



Life Among the Nabobs: An Award Winning Journalist's First Hand Account Of The Turbulent 1960s and 70s

Hunter James

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Much of Hunter James's career as an editorialist and correspondent for the Atlanta Constitution and Baltimore Sun coincided with the turbulent civil-rights-antiwar-protest years, affording him an opportunity to focus on many of the intimate details of the movements—details overlooked or simply neglected by the TV networks and other news outlets. This work, his third on the subject, is not another play-by-play description of the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s. Instead, its focus is on the South that existed before the movements in cities such as Atlanta and Baltimore, and the entirely different South that emerged. Atlanta, for example, a relatively peaceful city in the late fifties and early sixties, became one of the most crime-ridden cities in America. The author tells this story by giving voice to real people who had to deal in their own way with the turmoil, the violence and the new day that was dawning. From his encounters with some of the well known figures of the era, such as Robert Frost, Odgen Nash, William Faulkner and numerous others, he presents an intimate and personal view not found anywhere else. He tells the story of The Atlanta Constitution, the South's greatest newspaper in James's view, as it struggles to survive a turbulent and ever changing landscape. (209/1287)

Much of Hunter James's career as an editorialist and correspondent for the Atlanta Constitution and Baltimore Sun coincided with the turbulent civil right years, affording him an opportunity to focus on many of the intimate details of the movement—details overlooked or simply neglected by the television networks and other news outlets. This is his third book on the subject, different in almost every respect from more standard works on movement days. These works all, in their own way, tell the story of real people who had to deal with a new day in their own way, often with little help from the likes of big names such as Martin Luther King. King and his chief aides would put in appearance from time to time in the small Southern towns—then off he would go to indulge himself in less uplifting challenges. The men closest to him, most notably his second-in-command, Ralph Abernathy, believed (and spoke openly of it) that King would stand taller in history if he had refrained from many of his lascivious nocturnal pleasures. The real fight, meantime, had been left to the people he had left behind. And in the beginning at least most were at a loss as to their mission. Were they to leave the cotton fields to march in the streets? Some chose to do so; others chose to stay behind, though not enough of them to get in all the cotton. Yet, to be sure, there were heroics a plenty. Daily marches in the streets, many of us spending hot summer days talking to black workers in the cotton and corn fields or in or near the swamps bordering the Tombigbee River, fights in the streets—activists spilling the groceries of men and woman of their own race, men and women who had gone shopping at supermarkets declared off-limits by activists. Some would eventually join the movement, some never. “And we'd go out, some of us would, and bottle out their windows at night,” an old preacher named Godfrey Norwood told me once. Still, the protests were far from unanimous. See All the Forgotten Places and They didn't Put That on the Huntley Brinkley. Although this work deals with certain aspects of the movement in Baltimore and other cities as the movement went north, the real emphasis is on what it left behind. And what the Southern world was like before the freedom riders came through: a summing up, in other words, of the often devastating impact left by the movement mainly on the city where Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind (the Great American Novel?) found the home of its glory.

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