4-1-1991

Forum : Vol. 14, No. 01 (Spring : 1991)

Florida Humanities Council.

Peter Matthiessen
John Hope Franklin
Gordon Patterson
J. D. McClatchy

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/forum_magazine

Recommended Citation
https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/forum_magazine/10

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Florida Humanities at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in FORUM : the Magazine of the Florida Humanities by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.
THE MAGAZINE OF
THE FLORIDA ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES

Spring • 1991
FORUM

INSIDE
- Peter Matthiessen on Killing Mister Watson (Introduction by Carl Hiaasen)
- John Hope Franklin Traverses the Road to Race and History
- Le Moyne's Florida: Europe's First Pictures from America
- A Visit with Two Great Poets: Richard Wilbur and James Merrill
THE HUMANITIES

Philosophy, ethics, religion, history, art criticism, literature, language, linguistics, folk life, archaeology, anthropology and jurisprudence.

They tell us about our lives, our cultures and our societies. They provide the traditions, interpretations and visions which define our existence.

Inside Highlights

1. Killing Mister Watson and other matters by Peter Matthiessen
   The story of the wild west - Florida's wild west — when it was a haven for outlaws at the turn of the century. Introduction by Carl Hiaasen, author of Skin Tight.

2. Traversing the Road to Race and History by John Hope Franklin
   A noted teacher/scholar reveals (among other things) how the historian works and how he contributes to the quality of life.

3. Le Moyne's Florida by Gordon Patterson
   No European knew how the New World looked until Theodore De Bry published a book of etchings of the first professional artist to record his impressions of this new country.

4. A Visit With Two Great Poets by J. D. McClatchy
   Lifelong friends Richard Wilbur and James Merrill share an instinctive elegance and a cultivated, witty tone. Masters of the word from a young age, they show us ourselves in startling textures and tones.

5. Grant Application Deadlines for 1991-92

21. A View from the Board by Mark D. Szuchman

THE FLORIDA ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

F • E • H FORUM Vol. XIV, No. 1 • Spring 1991
The magazine of THE FLORIDA ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
1718 East Seventh Avenue • Suite 301 • Tampa, Florida 33605
(813) 242-3473

The Florida Endowment for the Humanities, a non-profit organization—funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the State of Florida, and private contributions—supports public humanities activities in Florida. Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Florida Endowment for the Humanities. F•E•H Forum is distributed free of charge to the friends of the Florida Endowment for the Humanities and interested Floridians. If you wish to be added to the mailing list, please so request in writing.

FRONT COVER

Charles Sherod "Ted" Smallwood stands in the door of the Chokoloskee post office. He eventually became the owner of most of the island of Chokoloskee. Author Peter Matthiessen called Smallwood's account of Ed Watson the "best" of the hard-to-come-by tales of that controversial Floridian. (See story, Page 1)

(Front page photo courtesy of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida)
Peter Matthiessen
on Killing Mister Watson*
and other matters with an introduction by Carl Hiaasen

(Abstracted from comments presented January 14, 1991 at the Broward County Library, Ft. Lauderdale, sponsored by the Florida Center for the Book and the Naples Literary Seminar, Inc., with FEH funding.)

Last year I was asked by the Chicago Tribune to review Killing Mister Watson*. It just knocked me out.

It took me into places that I had been in my childhood. Rivers I had taken a boat on or canoed. Places I had been snook or tarpon fishing. He told me things I did not know about in the voices of those who lived there.

This book held me from the first page to the last. The interesting thing is that the climax of the book happens in the first chapter. It is the sorting out that captivates you. That is a rare thing for a writer to pull off — hit you with the big punch at first, then expect you to hang around and see what happened. He does it wonderfully.

This is really a story of wild west, Florida. People don’t realize what Florida was like at the turn of the century. Florida was a haven for outlaws.

I write about outlaws all the time. Matthiessen made me feel guilty about the way I write, which is pretty much by the seat of my pants.

Any writer will tell you that the most numbing moment is to pick up a book that’s really, really good and start reading it. You have suicidal thoughts, including the thought that — and this occurred to me in a dark moment — compared to what Peter Matthiessen had done, I was doing pretty much the work of a fraud.

It's really a magical book. It will take you back to a place in time that is still happening today.

We in Florida remain a magnet for people who are on the run from somewhere else. They are coming here either for the sunshine or to escape from something. Many of them have been elected to public office. Ed Watson had similar ambitions. That is no accident. His heritage and his legacy live on.

It occurs to me that I should, since I am not a Floridian, make some attempt to establish my credentials for having written a book which pretends to represent Florida.

Once I wrote a book about American Indian people. I spoke about this book in New York City. I tried to reassure the mainly elderly audience that I was not Indian nor

anything like that. At the end of the talk there was a short silence. Then a lady in the back row said, “I don’t think I’ve ever seen an Indian before. He’s really quite attractive.”

So, I’m not a Floridian. However, I’ve been hanging out and around Florida for over 50 years.

My first memory of Florida was going up the Loxahatchee River, visiting an old trapper up there when I was eight. I remember losing a big tarpon down in Government Cut when I was little. It broke my heart. The mate on the boat was clumsy with the gaff. He hadn’t had much experience with tarpon. He lost my fish. I was inconsolable for days.

I came down here to Florida in my twenties and thirties. I was a rabid ornithologist. I just loved birds. I got into conservation writing. I did a lot of writing for Audubon magazine. I savagely attacked the Kissimmee River project. I wrote about Corkscrew Swamp. I attacked the Jet Port. I did a long piece for the Miami Herald Sunday Magazine on the Miccosukee Reservation situation.

When I was about 17, my father, my brother and I were starting up the west coast in his boat. As we went by the Ten Thousand Islands region my father told me about a big old white house sitting in the mangroves. Nothing else around it. A big strong white house.

That house was taken down after Hurricane Donna. The National Park Service said it had been so damaged that it was a menace. They just used the hurricane damage as an excuse. That house was very, very strongly built.

Anyway, that was Ed Watson’s famous house where terrible deeds took place. Just before he was killed by his neighbors, three people were murdered there.

Watson did not do it. It was actually his foreman who did the killing. The dispute was, “Did Watson order it? Was it done under his direction, or was it not?” That question has never been successfully resolved. So here we are considering the relationship between fact and legend in Florida history.

I didn’t want this book to be just a suspense story. I was much more interested in the psychological makeup of the people who killed Mr. Watson and their feelings as opposed to those who felt that he should not have been killed. So I set the execution up as a kind of myth and then work back to it at the end of the book.

Here, from the author’s note to the reader:

The book is in no way “historical,” since almost nothing here is history. On the other hand, there is nothing that could not have happened — nothing inconsistent, that is, with the very little that is actually on record. It is my hope and strong belief that this reimagined life contains much more of the truth of Mister Watson than the lurid and popularly accepted “facts” of the Watson legend.

Now the Prologue, or as Carl Hiaasen calls it, the first chapter:

In the hurricane’s wake, the labyrinthine coast where the Everglades deltas meet the Gulf of Mexico lies broken, stunned, flattened to mud by
FEH sponsored a series of evenings with eminent authors during Miami's world renowned Book Fair International in November of 1990. Professor Franklin was one of the participants. We have prevailed on him to share the substance of his remarks with a wider audience, our readers.

A few years ago I made the statement that if a composer could write operas, string quartets, symphonies, études, concertos, and oratorios, then an historian should be able to cut a similar swath. The historian should write monographs, broad interpretive works, historiographical studies, general works, textbooks, historical essays, and edit the works of others. Observing that I had already written in all these areas, I declared myself ready to start all over again.

