

Off the Shelf

The Georgia Library Quarterly reviews books on aspects of life in Georgia and the South, including history, literature, politics, education, and genealogy. Materials written by Southern authors or published by regional publishers may also be considered, as well as those on libraries and librarianship.

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NON-FICTION

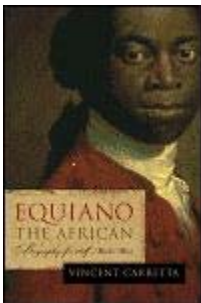


Best Garden Plants for Georgia by Tara Dillard and Don Williamson (Lone Pine Publishing, 2006; ISBN 976-8200-09-X, \$16.95). This book has an attractive layout featuring photos and short descriptions of plants selected for being proven winners in Georgia gardens. Longtime residents will recognize many favorites, and they will also find others they may have heard of but not yet tried. Although the cover is busy, the interior is engaging. One plant is described on each page, with two photos showing the plant's habit or distinctive feature, such as its flower. The authors give helpful tips about soil conditions and growth habits to help gardeners match plant and location. Some good trivia is included; for instance, *Elaeagnus* grows so well in Georgia that some gardeners consider it a weed. However, the authors could have included a stronger warning about English ivy—although it grows quite well, once it has smothered your trees and covered your house, you may rue the day you wished for a no-care ground cover. I also wish that native plants were always marked, as they are very definitely adapted to Georgia conditions and are unlikely to be regretted later on. Some descriptions leave the reader wanting more detail, but this book is intended as an overview. After you've read the highlights here, you'll want to read more about those plants that pique your interest or just run to the nursery right away! Suitable for all ages, this book is recommended for public libraries and general-interest collections, especially in areas with many newcomers to the state.—Reviewed by Marie Daum, Gwinnett County Public Library.

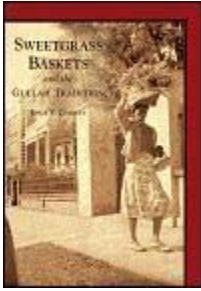


The Southern Railway: Further Recollections by C. Pat Cates, Dick Hillman, and Sallie Loy (Arcadia Publishing, 2005; ISBN 0-7385-1831-X, \$19.99). This book is a follow-up to the authors' first book, *Images of Rail: The Southern Railway*. Whereas the first book presented a general overview of the railroad and its many aspects, this book presents a more focused look at several components of the railroad's history. Through the author's use of over 200 pictures and photographs, the reader is presented with a literal look at this history. The book is divided into five chapters. The first chapter gives a look at the facilities of the Southern

Railway, including the Spencer Yard in Spencer, North Carolina, the John Sevier Yard in Knoxville, Tennessee, and the Inman Yard in Atlanta. Chapter two shows the history of passenger trains and equipment. This chapter includes many photos of passenger trains from around the south, including trains in Hawkinsville, Augusta, and Toccoa, Georgia. The role of the Southern Railway in World War II is the focus of chapter three. Included in this chapter are many photos from the war front. The fourth chapter presents the reader with a look at the different jobs within the railroad and the people who performed those jobs. The book concludes with a chapter on steam trains. Too often, books of this nature tend to focus only on pictures of trains. This book goes beyond showing just the trains and lets us see the people who have made the railway what it is today. In doing so, we see the bravery of those who served in World War II, the dedication of the railway workers, and the excitement of those who watch the trains go by. Many photos from Georgia locations other than those identified above are included in this book. Any library that has the first book by these authors should also have this one. It is also recommended for those libraries located in communities with close ties to the railway.—Reviewed by Lonnie Roberts, Altamaha Technical College.

