

Book Note

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Florida, Atlas of Historical County Boundaries (1997) John H. Long, Editor, Peggy Tuck Sinko and Kathryn Ford Thorne (Compilers). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons..

This atlas, produced under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of a project by the William M. Scholl Center for Family and Community History, is part of a series of volumes that currently covers 14 states. This series provides a unique resource to those in the areas of geography, demography, economics, genealogy, history, law, political science and other disciplines who need to know the history of county boundaries.

After a brief introduction, the atlas provides a "consolidated chronology of Florida State and County boundaries." This section presents a verbal description of the hundreds of county boundary changes that have been made, both major and minor, from the 1700s to 1986. The next 260 pages present maps of the 67 Florida counties over time. For example, the changes in the boundaries of Alachua County are presented in 13 maps on 8 pages, showing its evolution from 1828 as a county stretching from what is today Charlotte County to the Georgia border. Other counties, such as Martin County, are represented by 2 maps on one page.

In many cases, these maps are somewhat difficult to follow. For example, in examining the development of Putnam County, a map is presented that is titled "Putnam lost (territory) to Clay," yet nowhere on the map does the name "Clay" appear. One needs to examine the previous map (sometimes on the back of the current map) to discern which territory was lost. These maps could have been made much easier to read if shading had been used to indicate the territories lost and gained by one county from another. The final section presents census outline maps of Florida counties from 1830 to 1990 and an excellent bibliography.

While it is unlikely, at a price of \$120, to find itself on the shelves of many Florida geographers, all Florida geographers should be aware of this valuable resource in historical geography.