The head of a major publishing house in New York responded with the acute observation that I had never edited an encyclopedia. Thereupon, he invited me to be the general editor of an encyclopedia of African American history.

At my advanced age, with so many unfulfilled commitments, I had to decline his exciting invitation. I should have added that my earlier statement had been brash, ill-advised, and inaccurate!

From this experience I learned that an historian's work is never done. In all probability he or she had not worked in all the established categories. Further, new or emerging categories could well claim his or her attention for years to come.


Perhaps the greatest satisfaction grew out of the opportunity to review virtually my entire writing career, and to make some judgments and decisions about the appropriateness of including this or that essay in this volume.

I was pleased, of course, that I had so many options. I could choose from published essays at least three times the number that made the final cut. Had I extended the consideration to unpublished essays, the number could have been several times those that had been published.

Among the unpublished essays were works involving ongoing research whose conclusions were, at best, tentative, and which had not been refereed since they had not been considered by any learned journal, and had not benefited from outside criticism. Some essays that I rejected dealt with historical matters that greatly interested me, such as women's history and western history, but which I had dropped before my findings reached the definitive stage that could claim the serious and critical attention of others.

Delighted audiences crowd eagerly around Dr. John Hope Franklin wherever he speaks.
Other unpublished essays were lively enough but perhaps not scholarly enough. They were written, in most instances, to blow off steam, to vent my hurt and outrage at the mistreatment of others. They dealt with such topics as the barbaric treatment of blacks on trains and railroad stations during World War II, and the curious appeal to blacks to fight in that war because it would secure basic freedoms for Europeans and Asians which blacks themselves were daily denied in the United States.

My editor once called these my "mad essays." She still hopes that I will put them together in a volume. She has a point. As long as our universities are centers of racial bigotry and intolerance, as long as the President of the United States calls a bill to restore the rights of blacks guaranteed in the Civil Rights Act of 1866 a "quotas bill," there is a place for my "mad" book on the shelves of bookstores and libraries.

I have resisted the temptation to deal further with the politics of higher education and African American history with which I dealt in a paper I read before the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Nor do I wish to expound further on the future of African American history, the subject of my first Martin Luther King Lecture at the New School for Social Research.

These essays struck me as being incomplete in themselves. The discussion period following my delivery of the lectures had much to do with their effectiveness. To be included, they would have to be rewritten, which would violate a cardinal rule governing the selection of the essays in Race and History.

Only two of these essays are actually chapters in published books. One deals with slavery and the martial South. It appeared in a slightly different version in The Militant South 1800-1860, published in 1956. It explores the nature and the impact of the sensitive, bellicose, trigger-happy Southern slaveholders.

Many white historians at the time seemed to feel that black historians should confine their studies of the past to "their own people." Should a black...
A Chief in council. A depiction of early American Indians by Jacques Le Moyne, the first professional artist to record his impressions of this newly discovered land.

Le Moyne's Florida: Europe's first pictures from America
by Gordon Patterson

From the very first accounts of Columbus, Europeans were fascinated by America. Aside from a handful of crude woodcuts, no one had shown how the New World looked. Nothing until 1591. Then Theodore De Bry published a book of etchings.

Brevis Narratio eorum quae in Floridae Americae provincia Galles by Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, including 43 handsome etchings, was the second volume in De Bry's series Historia Americae. When completed, the Historia included 35 accounts of voyages and over 250 illustrations.

The year 1991 marks the four hundredth anniversary of De Bry's publication of Le Moyne's representations of Florida.

Le Moyne was the first professional artist to record his impressions of the New World. This visual record of the New World was then, and still is, a watershed in the cultural exchange which Columbus began. Others had written books. But none of those gave an idea of how the New World looked. Le Moyne made the words come alive.

Few now realize the pictures came out of an abortive attempt to make Florida into a French Protestant province.

At the midpoint of the 16th century, Europe was divided into Catholic and Protestant camps. War threatened. Spain vowed to exterminate the Protestant heresy. France was nominally a Catholic power but it possessed a strong Protestant faction. The French government temporized.

With a clear eye for the uncertainties in these conditions, Gaspar de Coligny, a powerful Huguenot (Protestant) nobleman, was inspired by the idea of creating a Protestant colony in the New World. In 1562, he sent Captain Jean Ribault to find a location for this enterprise.

On the first of May, 1562, Ribault arrived at the mouth of a river. He
named it the River of May and dedicated the site by erecting a column bearing the arms of the King of France. Today the river is known as the St. Johns. (The "May" is retained in the name of the naval base, "Mayport.")

Ribault explored the coast and found it an "incomparable lande," both bountiful and full of potential, inhabited by "naked" people "as well shapen and proportioned of bodye as any people in all the worlde, very gentill, cautious, and of good na
ture." Surely God would bless a permanent colony here if the French treated the natives with "gentilness and humanytie."

Ribault returned to France early in June. He left thirty of his men at a hastily constructed fort, called Charlesfort, located near what is now Beaufort, South Carolina. Ribault promised to return with shiploads of colonists and supplies.

Unfortunately, civil war intervened. France was torn between Protestant and Catholic factions. Ribault sought assistance in England, ran afoul of Queen Elizabeth, and ended up in jail.

Two years elapsed before Admiral Coligny was prepared to rekindle the Florida enterprise. In 1564 he directed René Laudonnière, Ribault's former lieutenant, to recruit colonists and gather a fleet. Clearly, Coligny envisioned Florida as a sanctuary for his fellow Huguenots.

Laudonnière specifically recruited Jacques Le Moyne for the trip. A native of Dieppe, Le Moyne was both a trained artist and an ardent Huguenot.

In Le Moyne's words:

My precise role would be, when we reached The Indies, to chart The sea-coast and to observe the situation of The towns and The depth and course of the rivers, and also the harbours, the houses of the people, and anything new there might be in that province.

The French experience in Florida was short and tragic. By the fall of 1564 the French had finished constructing Fort Caroline. Laudonnière, however, failed to provide adequate leadership. There was a mutiny in November. Relations with the Amerindians deteriorated.

Summer brought the harvest of the French folly. Relief from France did not come. By July, 1565, they were starving. Laudonnière ordered his men to destroy Fort Caroline and prepare for departure.

Then, a miracle. On August 28, 1565, Jean Ribault showed up. His ships were filled with supplies and new colonists. But they had the devil to pay.

Unfortunately, Philip II of Spain had gotten wind of the French undertaking. That the French were heretics was bad enough. That they were positioned to threaten the Spanish treasure fleets was unthinkable. Spain dispatched Pedro Menendez to rid La Florida of the French menace.

Six days after Ribault's arrival Menendez's fleet reached Fort Caroline. The French and Spanish fleets fought an inconclusive battle. Then Menendez sailed south to found St. Augustine. On September 10, Ribault followed Menendez. He sailed with the majority of the troops, leaving only 20 soldiers to defend Fort Caroline's 240 inhabitants.

A powerful hurricane intervened before the battle could take place. Ribault's fleet was smashed along the coast. Menendez's fleet was able to take Fort Caroline in the midst of the hurricane. Shortly before dawn on September 20th, the Spaniards attacked the French outpost.

Fort Caroline and 132 French were destroyed. Only a handful of Huguenots escaped.