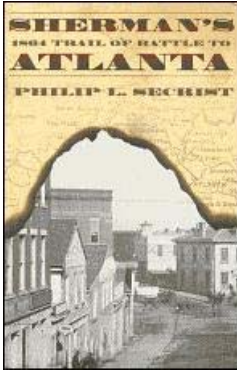


Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man (University of Georgia Press, 2006 ISBN 0-8203-2571-6, \$29.95). Author Vincent Carretta offers a fresh perspective on the life of Gustavus Vassa, also known by the African name, Olaudah Equiano. Vassa is best known for his autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789), in which he chronicles his life as a captured African, slave, seaman with the British Royal Navy, manager of other enslaved Africans, and finally as a free man. Vassa's autobiography is significant because at the time of its publication, it added a much needed voice to the abolitionist movement, a firsthand account of one who had experienced the horrors of capture, the Middle Passage and enslavement. The success of the autobiography, which went through nine editions, was a monumental feat for any man of that time, but particularly for a formerly enslaved person of African descent. In *Equiano, the African*, Carretta reveals circumstantial evidence that contradicts Vassa's claims regarding his birth in Africa and Middle Passage experience. Citing a baptismal certificate and naval logs, Carretta argues that Vassa more than likely constructed an African identity. Those expecting the author to devalue the historical and literary significance of Vassa's autobiography will be disappointed. Interestingly, the author's analysis and revelations about Vassa's life only serve to enhance the greatness of his achievements. Using a vast array of primary resources, Carretta places Vassa's life experience within historical context. As a result, the Gustavus Vassa that emerges is a rich, complex, multi-dimensional and at times contradictory individual. Any collection containing *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* would do well to add this book to its collection. Recommended for academic libraries.—Reviewed by Shaundra Walker, Georgia College & State University.



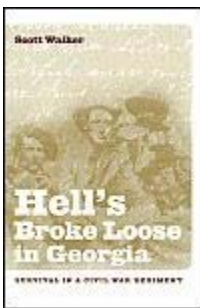
Sweetgrass Baskets and the Gullah Tradition by Joyce V. Coakley (Arcadia, 2005; ISBN 0-7385-1830-1, \$19.99). Joyce V. Coakley was born and raised in the Christ Church Parish District of Charleston, South Carolina, where her ancestors lived since the 18th century. Ms. Coakley interviewed and collected oral stories from relatives, friends, and acquaintances for over 30 years. The result is an insider's collection of personal photographs and stories gathered from the community, woven together to illustrate Gullah sweetgrass baskets and history. The book includes a glossary of common sweetgrass terms, Gullah names and titles, Gullah verbs, and common Gullah phrases. "Hush da nize" means "hush the noise" and "yiddie so" means "I heard it." A chapter titled "Flowers and Other Vendors" discusses the necessity of growing and selling flowers and vegetables as a means of income for newly freed slaves. *Sweetgrass Baskets and the Gullah Tradition* is primarily a scrapbook of photos and art; this is a story told in a series of vignettes of old photographs (there is a page or two of text at the beginning of each chapter). Each photograph is accompanied by a description and a glimpse of history. The importance of religion, family, friendship, and learning is stressed. Photographs of people, houses and locations are interspersed with photographs of sweetgrass baskets. Forty-nine artists provided baskets and background for this book. Basket design history and innovations are mentioned. This book does not contain an index, but it is a good collection of personal photographs of a community's journey from slavery to present day. Reading this book is akin to visiting relatives and hearing interesting tales told by the family storytellers. *Sweetgrass Baskets and the Gullah Tradition* is recommended for school and public libraries. Academic libraries may be interested in the photo collections and accompanying short stories.—Reviewed by Laura Tartak, Georgia Perimeter College, Rockdale/Newton Campus.

