Southern Women in the Progressive Era: A Reader

Carol Walker Jordan

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Georgia native Clay Scroggins explains the oddity of leadership. An individual does not have to be in a leadership role in order to lead. Employers may be inclined to depend upon those in authority to indicate change. But what if that change never happens? Those with ideas are encouraged to speak out with confidence that their voice will be heard. Scroggins is a lead pastor of one of a network of six interconnected church campuses in the Metropolitan Atlanta area. When he first took this role, he felt that his ideas were not being valued and understood. Instead of sitting back and pointing fingers and doing nothing about it, he took charge by writing this book and implementing changes in himself and the environment he describes in his book. He wrote this book about leadership.

The first part of this book focuses on how a new leader needs to accept and identify what authority their position offers. After, use the authority wisely to influence and make things better. Scroggins also focuses on the difference between leading by influence rather than authority, and how their influence on others can effect change. Scroggins goes a step further to discuss leadership as a sense of identity. “Near the core of what makes a person a leader is their sense of identity.” Your identity has three parts, your past, other people, and last is your personality. From your past, your family plays a key role in molding the person you have become. Other people is how an individual thinks others may perceive them in a particular way. With personality, our characteristics, traits, and talents all shape our lives. Scroggins talks about leading oneself through self leadership principles. First, model followership, meaning follow well. Second, monitor your heart and behavior, meaning monitor your emotions. And lastly, have a plan. What are you doing to lead yourself well first? A person can’t lead others until they learn to lead themselves.

Strongly recommended for individuals in leadership and middle management.

Mark A. Kirkley
Kennesaw State University


“The document selections in this book feature the voices of southern women who lived in the Progressive Era. That time period stretched from the 1890s to the end of World War I, when the United States was transformed by politically active pressure groups who called for various kinds of reform. The Reformers called themselves progressives, and the name has stuck.” (Introduction). So begins this amazing collection of historical research highlighted by personal writings, stories, reflections and photographs of noted women of the times.

The editors highlighted “progressive” women most engaged in reforming their circumstances and bettering the lives of those around them. The progressives were mostly middle class women who sought to “address many of the social, economic, political, and cultural problems of an industrialized and urbanized world”. (Intro.)

Roberts and Walker organize the data of their research on “progressives” into three headings: Activists in the Making, A New Southern Workforce, and Regional Commentators. Within each Part (one, two and three), rich detail on their lives and social activism are presented through personal writings in letters, diaries, and journals. These are fascinating reads. Along with the documents, there are numerous illustrations, and photographs that enliven the writings.

As an incentive to acquire and read this book, I hope you will consider your own life if it touched your mother’s life between the 1900s and the 1950s. I looked upon mine and could see and hear her and my grandmother’s stories of life during the progressive times.
I recommend this book to public, academic, and seminary libraries! There are fascinating notes beginning on page 319 and an index beginning on page 359.

Carol Walker Jordan
Librarian and Consultant


In November 1996, salvage divers found the resting place of Queen Anne’s Revenge (QAR), the flagship of Blackbeard, America’s most infamous pirate, off the coast of North Carolina. Foundering on a sandbar while trying to negotiate the Beaufort Inlet, the vessel capsized and sank in 1718. Although no riches were discovered through the subsequent ongoing excavation, the treasure trove of artifacts so far recovered provide a fascinating glimpse of life on board a pirate ship. Mark Wilde-Ramsing and Linda Carnes-Naughton, archaeologists who have been with the state sponsored QAR shipwreck project since its inception, combine entertaining vignettes on pirate history and lore with details about the excavation and artifact conservation in their book Blackbeard’s Sunken Prize: the 300-year Voyage of Queen Anne’s Revenge.

Giving context, the authors relate the tumultuous history of the notorious Edward Thache (Teach), a.k.a. Blackbeard, beginning with his capture of the French slave ship the Concorde in the Caribbean, which he renamed the Queen Anne’s Revenge. Relieving it of most of its crew and slaves, he outfitted it with forty plus cannons, eventually heading up the North Coast with several vessels under his command. After audaciously blockading Charleston, South Carolina, he sailed north and ran aground while trying to navigate the Beaufort Inlet.

Historical accounts tease the possibility that Blackbeard planned the shipwreck with the aim of taking the ship’s wealth and swindling his partner, Steve Bonnet, and other crew. After marooning fellow pirates who demanded a stake he went to Bath, NC to request the King’s pardon. However, not content with the quiet life, he once again took to piracy, coming to an ignoble end when he crossed swords with Lieutenant Robert Maynard and his men, commissioned by the Virginia Governor to engage and dispose of Blackbeard.

From the excitement of the shipwreck find to the trials of securing the site and handling the publicity, the QAR project faced unique challenges and surprising breakthroughs. Coordinating the archaeological marine investigations with the conservation and interpretation teams was integral to its success. To date, only sixty percent of the wreck has been excavated. Three chapters of the book are devoted to discussing the recovered artifacts. Some of the significant finds include two bronze ship bells, a brass mortar and pestle, a urethral syringe used to treat syphilis and various pewter plates. Weaponry, of course! Cannon, simple grenades, various blades and firearm parts have been discovered, as well as ammunition. Only four coins and a smattering of gold dust have been recovered, lending credence to the belief that Blackbeard kept the hoard for himself.

The authors marshal their expertise at marine excavation and archaeological interpretation of artifacts to provide cultural context for that era of piracy and relevance to historical records regarding Blackbeard. With detailed maps, graphs and tables, as well as a comprehensive index and list of notes, this book serves as a resource for the serious scholar and history buff alike.

Recommended for academic and public libraries.

Melanie Dunn
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