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Book Review: Democracy, Dialogue, and Community Action: Truth and Reconciliation in Greensboro

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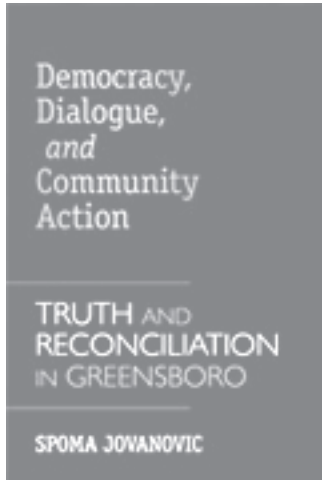
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BOOK REVIEWS



Jovanovic, Spoma. *Democracy, Dialogue, and Community Action: Truth and Reconciliation in Greensboro*. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2012. 226 p. ISBN-10: 1-55728-991-3 \$34.95

What happens when a southern town revisits a 25-year-old massacre in which five anti-Klan demonstrators are killed and ten injured? Would revisiting that incident bring the community closer together and determine why it happened in the first place? Or would it divide residents even more and make survivors relive old wounds?

Writer Spoma Jovanovic takes a close look at those issues and more in “Democracy, Dialogue, and Community Action: Truth and Reconciliation in Greensboro,” a book based on the event that took place in November 3, 1979.

The focus of the book looks at the day when members of the Communist Workers Party [CWP] staged a well-publicized anti-Klan demonstration in a black public housing neighborhood in Greensboro. The CWP had hoped to use the anti-Klan rally to end the perceived exploitation of workers of a textile mill, one of the state’s largest employers. But to do that, they felt they had to end the Klan’s influence over Greensboro residents.

Meanwhile, the Klan itself had much different plans for the day.

A convoy of Nazis and Klan members drove by the parade in a caravan nine cars long, hurling racial epithets, prompting the demonstrators to chant back insults of their own. The demonstrators used parade signs and feet to hit and kick the cars.

Soon after, 88-seconds worth of gunshots were fired from someone in the caravan, leaving five protestors dead and

ten injured. Two of those injured were a Klansman and a TV cameraman. The rest were protestors.

Within days, the TV-News-videotaped incident would leave some disturbing questions: How could the Greensboro tragedy happen? And would Greensboro ever gain perspective on that day.

Jovanovic spends the majority of her 226 page book telling her reading audience how a town-based Commission tried to answer questions about the massacre—often referred to in the book as simply “November 3, 1979.”

The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC], was formed in 2004 for the purpose of looking at the causes and consequences of what happened in 1979. The TRC was initiated to take public testimony and examine the causes, sequence of events, and consequences of the massacre.

The TRC spent two years studying November 3. The TRC held public hearings giving both survivors and perpetrators of November 3 the opportunity to speak.

The formation of the Greensboro TRC was founded on the idea of Ubuntu. This concept, started in Africa, believes that the community as a whole is a requisite for addressing human rights violations.

Dialogue is a key concept of the TRC. In doing so, they brought together survivors, perpetrators, and the community to talk about November 3.

And the more the TRC deliberated, the more questions were asked: Why did the shooters of November 3 all evade imprisonment? Where were the police during the shooting? Did either side (anti-Klan demonstrators and the Klan itself) incite violence that day?

To attempt to answer those questions, the TRC had a year’s worth of public hearings. This included both Cleveland, North Carolina Klansman Virgil Griffin stating that the NAACP was comparable to the Klan. In contrast, Jovanovic herself states that “while the Klan and Nazi passions of hatred and bigotry must be rejected, their experiences as members of the exploited working class are worthy of sensitive discussions.”

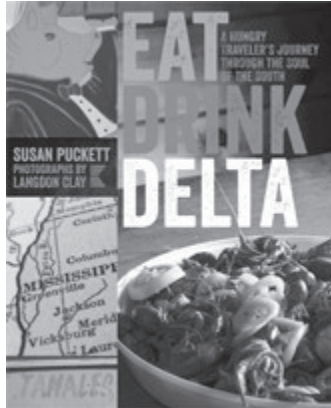
Jovanovic, a UNC at Greensboro communication studies professor, collaborated with other Greensboro residents to document the effort to form the first TRC in the United States.

Jovanovic’s book takes a thorough look at a culture which is still affected by the shooting years later. Through her book, Spoma facilitates a discussion about the possibility of reconciliation and forgiveness, as well as what happens if those two occurrences don’t take place.

Democracy, Dialogue and Community Action is an excellent starting point for that discussion

This book is recommended for academic and public libraries.