Ghosts and Shadows of Andersonville: Essays on the Secret Social Histories of America's Deadliest Prison by Robert S. Davis (Mercer University Press, 2006; ISBN 0-88146-012-5, \$35.00). Robert S. Davis's new book of essays explores the history of the infamous confederate prison as told through the experiences of the many groups and individuals caught up within the narrative. Each essay is devoted to a different person or group of people that interacted during the prison's brief existence from 1862 to 1864. In addition to describing the dire conditions of imprisonment in Andersonville, the book tackles many of the myths and misconceptions that have developed over the centuries. Through extensive primary research, Robert S. Davis postulates theories to answer some of the most enduring questions that remain about Andersonville, such as why more prisoners didn't escape and why General Sherman didn't liberate the prison. The author weaves the stories of prisoners, guards, generals, and slaves into a narrative that vividly illuminates the complex social histories of Andersonville. This book also contains an excellent bibliography and guide to historical research on Andersonville. Recommended for academic and public libraries.—Reviewed by Elizabeth White, University of Georgia.



Sherman's 1864 Trail of Battle to Atlanta by Philip L. Secrist (Mercer University Press, 2006; ISBN 0-86554-745-9, \$24.00). In May 1864, General William T. Sherman began his 120-day Atlanta campaign, battling his way across a 100-mile trail from Dalton to Jonesboro. Author Philip L. Secrist, a descendant of a Civil War soldier, takes the reader on a tour of Sherman's 100-mile battle path, stopping at key battle sites along the way. From Dalton, Sherman headed toward Resaca before leading a march to Adairsville, Cassville, and the Etowah River. More battles were fought at Dallas, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek (the battle site of Peachtree Creek is now an upscale Buckhead neighborhood with only a small

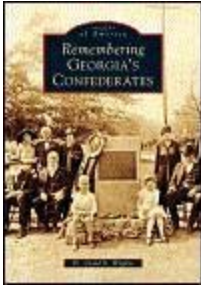
park to serve as a reminder of the Civil War battle fought there), culminating on July 22, 1864, with the Battle of Atlanta, one of the bloodiest battles waged by Sherman. Of special interest to Secrist is the terrain on which Sherman's battles were fought. This interest led the author to compare the terrain in 1864 to the same land today when attempting to verify the location of battle sites. War artifacts recovered from battle sites, along with Secrist's study of the terrain, aided in the identification of the sites. Secrist illustrates his account of Sherman's campaign with a variety of historic images: a Confederate belt buckle found 300 yards from the New Hope Church Battle site; military headquarters along the way; and maps depicting wartime trenches, battle lines, and 1864 landmarks. Well researched and full of historical details, this book is a must for Civil War buffs. However, the gripping accounts by soldiers and civilians, the author's highly descriptive and engaging writing style, and the tour-guide approach of the book will interest even the casual reader. People presently living along Sherman's trail to Atlanta will feel a particularly strong connection to the book. *Sherman's 1864 Trail of Battle to Atlanta* is recommended for public libraries and American history and/or Civil War history collections.—Reviewed by Lisa Block, Emory University.



Hell's Broke Loose in Georgia: Survival in a Civil War Regiment by Scott Walker (University of Georgia Press, 2005; ISBN 0-8203-2605-4, \$39.95). Author Scott Walker writes a narrative history of the 57th Georgia Infantry Regiment in which Robert Braswell, his great-great-grandfather, enlisted. The book reveals the beliefs and the human suffering endured by these soldiers and their families as they tell their own stories in excerpts from unpublished letters and diaries. Soldiers of the 57th Georgia were primarily very young men, many related and even neighbors, who joined the regiment not only out of a sense of duty to

the newly formed Confederacy but also as an adventure. The men came from very small South Georgia towns like Fort Valley or Thomasville and had never been away from home before. From 1862 to 1865, the 57th Georgia marched into Kentucky and Vicksburg, and the soldiers served as prison guards in Andersonville and fought Sherman in the Atlanta campaign. The men had inadequate training, very old guns and ammunition, and limited supplies of food and clothing. Beside all of these hardships, incompetent leaders kept the soldiers marching constantly for days without even an enemy encounter. By the end of the Civil War, the 57th Georgia was decimated not only by battle fatalities but also by disease. This book will appeal to Civil War buffs as well as

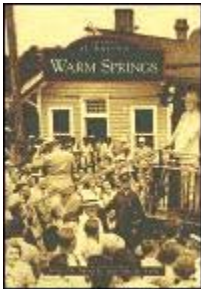
to any reader interested in the human condition.—Reviewed by Carolyn M. Brown, Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library, Emory University.



