

Fall 11-1-2024

Tracing Florida journeys: Explorers, travelers, and landscapes then and now

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Recommended Citation

Jordan, Austina McFarland (2024) "Tracing Florida journeys: Explorers, travelers, and landscapes then and now," *The Southeastern Librarian*: Vol. 72: Iss. 3, Article 11.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62915/0038-3686.2099>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol72/iss3/11>

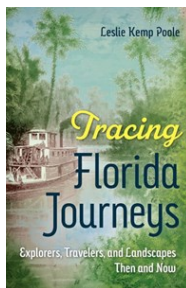
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she received the 2023 Henry Clay Public Service Award, named after the Kentucky statesman Henry Clay (1777-1852).

Sown in the Stars fills a gap in the current literature and would comfortably fit, like an old beloved friend, in any academic or public library with a collection on local agricultural and farming practices. The book provides a reminder that those “old ways” have not been forgotten. For those interested in planting by the signs, Dr. Hall provides a shortlist of recommended books. For those interested in her interviews, the recordings are archived in Berea’s Special Collections & Archives under *Planting by the Signs in Kentucky, Oral History Collection, 2018-2019*.

Linh Uong, University of North Georgia

Tracing Florida Journeys: Explorers, Travelers, and Landscapes Then and Now



Leslie Kemp Poole
Gainesville: University Press of
Florida, 2024
ISBN: 9780813080475
266 p. \$28.00 (Pbk)

Tracing Florida Journeys ties together the past and the present using carefully researched historical documentation, interviews with experts and advocates across the state, and the author’s own personal narrative, giving readers a colorful and expansive understanding of the history of Florida. It is part travel agent and part in-depth historical marker—pointing to the necessity for an ongoing discussion about the impact our collective past, present, and future have on the places we work, call home, and long to travel to in search of curiosity and exploration.

Presented in chronological order, Leslie Kemp Poole’s readers go on a journey beginning with Hernando de Soto (1539-1540) and ending with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (1931). Poole portrays nine notable individuals and outlines two formative periods in Florida history—a period dubbed “Travelers in the Panhandle” (1765-1891) and the famed 1892 Ingraham Everglades Expedition. Poole writes about people and places in her engaging work and weaves together a rich tapestry of Florida’s history. A historian with a rich back-

ground in environmental history, it is no surprise that Leslie Kemp Poole frequently pushes the reader to contemplate the modern-day environmental effects these people and events have had on the state, whether on land use, water resources, or tourism, as a few important examples.

Florida’s history, beginning well before official statehood in 1845, is complicated and inextricably linked to the Indigenous people living in the territory as the early explorers from Spain and other European nations arrived. Poole offers her readers a snapshot of this complexity and of how the experiences and decisions of those individuals and nations set the stage for how Florida would evolve as a place to be conquered and settled by countless outsiders and seen by those outside the region as a fantastical place that seemed almost mythical. This conflict develops mainly through her discussions and examples of travel writers who described Florida in these terms. This myth-making ultimately caused great confusion when visitors found the climate and environment inhospitable due to its unbearable heat and unwelcoming critters.

Poole’s work is especially compelling because she tells a person’s story and gives the reader crucial historical context for the period in which that person lived, making essential connections between the individual and what was happening around them. In the chapter covering Zora Neale Hurston and her work collecting the underrepresented stories of the Black community living and working in Florida, the reader also gets an informative description of the history of forestry and mill towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Poole understands that it is insufficient to outline quotes from Hurston’s reflections or those she interviewed. However, providing background information on the companies they worked for and their role in Florida’s economic and environmental history carefully shows us the interconnectedness of humanity.

Tracing Florida Journeys is an excellent example of natural and public history. Poole makes a solid argument for understanding the history of a place and why it must matter to residents, visitors, investors, and government officials alike. She routinely engages with the reader in such a way as to encourage a continual commitment to prioritizing the resources that help to sustain a way of life that values both the people and

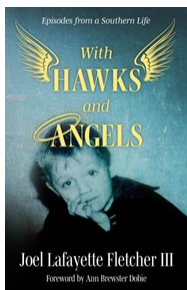
the land.

Tracing Florida Journeys is a co-publication with Florida Humanities and the University Press of Florida. Published in 2024, Poole's book was made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Leslie Kemp Poole is an Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Rollins College in Winter Park, FL. With a PhD in History from the University of Florida and as a fourth-generation Floridian, she provides a personal and highly approachable reader for both the academic and general reader interested in the storied and varied history of our nation's 27th state. Before working in higher education, she was an award-winning journalist for several newspapers, including the Orlando Sentinel.

This book is highly recommended for academic and public libraries, especially those with Florida and Southern History collections. Those planning a vacation or day trip centered on historical locations will find it especially enjoyable. Each chapter ends with detailed historical site information covered in the respective section. Additionally, the book includes numerous photographs and historical images that complement the rich descriptions provided by Poole.

Austina McFarland Jordan, University of North Georgia.

With Hawks and Angels: Episodes from a Southern Life



Joel Lafayette Fletcher, III
Jackson: University of Mississippi
Press, 2023
ISBN: 9781496844699
256 p. \$30.00 (Hbk)

Joel Lafayette Fletcher III's book *With Hawks and Angels: Episodes from a Southern Life* is a memoir of a privileged life. Privilege is the term he employs to denote the opportunities that come with status and financial security. In many ways, Fletcher did lead a privileged life. He attended a prestigious private university, traveled abroad, and met interesting and famous people. Unlike others with few financial resources, Fletcher not only had the desire to flee the discrimination he encountered, but he also had the financial means

to do so.

Fletcher was born in Lafayette, LA, and his family had power and influence in that community. Fletcher's father, Joel Lafayette Fletcher Jr., served as the president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette from 1941 to 1966. Fletcher remembers that at the age of five:

As a result of the [Huey] Long scandals, my father became president of the college and we moved into the imposing new mansion that my father's predecessor had finagled for himself. We not only had a cook to prepare our meals, but a maid to do the cleaning, and a male servant who came early in the morning to perform all other tasks. (pp. 211-212)

It was customary for his family to entertain distinguished guests who spoke at the University. Such guests included Archduke Otto von Habsburg (the last crown prince of Austria-Hungary). While there, Joel remembers von Habsburg patting him on the head, then sitting down to play *The Blue Danube* and *Tales from the Vienna Woods* on their piano. Other visiting dignitaries to the family home included a former president of France, Vincent Auriol, and celebrated soprano Lily Pons. These experiences set Fletcher apart from his school classmates and underscored his social difference.

Fletcher suspected that he was a homosexual during his adolescence, and that, too, accentuated his differences. He attended college at Tulane University in New Orleans, and he lived a closeted life there. He dated girls but describes his college years as "still trying to become what I was not" (p. 91). Upon graduation, and at the urging of his father, he received a commission as an ensign in the US Navy. He was assigned to an aircraft carrier based in San Francisco. Fletcher described San Francisco as "then as now a city of irresistible gay temptations" (p. 91).

After fulfilling his terms of service and being honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy, Fletcher applied to and was accepted into the graduate program at Stanford University. While at Stanford, he began to explore the possibilities of expatriate life. He was able to save money (largely because during his second year at Stanford, he lived rent free in a cottage on his parents' property) to plan a trip to Europe for a few months.