Charleston Horse Power: Equine Culture in the Palmetto City

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Removal Act—the mass displacement of the Trail of Tears.

There were some atrocities committed by Native Americans too, and it is possible to feel some sympathy for some of the white victims. One of the most sympathetic is Jane Johns. She and her husband, Clement, were attacked in their home near Jacksonville, Florida, by Seminoles in 1836 who were resisting removal to the West. Her husband was killed, but Jane survived being shot, slashed by a blade (the precise weapon is not specified), scalped, and left for dead. While she recovered from her horrendous wounds, her ordeal was publicized by newspaper accounts, a book, and speaking tours throughout the eastern coastal South, with Johns becoming somewhat of a celebrity (pp. 146-148). The unfortunate woman lived until 1874. Not surprisingly, the story of Jane Johns was used to mobilize action against the remaining Seminoles of Florida.

_Aggression and Sufferings_ provides thorough documentation via numerous endnotes. The bibliography of primary sources—such as manuscript collections, federal government documents, and a truly large listing of historical newspapers and periodicals—and the extensive listing of secondary sources by scholars is impressive and indicates considerable research went into the writing of this book.

_Aggression and Sufferings_ is strongly recommended to academic libraries and public libraries collecting in the areas of Southern and Native American history. White persons of conscience might find themselves both angered and informed by this work. D. Evan Nooe makes a convincing case as to how the South coalesced into identifiable Native American Southerner and white Southerner social and political entities with implications for the present day.

*Tim Dodge,* Auburn University

**Charleston Horse Power: Equine Culture in the Palmetto City**

Christina Rae Butler
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2023
ISBN: 9781643364025
248 p. $27.99 (Pbk)

In this work of social history, author and historic preservationist Christina Rae Butler recounts the lived experiences and contributions of Charleston’s urban horse and mule populations from the colonial era to the 2020s. Diverse topics explored include equine apparel, animal cruelty and welfare, and the emergence of carriage tourism. Using Charleston as a case study, Butler ultimately wrote this monograph to “help residents and visitors understand that equines played a key role in building the city, bringing supplies into and out of the city, and conveying humans through it daily for hundreds of years” (p. 172).

The book is organized thematically into 10 chapters devoted to various facets of Charleston’s equine past, including streetscapes, occupations, and architecture. In their heyday, horses entertained residents at local races, and beloved fire horses like Russia kept the city safe by deploying fire engines so that their human counterparts could extinguish the flames. Though less celebrated, mules also provided essential services, hauling raw materials or carting off the city’s waste. More than a mere mode of transportation, equines once touched virtually all aspects of everyday life in the Palmetto State’s capital. By the end of the book, readers will gain a greater understanding of and appreciation for how ubiquitous horses and mules once were in Charleston and how thoroughly the city’s past human population depended on them.

Though not the first monograph to explore urban equine history, *Charleston Horse Power* builds on the foundation established by earlier works such as Clay McShane and Joel A. Tarr’s *The Horse in the City: Living Machines in the Nineteenth Century* (2007), which primarily focused on developments in Northern cities. In chronicling Charleston’s urban equine history, for instance, Butler not only expands the geographical scope of the literature, but also sheds light on unique regional dynamics, such as Southern dependence on mules and how Jim Crow era segregation affected African Americans employed in equine occupations.

Arguably the greatest attribute of *Charleston Horse Power* is the author’s enthusiasm for the subject. The author consulted a surprisingly long list of primary and secondary sources to inform the study. Though this corpus of textual sources alone provides an ample foundation for the book, Butler enriches this research by incorpor-
rating scores of visual sources (namely photographs and maps) and her own personal observations from driving equines. General readers without an intimate knowledge of horses or mules (presumably most readers in the 21st century) will particularly benefit from definitions of equine-related terminology found throughout the work.

There is one minor critique of the book. Butler’s enthusiasm for equines is rivaled only by her avid interest in architecture. As a preservationist, she is most in her element in the eighth chapter, “The Buildings Where Equines Lived and Worked.” While thorough and informative, the author regrettably loses sight of the horses and mules at times in discussing their facilities. This criticism, however, does not detract from the quality of the book. Well researched and well written, Charleston Horse Power: Equine Culture in the Palmetto City is a worthwhile contribution to the growing body of animal history literature. Academic libraries, particularly those with Southern history, animal studies, and urban history collections, should consider adding this title to their stacks.

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The Cuban Sandwich: A History in Layers

Andrew T. Huse, Bárbara C. Cruz, & Jeff Houck
Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2022
ISBN: 9780813069388
180 p. $24.95 (Pbk)

The Cuban Sandwich: A History in Layers by Andrew T. Huse, Bárbara C. Cruze, and Jeff Houck from the University of Florida Press is a historical look at the relationship between Spain, Cuba, the United States, and the people who come from those nations. It combines social, economic, and political history as a way for the reader to see the complexity that lies in the Cuban-American experience. At the center of this story is the Cuban sandwich. It is a clever way to draw the reader in and connect them to an essential piece of the American experience.

Each chapter examines the Cuban sandwich, considering a particular element in this complicated story rooted in independence, revolution, and conflicting ideas about the political and economic direction of this island just 90 miles south of Florida. The authors also profile individuals in each chapter who have a connection to the Cuban sandwich and to the theme of the respective chapter. The profiles give the reader a true sense of how this complicated history connects directly to the lives of everyday entrepreneurs and their desire to share a part of their story through food, specifically the Cuban sandwich.

In its seven chapters, the book gives the reader a journey through the geographical locations where this story unfolds—not just across America, but globally. One chapter highlights the story of a Cuban living and working in Ireland and his success bringing the Cuban sandwich to an island nation nearly 7,000 km from Havana. Carlos Arguelles’ story is used as an example of what it means to live in exile as a Cuban: “Others pointed out that the sandwich, ‘despite its name, since the 1960s has been practically only eaten in the geography of exile’” (p. 98).

It is hard to imagine that a single sandwich and its origin story could take up more than a handful of pages. Yet the authors of this book do just the opposite, giving the reader a story of a sandwich, a people, nations, and a desire to feel at home in a place that is not quite home. Food is often a great unifier within the story of humanity. It can connect people who might otherwise be at odds with one another. From its humble beginnings in Cuba and South Florida, to failed attempts by McDonald’s to give its spin on this cultural phenomenon, the Cuban sandwich is an essential artifact in understanding the Cuban-American experience.

Public and academic libraries will find this book a great addition to their collections. While written with an academic voice, the prose is accessible to the general reader, and the book tells an intriguing story for the armchair historian or for the professor looking for supplemental texts to draw their students into the beauty and benefit of historical narrative. It is beneficial for collections seeking to tell the immigrant story and its deep connection to the American story, and in particular, the story of Florida and its profound and sometimes divided ties to its Cuban neighbors less than 400 km away.