Remembering Georgia's Confederates by Dr. David N. Wiggins (Arcadia Publishing, 2005; ISBN 0-7385-1823-9, \$19.99). With over 4,000 titles in print, Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series is familiar to legions of local history buffs. The winning formula involves pairing regional enthusiasts with a niche imprint eager to publish annotated black-and-white photographic images of a place or period of history. Longtime Carroll County educator and Civil War collector Dr. Wiggins presents over two hundred historically significant early photographic images of many of Georgia's men in grey. Wiggins is particularly adept in identifying names of individuals, muster rolls, birthplaces, burial sites, service records, and the particulars of uniforms and weaponry. He assiduously cites the sources of his material. The reader will encounter moving and often haunting portraits gleaned from private collections, libraries, historical societies, and what must be a valuable personal cache of images. Enlisted men mingle on the same page with distinguished officers. Real brothers in arms stare into the camera. Part one, the major part of the book, is a compilation of individual soldiers. We view members of the "Wirth Rebels," the "Fayette Grey Guards," the "McIntosh Volunteers," and the "Clinch Rifles." We see the "proclaimed youngest regular Confederate, 10-year-old David Bailey Freeman. In contrast, we see an image of General William Joshua Bush, Georgia's last living Confederate veteran, who died in 1952 at the age of 107. The second part presents pictures of Confederate reunions held in Georgia, while the third and fourth parts contain images of monuments and cemeteries honoring the dead. A self-described miscellany of early photographs, engravings, postcards, and portraits, the book is a visual treat for anyone interested in Georgia's Civil War legacy.—Reviewed by James A. Taylor, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library.

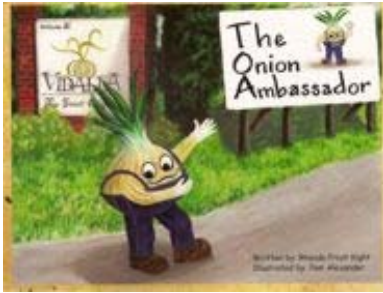
Touching the Web of Southern Novelists by David Madden (University of Tennessee Press, 2006; ISBN 978-1-57233-463-2, \$37.00). David Madden, professor of creative writing at Louisiana State University, explores his personal and professional relationships with a select group of Southern novelists, using the "charged image" (a term he coined describing an image with multiple layers of meaning) of a spider web. Each strand of the web connects his reactions to the subjects of his essays from his viewpoints as reader, teacher, novelist, and critic. Most of the essays included in this collection are reprints from journals, the lone exception being the previously unpublished Evelyn Scott's "Breathe Upon These Slain: A Gallery of Imagined Photographs." However, the two essays connected to Georgia are "Flannery O'Connor: Old Testament Christian Storyteller" and "Carson McCullers: Transfixed among the Self-Inflicted Ruins." (O'Connor was born in Savannah and died in Milledgeville; McCullers was born in Columbus.) Madden's web connects with O'Connor peripherally; he shipped out of Savannah as a merchant marine, and he stopped at a Milledgeville diner while traveling through Georgia and had O'Connor's property pointed out to him. His web also encompasses Robert Penn Warren, William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, Thomas Wolfe, Ernest Gaines, Jesse Hill Ford, George Garrett, Barry Hannah, Cormac McCarthy,

