

adhering to its water-based premise, the book also touches upon tourist attractions, trolleys, war, hurricanes, entertainment, social trends, and even activism. With the author's attention fixed on the waterfront, it is as if all the people of St. Petersburg passed through his gaze.

Despite the black and white character of the photos, they depict colorful activities that give readers a good idea of what day-to-day life was like in St. Petersburg over the years. The piers themselves also illustrate the character of the city in illuminating ways, becoming visual proof of St. Petersburg's ambition to reach out, often desperately, to the outside world in search of fame and riches. As the city's ambitions grew, the materials became more durable and the designs became more elaborate, but the goal was the same.

The photos themselves work very well for a number of reasons. First, they showcase the holdings of the St. Petersburg Museum of History admirably. Second, they are almost all rare photos that can't be found elsewhere. Third, they are entertaining and often vibrantly human. Proud fishermen share space with black and white female anglers. Crowded docks and trolleys convey the giddy excitement of weekends and vacations. Water and sun-flecked landscapes alternate with images of the hurricane of 1921, exercise classes for retirees give way to hordes of soldiers training for war. The writing is sound and informative, elaborating on larger issues that the photos represent. The author's thoughtful presentation transformed a seemingly narrow subject into a broad and meaningful interpretation of St. Petersburg's history.

Andrew Huse

University of South Florida Libraries

Coming to Pass: Florida's Coastal Islands in a Gulf of Change. By Susan Cerulean. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, bibliography. Pp. 304. \$29.95 cloth.)

The lure of the coast has tugged at Susan Cerulean throughout her life—from the New Jersey shore of her youth to the islands of Florida's Panhandle that have enticed her for decades. There she has found refuge, passion, and a connection to the rest of the world. In *Coming to Pass: Florida's Coastal Islands in a Gulf of Change*, her new collection of captivating essays, Cerulean shares this

relationship while drawing readers into a world of skittish shorebirds, mullet runs, and endangered red wolves as well the challenges they face in sharing wild spaces with humans. With growing threats from climate change, coastal development, pollution, and overfishing, the littoral and marine world is in peril and Cerulean describes the life-enriching beauty and biota that exist today—and that may be lost to future generations.

“How can we change the trajectory of these losses?” she asks in the opening pages of the book. “I have posed this question to scientists, to birdwatchers, to lovers of sea turtles, to activists, and to therapists. I listened for stories from the coast and its creatures. I have studied the cultural assumptions that allow this destruction to occur. I prayed for dreams to guide me” (7).

The resulting book, with its beautiful language and poignant descriptions of her experiences, is an attempt to answer this question while offering a paean to the Florida coast. Her particular focus is on the barrier islands in Apalachicola Bay that were formed by two enormous forces of nature: 2 million years of mountain sediment carried south by rivers as well as variations in sea levels and forces that pushed the land back. The resulting islands, resembling a “broad, blunt-tipped arrowhead,” and their flora and fauna inspire Cerulean’s prose (17).

Lush descriptions, combining scientific explanations with memorable observations, will appeal to a wide range of readers, from students of Florida natural history to visitors to residents unaware of the dramatic confluence of events that created and now threaten to destroy these jewels. She notes that three-quarters of Floridians can be found in coastal areas, leading many to think of islands as permanent despite their very nature as ever-shifting sands. As a result, even when storms devastate expensive coastal development, houses, buildings, and roads spring back anew without any qualms about whether they should or what their long-term environmental impacts will be.

The book has no single trajectory—its essays cover topics as diverse as early native people who lived on the islands to beach mice endangered by habitat loss. The discovery of wolf tracks is an opportunity to consider human relations with large predators. A dolphin’s leap is a sign of the sacred. A snorkeling trip to the ruins of a lighthouse is a reminder of the impermanence of island edges. Her most vivid portraits are of the island fauna, particularly the birds that rely on the coast for food, nesting, and migration stops.

She senses and shares an innate human connection to the avian world, one long acknowledged by biologists and bird lovers.

"Wild birds are the most real thing I know to praise," Cerulean writes, adding that humans have long cherished birds, which predate our existence on Earth by 1 million years. "Their songs were our first music, their call notes the first patterns on our collective human eardrum. They carry a memory of the time when we lived without separation from wildness, under the spread of the sky" (190).

Expressing boundless enthusiasm, Cerulean recalls a Christmas bird count expedition, noting the dedication and techniques involved in finding different varieties. When the tally comes out at 1,500 robins (among many other varieties observed) she is pleased, only to learn that the overall bird numbers are down fifty percent from the previous year. There are no clear answers why. With this she realizes what author Rachel Carson warned in her seminal 1962 book *Silent Spring*—that the world's birds were in trouble. Cerulean was a naive child when Carson sounded alarms about the devastating effects on birds of indiscriminate pesticide and chemical use. Today's birds are at risk from disappearing habitat, pollution, and rising seawaters that may drown nesting areas. Also in trouble: sea turtles that nest on island beaches, dolphins killed by oil spills, and the disappearance of life-sustaining marshes.

Cerulean offers strong alerts about climate change. She notes that the atmosphere contains a distressing amount of carbon dioxide that is rising at a rate unprecedented in our planet's history. If the geological past is any indication, sea levels may rise to the point where coastal marshes and islands may disappear. Despite these dire possibilities, however, Cerulean emphasizes that all is not lost and her plea and intent with her writing is that humans rediscover a connection to the Earth.

In blending calls for action with scientific evidence and lovely descriptions along an often-overlooked area, Cerulean's book adds to the growing body of Florida literature that strives to invoke a sense of place in readers and spur them to action. And she firmly stands in the wake of Florida women who fought for the last century to save the state's natural resources—a legacy she continues through her luminous words. "Despite our pirating of the atmosphere, the land, the waters, and the wildlife, Earth still speaks to us and shares her creations. 'What will you do in return,' she asks her

readers, 'to help this life continue?'" (273). It is a timely question that deserves our attention.

Leslie K. Poole

Rollins College

Signposts: New Directions in Southern Legal History. Edited by Sally E. Hadden and Patricia Hagler Minter. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013. Acknowledgments, illustrations, notes, index. Pp. xii, 480. \$69.95 cloth.)

It has been over thirty years since a group of legal historians gathered at the Gulf Coast campus of the University of Southern Mississippi to explore whether the South had a distinctive legal history. A few years later a conference on southern constitutionalism tested similar questions. The two books that emerged, *Ambivalent Legacy* (1984) and *An Uncertain Tradition* (1989) were among the first of numerous studies to challenge the New England bias of the still-young field of American legal history. Thanks to Sally Hadden and Patricia Minter, as well as the fifteen other experts they enlisted (including Jim Ely, co-editor of the seminal works cited above), the success of this efforts are quite evident.

Signposts above all is testimony to the maturation of a field. No longer is southern legal history primarily about slavery and the example of Virginia, the two themes that dominated *Ambivalent Legacy*. As Hadden and Minter note in their useful introduction, scholarship currently exists on the public and private law of most southern states (and their colonial predecessors), and it covers many more topics than would have been conceivable earlier. In fact, they argue, categories now are blurred, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of legal history itself. The seventeen essays that follow offer ample evidence of both claims. Colonial legal regimes, women and the law, property and the economy, legal institutions, criminal justice, law and policy, and a host of other subjects bracketed by "law and..." make it clear that law as doctrine and case law are only two threads in the complex tapestry that characterizes the region's legal past.

Joel Prentiss Bishop, one of the foremost legal commentators of the nineteenth-century, once wrote that law bears a remarkably intimate relationship with everyday life. The essays in *Signposts*