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## REVIEW: The Historic Oakland Cemetery of Atlanta: Speaking Stones

Ronda Sanders  
*Hall County Library System*

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## 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.

**Sarah McGhee**, Off the Shelf Co-editor, Chestatee Regional Library System, smcghee@chestateelibrary.org

**Karen Odom**, Off the Shelf Co-editor, Houston County Public Libraries, kodom@houpl.org

**Teresa Pacheco**, Off the Shelf Co-editor, Northeast Georgia Health System, tere711@comcast.net

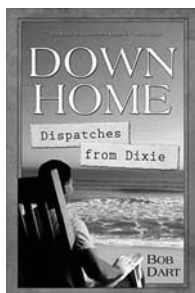
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### NON-FICTION

#### **Downhome: Dispatches from Dixie**

by Bob Dart (Southern Lion Books, 2008; ISBN 978-0-9794-2033-7, \$30.00).

Bob Dart, the author of *Downhome: Dispatches from Dixie*, covered the South for the Atlanta Journal and Constitution before moving to the Washington, D.C., bureau of Cox Newspapers as a national correspondent. For four decades, he covered some of America's biggest stories, including the Vietnam War, the invasion of Iraq and the Sept. 11, 2001, tragedy in New York City. However, his favorite stories have always come from the back roads and colorful characters of his native South. In *Downhome*, Dart has collected 50 of these stories, which paint a cultural portrait of 30 years in the South. Dart writes of sometimes funny, sometimes bizarre and sometimes dramatic people, places and events. He talks with survivors of Hurricane Katrina and tells us about interesting people, such as Georgia-born artist David Driskell, Junior Samples (television star of "Hee Haw") and Brownie Wise, creator of the Tupperware party. Dart takes the reader on visits to a North Carolina sanctuary for neurotic, injured and neglected birds; to a very small Virginia town memorializing the 21 young men it lost during the D-Day invasion of France; to South of the Border, a faux-Mexican tourist complex in South Carolina;



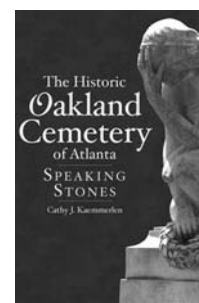
and to several Georgia cities, including Warrenton, Jesup and Brunswick. The author looks at unique events such as the World Invitational Half-rubber Tournament in Savannah and an all-night gospel sing in Waycross as well as horrific ones such as the shootings at Virginia Tech and West Virginia's Sago Mine disaster. This compilation of fascinating and always entertaining stories of the South is recommended for academic and public libraries.

— Reviewed by **Christine Zuger**  
Georgia College & State University

#### **The Historic Oakland Cemetery of Atlanta: Speaking Stones**

by Cathy J. Kaemmerlen (The History Press, 2007; ISBN 978-1-59629-330-4, \$19.99).

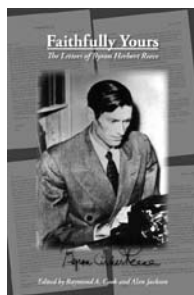
Georgia's cemeteries are sometimes thought of as old, rarely visited places where stately magnolia trees provide shade for the generations who have come before. But to one observant visitor, the Oakland Cemetery provides a treasure trove of tragic history and enduring romance. Cathy Kaemmerlen has used her gift of storytelling just as a weaver would use her loom to weave together the rich textures of Atlanta's Southern history. In her book *The Historic Oakland Cemetery of Atlanta: Speaking Stones*, Kaemmerlen tells that from 1850 to 1884 almost everyone who died in Atlanta was buried in the Atlanta Cemetery, renamed the Oakland Cemetery in 1872. This Victorian garden cemetery was