(Continued on Page 18)
ARABIAN NIGHT

Features unseen across the sand, he arrived, 
slung as baggage, case, train, of a death, a light his 
way as he, meaning every, finds, in 
their oasis,

What went wrong? You hear in the mirror, all the 
farther away to seat in the hall of Ca bares?
On and here's Enja, all along been nearly
after you heard?

No reply, then. ("Here" of course, also) insight's 
dazzle, snap's at dawn, like a wide then first lit.
Left! in one heartstring glassrend, stronger 
keenly to follow.

think years a slice, yet these traits, plus that 
not do strong — loyalty, optimism, 
prophetic's pure heart in AFRICAN musti 
straight out of Baghdad)

serve the life-long aches: a men no longer 
sorrows mean, but soon as my own. Baghdad 
thus his lamp. what? age? — and the navel has been 
forth in one lifetime.

James Merrill

Hamlon Brook

At the river's shadow's brink 
Where the stream slums to a liquor-jet
I lean to the water, shaking its top with sweet, 
And see, before I can drink,
A startled mending trout
Of spotted near. transparency

Towing a shadow darker than he. 
He survives now, starting out

To where, in a flicker slow 
of sparks and glittering salt, he wanders
Through stream-bed rocks, disturbing foamed leaves, 
And built them out of rocks

Breath, a sighing pass 
Crazed by the skinning of a breeze
Of luminous dragon - slave-keeps the face, 
In which deep blinders pass

And a white precision
Of mirrored birch, trees plunge down
Through where the azures of the stream drawn
How shall I think all this?

Play tricks is to supply
Dry reeds with what can cool, and strike, 
Leaving them dumb, forever, also, with an ache
Nothing can satisfy.

Richard Wilbur

In the authors' own handwriting — snippets of Arabian Night by James Merrill and Hamlen Brook by Richard Wilbur.

A Visit with Two Great Poets

by J. D. McClatchy


When James Merrill arrived on 
the Amherst College campus, "there 
was, I fancied, on my favorite teach-
ners' faces a kind of afterglow, a trace 
of half-bewildered delight: the brilli-
ant youth (Richard Wilbur), whose 
poems were appearing in magazines 
and were soon to be collected in a 
first volume, had only lately sat in their 
classrooms."

When the two young poets — 
Merrill and Wilbur — met soon after, it 
is not surprising that they formed a 
friendship that has lasted nearly half a 
century. But the friendship even pre-
ceded that meeting.

Merrill remembers that reading 
those earliest poems by Wilbur: 
"though I hadn't yet met their author, 
was for me like the first meeting with a 
lifelong friend. I marvelled at their 
relish for the world, their openness to 
intricacy, their good humor and, best 
of all, their unaffected faith in art. In a 
flash I saw a dozen aspects of my own 
nature — or what was becoming my 
nature with every page I turned — 
given form and voice. It was what art 
could do."

What from the start these two po-
ets discovered in each other's work 
was a temperament that believed in 
art — believed in the power of lan-
guage to refresh and redeem experi-
ence, believed that things are most 
themselves when seen as something 
else. Their instinctive elegance, their 
play of mind over the graces of this 
world and gravities of its sorrows, their
Two Great Poets...
(continued from preceding page)
preference for traditional forms and a cultivated, witty tone — there was a
time, a few decades ago, when all this seemed to one side of a burly
American literary culture that had come to favor a more surreal or natu-
ral manner, expressionist melodrama or stuttered confessions. but Richard
Wilbur and James Merrill persisted in the art they believed in. Not the least
of their achievements is to have con-
verted a large readership to the ex-
acting standards they had held them-
selves to all along.

Between them, Wilbur and Merrill
have more medals on their chests than
the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Each has won
— sometimes twice — every major
prize that can be awarded our writers.
And both got off to prodigiously quick
starts. Each had published a first book
by age 26, though there was nothing
of the stilted newcomer about
either; each was acclaimed at once
as the young master of a complex art.

Richard Wilbur
was born in New
York City in 1921.
and grew up in New
Jersey. His
father, a
portrait
painter, had rented
a farm
there from
a friend —
an exquis-
ite gentle-
man's farm, with tennis court and
walled garden along with the dairy
and barn.

After serving in the 36th Infantry
Division during the war, Wilbur enrolled
at Harvard to do graduate work. He’d
intended to be a scholar of 17th cen-
tury literature, but his wife showed
some of his poems to a friend; the
friend passed them on to a publisher.
The Beautiful Changes appeared in
1947, announcing a poet with extra-
ordinary gifts.

His work stood out as brightly in-
tellectual, and brilliantly turned. He
delighted in a "maculate, cracked,
askew/Gaypocked and potsherd
world" of objects and ideas — the
fallen world, in short, of the religi-
ous imagination that yearns for transcen-
dence but works out its salvation
among the jagged edges of scattered,
flashing bits of an ordinary mir-
rored life. From the start he wrote in a
style that flattered the mind his poems
celebrated — its powers and limits.
The complex disciplines of verse have
always intrigued Wilbur.

"A lot of my poems are arguments
against a thingless, an earthless kind
of imagination, or spirituality," he once
told an interviewer. "I like resistance, I
like it in art, as Gautier did: 'vers, marbe,
onyx, enamel.' And I like the world to
resist my ordering of it, so that I can
feel it is real and that I'm honoring its
reality." To equate verse with marble
or enamel says something of the pol-
ished finish a Wilbur poem has, but
underestimates the pulsing, vivid
movement of thought and feeling that
go on inside the poem.

New collections of Wilbur's poems
appeared regularly, beginning with
Ceremony in 1950 through New and
Collected Poems in 1988, a book that
won for Wilbur his second Pulitzer Prize.
These publications made two things
clear. One is that his abiding subject
is desire, "the dreamt land / Toward
which all hungers leap, all pleasures
pass." That desire can be embodied
in a woman, in a landscape, in the
weather.

"The heart's wish for life" is over
and over again dramatized in New
England scenes of volatile seasonal
changes or surprising urges from un-
derground or overhead. A loneliness
haunts his poems too. Wilbur writes
with the understanding that love and
beauty imply a separation. The de-
tached observer in a forest clearing,
or the lover awakened by dawn —
both share the same ache:

And call that sorrow sweet
That teaches us to see
The final face of love
In what we cannot be.

What also became clear over the
years is that Wilbur's voice changed.
Perhaps that owed something to the
theater work he had done, his Broad-
way lyrics for Candida and his incom-
parable translations of Moliere. In any
case, the best of his late poems were
looser, longer, closer to speech, with a
dramatic flair and psychological nu-
ance. And if anything, he has shar-
pened his ability to scrutinize details,
which are described with a precision
that can startle.

"I should like to be thought of," he
once put it with a characteristic un-
derstatement, "as someone who wrote
two or three
poems
which, as
Robert Frost
said, have
been 'hard
to get rid
of.'

Like
Wilbur.

James Merrill
was also born in New
York City, but in 1926. His father Char-
les, co-founder of the famous brokerage
house of Merrill, Lynch, and his
mother were divorced in 1939, an
event with reverberations throughout
Spanish Pathways Resource Guide Available

A compilation of the Florida’s libraries, museums, and historical societies which hold documentary and other materials relevant to the Spanish presence in Florida has been prepared by FEH.

Those looking forward to the 500th anniversary of the voyages of Columbus will be particularly interested. Readers can locate materials dealing with Columbus’ connections between the European and Amerindian worlds.

The guide has information on the holdings of 37 significant collections relevant to the Hispanic heritage of Florida, plus a bibliography of suggested readings.


