Patroons and Periaguas: Enslaved Waterment and Watercraft of Lowcountry

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works of renowned South Carolina artist Jonathan Green---was published as part of the same series in 2013.

Each author who contributed a work to the anthology began by choosing one or more photographs from the South Caroliniana Library’s digital collections to serve as inspiration. The book includes the chosen images as illustrations, making it easy for readers to move from image to text and back again. The library’s collections are available online (http://library.sc.edu/p/Collections/Digital/Browse?department=62) so that readers can easily view the image within the context of its collection if desired. Readers could also visit the online archives to find inspiration of their own.

Some of the collection’s works are meant to be more strictly ekphrastic than others, and the volume’s editors have arranged the pieces into three categories based on the author’s overall approaches: renderings, re-imaginings, and impressions. An outstanding forward written by award-winning poet and series editor Nikky Finney frames the book in terms of each writer having their own conversation with the past. From this vantage point—as if they are speaking with the dead—they are able to deeply explore meanings, feelings, and even the future.


Libraries with collections in Southern literature or history should consider adding this unique book with interdisciplinary appeal to their shelves. It may also serve as inspiration for potential future projects at libraries with their own online archives. Creative writing or history teachers might also be interested in constructing assignments based on photographs from the same online collections and using the writings in this book as inspirational examples for their students.

Allison Faix,
Kimbel Library, Coastal Carolina University


In the opening preface of her book, author Lynn Harris recounts how she and a colleague “motored slowly past alligators sunning on banks of the murky orange-colored Cooper River…” where they noticed many remnants of boats and ships scattered on the riverbed and immediately “speculated about the origins of these remnants”.

Harris, an underwater archeologist, in her opening remarks tells us that “River and waterborne activities were an integral part of the (South Carolina) low country plantation’s daily routine just as they were in the West Indies plantations”. Harris says an early historian wrote, “The oldest plantations were upon rivers, a waterfront indeed, and a landing was essential to such establishments, for it must have the periago for plantation purposes and the trim sloop and large cypress canoes for the masters use.” (The Papers of Henry Laurens to Timothy Creamer, Charleston, June 20, 1794:4:319.)

Through intense research in archival manuscripts and museum displays along with interviews and interpretations of maps and charts, Harris is able to help the reader understand the economies of the low country, the waterways flowing from the ocean inland, and the transportation shift for the patroons (land owners) from hard to reach ships and boats to more efficient and eventually secure watercraft (periaguas) for getting their goods to markets. Harris, explains how a work force developed in the region that arose from the native Americans, enslaved, Europeans, and people of color who came to the waterways to live, and work. In some detail, Harris explains how the boat building or watercraft industry arose from the creativity of this potential workforce.

The various research resources in this 146 page manuscript are presented in End Notes, a Bibliography and an Index. This is an excellent text to add to a university or special
The work has some connection to the South by content. Four of the interviewed stars were born in the South. Joseph Cotton, was born in Petersburg, Virginia. Melvyn Douglas was born in Macon, Georgia. Irene Dunne was born in Louisville, Kentucky and Dorothy Lamour was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. The productions in which the interviewed famous persons have played also have some connection with the South. The 1943 movie Dixie in which Dorothy Lamour was showcased is about a Kentuckian writer of songs Daniel Decatur Emmet who moved to New Orleans. The 1939 movie Gone with the Wind is set in Georgia. Joseph Cotton starred in the movie Hush...Hush Sweet Charlotte set in Hollisport, Louisiana. Inherit the Wind is a fictional play about the teaching of evolution which was illegal in a Tennessee high school. The 1941 movie My Life with Caroline uses a Florida location. The 1974 movie Mame includes the city of Peckerwood, Georgia. The state of Tennessee is where a soldier portrayed by Van Johnson grew up in the movie Miracle in the Rain. One Sunday Afternoon is a 1933 movie featuring Fay Wray as Virginia named after the state of Virginia. The camp in the 1961 movie The Parent Trap is like a camp in Asheville, North Carolina. The 1936 movie Show Boat is set in Mississippi. The 1944 movie Sunday Dinner for a Soldier uses the location of Florida. The location of the 1941 movie Swamp Water is Okefenokee Swamp, Georgia. The locality of the 1962 movie Walk on the Wild Side is New Orleans. The spot of the 1946 movie The Yearling is Florida. The excellent text is part of Screen Classics, a group of monographs, produced by the University of Kentucky about shows.

Each chapter is titled by the star's name. All chapters indicate Ron Miller or James Bawden as the interviewer. Every chapter includes the sections “Setting the Scene,” “The Interview,” and “Afterword.” “Afterword” makes known how, when, and where the screen idol died. “Setting the Scene” discloses the location of the interview such as the residence, dressing room, a hotel, lunch, high tea, a restaurant, the television show set, movie sets, telephone interviews, press conferences, or museums in the stars' honor.

The writing style intrigues the reader with the content about thirty-four luminaries' glamour, talent, and fascinating lives. Clearly, the perceived interest to the readership of the journal is absolute. One hundred black and white photographs with descriptions underneath the photographs captivatingly add to the discussion of the icons. The wonderful masterpiece is perfect for public and academic libraries and researchers of Hollywood golden celebrities.

Melinda F. Matthews
University of Louisiana at Monroe Library