

Spring 5-10-2016

A Yankee Scholar in Coastal South Carolina: William Francis Allen's Civil War Journals

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) "A Yankee Scholar in Coastal South Carolina: William Francis Allen's Civil War Journals," *The Southeastern Librarian*: Vol. 64 : Iss. 1 , Article 24.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol64/iss1/24>

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.

Night the New Jesus Fell to Earth)”. I did not believe I was being disloyal but I was eager to see writings Ron created that my colleague described as filled with humor.

While looking for a resource that might give a comparative analysis of Ron’s writings from poetry to short stories to novels, John Lang’s “Understanding Ron Rash” appeared on my Must Read Amazon Book List. Yes, I was hooked.

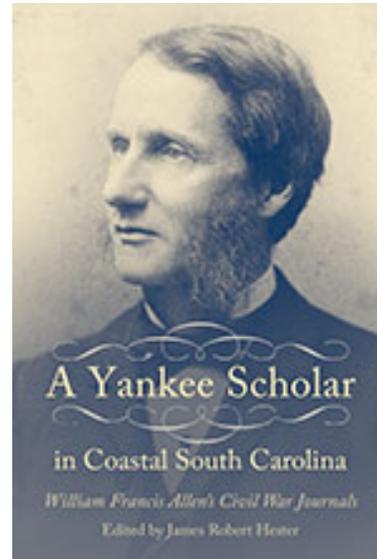
Lang’s introductory chapter provides an inside look at Ron and the history of his family with particular attention to the love he developed for the Appalachian foothills and “the mountains of North Carolina” (p.2 URR). Rash is quoted as saying “home was always the mountains of North Carolina” (p.2 URR). Lang acknowledges that Rash may be known to those of us who think of him as a southern writer but explains that Ron’s appeal as a writer (author) is strong in the south but flowed to the world stage with his writings appearing in more than a dozen languages (p.2 URR).

The highest compliment I believe John Lang gave Ron Rash was his acknowledgement, “my principle indebtedness is to the subject of this study, Ron Rash, whose fiction and poetry have earned my respect and admiration for nearly two decades”. My thanks to John Lang comes after I read the book and highly recommend it as a must collect book for any public and academic library. The notes section is fascinating as it relates terms and individuals to each of the reviewed writings and the bibliography and index are well organized around the writings and significant places and reviews of Rash’s writings.

Yes, I later thanked my colleague for introducing me to Ron’s short stories, particularly the collection, “The Night The New Jesus Fell to Earth and Other Stories From Cliffside, North Carolina”, Ron Rash, 1994, The University of South Carolina Press. Yes, I laughed and smiled with the characters, their adventures, and with Ron who created them.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina Greensboro

A Yankee Scholar in Coastal South Carolina: William Francis Allen’s Civil War Journals. Edited by James Robert Hester. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-61117-496-0. 344 p. \$49.95.



James Robert Hester’s edited edition of “A Yankee Scholar in Coastal South Carolina, William Francis Allen’s Civil War Journals” appealed to me as I am fascinated by the idea of Northeastern educators, ministers, military men, teachers and abolitionists joining together and arriving on St. Helena Island in the 1860s with the intent of providing the former slaves living there with tutoring in reading and writing.

William Francis Allen, a talented and exceptionally well education historian, arrived in South Carolina in 1863 with his wife and her niece to join the group hoping to go to St. Helena’s Island. Allen was a respected historian and talented musician and his immediate attraction upon arriving on St. Helena was to the former slaves and to their music and songs.

As an elementary school student in Kings Mountain, North Carolina, I eagerly awaited Thursdays since that was the day we had a visit from our music teacher. I loved to sing and most especially loved to sing the songs she described as “rounds”. When the class of fifteen was divided into three groups, we were given a quick lesson in the lyrics and then the first group began singing the lyrics with the second and the third group joining in sequence... she called this type of singing a “round”. One round we sang each Thursday was the “Boat Song”. Many times we repeated the lyrics five, six or eight times, we didn’t know who wrote it or where it began. Looking over Allen’s collection of “Slave Songs, 1867”, I saw that spiritual we sang each week in third grade:

Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah
Jordan bank de bank I stan’; Hallelujah (p. 106)

