

Lanterns On The Levee Recollections Of A Planters Son

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Democracy Heading South
Congressional Record
Memoirs and Letters of James Kent, LL. D.
House documents
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Charles W. Goodlander
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George Washington Parke Custis
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this fascinating volume contains the memoirs of william alexander percy who was born and raised in mississippi and witnessed the social changes at the turn of the century lanterns on the levee is his memorial to the south within which he describes life in the mississippi delta during the time between the semi feudal south of the 1800s and the uncertain south of the early 1940s this is a book that will be of much value to anyone with an interest in the history and development of southern american society it is not one to be missed by collectors of william alexander percy s

important literature william alexander percy 1885 1942 was a lawyer planter and poet from greenville mississippi most famous for writing this best selling biography we are republishing this text now in a modern affordable edition complete with a new prefatory biography of the author

set in the twilight years of southern aristocracy the percys of mississippi is a biography of a family in whose bloodline ran both a strong commitment to public service and an equally strong but more private dedication to literature following four generations of percy family history lewis baker chronicles the lives and public careers of colonel william alexander percy a planter and lawyer his son leroy a lawyer and united states senator leroy s son will a poet and lawyer and will s nephew and adopted son the novelist walker percy known as the gray eagle of the delta for his piercing eyes and silver hair colonel percy served as a confederate officer in both the eastern and western campaigns of the civil war he returned home to practice law and manage the family s property but he was soon drawn into the arena of state politics where he fought vigorously to strengthen the mississippi river levee system and to protect his district from the perils of reconstruction with colonel percy s death in 1888 leroy percy inherited his father s law practice and his mantle of leadership in the community leroy used his power as a united states senator to continue his father s long quest for an adequate levee system struggled to loosen the ku klux klan s grip of fear on the delta and campaigned tirelessly to discredit the divisive creed of the state s rising demagogue politicians in the election of 1911 leroy percy was defeated in his bid to be returned to the senate losing to the flamboyant demagogue james kimble vardaman the white chief it was a defeat echoed across the south throughout the dawning years of the twentieth century as poorer whites rejected the moderate counsel of the planter class their traditional leaders and embraced the demagogues fiery gospel of resentment it was this troubling altered south that leroy percy bequeathed to his son william alexander will percy fought in world war i taught for a time and stood at his father s side throughout many of the battles to safeguard the delta from extremism but will s true calling was as a poet and his lasting contribution to the delta would be in the form of a memorial to its past his memoir *lanterns on the levee* during my day he wrote will percy not long before his death i have witnessed the disintegration of that moral cohesion of the south which had given it its strength and its sons their singleness of purpose and simplicity it would be left to walker percy to fully confront this modern disintegrated south to seek in such works as the movie *goer the last gentleman* and the second coming the place of the percy family s values in a world that has little use for aristocrats

after lee and grant met at appomatox court house in 1865 to sign the document ending the long and bloody civil war the south at last had to face defeat as the dream of a confederate nation melted into the lost cause through an examination of memoirs personal papers and postwar confederate rituals such as memorial day observances monument unveilings and veterans reunions *ghosts of the confederacy* probes into how white southerners adjusted to and interpreted their defeat and explores the cultural implications of a central event in american history foster argues that contrary to southern folklore southerners actually accepted their loss rapidly embraced both reunion and a new south and helped to foster sectional reconciliation and an emerging social order he traces southerners fascination with the lost cause showing that it was rooted as much in social tensions resulting from rapid change as it was in the legacy of defeat and demonstrates that the

public celebration of the war helped to make the south a deferential and conservative society although the ghosts of the confederacy still haunted the new south foster concludes that they did little to shape behavior in it white southerners in celebrating the war ultimately trivialized its memory reduced its cultural power and failed to derive any special wisdom from defeat

born and raised in greenville mississippi within the shelter of old traditions aristocratic in the best sense william alexander percy in his lifetime 1885 1942 was brought face to face with the convulsions of a changing world lanterns on the levee is his memorial to the south of his youth and young manhood in describing life in the mississippi delta percy bridges the interval between the semifeudal south of the 1800s and the anxious south of the early 1940s the rare qualities of this classic memoir lie not in what will percy did in his life although his life was exciting and varied but rather in the intimate honest and soul probing record of how he brought himself to contemplate unflinchingly a new and unstable era the 1973 introduction by walker percy will s nephew and adopted son recalls the strong character and easy grace of the most extraordinary man i have ever known

for cochran the sense of deja vu is overwhelming and alarming book jacket

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