Candidates Sought

Candidates for the 1991-92 Speakers Bureau are being sought.

Initiating the application process is simple. Send a letter of interest, an indication of topics which could be addressed, and a resume to the Resource Center Director.

Appropriate candidates should hold an M.A. or Ph.D. in one of the fields of the humanities, have public speaking experience outside of the classroom, be willing to travel, and be prepared to speak to two topics.

We are particularly interested in topics dealing with Florida, especially Florida and the Columbian Quincentenary.

Selection of the 1991-92 Speakers Bureau members will be made by late summer, 1991.

Two Great Poets... (continued from preceding page)

Merrill’s poetry — as if he were the child of a broken home continually trying to reconcile his warring parents, or those sides of his own personality those parents had helped shape and still represent. It would be absurd, of course, to reduce Merrill’s genius to any such formula. In fact, if any word describes his temperament, it is mercurial. If any word describes the shape of his career, it is surprising.

Few readers would have anticipated that the author of Merrill’s early books — his First Poems appeared in 1951 — with their exquisite, highly wrought lyrics, would have come by 1982 to write ‘The Changing Light at Sandover’, a gigantic and unnerving epic poem based on the Ouija board.

But both those early lyrics and that late epic — along with the narratives and meditations of this middle period — resolve to a phrase used about Merrill’s work by Mirabell, one of the characters in the poet’s epic trilogy. He calls Merrill’s poems “Chronicles of Love & Loss.” There is no better description of Merrill’s achievement than that, not least because it stresses the autobiographical and narrative thrust of his work, his sense of a life lived and understood over time, and also because it links this poet’s two great themes together, love and loss. Love is not fully itself until lost, until it becomes a memory, becomes art.

Again and again, in small poems and large, Merrill returns to the greatest loss of love in his life — that occasioned by his parents’ divorce. It is as if that split threw into stronger relief a...

Grant Application Deadlines for 1991-92

For projects expected to begin after November 1, 1991:

Preliminary Application due by July 10, 1991

Final Application (1 original, 28 copies) due by August 8, 1991

Notification by October 9, 1991

For projects expected to begin after February 1, 1992:

Preliminary Application due by October 3, 1991

Final Application (1 original, 28 copies) due by November 6, 1991

Notification by January 2, 1992

For projects expected to begin after June 15, 1992:

Preliminary Application due by February 8, 1992

Final Application (1 original, 28 copies) due by March 15, 1992

Notification by May 15, 1992
kind of split personality in the poet himself.

Certainly his mind prefers doubled perspectives, prefers to be of two minds about all matters. And the elegant tensions in his work as well derive from characteristics we could call paternal and maternal. But Merrill’s ambition is not merely to display the two aspects of his personality or savor his own ambivalence about experience, but to unite and harmonize the sides of his life.

From those first books in the 1950s until his latest, The Inner Room, published in 1988, the hallmark of Merrill’s art has been the luxuriant allure of his work’s textures, the lapidary brilliance of its imagery, the fluent, refined eloquence of its tone, qualities that complement its thought-provoking designs.

Early in his career he wrote a novel and two plays, and that may have helped him toward a narrative amplitude and a more wholly convincing voice. Merrill has also been a constant traveler, and for many years lived part of each year in Greece. The ironic discoveries and displacements of a life on the move alternate in his books with marvelous descriptions of the domestic life. Rather than in deliberate shifts of style, he has sought in new experiences the sources of change in his work.

Travel, romance, history, aging—in each turn of life he looks for ways to illuminate the toils of both the flesh and the spirit.

The images both poets finally show us are of ourselves.

As far back as 1967, when he was awarded the first of his two National Book Awards, the judges praised Merrill for “his scrupulous and uncompromising cultivation of the poetic art, evidenced in his refusal to settle for any easy or profitable stance; for his insistence on taking the kind of tough, poetic chances which make the difference between esthetic success or failure.”

There was nothing easy about the task he set himself in the mid-1970s, when he began to make a poem from the messages he and his companion David Jackson had taken down from the Ouija board over a 20 year period. “In Divine Comedies” (1976), “Mirabell: Books to Number” (1978), and “Scripts for the Pageant” (1980) — eventually collected into a single volume, with additional material, and titled The Changing Light at Sandover — his project grew into an immense encounter with the sublime.

“Don’t you think there comes a time,” he has asked, “when everyone, not just a poet, wants to get beyond the self? To reach, if you like, the ‘god’ within you?” Merrill’s encounters with the spirit-world, of course, all the initiations and revelations, have everything to do with his life, and with ours.

Neither Merrill nor Wilbur is comfortable with large claims and theories about his work. To understand either poet, it makes more sense to reread the poems themselves.

You will find Merrill’s ‘Arabian Night’ in The Inner Room (1988). The poem is written in sapphics, a demanding, highly stressed, and unrhymed verse form, named after the Greek poet Sappho.

Wilbur’s ‘Hamlen Brook’ first appeared in his New and Collected Poems (1988) and should remind us of his link with Robert Frost—the buoyant speechliness, his controlled surprises, and canny moralism in Wilbur’s cold pastoral. Wilbur’s rhyme-scheme “ABBA” envelops line-lengths that expand and contract like breathing.

The images both poets finally show us are of ourselves. Trying to account for the origin of poetry — what prompts the words, the thoughts? — Robert Frost once said that poems begin with a lump in the throat, a homesickness. In this world, Richard Wilbur once wrote, we are all ‘homelessly at home.’ When poems show us our true condition — as these two exquisite poems do — then each of us is left with that same lump in the throat. That, as James Merrill said, is what art can do.
the wild tread of God... a far gray sun picks up dead glints from windrows of rotted mullet, heaped a foot high.

This is the famous hurricane of 1910. It produced the highest recorded wind in the history of the United States' weather service to that time.

A figure in mud-fringed calico, calling a child, stoops to retrieve a Bible, then wipes wet grime from The Goad Book with pale, dulled fingers. She straightens, turning slowly, staring toward the south. From the wall of man graves far off dawn The bay, The drum of The boat engine comes and goes, then comes again, a little louder. "Oh, Lord," she whispers, half-aloud. "Oh no, please no, sweet Jesus."

Along toward low gray-yellow twilight, Postmaster Smallwood, on his knees beneath his store, is raking out the last of his drowned chickens. What the hurricane has left of Smallwood's dock — a few poor pilings — sticks out at angles off the end of the spoil bank where he'd dug his canal for Indian canoes.

Postmaster Smallwood, Ted Smallwood, was real. Ted Smallwood wrote the best account — well, he didn't write it, he told it to Dr. Charlton Tabeau, a very fine historian who used to be at the University of Miami.

Tabeau wrote a book called Chokoloskee Bay Country. It is a wonderful account of the old frontier. There are a few pages in it of Ted Smallwood's memoirs, including his account of Ed Watson. Smallwood's account, with one other coming from more or less the same time, are probably the most accurate in existence. But even they have a few mistakes.

Back to Smallwood on his knees, under his store, raking out the last of his drowned chickens:

Three days before, when that boat had headed south, all ten families on the island watched it go. Smallwood was the only man to wave, but he, too, prayed that this would be the end of it, that the broad figure at the helm, sinking into darkness at the far low line of trees, would disappear forever from their lives.

Said Old Man D. D. House, "He will be back."

The House clan lives one hundred yards away, east of the store. Ted Smallwood sees his father-in-law's black Sunday boots descend the Indian mound, with Bill House and Young Dan and Lloyd barefoot behind.

