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A President in our Midst: Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Georgia

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The author begins the first chapter with the thoughts of Yolanda, the narrator, telling the tale of her own birth in the first chapter to Lucy. Wilkinson is skillful at drawing the reader into the lives of the Goode-Brown women, Minnie Mae, Tookie, Lucy and Yolanda.

Minnie Mae is a leader in her community and in her own home. She usually surrounds herself with four generations of family with strong roots to the community.

Wilkinson's other work includes "Blackberries, Blackberries," winner of the Chaffin Award for Appalachian Literature. She also wrote "Water Street," a collection of short stories.

The novel's title doesn't seem metaphorical at all. "Opulence," a fictional town, was so-named after a freed slave from Virginia protested the racially charged name white people gave for that area. So Old Man Hezekiah dutifully named the town "Opulence." Parts of the book are set in Louisville and Lexington, as the book is the latest in the Kentucky Voices series published by the University Press of Kentucky. Wilkinson herself is a Kentucky resident.

Part of what makes the novel so compelling is how characters like Joe Brown, Yolanda's husband, who is such a good mechanic he can fix almost anything, is helpless in trying to make sense of his wife's mental illness, having seen ghosts and endured depression while she was alive.

The struggle of the Brown family in coping with their families shortcomings, albeit no fault of their own, is one reason this book is such a good read.

This book is recommended for academic and public libraries.

Peter R. Dean
University of Southern Mississippi

A President in Our Midst: Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Georgia. Kaye Lanning Minchew. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2016. 270 p. ISBN-9780820349183. \$34.95, hardcover.



Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 45th president of the United States, visited Georgia 41 times in his lifetime, often claiming the state as his second home. In *President in our Midst: Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Georgia*, Kaye Minchew, former director of the Troup County Historical Society, has compiled a treasure trove of photographs of Roosevelt, primarily of his time spent in Georgia. The accompanying text, which includes anecdotes and eyewitness accounts, complements the visual images, providing an in-depth portrait of a politician and president's rise to power despite his disability. His battle to overcome and compensate for the ravages of polio and his connection to the farmers and ordinary folk of Georgia during tough economic times, helped propel him to power. This well-researched compendium of Roosevelt's connection to Georgia is a tribute to the man and his legacy.

Distilling Roosevelt's connection to Georgia into a chronological narrative, the author examines five periods of F.D.R.'s time in the state, providing the casual reader with a comprehensive overview and the more serious scholar with a timeline, footnotes and an extensive bibliography. Beginning in 1924 with Roosevelt's discovery and enhancement of Warm Springs as a treatment center while he recovered from polio to 1945 when he passed away at the little White House in Warm Springs, the author succeeds in showing how Roosevelt's relationship with his adopted state both succored and energized him.

It was at Warm Springs Georgia, a resort built around heated mineral springs, that Roosevelt recovered his strength after succumbing to polio in 1921. Through his efforts and generosity, a Foundation was established for a hospital specifically catering to polio patients. It was also at Warm Springs that the politician learned ways of managing and concealing his disability so as to convey strength and vigor. His fondness for the area was such that he had a house built in Warm Springs christened "The Little White House."

It was Roosevelt's connection to farmers and working people, however, that endeared him to Georgians. On his customary visits to the state, usually in the spring and around Thanksgiving, he enjoyed driving around the area, stopping to greet folks and chat. He enjoyed picnics and many of his favorite spots are commemorated with markers. Though steeped in privilege and the product of an elite upbringing, his connection and sympathy for working people provided him with insight and his New Deal policies reflect his understanding of their struggles.

Replete with photographs of his campaigns and presidential visits to Georgia, the book also includes a wealth of snapshots of more informal occasions with family and friends. Unfortunately, as demands on his time grew, especially with the onset of America's involvement in the war, he curtailed time spent in the state. Eleanor, his wife, never a frequent visitor to Georgia, continued to advocate for civil rights and desegregation. Comments by the First Lady suggest her discomfort with the subservient status of the black staff at the Warm Springs Foundation and

segregation throughout the state made her a reluctant visitor to Georgia.