described as “the most attractive place in the city, where citizens congregated to spend a quiet Sunday in the park among friends and relatives both living and deceased.” Kaemmerlen has filled her book with intriguing and often heartwarming stories of the famous and not-so-famous residents of Oakland Cemetery. She tells the story that Atlanta was named after Gov. Wilson Lumpkin’s daughter Martha not once but twice. She describes the heroic deed of Dr. Noel Pierre as he saved the Confederate hospital in Atlanta from being burned by Sherman’s troops. A wonderful sense of the past unfolds as Kaemmerlen recounts Ransom Montgomery’s courageous act, which resulted in his being the only slave owned by the State of Georgia, and describes the heartbreaking story of Sarah Kugler Dye and her desperation to give her son a proper burial as the war raged around her. She weaves the stories of Julia Collier Harris, who was a dynamic journalist in her own right, and of the Rich brothers, who went on to build Rich’s Department Store. Be prepared to laugh, cheer, cry and sometimes get angry as you relive Georgia’s past through Kaemmerlen’s historically inspired stories. Recommended for all libraries with an interest in the Civil War and Georgia’s history.

— Reviewed by **Ronda Sanders**  
Hall County Library System

**Faithfully Yours: The Letters of Byron Herbert Reece** edited by Raymond A. Cook and Alan Jackson (Cherokee Publishing Company, 2007; ISBN 978-0-8779-7374-4, \$17.00).



By the early 1940s, Byron Herbert Reece, then in his 20s, was already a published writer of columns, poems, prose and numerous book reviews. During this same time, he also worked on his family’s farm, taught at a local school, was invited to speak at a poetry forum and won a newspaper poetry contest. By the time he took his own life in 1958, Reece had taught at UCLA, Emory University and Young Harris College; his work had appeared in numerous publications; he had written two novels, had published four books of poetry and had won a Guggenheim Fellowship twice. All of these facts can be gleaned from the letters found in *Faithfully Yours*. But these letters reveal much more than basic facts about his life and works. As the editors say in the introduction, “Nowhere does Reece reveal his intense personality more compellingly than in his letters.” *Faithfully Yours* does not contain a complete set of Reece’s letters. But the letters included paint a vivid picture of the last 18 years of his life. The majority of the letters were written to several close friends he had met as

a student at Young Harris College, but the most letters sent to a single person were to a young writer he never met. As could be expected, many letters discuss literary topics, such as the progress of his work, books he had read recently, opinions about his own works and those of others and writing advice. But, throughout his letters, Reece also reveals his feelings about teaching, classical music, politics, farming, nature and more. *Faithfully Yours* seems to be the only existing print collection of his letters and is especially recommended for libraries that maintain a collection of Georgia author materials. If adding this book to your collection, be sure to have some of Byron Herbert Reece’s works available, because his letters are likely to create interest in the works he mentions.

— Reviewed by **Julie Camp**  
FSU MSLIS Distance Student

**Circling Home** by John Lane (University of Georgia Press, 2007; ISBN 978-0-8203-3040-2, \$24.95).



After settling down in Spartanburg, S.C., author John Lane traced an old, chipped plate on a topological map to draw an arbitrary radius around his home and set out to explore his neighborhood. Traveling on foot, by kayak, bicycle and car, Lane navigates the rich history, ecological diversity and social constructs of this Southern city. With a voice that resonates with love for the natural history of the area, he reconstructs the geography from ancient history through the 21st century, providing readers with a clear vision of the effect that humans have had on the landscape through the centuries. Alternating between wistful reveries on the original native inhabitants of the land and his personal protectiveness of the remaining wildness, Lane vividly describes the terrain. While Lane’s focus is on natural history, the strength of his observations lies in his personal struggle to come to terms with the many dichotomies present within his neighborhood — between the Southern locals and new transplants, blue-collar workers and country club members, environmentalists and developers. Exploring the complicated intersections of class, economics, biology and sustainability, Lane merges the personal, the present and the past in a way that creates a rich sense of history of place – all within a short radius of his home in one small part of the world. *Circling Home* is recommended for any collection with a focus on Southern history, anthropology and natural history.

— Reviewed by **Kate Farley**  
Lane Library, Armstrong Atlantic State University