Ted Smallwood married the House boys' sister, Mamie. These are the three oldest D. D. House boys — Young Dan, Lloyd, and Bill.

Daniel David House has silver in his brows and his mustache juts into axhead sideburns. Though he wears no collar underneath his beard, he is dressed as if for Sunday, in white shirt, shiny black frock coat, wiped boots, and stiff black pants hauled high by gaituses...

"Where's his missus, then?" the old man says.

"She's right inside here with her young'uns. With your daughter and granddaughters, Mr. House." When the old man grunts and turns away, Ted's voice goes higher. "Them women and children gone to have 'em a good view!"

Henry Short, expressionless, moves past, holding his rifle down along his leg.

"You, too?"
Some of you know Marjory Stoneman Douglas’s wonderful book on the Everglades. In her book she has a fairly accurate account of the Watson legend. She says that Curtis House’s great-grandfather, C. G. McKinney, was reputed to be the man who led the posse. She correctly states that he actually was not there.

She claims the man who fired the first shot was a white fisherman name Luke Short. In fact, it was Henry Short. He was a black man. He was a very distinguished hunter and fisherman who had been raised by the House family.

The island men are gathering, twenty or more. All have shotguns or rifles....

Henry Short leans his 30.30 Winchester into a fork of the big fish-fuddle that the hurricane has felled across the clearing. The gun is hidden when he leans against the tree, and his arms are folded as if in sign that none of this is any of his business.

Twilight gathers behind the coming boat. The armed men stand half-hidden in the undergrowth, too tense to slap at the mosquitoes. In the dusk of a dark day, in the tree shadow, the postmaster can no longer make out faces beneath the old and broken hats. His neighbors seem anonymous as outlaws....

With killing Mister Watson nearly finished, Noel Buckner and Rob Whittlesey of the PBS Adventure series followed Peter Matthiessen to the Everglades in 1989. The result, "Lost Man’s River," is 56 video minutes on the track of the reflections and memories which brought Matthiessen back to this wild frontier over 15 years.

Matthiessen and his old friend, Peter White, move through the channels, rivers, and islands that are the Everglade coast. Perhaps America’s last frontier, this is the spawning ground for stories of gator poaching, smuggling, and Mr. Watson. Here is the mysterious source of Killing Mr. Watson.

Is your organization interested in discussing Killing Mr. Watson? Want to use this filmed provocation for discussion? It is available on loan to any non-profit organization. Contact the FEH Resource Center (813) 272-3473.

If you wish to purchase a VHS copy for your own use, contact Mystic Fire Video, Inc. (800) 727-8433.

— Getting to the Heart of Mr. Watson —
Any questions?

Q. What motivated you to write about Watson?

When I first heard the story I was intrigued by a man being executed by his neighbors.

The neighbors were not outlaws, but peace-loving, hard-working people. And Mr. Watson was, by all accounts, very popular: a very good husband, a very good father, a very good provider. He wasn’t some sort of stunted serial killer. He was quite a guy. That attracted me.

The Watson story is a very strong one. The deeper one gets into it the stronger it gets.

Q. How many people has Watson been accused of murdering? Isn’t it around 100?

I do not think so. The highest number I have ever heard is 55 or 57. It’s hard to know. No one survived to tell. No one ever saw him kill. There is a mathematical possibility that he, in fact, killed no one. Based on what I know, there are seven deaths from which it is very hard to separate him. Let’s put it that way, about seven. That is enough.

He was the only man ever arrested for the murder of Belle Starr, “The Outlaw Queen.” In Oklahoma, on February 3, 1889, she was ambushed, shot off her horse, and finished off. She’d had a fight with someone named Watson. The same Ed Watson. Depending on his mood, he used to boast from the bars of Key West that he’d knocked off Belle Starr. Other times he denied it. There is no question Watson was the man who was arrested for the killing. But they acquitted him. Not enough evidence for conviction.

Q. Wasn’t there a big scandal at the time? How do the families feel about it today?

Oh, it’s still going on. I am doing a second volume which is really about the fallout among his family, his sons and grandsons, how they reacted and how they lived after this. In those days it was no joke to have a man like Watson as your forbearer. The scandal must have been tremendous.

His daughter was a very beautiful woman who married the president of the First National Bank in Fort Myers. The son-in-law was a big family man, came from a very good family, and so it was a complicated business. Even the Governor, Napoleon Broward, interceded for Ed Watson at one point when he was tried for another murder up in Madison County.

He had good connections. He was very well known. He was a friend of Jose Marti. He got around.

Q. How did the families react to your doing the book? Any objections?

There’s a couple that are kind of cross with me. I don’t think they should be. I really bent over backwards to be fair and to get it straight. But most of the people I have heard from like it a lot. House, whose great uncle, Ernie, was Bill House’s son, was one of my most important informants. He and his family like it a lot, and the Smallwoods like it. But others are a little cranky about it. It is fiction, after all. It is not supposed to be dead accurate.

Q. Are there things you left out of the book?

A second book will deal with Watson’s sons and grandsons and their families and resolve some of the mysteries I set up in this book. Who actually shot first? Who was Leslie Cox, who actually killed the three people on Watson’s plantation? I stay even-handed because I don’t know quite who Watson is and I want the readers to have their own intuitions.

The third book — I am very ambitious — will be Watson’s side of the
Killing Mr. Watson . . .
(continued from preceding page)
whole story, from the time he was a little boy until the time he’s approaching this crowd of men on the shore.

Q. How did the people react when you came around?
They didn’t like me much in the beginning. I just hung around. They thought maybe they could get rid of me if they answered my questions. I’ve been doing this at least five or six years. I’ve made a lot of good friends. They introduce me to other people. Gradually other people trusted me, at least a little bit.

Q. Do you think of Watson as a typical example of a twentieth-century American?
He is a classic American frontier type. Nowadays the classic frontier types have other people do their dirty work for them. We all know, from reading Carl Hiaasen and other people, that there is plenty of that. We know from the Karen Silkwood story, and many others, that people who get in the way of corporate enterprise may not survive. Watson was more direct about his methods. He took things in his own hands.

Yes, he is an American character. He is also a very classic nineteenth-century character. There were many people like him. Some ran small republics in South America. They were very ruthless, a little bit like in medieval days, or Renaissance Italy, or places like that. If people were in your way, you took care of them.

Now we have a man, Saddam Hussein, who behaves this way. Hussein is in a situation where he can do precisely what he wants and kill whom he pleases. But he is by no means unique. There have been people like this throughout history. We have a lot of them on our current frontiers — both our corporate frontiers and our wilderness frontiers.

Q. What about the Crazy Horse situation you were involved in a while ago?
Maybe I should explain. Many of you will not know about Crazy Horse. The book has been suppressed for seven years. In the Spirit of Crazy Horse (Viking, 1983) is the story of a man named Leonard Peltier who is doing two life terms in Leavenworth for allegedly murdering two FBI agents.

He did not do it. He was railroaded and framed.

We are trying to get Peltier a new trial. Senator McCain, who has gotten interested in the case, is trying to get him pardoned.

Twice in this past year I’ve talked to the Indian who actually killed the agents. He is upset that Leonard is doing all this time. But he also feels he isn’t responsible. It was done in self-defense. And he doesn’t want to go to prison either. It is a painful situation.

Meanwhile we (myself and the publisher, Viking Press) were sued for $24 million by South Dakota governor William Janklow, and then for $25 million more by David Price, an FBI agent. Their feelings were hurt by the things I said about them in the book. They have lost every decision in the courts, but meanwhile the book has been suppressed. (The new and revised In the Spirit of Crazy Horse is now available.)

