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REVIEW: Spirit Willing: A Savannah Haunting

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Wife" describes the hardships and sacrifices of a thrifty woman left to manage the farm while her menfolk fight, and we follow a young lady behind Union lines in "Bringing Travis Home" as she searches for her injured brother. The final novella, "Leaving Gilead," presents the collapsing world of the South through the eyes of innocent, 8-year-old Sarnell Birdsong. Sarnell, her mother and their slave, Renny, desert their home as Union soldiers approach. This work seemed to end too abruptly, however, the vibrant characterizations of Renny and Sarnell make the journey worthwhile. Pat Carr has published 12 other books of fiction and more than 100 short stories. Recommended for public and academic libraries. ▶▶

— Reviewed by **Crystal Renfro**
Georgia Institute of Technology

Spirit Willing: A Savannah Haunting by *Susan B. Johnson*
(Bonaventure Books, 2006; ISBN 978-0-9724224-6-8, \$19.95).



Charlotte Horner wants to capitalize on the booming Savannah, Ga., tourist trade by turning her family's historic home, known as Hibiscus House, into an upscale inn. Unfortunately, the home still belongs to her elderly aunt Olivia, and unbeknownst to Charlotte, Olivia has a secret ally — Cyrus Thornheart, ancestral owner of Hibiscus House and very determined ghost. Though its title and cover may suggest a spooky midnight tale of terror, Savannah-based author Susan Johnson's novel is by turns slapstick comedy, light romance and touching family drama. The novel's most frightful character, the turbulent and manipulative Charlotte, tries everything from legal maneuverings to poisonous mistletoe to get her way, but she is continually thwarted by the antics of ghostly Cyrus, who wishes to ensure that an ages-old promise is kept and that Hibiscus House remains a family home. The linchpin for a happy ending resides with Charlotte's younger brother, Alexander, who is pursuing an artistic career in Ireland. Though Olivia is distrustful of her niece Charlotte, she fears Alexander's continued bachelorhood and apparent lack of interest in returning to Savannah could spell the end of Cyrus' hopes. Little does she know, but fate has intervened, and Alexander has fallen for an Irish lass who may help to bring him home, after all. Readers seeking the familiar stock of oddball Southern characters will get a laugh, and the story's quick pace will appeal to those looking for a good beach or weekend read with a regional setting. ▶▶

— Reviewed by **Christina Hodgens**
Conyers-Rockdale Library

NONFICTION

Gardening With Heirloom Seeds: Tried-and-True Flowers, Fruits, and Vegetables for a New Generation by *Lynn Coulter*

(The University of North Carolina Press, 2006; ISBN 0-8078-5680-0, ISBN 978-0-8078-5680-2, \$22.50).



Coulter provides a holistic approach to gardening in her beautiful heirloom gardening guide in this survey of all types of plants — flowers, fruits and vegetables — and in her holistic overview of the gardening season, including ways to promote a healthy garden by enlisting nature's help instead of by employing harmful measures like pesticides and insecticides. The beauty of gardening with heirloom seeds is that they have proven resistant to diseases, as evidenced by their survival through multiple generations. *Gardening* begins with an explanatory introduction about utilizing heirloom seeds in the garden. Her anecdotal tales provide fond reminiscences of a simpler time and convey the sense that heirloom gardening allows gardeners to honor the past while enjoying a superior plant. This book is divided into sections dedicated to the different seasons, and each chapter begins with a summation of the gardening tasks specific to the season. Coulter describes favorite flowers, fruits and vegetables best suited to planting in the season highlighted. Fifty descriptions give historical placement of the plant, Coulter's favorite varieties and growing tips specific to the plant. The chapter on winter recounts the mixed emotions the gardener experiences: the feeling of relief that the bounty of summer and fall is over, coupled with the anxiousness to begin the new season's garden. Coulter provides a historical context for the planning process by recounting the history of the seed catalog and emphasizing its importance even for today's gardener. The text is complemented with beautiful pictures of plants, seeds and old-fashioned seed packet illustrations. Botanically themed quotations grace the margins, with space reserved for note-taking. Complete with a bibliography, a guide for finding heirloom seeds and gardens, and an index. Suitable for gardeners in any area, but emphasis is on plants that do best in Southern climates. Recommended for public and academic libraries. ▶▶

— Reviewed by **Diana Hartle**
Science Library, University of Georgia