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Book Review: Gwinnett County, Georgia, and the Transformation of the American South, 1818-2018

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Gwinnett County, Georgia, and the Transformation of the American South, 1818–2018

edited by Michael Gagnon and Matthew Hild (University of Georgia Press, 2022: ISBN 9780820362090, \$34.95)

Gwinnett County, Georgia, and the Transformation of the American South, 1818-2018 covers Gwinnett County's long history with selected scholarly chapters dedicated to a particular topic. One of the few scholarly books on Gwinnett County, the book looks at some interesting aspects of the county's history, culture, people, and politics. Spanning from 1818 through 2018, the book covers Gwinnett as a frontier area, a Southern area, a

rural area, and an area of suburban and urban growth. Each chapter of the book narrows in on a specific piece of history in Gwinnett County, from Native American sovereignty, to MARTA, to shifting demographics, and even to the life of Buck Buchanan, a Gwinnett businessperson who made it big but also lost big. Overall, the book does an excellent job of covering some of the major changes and historical events that happened in Gwinnett over 200 years.

The book contains some interesting highlights of Gwinnett's history and historical context within the South. The first two chapters discuss Georgia and Native American relations through the lens of what will become Gwinnett County. The next three chapters discuss slavery, race, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. The middle five chapters deal with economic growth and change in the area, from the growth of towns and railroads to farmers' movement and cotton, and the lives of a few individuals from Gwinnett: a Confederate satirist by the alias of Bill Arp, the businessperson Buck Buchanan, and the first woman mayor in Georgia, Alice Harrell Strickland.

Chapters 11 and 12 bring us from the 1800s to the 1980s, and the last three chapters deal with Gwinnett in its modern context and bring an interesting scholarly look at things that have happened, including the shift in Gwinnett's demographics from the late 1990s that is continuing through today.

This book will be of most interest to the academic community, primarily to the historian, anthropologist, or Georgia history scholar. While this book is specifically targeted at academic scholars, the history buff may find this book an interesting and informative read, as it gives a deep scholarly

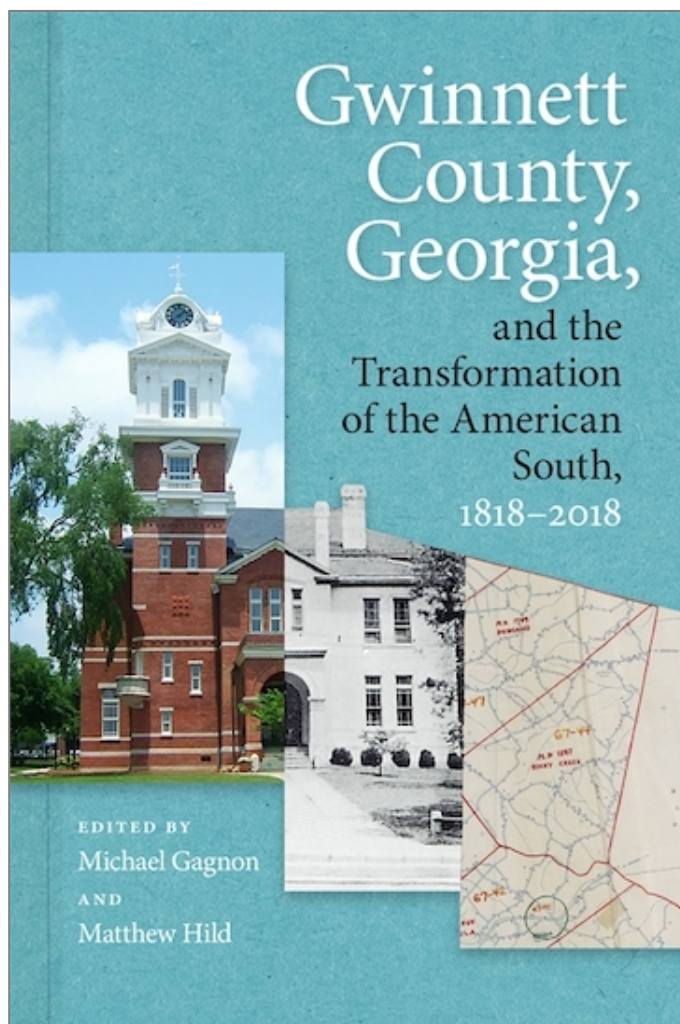


Image courtesy of University of Georgia Press

account of some of the more interesting oddities of Gwinnett's history, such as the MARTA saga or the story of Gwinnett as reluctant to secede from the Union—at least when Georgia did. This book would be an excellent addition to the university library with departments or majors in Appalachian studies, Georgia history, urban

studies, or anthropology with a focus on Georgia or the American South.

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at the University of North Georgia
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