I hope you will acquaint yourself with Leonard Peltier. He is very, very well-known in Europe. He has won a big Spanish peace prize.

In this country, no one has ever heard of Peltier. "Sixty Minutes" won’t do the story. It is very controversial. But it has not gone away.

Q. Will you reissue the original book?
Yes, I think I will. Unfortunately, the current Supreme Court is very conservative. Even though we won every single court decision, they can now say that during the court hearings and depositions I should have learned what nifty guys these two fellows were. Because I still say the same things, they could claim that I am being reckless and malicious. Therefore, they could sue me again for the same book.

So, we have made certain cuts. But I am going to put in a preface saying we do not do this willingly, or because we feel what we said wasn’t true, but because we are condemned to do this by the Supreme Court ruling.

Q. Is the same publisher involved?
Viking is, indeed, publishing this book. These are the same folks who brought you Salmon Rushdie. They are pluckily coming back and asking for more trouble (with this book).
Dr. Franklin enjoys talking with the youngsters who come to hear him. Young Ivy Redd gets his attention and his autograph at the 12th Baptist Church of Boston while Donald Hill and Ronald Whitehead look on.

Historian write about white people? Who would take it seriously?

One of the readers of my manuscript told the Director of the Harvard University Press that he could not understand why the Press would be at all interested in publishing a Negro's view of the Old South. The Director replied that what the manuscript contained was an exciting and fresh look at the Old South and that my race was incidental.

True, when The Militant South appeared in 1956, it experienced some rough patches. One reviewer had second thoughts about his groundless tirades against my presumption in presenting myself as an authority on the conduct of white people, and at the last minute sought to retrieve his review from the journal. Alas, it was too late. When one reads the review today, it tells as much about the reviewer and the status of race relations at the time as it does about my book. Consequently, I decided to include in Race and History a chapter from The Militant South to see how much things had really changed with respect to certain attitudes since 1956. In this regard, at least, things seem to have changed, even if not enough.

The other essay previously published in a book summarized my 40-year effort to reconstruct the life of the most unforgettable person I have ever encountered. It is the introductory chapter of the book, George Washington Williams: A Biography. I call it "Stalking George Washington Williams." This 19th-century soldier, editor, Baptist minister, Ohio legislator, historian, African explorer, and philanderer packed more into his 41 years than any other person known to me. It was not enough for me to persist year after year pursuing one clue after another, even as such pursuits yielded precious bits of information about the life of Williams. I also had to have luck on my side.

**Luck brought me to a Belgian priest in Kinshasa, Zaire.** He knew a great deal about the sojourn of Williams in the Belgian Congo. A Belgian diplomat in Washington provided details regarding the controversy swirling around Williams after he exposed the incredibly inhumane policies of King Leopold II in the Congo in 1890.

I was also fortunate when Dorothy Porter, curator of the Moorland-Spingarn Collection at Howard University, handed me the letter of a semi-literate George Washington Williams seeking admittance to Howard University in 1869.

Then I stumbled upon a cache of letters from Williams to his benefactor, Collis P. Huntington. They provided an almost day-by-day account of his African journey in 1890-1891. They were a quite satisfactory substitute for Williams' diary of that trip, which, unfortunately, had disappeared shortly after the death of Williams' widow in 1945.

My life of Williams shows the reader how the historian does his work. It also reveals facts about the subject that were unknown even to the subject's contemporaries. Two examples will suffice, and each of them will reveal a side of Williams that was suspected but never conclusively proved.

When Williams died in Blackpool, England, on August 2, 1891, Alice Fryer, an Englishwoman to whom, according to Miss Fryer, he was engaged, was at his bedside. It should be added that he was still legally married to Sarah Williams in Washington, D.C., who had
steadfastly refused for several years to give him a divorce. Rumor had it that Williams and Miss Fryer had met on a ship somewhere between India and Egypt.

I could never be certain that this account was at all accurate until, at the prodding of my secretary, I went to the Public Record Office in England and examined the manifests of ships traveling from India via Egypt to England in the late spring of 1891. While examining the many manifests, I encountered that of the S.S. Golconda, which recorded that Alice Fryer boarded the ship at Madras, India, and that Williams boarded the ship at Ismailia, the principal Egyptian port before Alexandria became Egypt's main point of ingress and egress.

So — they must have become acquainted, these two young people, somewhere between Ismailia and London. Perhaps it was the balmy Mediterranean nights, or the calls at Crete or Malta. In any event, at some point along the way they fell in love and became engaged. Meanwhile, Mrs. Williams was biding her time in Washington, D.C.

I have tried, above all, to be a teacher.

I recount this not for the salacious premise of the story, but because the records — along with the Mediterranean nights — tell us things that the couple’s contemporaries could not possibly have known. Later, perhaps in order to protect the good name of the young Englishwoman, the accounts said that on the voyage she was accompanied by her mother. A careful examination of the passenger list reveals no person who could possibly have been Alice Fryer’s mother.

The other example followed the death of Williams. When the Consul journeyed from Liverpool to Blackpool to take charge of his affairs, Alice Fryer, prostrate with grief, told him that as far as she knew, Williams had one relative in the United States, an aunt by the name of Lois Staples. This name meant nothing to the Consul until he received a letter from Ms. Staples sent from Worcester, Massachusetts, urgently requesting him to return to her immediately any letters or papers among Williams’ personal effects with her name on them.

It seemed quite clear to the Consul that Staples was not Williams’ aunt but an older but intimate associate of Williams. I discovered that they belonged to the same church in Worcester. The status of “Aunt” Lois had been given her by Williams. Who wouldn’t wonder about letters coming regularly from a woman in the United States?

I have been surprised at the extent to which the essays in Race and History have been regarded by many reviewers as essentially autobiographical. There is, strictly speaking, only one piece of autobiographical writing in the book. That one is called “A Life of Learning,” delivered as the Haskins Lecture before the American Council of Learned Societies in 1988.

Upon re-reading the essays and examining the volume as a whole, I can understand how the work may be viewed as autobiographical.

Several essays, such as “The Dilemma of the American Negro Scholar” and “The Historian and Public Policy,” are deeply personal, but only because I was seeking to delineate the role of the scholar in general and the historian in particular. It is, perhaps, the dates, 1938-1988, that suggest a summing up, or the author’s “final statement,” and therefore as close to an autobiography as I shall ever come.

After I delivered the Haskins Lecture, several friends urged me to write an autobiography. These essays are not a response to their advice. Some day I may venture into that genre. If I do, you may be certain that it will be with great trepidation.

If I were to attempt a brief description of Race and History, I would say, merely, that the essays are an attempt to demonstrate how the historian works, what his objectives are, and how the historian’s skills can contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and especially the quality of human relations.

I did not have such sterling objectives in mind when I wrote a paper in 1938 for Professor Arthur Schlesinger

— NOTICE —
MEDIA APPLICATIONS SUSPENDED

No media applications will be considered in 1992. The media grant program has been suspended. The originally announced media application deadline is inactive.

NO MEDIA GRANTS TO BE AWARDED IN 1992
Sr.'s class. It became my first published piece, coming into print later that year as "Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement." My sole objective on that occasion was getting a good grade! Gradually, I adopted nobler objectives, and I have since then tried to adhere to them faithfully.

