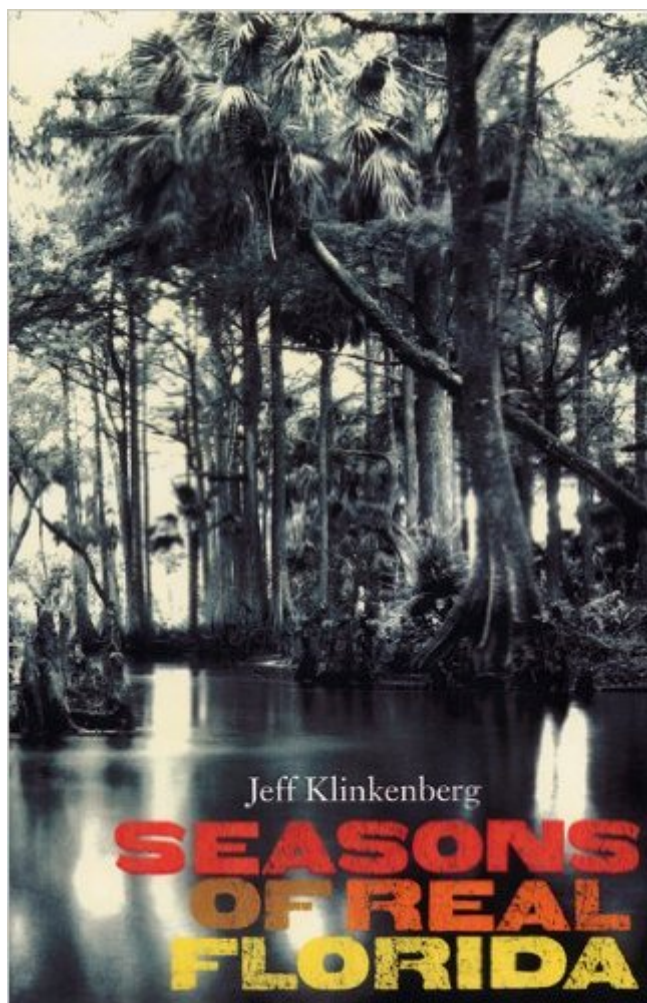


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# Seasons Of Real Florida (Florida History And Culture)



## Synopsis

From the foreword: "What is raw, alive, and essential about Florida is becoming more difficult to find, true; but it's still possible to encounter it, to experience it, and a good place to start is any story or book by Jeff Klinkenberg. . . . Jeff loves Florida. It shows."--Randy Wayne White, author of *Shark River and Everglades* "Klinkenberg is a genius reporter and a wonderful writer. I read this book in one gulp, then went outside, looked at that magnificent Florida sky and made myself all sorts of promises."--William McKeen, author of *Highway 61: A Father-and-Son Journey through the Middle of America* No wonder Jeff Klinkenberg loves Florida. At any time of year he can find a place in the state that's ripe to enjoy or a person whose story has aged to perfection. Arranged by season, the book opens in the fall, which Klinkenberg says is like spring in the north--a time of celebration: "Having survived our harshest season, we feel renewed." Fair weather, good food, and the joys of nature lie ahead, described here in essays that are like time capsules of "old Florida values." Preserving the past, they reveal Klinkenberg's waggish appreciation of the state's history, folkways, and landscape, not to mention its barbequed ribs, smoked mullet, stone crab claws, and fresh lemonade. Many pieces focus off the beaten path and on modern rogues who seem to turn their backsides to the subdivisions and shopping malls that pave the state: Miss Ruby, whose fruit stand features rutabagas, boiled peanuts, and her own brightly colored plywood paintings; an 85-year-old resident of the remote island of Cayo Costa who hums Beethoven while she hunts for shells; the scientists who test mosquito repellent in Everglades National Park; and the unofficial caretaker of Lilly Spring on the Santa Fe River, who greets canoeists wearing glasses, a necklace, and on occasion a synthetic fur loincloth. Other pieces pay homage to Klinkenberg's literary heroes who've written in and about Florida, such as Pulitzer Prize-winner Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Rawlings's companion and memoirist Idella Parker, Everglades crusader Marjory Stoneman Douglas, and novelist Ernest Hemingway. Klinkenberg also revisits an old St. Johns River campsite of 19th-century botanist William Bartram, whose encounters with alligators there were as alarming as Klinkenberg's with beer cans and soda bottles. For anyone who has a stake in the real Florida--resident, tourist, naturalist, or newcomer--this tour of the seasons will linger in memory like the aroma of orange blossoms on a clear winter night. Florida native Jeff Klinkenberg has been writing for the St. Petersburg Times since 1977. He is the only two-time winner of the Paul Hansell Distinguished Journalism Award, the highest honor given by the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is one of several great collections of award-winning St. Petersburg Times writer Jeff Klinkenberg's columns about some of the most interesting people and places in the remaining pockets of Real Florida. A master wordsmith, Klinkenberg brings eccentric individuals, wild locales, and local history to life with deft skill. He looks beyond the big cities, theme parks, and cookie-cutter suburbs that define modern Florida. His interviews, vignettes, and anecdotes are delightful -- alternately funny, strange, bittersweet, or all three. This book is hard to put down. Though I'm a native Floridian and, for all but two years of my life, have been a life-long resident of the Sunshine State, and though I have traveled through almost every corner of it, I still found myself discovering new places and stories that I didn't know about, and becoming reacquainted with old ones and seeing them in a new light. Highly recommended for anyone who wants a taste of Real Florida!

