



The South: A Concise History, Volume II

By Jeanette Keith

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For undergraduate courses on the history of the southern region of the United States.

A narrative history, this two-volume text integrates recent scholarship on race and gender into the story of *The South*. In clear, succinct prose, it surveys the sweep of southern history from Jamestown to the present, with special attention to the Old South and to the social, economic, and political changes that have created the New South of today. The text's brevity allows instructors to use it in conjunction with other reading material.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

The South: A Concise History provides a narrative history of the nation's most distinctive region from 1492 to the present, with special attention to the Old South and to the social, economic, and political changes that helped create the New South. Designed to be accessible to college students and the average reader alike, *The South* provides a narrative framework for analysis of the themes of southern and national history.

Incorporating new scholarship on race, class, and gender, *The South* illustrates—through narrative and example—how these issues affected ordinary people while contributing to the region's history.

Additionally, the text devotes as much time to the post-Civil War South as to the Old South, particularly the South after World War II, thus providing context for contemporary regional culture and politics.

Volume I covers Southern history from 1492 to the Reconstruction era, investigating such topics as the role the South played in the new nation, the meaning of liberty in a slave society, southern politics from Washington to Jackson, and myths and misconceptions about the South.

Volume II examines the South from the Reconstruction era to the present, including the New South economy, Jim Crow, Southern Progressivism, the impact of the World War II on the southern home front, the Civil Rights movement, and the Sunbelt economic boom.

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Although I am a native Southerner, born and raised in rural Tennessee, I teach southern history at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, a small state college in the North. My students think southern history is dramatic, full of exotic characters and exciting events. They are fascinated by the Old South and the Civil War, moved by the Civil Rights Movement, and curious about southern culture and folkways. Their interest is partly practical: many of them will be moving south in search of work after graduation.

For my southern history class, I wanted to assign a series of primary texts, essays, scholarly articles, and fiction pieces, but I knew that my students would need a textbook for background. Unable to find the sort of concise narrative history I wanted, I wrote this book.

The South: A Concise History is one extended story, or history, of the nation's most distinctive region from colonial settlement to the present. In composing this story, I have tried to incorporate new scholarship about race, class, and gender. This is another way of saying that the characters in this story are not just members of the political elite, but also include dirt farmers, Indians, plantation mistresses, slaves, factory workers, civil rights leaders, and all the motley collection of personages that make southern history one of the best stories around.

I have concentrated more on what happened than on detailed explanations of why, in the belief that the route into history comes through narrative: knowledge of the basic outline of events is a necessary precursor to analysis. In that spirit, I urge students of southern history to use this book as an avenue into further exploration of southern history and culture.

The field of southern history is fiercely political and deeply contested. I am sure that southern historians of all political stripes will find things here that offend them. I am also positive that my fellow historians will

wish I had done more with this or supplied more information on that. The book is intentionally short. Far from wanting the last word, I hope that readers of this book will be intrigued by the stories they find here and look for more history and analysis, starting with the suggestions for further reading and viewing appended to each chapter.

For their help with and judicious criticism of this project, I wish to thank Tony Allen, Michael Hickey, Susan Stemont, Scott Nelson, Cindy Hahamovitch, Mark Quintanilla, Jeff Davis, Tim Tyson, Mel McKiven, Anastatia Sims, David Carlton, members of the Southern Humanities Council (who heard about the project in a presentation in 1999) and the readers who critiqued the manuscript for Prentice Hall: Eric H. Walther, University of Houston; Tommy R. Thompson, University of Nebraska at Omaha; Richard L. Hume, Washington State University; Norman G. Raiford, Greenville Technical College; Christopher Waldrep, East Illinois University; Robert Thurston, Miami University. All sins of commission and omission in this work are my own.

Most of all, I wish to thank my students at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, where I have taught American history for the past twelve years. Over the years, their comments and questions have enlightened me as to what students can be expected to know, and not to know, about the history of the South. They have also been very forthright about what they would like to know more about, and what they would not. If this book proves readable and entertaining as well as useful, much credit is due to them.

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