies, but Noll and Tegeder rightly seize upon another: the 107-mile Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway that sits as a linear oasis amid of sea of suburban sprawl. The story of the Cross Florida Barge Canal offers no easy answers, and Noll and Tegeder have done the state a great service by writing this book. It is hard to imagine a better telling of this tangled tale.

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A Place to Be: Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican Immigrants in Florida's New Destinations. Edited by Philip J. Williams, Timothy Steigenga, and Manuel A. Vásquez (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2009. ix, 238 pp. Acknowledgments, tables, contributors, index. \$25.95, paper)

This excellent collection of essays on the lives and struggles of recent immigrants in Florida joins a new generation of scholarship that explores immigration in nonconventional destinations outside of gateway cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Houston. The authors employ rigorous ethnographic, oral history, and social science methodologies to illuminate the experiences of people who come to work in Jupiter, Immokalee, and Deerfield Beach, among other towns. This book will be eminently useful for readers interested in understanding both the historical as well as contemporary dimensions of immigration in Florida.

A Place to Be places Florida squarely within the rapidly changing *Nuevo* New South. At the same time, authors build on seminal works by Alejandro Portes, Leon Fink, Alex Stepick, and other scholars who situate the region in a much broader framework of globalization and neoliberalism that is having a profound impact on the working class throughout the entire Americas. The underlying premise of *A Place to Be* is that we cannot understand the Sunshine State – or the state of the American Dream – in the twenty-first century without understanding the aspirations that Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican immigrants bring here.

The essays in *A Place to Be* grow out of a collaborative and interdisciplinary research project initiated by scholars and immigration experts in Florida, Brazil, Guatemala, and Mexico. The works are organized thematically around three critical concepts: transnationalism; collective mobilization, and lived religion. The introduction is lucid and presents the major case studies of the book: Guatemalans