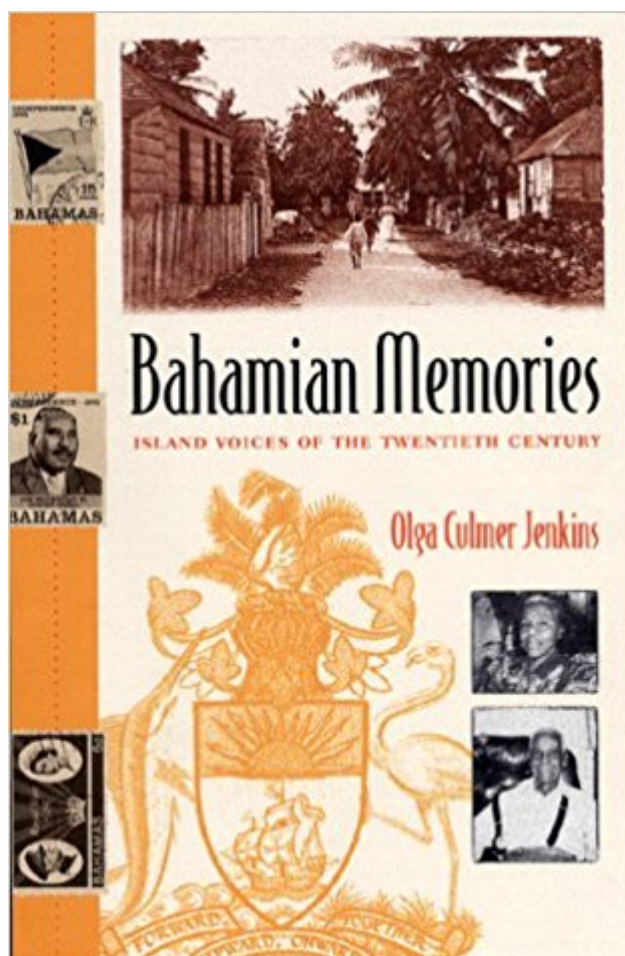


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Bahamian Memories: Island Voices Of The Twentieth Century



Synopsis

"A valuable contribution to the literature on the Bahamas. . . . and a successful experiment in history from below." It demonstrates the richness of oral evidence as a historical source."--Howard B. Johnson, University of Delaware

In *Bahamian Memories*, Olga Jenkins offers a story of the last 100 years of Bahamian history, letting those who lived it tell it. Allowing each person's story to stand with its own color, texture, and pattern, she has created a people's history of these Bahamians. Most of the 30 people Jenkins selected were born during the first three decades of the 20th century, and their voices are as varied as the populations of the eight islands the author visited, including black, white, mixed, and working- and middle-class individuals. Their views of change during the last century are captured in discussions ranging from early lifestyles, beliefs, and values to traditional occupations and customs to contract farming and tourism. These stories remind readers that this archipelago, less than 100 miles off Florida's east coast, is close both geographically and historically to the United States. When the white Bahamian government and power brokers expressed a desire to attract U.S. tourist dollars, the consequence was the introduction of greater racial segregation in the Bahamas during the first half of the century. When liquor was outlawed in the United States during Prohibition, the Bahamian government and a few shrewd Bahamian citizens made tremendous profits by supplying liquor to bootleggers. When World War II took American workers abroad, Bahamian labor often helped keep U.S. farms and agricultural markets afloat. Jenkins's parents were born on the Bahamian island of Eleuthera, and her roots are evident throughout this work. Approaching oral history with insight and sensitivity, she has preserved for scholars and future generations an important inspirational and educational legacy. Olga Culmer Jenkins, an independent scholar and educational consultant, has worked as a teacher and educational administrator. She lives in New York City.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Growing up in Philadelphia, Jenkins inherited a love of stories as her parents reminisced about their childhood in the Bahamas. As an adult, this independent scholar visited the islands on behalf of the Bahamian Ministry of Education and collected oral histories, presented here, that embrace all aspects of traditional life. The harvesting of sponges, the practice of "bush" medicine, and the craft of plaiting with straw are described in many vivid vernacular styles. In her foreword, Gail Saunders (coauthor of Univ. of Georgia Press's two-volume *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People*) places the collection in a useful historical context. Recommended for comprehensive collections in oral history or Caribbean studies. (Index not seen.)
DNancy B. Turner, New Mexico State Univ. Lib., Las Cruces Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"The 40 people Jenkins interviewed spent their lives in the islands, and they give a full picture of that life, from politics to religion to folk medicine..... Bahamian Memories is at times more like poetry than history." - Florida International "Jenkins has captured an authentic historic picture of life in the Bahamas.... The book reflects oral history at its best and is a valuable resource on the culture, educational system, sports, occupations, and ethnic backgrounds of Bahamians.... A valuable resource in the study of Caribbean culture and West Indian history." - Multicultural Review "This book is required reading for anyone interested in the social history and development of The Bahamas, and I am pleased to commend it." - Sir Orville Turnquest, Governor-General of The Bahamas" --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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