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Jekyll Island's Early Years from PreHistory Through Reconstruction

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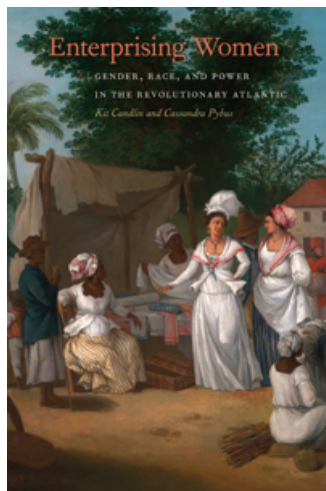
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Enterprising Women: Gender, Race, and Power In The Revolutionary Atlantic. Kit Candlin and Cassandra Pybus. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-8203-4455-3. \$49.95



Trying to ignore my lack of knowledge of the history or politics of the British Empire's occupation and control of islands in the Atlantic Ocean in the mid-1750s, I bravely forged ahead and I can say, I am delighted I did.

Reading the *Introduction* (p.1), I was immediately struck with the locations of the archival sites that opened up to Kit Candlin and Cassandra Pybus: (here I note only a few) the University of West Indies in Grenada, the University College London, the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry at the University of Sydney, the National Archives of the United Kingdom, the National Archives of Scotland, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago, the British Library and St. George Church in Benenden. Candlin and Pybus revealed the grants they received from the Australian Research Council which allowed them to dedicate themselves to this amazingly rich archival research on women of color in islands in the Caribbean. (*Acknowledgements* p. 1-2)

To reveal their research, Candlin and Pybus focus upon a series of micro-biographies, life stories that allow the reader to see the unique British colonial Atlantic empire within a cultural perspective. Both say: "We believe micro-biographies provide insight into the connections between historical events and individual experience...each biography serves as a particular case study of the macro-history of the times." (p.13)

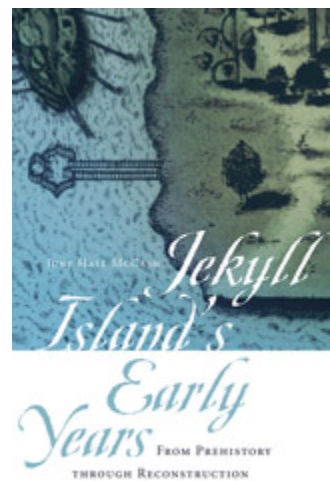
Balancing the focus on what appears to be biographies of wealthy free colored women in an emerging world, Candlin and Pybus write, "those who grew powerful enough to affect colonial justice, make demands of white men, possess many slaves and own hundreds, sometimes thousands, of acres of the most valuable farming land in the world need to be seen in contrast to those free colored women who rarely experienced life beyond the petty world of prostitutes, hucksters, and washerwomen, who would never own land or slaves." (p.8) Reading the biographies

brings the reader into the scenes of the lives of the women and their families and verifies the hope that the authors had for the reader experience.

In the Chapter on *Conclusion*, the authors say: "Micro biographies of a handful of free colored women cannot produce a new reading of the slave Caribbean, but they can demonstrate that the history of Caribbean slave society was more topsy-turvy than we had hitherto understood."(p.180) This rich archival collections produced a book that has of great value to many areas of research in slave history, Caribbean society, the Atlantic Empire, and women's studies. Inside there are 180 pages, plus extensive *Notes*, a *Bibliography* and an *Index*, giving a total of 280 pages. My recommendation is to consider this book a requirement for inclusion in today's history, social studies, policy studies, and women's studies courses at the college and university level.

