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## The Trials of a Scold: The Incredible True Story of Writer Anne Royall

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200 years, the family maintained their close familial lives and rarely married outside the original founding Benehaleys.

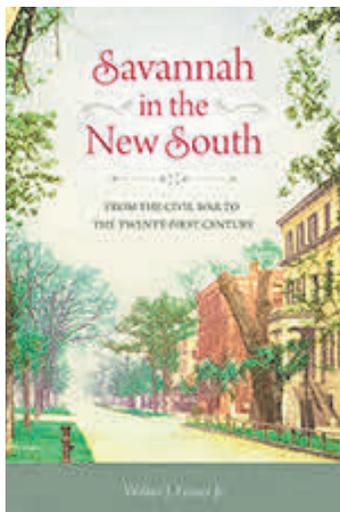
To the surrounding neighbors and other community groups, the Benehaleys were perceived as Native Americans, Negroes or islanders. By building their own school, church and homes, the Turkish family established their isolation over many years. Terri Ognibene's passion as a researcher, writer and descendent of Joseph Benehaley led her to seek to understand the social and legal struggles that her Turkish family suffered over the years in Sumter County-- as she described, "isolation, segregation, discrimination, oppression, and assimilation." (Cover fly leaf)

Photographs, maps, and illustrations provide assistance in visualizing the Benehaley family life over the years. Terri Ognibene's passion in seeking the Turkish descendants/individuals who might be willing to share highly personal stories about themselves and their social relationships in Sumter County is evident and must be applauded. Glen Browder's meticulous efforts in finding and sharing primary document research documents many of the struggles the Turkish families suffered.

A good resource for academic libraries, historical archives and for student research into sociology/kinship studies and family structures in rural communities.

*Carol Walker Jordan,  
Library Research Consultant.*

**Savannah in the New South: From the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century.** Walter J. Fraser, Jr. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2018. ISBN 978-1-61117-836-4 (Hardcover); 978-1-61117-837-1 (Ebook); both \$44.99. 400 p.



My desire to review this new book was to learn about the Savannah that I knew nothing about except friends'

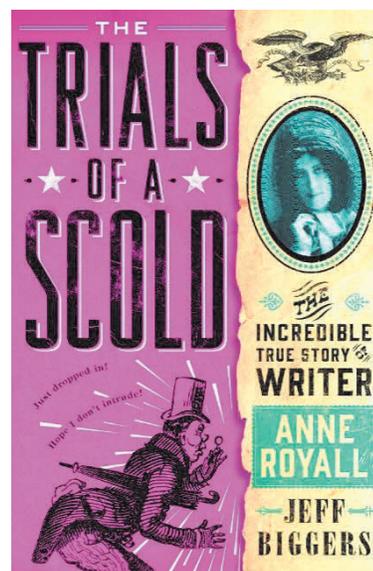
encouragement to visit to see the beautiful architecture, gardens, and a visit to the Savannah College of Art and Design! An awakening to the history of Savannah's place in the development of the state of Georgia was not a pleasant and joyful awakening! Dr. Fraser, our author, died shortly after I began reading the book, adding to the sadness I felt when I realized I could not contact him and talk about his years of research on Savannah's history and its present days.

Dr. Fraser's truly painful history reveals slavery, discrimination, suppression of freed people, harassment, voter suppression, boycotts, racial tension, wealth disparity, and gang violence. From Dr. Fraser's documented research, little was recounted that in the state of Georgia and in Savannah freedom arose and was shared among citizens before and after the Civil War. Since I expected to find Savannah a southern city full of promise and one that left "jim crow" behind, I was highly disappointed. I closed Dr. Fraser's book in great disappointment with "a new South concept".

Yes, I should applaud the author who "tells it like it is" and then leaves us the readers to continue the research and activism to make Savannah a "city on a hill". Will it strive to be inclusive of all, open to conversations and collaboration, free of bias and prejudice, and representative of the freedoms we promise? I do not feel confidence in Savannah's future. Its history is somehow overpowering.

*Carol Walker Jordan  
Library Research Consultant*

**The Trials of a Scold: The Incredible True Story of Writer Anne Royall.** Jeff Biggers. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2017. ISBN: 9781250065124. \$26.99. 260 p.



