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## The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America's Tourist Paradise, 1896-1968

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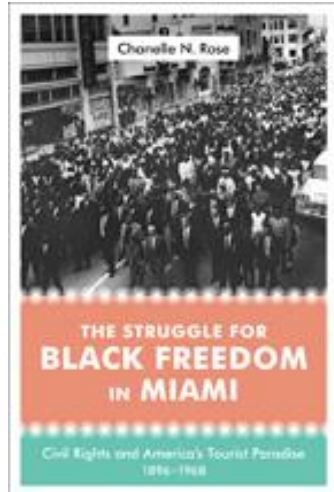
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one volume many important works that might be difficult to locate otherwise. The excellent biographical introductions by the editors introduce each writer and place their work in historical context for the reader, helping to further illuminate the importance of each writer's work. The anthology includes a wide variety of genres of writing, including autobiographical narratives, letters, essays, speeches, pamphlets, chapters reprinted from books, and sermons. The works are grouped into four sections by time periods, so that readers can also follow chronologically if desired. The editors chose selections that showcase the way that these writers were able to reach a national audience and influence national thought. This is an essential book for South Carolina libraries, but would be a good addition to any library with collections in American History or African American studies, especially if the authors included are not already represented in existing collections.

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**The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America's Tourist Paradise 1896-1968.** Chanelle Nyree Rose. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8071-5765-7 (cloth: alk. paper), ISBN: 978-0-8071-5766-4 (pdf), ISBN: 978-0-8071-5767-1 (epub), ISBN: 978-0-8071-6000-8 (mobi). 344 p. \$47.50 cloth.



For anyone who has spent considerable time in Miami or who has lived there as a resident as I did during the 1980's rather than just passing through as a tourist, it becomes apparent that many if not most black residents live in conditions noticeably less comfortable than is true for most white and Latino residents. Many of these rundown and largely black neighborhoods such as Liberty City are not visible to the tourists and the wealthy. The city is increasingly Latin American (primarily Cuban) in culture and many Latinos are prospering. Just as the socioeconomic conditions of Miami are a complex mixture, so too is the history of civil rights in that city as related by

Chanelle M. Rose, associate professor of History at Rowan University.

Rose's thesis is that the civil rights struggle in Miami was not typical of that of other Southern cities due to the fact that the white civic elite, concerned with ensuring Miami's reputation as a glamorous tourist destination, were prepared to make mostly cosmetic changes that nonetheless served to dissipate growing black discontent, all while the city's increasingly Latin flavor tended to blur or obscure the more harshly traditional divisions of black and white found in other Southern cities.

The book is largely successful in demonstrating this interpretation of the history of civil rights in Miami but, perhaps due to the complex nature of the topic, it is also, at times, a bit frustrating. Just when it looks as if things are improving for black Miamians, Rose then illustrates that, no, the fundamental problems have not been solved. Yet progress in improving the lot of Miami's black citizens is undeniable at certain steps along this frustrating journey.

Even when analyzing the black population of Miami alone, the story is more complicated than in most American cities, especially in the South, because a significant portion was of West Indian origin, primarily Bahamian. This is significant in that the Bahamian experience of slavery and then freedom was different from that of African Americans. Many Bahamians refused to accept second-class citizenship or the insults of white racism. Several important early civil rights leaders in Miami were Bahamian in origin including Episcopal priests Rev. John E. Culmer and Father Theodore Gibson. Both of these leaders at different points in the twentieth century were able to work with the white civic establishment in a largely non-confrontational way and to gradually begin improving conditions for the black population. In recent decades the black population has been augmented by significant immigration of Jamaicans and Haitians.

Even prior to the huge influx of Cubans fleeing Fidel Castro's revolution, Miami developed a Latin character as Latin Americans increasingly patronized the city as a vacation destination and as a place of business. The white business and political elite took steps to ensure that Latin Americans, even those of dark complexion, did not experience the insults of segregation. As Rose indicates, some of this favorable treatment of Latin Americans was occasionally extended to blacks at least under certain circumstances and in certain locations.