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Puckett, Susan. Photographs by Langdon Clay. *Eat Drink Delta: A Hungry Traveler's Journey Through The Soul of the South*. Athens: University of Georgia, 2013. 294 p. ISBN 13: 978-0-8203-4425-6 (pbk.) ISBN 10: 0-8203-4425-7 (pbk.) \$24.95.

Eat Drink Delta is an enchantingly delightful treasure describing marvelous eating establishments in the Delta of Mississippi and Tennessee along with an abundance of their recipes. The inviting and intriguing masterpiece consists of Contents, an excellently handy Eating and Drinking Venues by Chapter, Acknowledgments, Introduction, 1. Memphis Gateway to the Delta, 2. Tunica and Environs Las Vegas of the South, 3. Clarksdale Cradle of the Blues, Crossroads of Cultures, 4. Como Hill Town with a Delta Rhythm, 5. Tallahatchie County Wild and Mysterious, 6. Cleveland and Environs, Home of the Fighting Okra, 7. Greenville Athens of the Delta, 8. Leland Imagination Flows along Deer Creek, 9. Sunflower County Homegrown Legends, 10. Greenwood and Environs from Cotton Capital of the World to Home of the High-Tech Range, 11. Humphreys County The Catfish Capital, 12. Yazoo City Half Hills and Half Delta, 13. Vicksburg Red Carpet City of the South, Epilogue, Resources, About the Recipes, Selected Readings, Photo Credits, a superbly indispensable Index of Restaurants and Places of Note, and a tremendously useful Index of Recipes. Marvelously helpful to potential Delta restaurant customers, a map provides the locations of the towns in the Delta where the fabulous eateries are. One hundred seven lovely bright photographs of the exquisite fare and charming dining sites enhance the discussions. The fantastic book enriches readers with two hundred fourteen recipes of the superior food.

The beautiful brilliant author Susan Puckett is from Jackson, Mississippi. The initial Delta eating place Susan ate with a boyfriend from Ole Miss is Lusco's of Greenwood renowned for small rooms with curtains for each dining party, pompano fish, gumbo, shrimp, steaks, and spinach soufflé. The splendid work has connection to the Southern USA by author Susan Puckett who is from Jackson, Mississippi and the content of the monograph is the history and discussion of spots to eat in the Delta of Tennessee and Mississippi. The writing style is superior. The content is magnificently researched and presented. The perceived interest to the readership of the journal is outstanding because of the numerous variety of delicious food and entertaining sites and activities illustrated that are available to people, tourists, and librarians in the Southeastern United States.

For example, alluringly, Memphis welcomes visitors with the beautiful Peabody Hotel on the National Register of Historic Places and its Chez Philippe Restaurant and Capriccio Grill. Memphis also delights people with the residence of Elvis Presley, Graceland. The book discloses instructions for banana and peanut butter on bread that Elvis Presley and his family enjoyed. Tunica casinos enrich visitors such as Paula Deen's southern all you can eat buffet at Tunica's Harrah's for five hundred sixty persons. Clarksdale directs a Tennessee Williams Festival due to Tennessee Williams being there as a child. Oxbow Restaurant of Clarksdale, noted in the periodicals *People* and *Travel and Leisure*, and on the Travel Channel, entices patrons with tacos and tuna stuffing and hummus using black eyed peas.

Additionally luring, B.B. King is from Sunflower County where the fourteen million dollar B.B. King museum is located. Jim Henson, creator of Kermit the Frog and the Sesame Street muppets was from Leland, Mississippi where the Leland Chamber of Commerce oversees a Sesame Street museum. The boulevard entry road to Greenwood displays palatial regal residences that Garden Clubs of America and US Chamber of Commerce remarked as one of the most gorgeous areas. Humphrey's County is the catfish capital, although the one hundred thousand acres of farms of catfish has lessened from 1990. Greenwood's Larry's Fish House produces catfish. In September, Cleveland's Sillers Coliseum offers for two dollars hundreds of rice dishes in honor of National Rice Month. Greenwood's The Alluvian Hotel is like a Europe hotel with baths, spas, and a steak house.

Also enchanting, the museum of the initial Coca-Cola bottling is the Vicksburg Biedenharn Candy Company Museum of Coca-Cola. The tapestry pilgrimage reveals Vicksburg's lavish mansions and eateries. Cedar Grove Mansion Inn Restaurant and Bar has the best dining room in Vicksburg with beautiful statues. Vicksburg National Military Park draws people. Tamales are the best fare of Delta. Tamales originated from Mexican labor. The wonderful book covers twenty-two eating establishments that serve tamales and makes known a Mississippi Delta tamale recipe. *Delta Magazine* of Cleveland shares recipes and occurrences and eateries in the region guests would