Anne Royall was a travel writer, investigative journalist, and newspaper editor and publisher. She also had the dubious distinction of being the first and only woman put on trial in a federal court and convicted of being a “common scold.” Buried in a pauper’s grave in 1854, Anne Royall finally received her recognition in May 1990 when the Society of Professional Journalists dedicated a plaque to her in the Hart Senate Office Building hailing her as a “fearless champion of freedom of the press” and “the first woman to cover the U.S. Congress.”

Perhaps proving that it takes one journalist to do justice to another, American historian, journalist and prize-winning author, Jeff Biggers, pens a revelatory biography of this singular woman who set a high standard for the fourth estate by refusing to be silenced. Including copious quotes from the writer herself, as well as observations from her contemporaries, Biggers gives us an extensively researched, in-depth portrait of a pioneering woman of the press, who, in her own words, sought to “expose all and every species of political evil, and religious fraud, without fear or affection.”

Anne was born in Maryland, in 1769, and eventually moved to Pennsylvania with her parents. Left destitute after a second marriage and widowhood, Anne’s mother traveled to Virginia and found employment with Major William Royall, a member of the colonial elite who fought in the Revolutionary War. Well educated and liberal for his time, he found Anne receptive to his views and eager to learn. After living together for several years, they eventually married. However, his relatives never accepted her as his true wife and, along with other accusations against her, contested his will, leaving her in poverty.

Biggers notes how, in her early fifties, broke and alone, “Anne reinvented herself again as an American author on the road to great adventure.” Gaining confidence from writing *Letters from Alabama* and a novel, *The Tennessean*, she dove into a writing career. Peddling travel books which included critical, and often unkind sketches of the prominent citizens of the towns she visited, she was able to raise funds for subsequent publications. Later, her three volume travelogue, *The Black Book*, helped hone her craft by providing political and social commentary on issues she deemed important, including separation of church and state and freedom of speech.

It was her battle with evangelicals in Washington which led to her trial on the archaic charge of being a common scold. Now sixty, and still living hand to mouth, Anne provoked the Presbyterian clergy by holding them up to ridicule and satire. Having to endure the threat of a ducking stool should she be convicted of the charge, she nevertheless conducted herself with wit and verve, recognizing the courtroom as theatre. Fined ten dollars, it was paid by two reporters at the behest of editor Joseph Gales, who viewed the trial, as did many journalists, as an attack on press freedom.

Gaining a national audience after her ordeal, Biggers writes “she became her own pen portrait” transforming from

author to performer in her travels, though not necessarily by choice. Re-establishing herself in Washington, she set up a press and started her own weekly newspaper, *Paul Pry*. Serving as both editor, publisher and investigative reporter, the paper exposed corruption by government officials, while also advocating for labor, the poor, and the powerless. After *Paul Pry* folded due to financial constraints, she published *The Huntress* which included lighter fare along with political news. In 1854, the last issue was printed. Anne Royall died the same year and was consigned to an unmarked grave in the now Historic Congressional Cemetery.

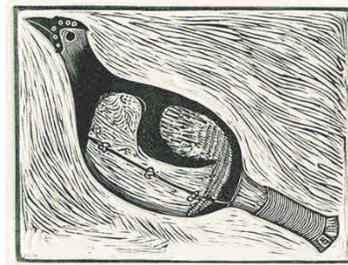
Jeff Biggers reveals for us a witty, humorous, often irascible woman, who excelled in satirizing the power brokers of her day. Though the archetype of a muckraking journalist, she had immense respect for the nation and its constitution and it was love of country which often provided the fuel for her print assaults on challenges to its integrity. Partially due to her age and willingness to challenge expectations for her gender, she was effectively denied recognition after her death. With this incisive and generous biography, which includes extensive notes, as well as a bibliography of primary and secondary sources, Jeff Biggers gives her the belated credit she deserves.

Recommended for academic libraries, particularly those with programs in journalism and women’s studies.

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**Frog Pond Philosophy: Essays on the Relationship Between Humans and Nature.** Strachan Donnelley. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018. ISBN 978-0-8131-6727-5 (cloth); 978-0-8131-6729-9 (epub); all \$80. 266 p.

## FROG POND PHILOSOPHY



*Essays on the  
Relationship  
Between Humans  
and Nature*

STRACHAN DONNELLEY  
Edited by Coara Donnelley and Bruce Jennings  
Foreword by Frederick L. Kirschenmann

*Frog Pond Philosophy* attracted my attention as I recently wrote and published a children’s book featuring a wise old