

Austin, Ashleigh. **St. Tammany Parish Postcards: A Glimpse Back in Time.** Gretna: Pelican Publishing, 2005. ISBN 978-1-58980-247-6. Softcover. \$10.95.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Ashleigh Austin's new book of postcards depicting a more serene St. Tammany Parish is even more important as a historical reference for one of the fastest growing parishes in the state. In 80 pages, Austin, a Louisiana native, beautifully reproduces 115 old picture postcards from the early 1900s to the 1960s that feature St. Tammany landmarks and landscapes along the Northshore from Slidell to Covington.

The postcard images are clear and crisp with excellent resolution providing for exquisite detail and authenticity. The layout of the book is clean and spare, with two postcards per page and plenty of room for editor's notes explaining everything from postmarks to dating techniques to the images themselves. Austin includes a brief introduction and a list of sources at the end of the book.

The book is divided into ten geographic sections beginning with New Orleans East headed north. Slidell is featured in the second section, followed by the Oaklawn/Lacombe areas before moving westward to Mandeville, Abita Springs, Covington, St. Benedict, Goodbee, Madisonville/Houltonville and ending at the Causeway. In addition to the postcards is an early map of St. Tammany Parish which shows the Highway 11 bridge across Lake Pontchartrain in Slidell and two other proposed bridges in the western half of the parish – one would go on to become the Causeway, the other was slated to bulkhead in Goose Point south of Lacombe but was never built. Why postcards?

Austin, an amateur photographer, found it difficult to locate old photographs of the area. What she could find were attractive postcards in good physical condition, many of which were advertisements enticing visitors to St. Tammany Parish because of its location in the Ozone Belt. Delving further into the antique postcards, Austin studied the processes of dating the cards such as stamp box dating and the Curt Teich postcard dating system. Her expertise and historical knowledge of the images and time period add depth to the book and forms a credible reference for researchers.

As the people of St. Tammany work to rebuild a parish dealing with issues of traffic congestion and explosive exponential growth, Austin's book serves as a reminder of just how far St. Tammany has come in a relatively short time. Her personal collection of old

postcards serves as a reminder of how things used to be in St. Tammany Parish. In the introduction to the book, Austin writes the collection is a "...reference as documentation of places that had either changed through the years, or no longer existed."

The book includes several postcards featuring places that no longer exist, such as the White Kitchen near Slidell and the Mugnier Hotel in Mandeville. Other notable postcards depict the first accredited high school in the parish, along with numerous old churches, hotels and other schools, which help visually document the history of St. Tammany. Several of the old postcards were advertisements encouraging tourists to visit the abundant natural springs in the region where the water's healing and relaxation properties were touted. In fact, one postcard features an ad for Morgan's Swimming Pool and Spa in Abita Springs that boasted of a 6,000 square foot concrete pool with a sandy bottom fed by an artesian well.

St. Tammany Parish Postcards is recommended for all academic and public libraries in the state, especially those with a Louisiana history collection.

*Gabriel Morley, Director, Washington Parish (Public) Library System*

Chance, Harvey. **The Life and Selected Letters of Lyle Saxon.** Gretna: Pelican Publishing, 2003. ISBN 1-5898-0109-1. \$24.95.

Almost two generations have elapsed since the author of **Fabulous New Orleans** and compiler of **Gumbo Ya-Ya**, the collection of Louisiana folktales, has passed this good earth. So it seems fitting that a new biography of this gifted yet troubled writer should appear as we approach the 60th anniversary of his death.

Though he was born in Washington state, Saxon moved with his mother to Louisiana at a very young age and actually grew up outside of Baton Rouge. The fact that he later would claim to be a Louisiana native is evidence of how he spent much of his life "embroidering" his past, creating the persona of an erudite, popular *bon vivant* to hide what must have been a lonely and disconnected soul.

A distinct sadness seemed to pervade much of his life. His father abandoned him shortly after his birth, producing a feeling of distress Saxon never overcame. He waged a lifelong battle with ill health that was only exacerbated by later heavy drinking. He continually fretted over his abilities as a writer, and even though he exuded a jovial nature, he never seemed quite satisfied with life. Yet despite the depression that plagued him

so relentlessly, he developed many deep, long-lasting friendships which proved mutually sustaining.