I have tried, above all, to be a teacher. For over 53 years I have sought to instruct and inspire what now adds up to many thousands of students. It has been my privilege to have had direct contact with some of them. With others I have had to be content with reaching them through my writings. I have shared with teachers and students some of the methods and approaches that I have used in an essay called "Archival Odyssey: Taking the Students to the Sources" (Race and History, pp. 3-9).

In 1967, I took my entire University of Chicago seminar to North Carolina to do research on their term papers. What an impact on their careers! Many have become quite distinguished. There are numerous books and articles to their credit. Two have even become chairs of departments, (although at least one of them is chafing to get back to more teaching and research).

I have also attempted to insist that at all costs the historian must maintain the highest standards of his craft. That is why I undertook to point out in "Whither Reconstruction Historiography" the travesty of making a mockery of the truth during the Reconstruction era as E. Merton Coulter had done in his book The South During Reconstruction. That is why I called attention to the manner in which David W. Griffith and Thomas Dixon used the new medium of the motion picture to distort, malign, and misrepresent the Reconstruction period to a trusting and believing public.

The role of teaching does not prevent the historian from assuming a role of leadership. In "The Historian and Public Policy" I indicated the manner in which the historian lent his talents and skills in working on school desegregation cases.

I pointed out in "The Dilemma of the American Negro Scholar" that he or she, like their fellow citizens, had a responsibility to work as diligently as possible for a better world in which to live.

Finally, I do not think that the historian should shirk leadership roles.

The historian has a rare opportunity to relate the materials of history to the special ways in which the lessons they teach can point to a better life and a better world. It has been a source of downright joy to be in the people chase as well as the paper chase.

One final note. Race and History is dedicated to Margaret Fitzsimmons, my secretary of 25 years. In doing so I express my heartfelt thanks that a society of equals begins when equal roles and equal status can be maintained even where roles are culturally defined but where subordination is both stifling and counter-productive. Thus Race and History, even in its dedication, is a reaffirmation of my belief in true equality.
The battered survivors of Ribault’s shipwrecked fleet made their way up the coast in two groups. They were unaware of Fort Caroline’s fate. When Menendez learned of the Frenchmen, he marched to meet them. The French surrendered and pled for mercy. Menendez ordered their massacre, not because they were French but because they were damned heretics. More than 300 were killed.

Terra Florida, Ribault’s “flourishing land,” had become a killing field. The French were vanquished. St. Augustine endured to assure that La Florida remained Spanish.

Jacques Le Moyne escaped the slaughter. After wandering in the marshes and pine woods around Fort Caroline for three days, Le Moyne finally reached the river bank. Two small French vessels lay offshore. Sailors sent a boat to retrieve the pitiable survivors who had gathered at the river’s edge. On September 25, Le Moyne and his compatriots set sail for home in these two ships, “poorly equipped with sail and provisions.”

The passage proved difficult. There was not enough food. The ships were separated. Le Moyne’s ship, the Levrier, landed at Swansea in Wales.

Laudonnière, who was also on the Levrier, recounted how the passengers were “lent money to buy clothes” and then went on to London.

Early in 1566 Laudonnière “and a part of (his) company” reached the King and revealed the extent of the French catastrophe.

Le Moyne was probably present at this audience. In the Brief Narrative, he referred to a meeting with the king. He stressed that he had carried out his assignment “as faithfully as I could, as I showed his majesty, when having escaped the extreme treachery and atrocious cruelty of the Spaniards.”

Le Moyne’s knowledge of the New World placed him in good stead with the group of powerful English noblemen who wished to establish an English presence in America. By the 1580s, Le Moyne was in the service of (Sir Walter) Raleigh acting as painter, engraver of wood, a teacher, art publisher and book seller.

In 1586, Laudonnière’s account of the Huguenot colony in Florida was published in France. The next year the book appeared in English. The famous English geographer, Richard Hakluyt, supplied the translation and an introduction which contained the first published reference to Le Moyne’s drawings of the New World. The French experience, Hakluyt observed, “and divers other things chiefest importance are lively drawn in colours at your no small changes by the skilful painter James Morgues sometimes living in the Black-fryers in London.”

This James Morgues was no other than Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues. Hakluyt persuaded De Bry to try to buy Le Moyne’s drawings. In 1587 Le Moyne declined. He probably planned to produce the book himself. Death prevented this. The next year, 1588, Le Moyne’s widow agreed to sell both the drawings and the Brevis Narratio to De Bry.

De Bry intended to publish Le Moyne’s Brief Narrative as Part I of his Historia Americae. Richard Hakluyt urged otherwise. First, he counseled, bring out Hariot’s Brief and true report of new found land of Virginia together with John White’s drawings of Virginia.

Hakluyt’s motives were purely practical. Raleigh was trying to generate support for the troubled Roanoke colony. Hariot’s report and White’s drawings would help. De Bry agreed. The Hariot/White book came out in 1590, but De Bry wrote in the foreword that he had decided to publish Hariot’s report on Virginia first at the request of friends:

albeit I have in hande the Historye of Florida which should be sett foorth because yt was discovered by the Frenchmen long before the discouerye of Virginia, yet I hope shortly also to publish the same Historye doubtless so Rare, as I think the like has not been heard or seene.

Le Moyne’s Brief Narrative, with its 43 illustrations, went on sale in Sigismund Feyerabend’s Frankfurt bookstore in 1591. Its reception was electrifying. Sixteenth century Europeans were astonished by Le Moyne’s images of the New World and its natives.

Each of the illustrations, with the exception of Le Moyne’s map, was accompanied with a Latin Declario.
or explanation. As De Bry put it, Le Moyne was the first European to grasp "out of regard for intelligent people...that the story should not just be told but should also seem to be vividly enacted before their eyes."

The Le Moyne-De Bry engravings divide into three groups.

The first seven plates depict scenes from Ribault's first voyage to Florida. Le Moyne was not there. He based these drawings on Ribault's accounts.

There are minor discrepancies. For example, Ribault described the Indians' fish traps as constructed:

"after the fashion of a labirint in the or maze, with so many touns and crokes, as yt is impossible to do yt with more cunning or industrye."

As pictured, these traps are neither complicated nor functional. Still, the discrepancies are trifles when weighed against the richness of detail. To 16th century Europeans the Le Moyne-De Bry illustrations were revelations. "Okses, palme trees, cipers, cedars and bayes" are represented in the drawings as well as what Ribault described as "the highest, fayrest and greatest ffir trees that can be seen." They showed what is probably the first drawing of wild American turkeys. Behind the turkeys are grape vines and "great Pumpions (pumkins), much more excellent than those which we have in France."

The second group of the Le Moyne-De Bry engravings represented historical incidents which occurred during Le Moyne's Florida sojourn.

The first shows Laudonnieré and Athore, Chief Saturiba's son, standing before Ribault's column. Athore's body decorations are singular. His long hair is knotted on the top of his head. Two raccoon tails adorn it. Athore wears ear ornaments made out of inflated fish bladders. His fingernails and toenails have been filed to points. Vegetable offerings, fruits, grain, and probably the leaves of the ilex vomitoria (used in preparing the cassena drink) lie before the column.

Strikingly, Le Moyne portrays Athore as Laudonnieré's equal.

A third group portrays scenes drawn from the daily life of Amerindi ans. These engravings show Indians at war, mutilating enemy corpses, women mourning their fallen husbands, the work of hermaphrodites, the treatment of the sick, cultivation of crops, cooking fish, meats, and other foods, sacrifice of firstborn sons, hunting alligators, preparing for a feast, holding councils, playing games, marrying, and burying the dead. Few are connected with specific events.