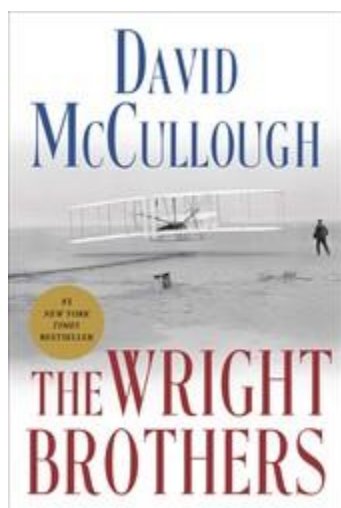
One of Rose's more illuminating insights is that seemingly progressive measures of the white leadership of Miami paradoxically either made things worse or merely served to delay addressing the real problem for black Miamians. This is especially evident in Chapter Six concerning school desegregation. Progress in integrating Miami's schools was very slow yet gradual and grudging reforms did take place, thus blunting some of the growing black anger at poor educational conditions.

Real progress was haltingly made by a combination of the gradual accommodating tactics of early black leaders such as Culmer and Gibson, the efforts of white civic leaders concerned about keeping Miami's image as a tourist paradise and as a welcoming place for Latin American tourists and businesspeople, and, as the 1960s unfolded, more militant demonstrations and legal actions of the local NAACP chapter and other black civil rights groups. An important component too is the Black – Jewish alliance that emerged in the post-World War II period. The presence of a very large Jewish population is yet another factor making Miami's civil rights history atypical of the South as well. Raymond Mohl's *South of the South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami 1946-1960* (University of Florida, 2004) provides a detailed look at the story that unfolds in Chapter Four in Rose's *The Black Freedom Struggle in Miami* and, in fact, appears to be the only other book that really addresses the broader civil rights movement in the city.

Academic libraries and large public libraries collecting in the areas of civil rights and African American history will want to add *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami* to their collections as will many libraries large and small in Florida. Although a little frustrating to read at times, this title is an important one that provides a unique perspective on the ongoing struggle for African American civil rights. Regrettably, this scholarly book does not have a bibliography, although it is possible to determine at least some of the sources consulted by Chanelle N. Rose via the informative endnotes.

Tim Dodge  
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**The Wright Brothers.** David McCullough, NY, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2015. ISBN 978-1-4767-2874-2. 368 p. \$30.



*How can two bicycle mechanics from a little town in Ohio become the two people who provide the world with the means of transportation that will essentially change lives in America and around the world?*

David McCullough responds to this question and a similar one on a recent talk show with Charlie Rose (<http://sharetv.com/watch/919759>). McCullough offers his strong feelings in answers: “the brothers grew up in a home filled with books, they never graduated high school, never went to college, they never had tutors or instruction in the liberal arts but they had a father who believed in the value of learning and perfecting the English language, both speaking and in writing and those specific abilities served them well. Both sons were avid readers and took advantage of the books that filled their home. They were self-taught. McCullough also credited the philosophy of the midwestern United States family as one of humble origins. They taught their children to seek a high purpose in life, and a never give up attitude.

In the Prologue, a note includes a story of a toy brought home to the boys from a trip their father made to France, “... it was created by the French experimenter of the nineteenth century, Alphonse Penaud, little more than a stick with twin propellers and twisted rubber bands, and probably cost 50 cents...when their father opened his hand to reveal the toy, it flew to the ceiling; they called it the bat.” (p.1)

Experimenting and trying ideas by involvement was demonstrated by the brothers. One behavior which created humorous reactions by the neighbors was to see the brothers as they studied birds flying overhead. Orville and Wilbur copied the flying movements by watching the birds and running along below them flapping their arms and bending themselves into the shape of the flying birds. Watching and learning that these birds could soar and could let the winds lift and propel them gave the brothers a belief that the winds could lift and propel a machine to fly.

“The Wright Brothers” by David McCullough is fascinating and reveals messages about education, family values, creativity in science and art, and a persistence of loyalty and love in families.

McCullough is a masterful researcher and writer. This book has a large number of beautiful and varied photographs and also has Acknowledgments, Source Notes, A Bibliography, Illustration Credits and an Index that covers pages 263 to 320. Though a thick and large book, it is recommended for public libraries, school libraries and colleges and university readers.

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