

1-1-2011

Salvaging the Real Florida: Lost and Found in the State of Dreams
by Bill Belleville

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Recommended Citation

Davis, Jack E. (2011) "*Salvaging the Real Florida: Lost and Found in the State of Dreams* by Bill Belleville,"
Tampa Bay History. Vol. 25 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory/vol25/iss1/10>

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post–World War II “gaudy age of tourism,” the theme-park era, and current efforts to lure Gen X and Gen Y travelers pursuing “novelty and freedom” (118, 47).

In each chapter, Revels is also careful to examine tensions between tourists and residents. She explains, for example, that in nineteenth-century Florida, “invalids were obnoxious to the healthy, and the healthy were frequently the bane of the indisposed” (14). Revels also emphasizes how Florida tourism affected minorities such as Jews and African Americans, who were denied access to hotels and tourist destinations but who played essential, though often overlooked, roles in Florida’s tourism industry. Similarly, tourism presented Seminoles, such as Willie Willie, who set up the Musa Isle Village and Trading Post, “with both the dangers and opportunities of cultural exploitation” (74).

Revels’s study is not a triumphalist account—while many tourists felt satisfied with their visits to Florida, others felt “hoodwinked” and misled; theme parks brought millions of visitors to Florida, but “highways snarled, lakes fouled, and property taxes shot into the stratosphere” (13, 127). One of *Sunshine Paradise*’s strengths is its balanced depiction of the good, the bad, and the ugly of Florida tourism.

There is much to praise in this study, but some readers might question the author’s depiction of Florida race relations and her claim that Florida’s Jim Crow laws “were not as harsh as the rest of the South’s” (104). This criticism aside, *Sunshine Paradise* is an excellent addition to the University Press of Florida’s “Florida History and Culture” series. Revels’s work will likely be a foundational text in Florida history courses, and will also appeal to a broad audience interested in Florida, tourism, and marketing.

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Salvaging the Real Florida: Lost and Found in the State of Dreams. By Bill Belleville. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. 292 pp. Introduction. B&W photographs, maps, epilogue, acknowledgments. \$24.95, cloth.)

Anyone who has read Bill Belleville’s *River of Lakes: A Journey on Florida’s St. Johns River* (2001) or his *Losing It All to Sprawl: How Progress Ate My Cracker Landscape* (2005) is familiar with the lament in his writer’s voice. He justifies that lament with the evidence he serves up, the clear-eyed vision he has for Florida, and the passion that issues from his words. His writing is poetic and his musing that of a nature-loving troubadour. His latest book reaffirms that his poetic work belongs with a class of Florida writers that includes Al Burt (too often forgotten), Archie Carr, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Sidney Lanier, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and William Bartram.

The familiar lament is not as salient in *Salvaging the Real Florida*. He writes, for example, after being inspired by a paddle down the Suwannee that ends with a star-studded night over the historic river, “For anyone who cares about our natural places in Florida, there is something about all of this that is redemptive, that offers hope, even in the midst of great loss” (118). Belleville follows the Archie Carr formula of celebrating Florida’s natural endowments. He still turns a cold eye on the trampling, gouging, lacerating, scorching, mauling, draining, and eradicating that lies behind a perverted notion of progress. But he does not allow the conceit to get him down as he crisscrosses the state in search of the “real Florida,” an expression Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings used more than six decades ago to distinguish the indigenous landscape from the developed. Despite the abiding onslaught, Belleville assures the reader that nature endures with a “timeless resolve” (215).

He shares his assurance with readers in forty-seven essays, each born from its own setting and depicting a singular experience. The latter include hiking through tangled scrubland and fertile hammocks, diving coral reefs and the cool depths of the Floridan Aquifer, kayaking a peaceful river or lake. Snakes, alligators, birds, insects, and fish abound. He also devotes one short essay to identifying his favorite books on Florida, another to miscellaneous pieces of art that collectively say something about his life on earth, and yet another to wandering through historic Sanford (which represents the wise use of an existing infrastructure). He prefers to think of his pattern of travel as sauntering, a term he borrows from Henry David Thoreau, which describes a mode of movement that combines “reflection” with the consideration of “possibilities” (4). He moves about often with a companion—a scientist, recovering engineer, or fellow nature lover—who becomes a device for illustrating a point or illuminating a revelation. Nothing—color, light, movement, sound, sensation—escapes Belleville’s attention or detailed description. He knows every tree, every flower, every animal, every insect, and every place. If the tempo from essay to essay seems repetitive (which is difficult to avoid in a collection of this type), or if the first-person voice feels a bit intrusive in places, readers will find that eloquence and wisdom ultimately prevail.

Salvaging the Real Florida is not a history book per se. But Belleville has read widely, even in primary source materials. He likes to know how others saw Florida long ago, and to compare that Florida with the one of today, and there is much to learn from him. He devotes an essay, for example, to the natural and social history of the coontie, a native plant with roots that were an important staple in indigenous and Cracker cultures. It had no worthy place in the generic, heavily sodded landscape of modern Florida and fell under the invading army of bulldozers. Then, in the twenty-first century, it made a comeback as a practical and attractive drought-resistant xeriscaping plant.

Belleville is keenly aware of how the past impinges on the present, and vice versa, and how the contemporary has too often been a poor substitute for the proven sustainability of the historic. One theme that carries through a majority of his essays

is that Florida has always been a place of dreams, including conflicting dreams, such as those of real Florida and those of a made-over Florida. Belleville's important book is in itself a part of salvaging the real Florida.

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William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida. By Daniel L. Schafer. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. ix, 152 pp. List of figures, introduction, illustrations, maps, B&W photographs, epilogue, acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index \$24.95 cloth.)

William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida offers, as its title suggests, an economic history of the St. Johns River valley through the lens of the pioneering naturalist. Daniel L. Schafer enlists decades of research, notably from British land records, to recover the comings, goings, profits, and losses of planters and absentee speculators from the mid-1760s to 1783. Bartram would seem to be the ideal source: he journeyed up the St. Johns in 1765–66 and again in 1774; failed as a planter there himself in 1766; and his 1791 *Travels* includes memorable scenes of alligator battles and a botanic sublime. But as Schafer notes, Bartram remained largely silent about property holdings. This point comes as no surprise to attentive readers of *Travels*. Experts on Bartram would even call the point obvious, and in its failure to bridge impressive (though narrowly focused) explorations of the archive with ongoing scholarly conversations, *Ghost Plantations* falls short.

Chapter 1 recounts Bartram's first journey up the north-flowing St. Johns, made with his botanizing father, John, after the cession of Florida from Spain. Schafer reviews the written record of the tour (mostly John's "Diary"), notes important landmarks such as Fort Picolata and the colossal failure that was Rollestown, and spools up a running commentary on places—"there then, here now"—that lasts through the book. After a short chapter on William's disastrous stint as a planter, Schafer launches into Bartram's "Second St. Johns River Expedition." (That Bartram actually made two trips up the St. Johns, in spring 1774 and again the following fall, is noted only in passing—a key point sacrificed to Schafer's approach.) A case against the naturalist's famously uneven memory builds: patrons "not mentioned" (45), key details "forgotten" (47), and so on. But what were Bartram's reasons for writing *Travels*? Schafer seems to assume that the book's sole purpose was to provide a record for the ex post facto historian.

The next two chapters, on "ghost plantations," move up the east and west side of the St. Johns respectively, drawing from impressive research on land holdings to offer an intriguing composite portrait of the region. After the Seven Years' War, East