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## Roadside Americans: The Rise and Fall of Hitchhiking in a Changing Nation

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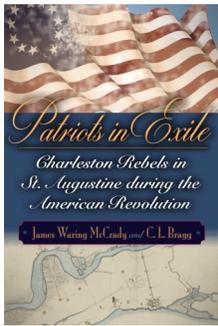
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***Patriots in Exile: Charleston Rebels in St. Augustine during the American Revolution***



James Waring McCrady and  
C.L. Bragg  
Columbia: University of  
South Carolina Press, 2020  
ISBN: 9781643360799  
248 p. \$29.99 (Hbk)

Few know details of the aftermath of the May 1780 capture of Charleston, South Carolina by British and loyalist forces. Authors James Waring McCrady and C. L. Bragg joined intellectual forces to uncover an historical phenomenon of exile of American citizens.

According to McCrady and Bragg, British soldiers in Charleston arrested sixty-three paroled American prisoners and transported them to the Royal Exchange and Customs House in Charleston. From there they were transported by boats to an armed ship going to the borderland town of St. Augustine, Florida.

Those arrested and exiled were elite Southerners including tradesmen, artisans, prominent citizens, military officers—among them three signers of the Declaration of Independence. Interestingly the majority of the exiles knew each other and their families.

McCrady and Bragg conducted extensive research partially driven by their interests in their ancestors who were among the exiles. Documenting the times spent in St. Augustine between exile from Charleston and the ultimate return to Charleston allowed them to learn more of the stories they heard from their families.

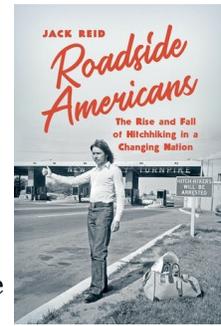
McCrady and Bragg documented sixty-three individuals with extensive biographical research and data comparisons that illuminate both the exiled times and the loss and destruction of homes and careers of those exiled.

Recommended for academic and public Libraries, for historical collections and archival societies.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D., MLIS

***Roadside Americans: The Rise and Fall of Hitchhiking in a Changing Nation***

Jack Reid  
Chapel Hill: University of  
North Carolina Press, 2020  
ISBN: 9781469655000  
264 p. \$29.95 (Hbk)



In this masterful work of social history, Jack Reid provides a sweeping account of the practice of hitchhiking (mode of transportation where roadside travelers solicit and accept free rides from passing motorists) as a widespread custom in American society from its emergence in the 1920s to its decline during the late 1970s and 1980s. *Roadside Americans* does not merely chronicle the history of hitchhiking but thoroughly examines this practice within the broader context of national history. As Reid observes, “Because ride solicitation intersects with so many aspects of American life, we can see the rise and eventual fall of hitchhiking during the twentieth century as a manifestation of wider social, economic, and cultural transformations” (p. 180). This approach enables the reader to understand how hitchhiking became mainstream during the hardships of the Great Depression and WWII but virtually vanished with the ascendance of New Right values like self-reliance and stalwart individualism.

Throughout this time period, acceptance of this practice ebbed and flowed with changing circumstances and impressions of ride solicitation. At the heart of this complex evolution were shifting degrees of social trust and cooperation, necessity, thrill-seeking, and personal safety concerns. *Roadside Americans* analyzes this tension between acceptance and opposition to ride solicitation through three lenses: the perceptions and experiences of hitchhikers and accommodating motorists, discussions about the practice within the media, and the actions of public officials charged with ensuring roadway safety. While *Roadside Americans* documents the overall trajectory of hitchhiking acceptance during this period of examination, the author avoids the pitfall of overgeneralization by meticulously highlighting nuances in views.

The fundamental purpose of this study is to answer the question, “Why did the once ubiquitous act of soliciting rides from a passing vehicle lose acceptance?” (p. 2). Reid refutes the common assumptions that there was no longer a need or that the practice became too hazardous by establishing that ride solicitation was still popular during the 1960s and early 1970s with prevalent auto-mobility and that acts of violence committed throughout this period of examination prove that “thumb tripping” always bore a risk for hitchhiker and motorist alike. Above all other considerations, he convincingly demonstrates that the public’s perceptions about personal safety, risk aversion, and individualism eventually prevailed while social trust and cooperation (which had made this widespread practice possible) disintegrated during the 1980s and has never recovered. Even with the recent emergence of ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft, the author astutely notes that these monetized services are fundamentally different from the randomness of traditional hitchhiking because they provide passengers with user scores and reviews of their drivers to cater to modern Americans’ concerns about personal safety.

Arguably the greatest attribute of this book is its sheer diversity. Reid’s scope is not limited to the experiences of people from one or two backgrounds but attempts to capture as many walks of life as possible. From beginning to end, he painstakingly illustrates how various demographics (age, race, gender, social class, and sexuality) uniquely shaped every hitchhiker’s experience. High schoolers, Native Americans, and gay men are among the varied cast of actors featured throughout this inclusive history. Furthermore, every region is represented, including the southeastern United States. Of particular interest to this readership are the challenges that African American hitchhikers faced in the Jim Crow South. Considering the author’s laborious efforts to reconstruct this comprehensive history, he can take pride in knowing that *Roadside Americans* is aptly titled.

No less impressive is the breadth and depth of research that went into the book. The extensive list of newspapers in the bibliography alone is staggering. It is apparent that Reid reviewed every relevant source he could find to write this monograph. There is, however, one critique.

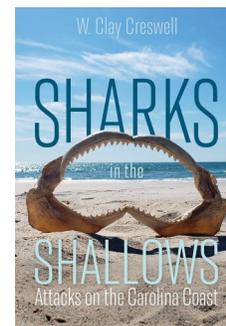
Researchers interested in consulting the source(s) that informed his discussion of the 1968 presidential election and the resulting realignment of American politics (pp. 151-152 and endnote #69) will find that they are not provided in the endnote, which is undoubtedly a simple oversight in an otherwise judiciously cited work.

This minor criticism by no means discredits the overall quality of this scholarly tour de force. Despite the numerous layers of this complex history, Reid adroitly navigates them all in a lucid and organized manner. Scholars and general readers interested in learning about the bygone era of hitchhiking in the United States or reexamining major themes of 20th century American history through this fresh perspective will find *Roadside Americans: The Rise and Fall of Hitchhiking in a Changing Nation* an illuminating and innovative addition to the body of social history literature.

A. Blake Denton, The University of Arkansas at Monticello

### ***Sharks in the Shallows: Attacks on the Carolina Coast***

W. Clay Creswell  
Columbia: University of  
South Carolina Press, 2021  
ISBN: 9781643361802  
184 p. \$19.99 (Pbk)



Most North Carolina families have a history of visiting the beaches along the North and South Carolina coasts. Some own homes there and others rent houses for parts of the summer to gather for a traditional or annual beach trip. Among the sea creatures that are well known to most family members are the jellyfish, the sea gulls, the dolphins and the sharks. A son in our family expressed his opinion of the sharks by saying, “The sharks stay in the water and I stay on the beach!”

Fear of sharks is well founded as W. Clay Creswell tells us in *Sharks in the Shallows Attacks on the Carolina Coast*. “Oceans are home to some five hundred species, and of those, fifty-six are known to reside in or pass through the waters off the coast of both North and South Carolina...at any time waders, swimmers, and surfers enjoying