Saxon's work as a journalist for the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* in the 1920s and as manager of the WPA Writers' Project gave him direct contact with the people and local culture that formed the basis for much of his writing. He lived at a time that was particularly crucial for Southern literature, when the "old South" was gradually becoming replaced by something new and more urban. This supplantation extended to the field of architecture as well, and in fact it was Saxon's efforts which helped spur preservation of much of the French Quarter that we enjoy today.

His formative time at Melrose plantation and his home at 536 Royal Street in New Orleans enabled him to meet and play host to the artistic and literary celebrities of his day. His connections included everyone from Grace King and Sherwood Anderson to Clementine Hunter and a young William Faulkner. Saxon was one of the first to promote "Clemence's" art, and his influence on and support of Faulkner, both professionally and personally, helped to establish him as an author.

This book appears to be an update of Chance's 1980 publication **Lyle Saxon: a Portrait in Letters, 1917-1945**, which itself is not widely held throughout the state. Her use of Saxon's letters, which number about fifty pages in the book, provide a unique and objective way of analyzing this fascinating individual while allowing Saxon to speak for himself. There are copious notes as well as a selected bibliography and index. A fair number of pictures scattered throughout the book enhance the text.

Sadly, it seems that Lyle Saxon has become lost to the present generation. A cursory glance of only the academic libraries in Louisiana reveal scant holdings on books about this author and his writings. This is most unfortunate considering Saxon's pivotal role in preserving Louisiana heritage. Upon his passing, writer George Sessions Perry remarked in the *Saturday Evening Post*, "the heart of old New Orleans has stopped beating."

This latest book by Harvey should help to revive appreciation of such an accomplished and enigmatic author especially in light of Louisiana's bicentennial statehood a mere two years ago. All academic and public libraries would do well to obtain a copy of this publication.

*Kevin Cuccia, Engineering and Science Librarian,  
Prescott Library, Louisiana Tech University*

Nosakhere, A.S., Hughes, M.E. & Mosby, A.P.  
**African-American Studies Core List of Resources: an Annotated List of Selected Resources used by Teachers of African-American Studies at Colleges and Universities in the United States during the 1998-99 Academic Year.** Caldwell, N.J.: Blackburn Press, 2004. ISBN 1-9328-4601-8. \$24.95.

**African-American Studies Core List of Resources** is well written and easy to read. The authors are all well qualified in the area of academic librarianship and reference; also, they are very experienced in collection development in the areas of Africana studies, African-American Studies and Social Science. Together, these authors present an annotated checklist of scholarly books that offers a snapshot of the resources used in the instruction of the black experience of the Americas during a given academic year.

There are 304 key titles listed in the book. The number of titles represented in each area varies. In some areas, such as "History - United States," there are as many as 25 titles, while several of the sociology or anthropology areas have only one title per area. The titles are organized in 50 Library of Congress subject areas, and include Library of Congress numbers, ISBN or OCLC numbers, as well as annotations of varying lengths. Unlike some earlier bibliographies, this bibliography focuses on book resources. No journals, media, or unpublished dissertations are included.

Nine appendices provide background to the study through the listing of the survey instrument and the results. This lends credibility to the study. There are two very serviceable indexes. The Title index provides an alphabetical list of all the titles, while the Author index also gives an alphabetical list of all the authors. These indexes make it easy to check a source either by author or by title.

There are several older guides of African-American studies bibliographies. One of the earliest is **The Negro in Print**, currently out of print. This is a subject index of books, documents, reports, and journal articles covering African-American life during 1965-1970. Another bibliography of significance is the comprehensive classic title **The Bibliography of the Negro in Africa and America**, by Monroe N. Wok, a publication that was the first of its kind and presented works or publications about blacks in all parts of the world from ancient times to 1928. However, none of these older publications had the focus of the bibliography under review.

This publication is unique because it is compiled exclusively from the syllabi and recommended reading lists of African-American Studies instructors who participated in the initial survey. It is a highly readable book geared toward academic department administrators, researchers, publishers of Africana materials, and librarians. With the increase of African-American Studies programs in colleges and universities, this publication will be a useful tool for any librarian acquiring materials for instruction and research in the field of African-American Studies.

*Lynette Ralph, Assistant Director, Sims Memorial  
Library, Southeastern University*