World War II took a heavy toll on Roosevelt's health and it was at the Little White House in Warm Springs that he passed away. With him that day were Lucy Page Mercer Rutherford, former mistress and constant friend, artist Elizabeth Shoumatoff, and two cousins, Daisy Suckley and Laura Delano. Pictures and commentary reflect that Georgians pulled together to provide an emotional, but dignified funeral escort for their friend and champion.

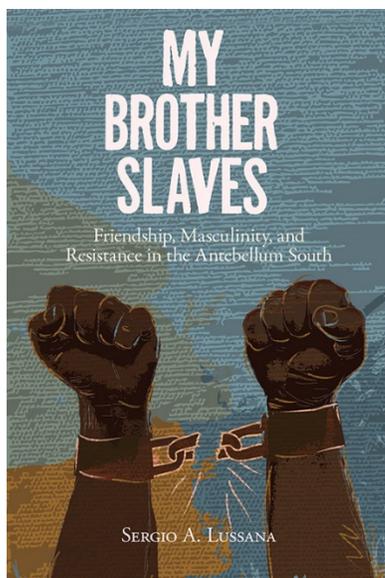
With *A President in our Midst: Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Georgia*, author Kate Minchew achieves a dual accomplishment. With the cornucopia of photographs, it succeeds as a coffee table book for browsing and as a point for conversation; with the addition of the thoughtful, well-researched text, it becomes a seminal resource on Franklin Delano Roosevelt's relationship with Georgia.

Recommended for academic and public libraries.

Melanie J. Dunn

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My Brother Slaves: Friendship, Masculinity, and Resistance in the Antebellum South. Sergio A. Lussana. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8131-6694-0 (Cloth); 978-0-8131-6695-7 (epub); 978-0-8131-6696-4 (Web pdf). 238 p. \$50.00



In Sergio Lussana's "My Brother Slaves", his detailed research and writing focused on the lives of enslaved men "throughout the antebellum South—from the slaveholding border states, down to the Lowcountry and Deep South and across to the southwestern slaveholding states such as Texas"(p. 16). Emerging from the research, Lussana saw that no matter whether the region, crop, or size of the plantation differed, enslaved men responded to their lives

in similar ways. The themes Lussana identified as masculinity, friendship and resistance were "generally uniform" (p. 16). Clarifying behaviors of enslaved men, themes arose again and again: drinking, gambling, wrestling, hunting, evading patron gangs, stealing, forging friendships and resisting enslavement" (p. 16).

Lussana gives us a look at the research into the relationships between a man and his wife and their children. Given to women all the responsibility to care for, educate and sustain children, enslaved men held no place of importance in the family, resulting in the formation of a "matrifocal" society. Enslaved men could not protect their wives from abuse nor stop the selling of a wife and children to other owners on other plantations (p. 2). The forging of bonds between enslaved men became of great importance to their fellow enslaved men.

From a beginning chapter where the work of enslaved men is presented, it is clear that slave owners understood the relationships of the men and how those added to their abilities to work, to lead and to manage. Observing the motivation level of enslaved men to bond and fashion their own work culture, owners appeared to put faith in their abilities and depend upon their solidarity. In Chapter two, the value of the leisure time of enslaved men added significantly to work production—some time for family but significant time spent with their enslaved brothers by "drinking, gambling and wrestling" (p. 17). Lussana points out that hunting, evading patrol gangs, stealing from other plantations, and resisting plantation owners' constraints allowed enslaved men to form additional bonds of masculinity.

In Chapters 4 and 5, the major insights showed how the friendships of enslaved men led to bonds that allowed for rebellion and sharing of networks to further their chances for freedom, "Through each other, enslaved men created a secret world that defied and subverted the slaveholder's authority" (p. 18).

A fascinating read of 149 pages, Acknowledgements, Notes, Bibliography and Index of 62 pages provided a great resource of primary source materials for any reader or researcher pursuing new light on the topic of friendships, masculinity and resistance of enslaved men in the Antebellum South. Recommended as a text or supplemental readings for African American Studies, Gender Studies, and American History students.

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