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Jekyll Island's Early Years From PreHistory Through Reconstruction. June Hall McCash. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8203-2447-0. \$31.95



June Hall McCash tells us that "Jekyll Island is the smallest of Georgia's Golden Isles...one of a chain of the barrier islands that stretches like a string of pearls along the Coast.... In prehistoric times, Jekyll was covered with vegetation and inhabited by prehistoric animals—mastodons and mammoths...land that lay many miles inland". (Introduction 1)

She paints a picture for us of the time Jekyll Island was born as she explains the eating away of land areas during the melting of glaciers so that sea levels began to rise. "Only nine miles long and two miles wide, it (Jekyll) lies at a latitude of 31 degrees north and a longitude of 81 degrees...west, separated from the mainland and

Brunswick, Georgia, by a magnificent six-mile stretch of marshland.”(Introduction 1)

Given the footprint of the island, it is fascinating that the author presents her research on 280 pages, which includes 66 pages of Notes, a Selected Bibliography and an Index. Her research centers on the years prior to the formation of the famous Jekyll Island Club of 1886. She explains that human conflict and a natural environment did not always produce the tranquility and refuge many of us seek on an island. She explains how the world and world issues found Jekyll Island and its inhabitants.

For lovers of Sea Island history, McCash’s in depth research gives the reader maps, architectural designs, drawings, portraits, and scenes of daily life. Her research is distinct and unique since previous research on Jekyll focused on the periods following 1886, beginning with the Chicago Literary Club in 1882 and a spoof by its members, “The Legends of Jekyll Island”, that may have started the move to bring the world to Jekyll’s shores.

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The Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War. Edited by David T. Gleeson and Simon Lewis. Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2014. ISBN 978-1-61117-325-3. \$49.95.



The genesis for this fascinating scholarly collection, *The Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War*, was a 2011 conference held by the Carolina Low Country and Atlantic World Program at the College of Charleston. It is comprised of a collection of essays that frame the American Civil War not as a solely national conflict but as part of larger global events relating to economics, slavery, democracy, and national identity. It moves beyond a purely American perspective of the war into one which factors in the international externalities, revealing the political and economic codependency of the United States and other world powers.

The editors, David Gleeson and Simon Lewis, group the essays into three areas of study. The first describes the prelude to the War in the United States; the second focuses on European sociological perspectives concerning race, abolitionism, and slavery; and the third deals with the aftermath and legacy of the Civil War domestically and abroad.

In the book’s first section, Gleeson and Lewis selected essays that contextualize slavery within the global economy, concentrating on the American South’s confidence in their slave-based agricultural system and the assurance of their political position within the European-dominated world. These chapters show how the South’s fear of economic collapse and slave insurrection ultimately led to the American South holding on more tightly to slavery while Europe began to embrace abolition throughout their colonial holdings. Trusting the international community would eventually return to slavery because of examples of failing island economies led the South to become overconfident in their position – especially with the strength of “King Cotton” in the world economy.

While the first chapters describe the global atmosphere that drove the South’s political calculus leading to the war, the second section focuses on more specific examples of international perspective. Shifting to pure European post-Congress of Vienna politics, Niels Eichhorn’s chapter, “The Rhine River,” describes how the actions taken by the Prussians to block French expansion following annexation of Nice and Savoy, as well as general fears of French ambitions on the German side of the Rhine River, created a tense political situation, which drew potential European support for the beleaguered South. Although these events took place thousands of miles away from the States, the events ultimately bound Great Britain into a politically neutral stance in America, crushing the possibility for Southern success.

The third section covers a variety of subjects dealing with the legacy of the Civil War, including the impact of Florence Nightingale on women during the Civil War, a South African perspective on *Gone with the Wind*, and a very interesting discussion on memorializing the War. Jane Shultz’s commentary on Florence Nightingale makes interesting points regarding the internationally famous nurse as an icon, heroine, and English role model for many American women facing the horrors of their nation’s war. Her name literally became synonymous with war nursing -- an image of a feminine “saintly warrior.” The idea of legacy takes a completely different turn in Lesley Marx’s “Race, Romance, and ‘The spectacle of unknowing’ in *Gone with the Wind: A South African Response*,” the story of a young girl from South Africa viewing the movie for the first time, creating a nostalgia for American antebellum history while living in a political and social environment of racism. The final essay effectively deals with the larger historic perspective of the war including the thoughts on the subject from a variety of scholars, leading the reader to consider the true legacy of the war.