and James Agee, with some strands strengthened by personal anecdotes. While most of these names evoke some degree of familiarity, Jesse Hill Ford of Tennessee is a relative unknown. Madden's essay on Ford is one of the most compelling in the collection. Ford, a white writer, thinly novelized the local murder of a black undertaker a decade earlier in *The Liberation of Lord Byron Jones* (1965), and then he brought Hollywood to rural Tennessee to shoot the film. His seeming disregard for the people involved and his reinterpretation of crucial facts to suit his vision polarized local residents into two camps, and eventually Ford shot and killed a young black soldier he feared was waiting to murder his son as he came home. Madden's web reverberates with insight and personal contemplation, distinguishing this collection of literary criticism from the typical dry fare of academe. He delves into his own psyche with the same degree of consideration he gives his subjects, bringing to life the reason why he is one of the preeminent voices in Southern literature. In addition, this collection contains a comprehensive index most researchers dream of finding and almost never see. Recommended for academic libraries and larger public libraries.—Reviewed by Melanie C. Duncan, Middle Georgia Regional Library System.



Warm Springs by David M. Burke, Jr. and Odie A. Burke (Arcadia Publishing, 2005; ISBN 0-7385-4199-0, \$19.99). This pictorial work featuring Warm Springs, Georgia, located in the west central part of the state, features over 200 photographs. The work begins with an explanation of the geology of the area that causes the warm springs to exist. There is some discussion of the early history of the locale from the 1800s through the early 1920s when the area was primarily a vacation spot for the well-to-do. The majority of the book, however, emphasizes the years from 1924 to 1945 when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was active in Warm Springs. It touches upon the ostracism suffered by polio victims—who were not allowed to ride in passenger cars on trains and feared to be contagious when bathing in a shared pool—and the great changes that Roosevelt affected for them. He caused Warm Springs to become a haven for those suffering from polio and other paralyzes, spending two-thirds of his fortune to purchase property and buildings in the area. He hired physical therapists and had constructed pools, living quarters, a hydrotherapy center, and more. Roosevelt incorporated the March of Dimes that eventually funded the vaccine for polio. Many photographs show Roosevelt in relaxed settings, among polio victims, children, and ordinary townspeople. The narrative submits that it was during his stay in Warm Springs that Roosevelt came to understand the plight of the rural poor. Due to that understanding, he implemented the Rural Electrification Administration, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Civilian Conservation Corps, all of which helped bring the country out of the Great Depression. This volume belongs in any library with a focus on Georgia, social history, political science, and/or Franklin Delano Roosevelt.—Reviewed by Mary-Frances Panettiere, Georgia Institute of Technology.

JUVENILE LITERATURE



Yumion series by Rhonda Frost Petty, illustrated by Pam Alexander (Be Sweet Publications: **The Onion Ambassador**, 2001; ISBN: 0-9709105-0-9, \$16.00 – **Yumion Goes to the City**, 2002; ISBN: 0-9709105-1-7, \$16.00 – **Yumion’s Mountain Holidays**, 2004; ISBN: 0-9709105-2-5, \$16.00 – **Sails, Pails, and Alligator Tales**, 2005; ISBN: 0-9709105-6-8, \$16.00).

Vidalia, Georgia, was made famous years ago for its unique variety of onion. Now the city is entering the spotlight again as the birthplace of another onion variety—the walking, talking kind. Meet Georgia’s newest ambassador, Yumion, the lovable adventurer whose mission above all is to remind everyone to “Be Sweet.” In this four-volume series, Yumion, the Onion Ambassador, travels all over Georgia learning about all that this great state has to offer. Yumion’s travels take him from the fields of Vidalia to the state capital in Atlanta. From there he ventures to the Mountains and then out to the coast, ending up in the great Okefenokee Swamp. Readers of this series will not only learn about Georgia’s great sites, but also learn a bit about some famous personalities, such as President Jimmy Carter and Zell Miller. The rhyming text and engaging illustrations make this series an excellent choice for reading aloud to any audience, young or old. Pam Alexander and Rhonda Frost Petty have compiled an excellent series of tales that will be useful to students, teachers, librarians, and even tourism committees throughout the state of Georgia. After reading these adventures, one wonders, where will Yumion go next?—Reviewed by Sandy Hester, Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library.

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