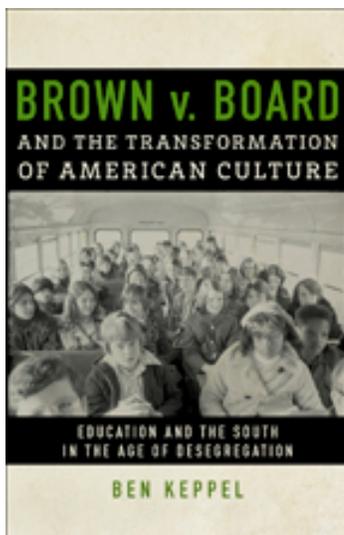
As a librarian and teacher now, I am aware the Negro spirituals which we sang as little children and the play, "The Life of Stephen Foster", with its beautiful songs written by Stephen Foster in the 1800s, emerged from the days when slaves sang and performed their spirituals in churches and on plantations. The strong impact of the slave spirituals upon America's musical heritage spread to art, theatre and opera in the following years.

William Francis Allen contributed through his journals and his work a priceless gem of songs and historical descriptions. His painstaking recording of lyrics and of scores and his journal writings of day to day experiences, all recorded in the edited manuscript by James Robert Hester, provide a precious look at St. Helena Island and the Charleston region during the 1860s and 70s.

This book is recommend as a valuable acquisition for public and college/university libraries..... Pages 216 to 323 pages of research notations.

Carol Walker Jordan, PhD
University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Brown v. Board and the Transformation of American Culture: Education and the South in the Age of Desegregation. Ben Keppel. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-8071-6132-6. 225 p. \$41.16.



The monumental text referring to Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka (1954) and desegregation tells in all-encompassing details the improvements in human rights and advances in education in the south as well as all of the United States.

Ben Keppel is on the faculty at the University of Oklahoma as an associate professor in the department of history. The monograph has some connection to the south because slavery and Reconstruction as well as Brown versus Board

of Education and desegregation of public schools are specifically discussed. Other places pointed out where incidents of human rights in Southern USA also occurred are Alabama, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Kansas. The writing style is easy to read. The content reveals how the United States accomplished the magnificent United States public school system. The perceived interest to the readership of the journal is perfect in that the book exposes human rights and education in southern and northern United States has greatly increased.

Examples from this work of progress in human rights and education in the United States are as follows. The Reconstruction of the South after the Civil War is referred to as the First Reconstruction. Desegregation is referred to as the Second Reconstruction in the South. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) made unconstitutional the laws of the states separating black and white pupils with different schools. Robert Coles and his publication *Children of Crisis*, a study of Mississippi desegregation, are revealed. Education empowers choices for occupations.

Educational television started in 1953. A television program to aid children prior to public school with alphabet and socializing is *Sesame Street* created by Joan Ganz Cooney. Other educational television programs alluded to are *Electric Company*, *Mister Roger's Neighborhood*, *Romper Room*, *Captain Kangaroo*, *Rowan Martin's Laugh In*, *Antiques Road Show*, and *Batman*. Parents brought into play *Sesame Street* to make their children more productive. Bill Cosby's *Cosby Show*, *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, and *Good Times* portrayed successful humans to inspire all in the United States to do well. National Education Television (NET) furnished folk music, science, and classical music programs. Young people also learn tunes from commercials. Bill Cosby starred in JELL-O and Cola commercials. *Superman* on the radio was hoped to motivate children especially poorer children.

In 1916, South Carolina instructors conveyed tales to instruct pupils in reading. Having other books for pupils to read such as *Robin Hood*, *George Washington Carver*, and *Richard E. Byrd* enhanced student scores. Montessori schooling was initialized in the 1950's for pupils to learn alone. In 1961, Miami, Florida did not have enough instructors for the large amount of pupils, so educational television on history, sciences, automobile driving, reading, spelling, composition, and literature was employed to instruct the pupils instead. In the seventies in the United States, food stamps and school lunches were created. The idea of a shorter workday for Americans brought desires for maintaining a cleaner home. A cafeteria female employee indicated she would clean her residence. A business person said he would advertise in amplified amounts. The United States wants all types of people in public school together for all people to have opportunities and education to strive for expansion and improve the United States. This work is invaluable for public and academic libraries and vital for researchers of the history of