

Winter 1-6-2016

Venerable Trees: History, Biology, and Conservation in the Bluegrass

Carol Walker Jordan

University of North Carolina - Greensboro

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

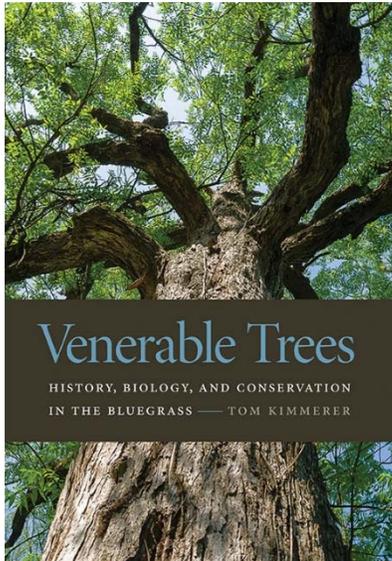
Recommended Citation

Jordan, Carol Walker (2016) "Venerable Trees: History, Biology, and Conservation in the Bluegrass," *The Southeastern Librarian*: Vol. 63 : Iss. 4 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol63/iss4/6>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Southeastern Librarian by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.

Venerable Trees: History, Biology, and Conservation in the Bluegrass. Tom Kimmerer, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015. ISBN 978-0-8131-6566-0. \$39.95.



Tom Kimmerer is an author who can “paint a picture with a few words” when he is writing about venerable trees. His early comments in this fascinating book about the trees of the “bluegrass of Kentucky” (p. 1) touch the heart of any tree lover or preservationist of old trees. He says, “People in all cultures revere large, old trees. From temple trees in Southeast Asia to the giant sequoia and coast redwood groves of the American West, people visit, worship, and love trees. Trees are venerated—held in awe and esteem.” (p. 1) As he reflects upon his love of an old American beech tree of his childhood, it is clear to see how his life’s passion was formed to make him a tree physiologist and a forest scientist.

Uncovering for the reader what is unique about the Bluegrass Region of Kentucky and its venerable trees, Kimmerer takes us to the landscapes of Kentucky, once occupied by bison and habited today by venerable trees. From the intricate descriptions of large grassy areas ringed by venerable trees to examples of dedication of enthusiastic preservationists of Bluegrass Kentucky, we learn of efforts to venerate, to protect, and to replenish the tree canopy of the Bluegrass.

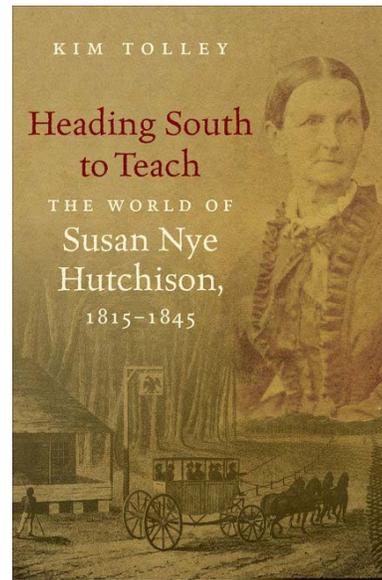
Providing us with more than 100 color photographs and the use of historical documents, this book is a critical volume for public and university libraries. Particularly of interest to young readers are the tidbits we uncover as we wonder “is the grass really blue?” and “was “blue grass music” born in Kentucky?” “where did the bison of the Bluegrass come from?” “why are there so many old venerable trees still standing in the bluegrass region of Kentucky?”

I remember a favorite poem we learned in elementary school...“I think that I shall never see. A poem lovely as a tree.” (Joyce Kilmer, *Poetry*, August 1913) ...I was drawn

to Kimmerer’s book as I am a tree lover and my neighborhood has preserved what I refer to as our “dynasty tree”....Maybe I’ll change its name to our venerable tree?....

Carol Walker Jordan
University of North Carolina - Greensboro

Heading South to Teach: The World of Susan Nye Hutchinson 1815-1845. Kim Tolley. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-4696-2433-4.



Kim Tolley, a Professor of Education at Notre Dame de Namur University, documents her writing through the journals of Susan Nye Hutchinson, 1790-1867. These journals guided her research and the writing of the book, “Heading South to Teach: The World of Susan Nye Hutchinson 1815-1845”. Tolley found in the South in those days the cultural, political, religious and social issues that brought alive a dark side of history. Hutchinson’s goal of being an educator in the Southern States after the Revolutionary War was never in doubt but the roadblocks were evident as the journals explain.

Life struggles with travel, teaching, marriage, children and financial security between 1815 and 1845 at times portray a horrific battle to live her dreams of a family, a career, and the goal of being an effective educator. One scene that lives on with this reader is the one Tolley describes of Hutchinson praying with slaves and free blacks in the streets of Raleigh. Hutchinson knew she was in great danger since teaching reading and prayers to slaves and free Blacks was forbidden.

Following Hutchinson’s life as provided in the 30 years of her journals brings a reader to see the life of a woman