The interesting Florida history written about in Peter Matthiessen's book, *Killing Mr. Watson* prompted further reading on the subject. Jeff Klinkenberg's stories capture that wonderful Florida background. Each chapter describes a different and quite unique Floridian person, place or thing, all spun into delightful true tales. Mr. Klinkenberg aptly chooses Florida history that displays "sense of place" so well. Like another reviewer, I'm a hard to please reader too. I couldn't put this book down, and I've never been to Florida. The cover photograph, "Loxahatchee River #30" by Clyde Butcher is so haunting, lovely and appropriate for this book. Fortunately Mr. Klinkenberg devotes an entire chapter describing the one-of-a-kind Clyde Butcher. This book is funny, very interesting and highly

educational.

If you want to know what real Florida is like, what it looks like, feels like, smells like and even tastes like -- fall through summer -- this is the book for you. Klinkenberg is a true original, a natural resource as valuable as the panther, manatee and black bear.

The book's editors (Mormino & Arsenault) invite us to sit down with Florida delectables, like orange juice, to read this book. My plan was to snag some recipes from Randy Wayne White's "The Fishing Guide's Guide to Tropical Cooking." Alas, Klinkenberg's book was in my custody for only a day when relatives spotted it on my table top and hauled it away for their reading pleasure. My half-a-book review: gimme my book back, I love this author!"Seasons" real value is in the future when we read its stories of people and places and look back wistfully at Florida as it was. And it reminds me that Florida today is still full of charm. And charming writers like Jeff Klinkenberg.

Jeff Klinkenberg has been out in his car on the back roads and he's found the reason everyone moved to Florida in the first place. When my great aunt moved to North Miami in 1927 her house was on stilts (floods and alligators); now it is surrounded by 6 foot chainlink fence topped with barbed wire (urban animals!). Jeff talks to people who tell him the stories in between those extremes. Excellent read for anyone who wonders what was there besides the weather.

I spent Winter '08 visiting my dad in urban Tampa, and looking for Old Florida, decidedly hard to find. Jeff's terrific narratives about so many interesting people and places augmented and often replaced my futile search. I'm a hard-to-please reader, and this one completely satisfied.

I read this book several years ago when we spent winters in Florida and I gave it away. But Jeff Klinkenberg is a wonderful writer and I missed his wonderful "Florida" stories so I bought another copy and this time I'm keeping it so I can read it again when I get homesick for that beautiful state...

The author tells the reader about a lot of places and people here in Florida that he has known or written newspaper articles about. It is a good way to see how and what folks have done while living here. Plus it let me go back in time to places I have been and to read about folks that I had meet years ago.

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