Four of the engravings capture the range of Le Moyne's experiences. One contains a great deal of information about American medicine. Two naked Indians lie on low wooden benches. The Indian on the left is having blood sucked from his forehead by a medicine man. Two women stand to the side. Both are wearing skirts made of Spanish moss. One is drinking from a pottery bowl. The other is suckling a child. Le Moyne informed his readers that the women "drink this blood, especially when it is that of a strong young man, that it may improve their milk and make their offspring stronger and more energetic."

On the right side of the picture a man is throwing something into a fire while another naked Indian lies on his stomach inhaling the fire's smoke. A woman approaches from the left carrying a string of berries or seeds that will be fed to the fire. The smoke, Le Moyne reported, "circulates the entire body and induces vomiting and so expels the cause of sickness." In the background, an Indian man is depicted smoking a long pipe while a woman stands to his right holding "tapaco" leaves in her hands.

The plate marked 29 (see page 5), shows Indians gathered to advise their King. In the foreground women prepare the cassena drink. A cup-
Le Moyne . . .
(continued from preceding page)
bearer carries the potion in a shell
drinking cup. Two men are shown
vomiting. Le Moyne remarked:

So highly do they value this drink
that nobody in this gathering is al-
lowed to drink it unless he has first
proved himself a brave warrior. More-
over, this potion possesses the quality
of inducing perspiration as soon as it
has been drunk. For this reason, those
who cannot stomach it but throw it up
are not entrusted with any difficult
undertaking or military office.

The most disturbing engraving in
the series is entitled "The Sacrifice of
First-Born Children." In it a tattooed In-
dian chief explains the ritual to a
French officer, who draws back in
horror. Fourteen Indian women dance
in a circle around a single woman
who is holding an infant above her
head. Another woman squats with
her face in her hands before a large
stump. In the background a priest
holding a club stands flanked by three
men on each side. Le Moyne claimed
to have witnessed such a sacrifice.

The engravings pose a number of
puzzles. First, when did Le Moyne
create the originals? Most were proba-
bly drawn in the 1570s or early 1580s.
Two decades could have separated
Le Moyne's experiences and their
depiction. Second, how accurate
are De Boy's engravings? Only one of
Le Moyne's original miniatures is ex-
tant. It is impossible to know what
liberties De Boy and his assistants may
have taken with the other drawings.

The most vexing problem centers
on the question of the engravings' his-
torical accuracy. They are, after all,
the product of a European mind re-
membering American facts.

Consider the Athore engraving.
Some of the artifacts shown tally with
archaeologists' findings. For instance,
William Sturtevant has identified the
"small bowls with handles, the bird leg
ear ornament, the oval metal penda-
tant, and the long-stemmed tobacco
pipes" as being authentically Ameri-
can.

But there are important anom-
alias. The Indian women have wavy
hair. The baskets and quiver are of Eu-
ropean origin. Sturtevant observes that
the "exotic fruits in the baskets are im-
probable — really impossible — for
Florida." Repeatedly, Le Moyne and/
or De Bry Europeanize the Indian
figures and place European artifacts in a
Florida setting, including pack bask-
ets, hoes, and shell vessels; the forms
of bows and arrowheads; the shapes
of pottery vessels; and even the awn-
ing on a litter.

The illustrations are not photo-
graphic records. They reveal as much
about 16th century Europeans as they
do about the native Timucuans. When
16th and 17th century Europeans
looked at these drawings they
"thought" they were seeing the exotic
lands and peoples that lay across the
seas. Much of what they saw was, in
fact, a vision.

The contemporary American es-
sayist, Wendell Berry, has written that
historically, Americans have exhibi-
ted much vision and little sight. What Berry
means is that as a people we have
had a penchant for building our lives
around visions of places rather than
where we are. Sometimes it has been
a vision of the place we left behind;
other times, it is a vision of where we
wish to go. Rarely, have we had suffi-
cient sight to see where we are and
what we are doing.

The French and the Spaniards
launched an American tradition when
they tried to impose their vision of Flor-
ida on the "flourishing land."

Jacques Le Moyne was a rare
man. He possessed both vision and
sight. Being human, his illustrations often
fail. They contain misrepresentations.
Nevertheless, there is something in Le
Moyne's drawings that is honest and
trustworthy.

Perhaps the value of the Le
Moyne-De Bry engravings lies in their
humanity. Human beings regularly
judge different cultural practices infe-
rior simply because they are different.
Le Moyne rose above his prejudices.
He heeded Ribault's advice and
looked on Florida's "uncivilized"
people with "gentleness and human-
ty." For this he deserves to be remem-
bered among those who have fought
for humanity in the hemisphere of
imagination.
A View from the Board

As my term on the Board of Directors comes to an end, I have been reflecting on the relative worth of my activities. I don't believe it is a manifestation of mid-life crisis, but rather the reflection that accompanies closure.

In the movie Sleeper, Woody Allen offers us his vision of a future with an odd mixture of banality and high principles, self-referentialism and leadership. In the end, the movie reminds us of life's pleasures.

These images turn out to be nothing more than commentaries on our concerns and ideals today. Allen can produce social criticism with his one-liners as penetratingly and deftly as entire essays written by Thorstein Veblen. In the movie, he awakens from a frozen state that had lasted for centuries. Asked how it feels to be so deeply asleep, he replies that it is not too different from spending a weekend in Beverly Hills.

In important ways, we're not very different from Mr. Allen. We, too, are capable of great imagination. We all experience meditations that are nothing more than adult versions of the mental autobiographies we fashioned in our childhood daydreams. It's only that, unlike Mr. Allen, most of us do not fulfill our hopeful images of greatness. Indeed, the sum total of our experiences may be reduced to a metaphorical weekend in Beverly Hills.

People who belong to the professorate, as I do, delight in writing scholarly texts, believing that, through our publications, we have found a way to guarantee the immortality of authorship. It used to be said that professors could change students' lives; by giving them knowledge we became agents of their growth, and by teaching them to learn we shaped their development. Today, such lofty and narcissistic notions regarding our teaching have been reduced to a more functional concept: information empowers.

Such political reductionism represents our times: we have learned to think and act within a functional framework. Only the concrete and specific is given value. Abstraction is considered inactive and wasteful. No wonder so many young men and women look for "practical" fields to study, by which they mean professions whose activities yield concrete, measurable outcomes in the form of goods or services. I'm not sure who is more naïve about their concepts of social value: professors with their sense of immortality, or young CEO-wanna-be's with their notion of accumulations. Both groups are subject equally, I'm certain, to Allen's Beverly Hills syndrome: when it's all over, will that be all there was?

I feel fortunate, in contrast, to have learned from colleagues on the board and the staff of the FEH how to affect the lives of creative people whose programs have, in turn, enlivened Floridians throughout the state. A young film maker expressed gratitude for the funds that made possible the completion of her documentary. An anonymous Floridian scribbled an earnest commendation for an FEH-funded program devoted to the timely discussion of ethics and science. A librarian put together a literary program in a region of the state barely noticed by most of us, yet richly imagined by scores of writers. These and hundreds of other instances of human spark brighten my path.

Mark D. Szuchman

Spring 1991
The maze called Ten Thousand Islands glistens along Florida's southern Gulf Coast below Marco Island. It marks the upper western edge of the mysterious, hauntingly beautiful Everglades Swamp — site of Peter Matthiessen's Killing Mister Watson.

(See page 1 inside. Photo courtesy of the Florida State Archives.)