

## The Golden Band from Tigerland: A History of LSU's Marching Band [Review]

By: [Kathelene McCarty Smith](#)

The Golden Band from Tigerland: A History of LSU's Marching Band. Tom Continé and Faye Phillips. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8071-6350-4 (Hardback). \$39.95. 148 p.

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### **Abstract:**

No one who has heard the thrilling first four notes of “Four Corners,” the pregame salute at each of Louisiana State University’s (LSU) home football games, could forget the “Golden Band from Tigerland.” Authors Tom Continé, alumnus of the LSU marching band, and Faye Phillips, retired Associate Dean of Libraries for Special Collections at LSU, have crafted a thoughtful tribute to the storied band. Their book, *The Golden Band from Tigerland: A History of LSU's Marching Band*, weaves a fascinating narrative that traces the group’s history from its modest beginnings in 1893 as an eleven-member cadet band, to its current place as one of the most preeminent college marching bands in the country.

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### **Article:**

**\*\*\*Note: Full text of article below**

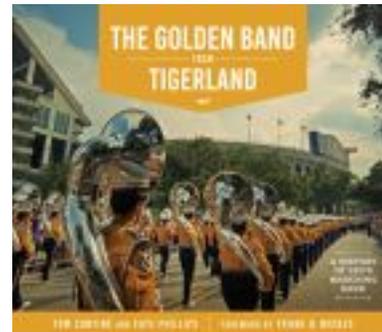
city, yet it was separated by huge social and economic gulfs. Feminist, abolitionist, and social reformer, Harriet Martineau was unimpressed during her 1835 stay in the city. Astutely sensing the increasing political unrest, she marveled at discussions in which words such as “justice” and “oppression” were used in talking of tariffs, but not of slavery. While in Charleston, Martineau visited both a slave market and a slavemasters’s home and she considered the experiences horrific. She believed that “if the moral gloom which oppresses the spirit of the stranger were felt by the resident, of course this condition of society would not endure another day.” Yet this stranger could see the inevitable consequences of slavery, even if many Charlestonians could not.

The final narrative comes from Boston native, Anna Brackett, who arrived in Charleston in 1860. Brackett was one of many Northern educators who were recruited to train young Southern women in pedagogical methods. A fervent feminist and suffragist, Brackett often felt at odds with her Massachusetts upbringing and her newfound home of Charleston. Even though she was a witness to the secession of the state of South Carolina and the Confederate firing on Fort Sumter in 1861, Brackett was fascinated by the traditions and beauty of the city. She understood that the South’s way of life was passing away just as the region was trying so strongly to hold on to it. In this nostalgic account, Brackett looked back kindly on her former students, who she was confident would share her teachings with generations of children of the postwar South.

Interestingly, Fant chooses to end the book just as the Civil War begins, yet the reader knows what is to come. An important Confederate port, Charleston was a prime military target of the Northern Army, and was under relentless siege. The constant bombardment, as well as fire and disease, led the city to finally fall into the hands of Union troops on February 18, 1865, only a little over a month before the South surrendered. However, it is the earlier years that are captured by the narratives included in *The Travelers’ Charleston: Accounts of Charleston and Lowcountry, South Carolina, 1666-1861*, reflecting the transformation of the region from a swampy “paradise,” to a city poised for war.

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No one who has heard the thrilling first four notes of “Four Corners,” the pregame salute at each of Louisiana State University’s (LSU) home football games, could forget the “Golden Band from Tigerland.” Authors Tom Continé, alumnus of the LSU marching band, and Faye Phillips, retired Associate Dean of Libraries for Special Collections at LSU, have crafted a thoughtful tribute to the storied band. Their book, *The Golden Band from Tigerland: A History of LSU’s Marching Band*, weaves a fascinating narrative that traces the group’s history from its modest beginnings in 1893 as an eleven-member cadet band, to its current place as one of the most preeminent college marching bands in the country. Organized in three separate “epochs” and including 150 beautiful photographs, the book chronologically follows LSU’s marching band through its multiple directors, its periods of transition, and its connection with the university.

Interestingly, the history of the LSU marching band reflects the history of Louisiana itself, as well as the colorful personalities who have inhabited it. Organized by future governor Ruffin G. Pleasant in 1893 when he was a cadet at Louisiana State University (then an all-male military institute), the Cadet Band initially provided accompaniment for military drills. Just a few decades later they were incorporating jazz numbers into their repertoire, marching in Mardi Gras parades, and participating in halftime shows during the college’s football games. Yet, it was another Louisiana governor, Huey P. Long, who would understand the importance of the band to both the university and the state. Not surprisingly, the most intriguing sections of the book deal with the unusual connection between the LSU marching band and Governor Long. From his election in 1928 until his assassination in 1935, Long was in large part responsible for moving the band into what the authors describe as its first “Golden Age.” The governor often accompanied the band on trips, composed songs for their performances, and periodically led them in parades as the unofficial drum major. He recognized the significance of his “Show Band of the South,” not only as a calling card for the state, but also for his own political interests.

Additionally, Long hired one of the most charismatic band directors in the school’s history, Castro Carazo. Carazo, a

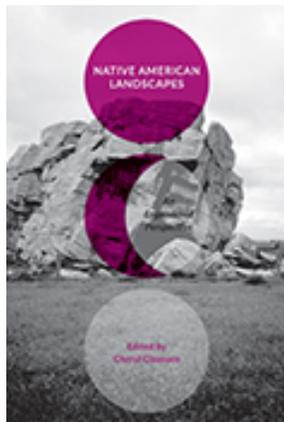
native of Costa Rica, had been working as the musical director of the Blue Room Orchestra in New Orleans' famed Roosevelt Hotel. His transition from orchestra leader to the directorship of the LSU marching band is the stuff from which legends are made. Soon, the band greatly increased in size and transitioned from military dress to purple and gold uniforms. The combination of the flamboyant personalities of Long and Carazo brought true excitement and glamour to the band, and this golden age of showmanship and fame would last until a more austere period was ushered in on the eve of the Second World War.

As the nation began to mobilize for war, the university and its band underwent significant changes. Not only was there a new, less exuberant, director, but women were being included into the band's ranks. Although LSU had accepted women since the turn of the twentieth century, they had not been a part of the marching band. The postwar years saw the addition of a costumed student tiger mascot, the inclusion of the "Golden Girls" dance team in half time performances, and adaptations to meet the needs of televised football games. The authors track the modifications, improvements, and modernization of the LSU marching band through the years, including the addition of female drum majors, as well as recent triumphs, such as the band's induction into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame.

*The Golden Band from Tigerland: A History of LSU's Marching Band* is an engaging and entertaining read, not only for those affiliated with LSU, but also for those interested in the history of Louisiana, the traditions of college football, and the unique contribution made by marching bands to the American musical landscape.

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**Native American Landscapes: An Engendered Perspective.** Edited by Cheryl Claassen. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2016. ISBN 9-781-6219-0253-9. \$74.95



Cheryl Claassen's collection of essays caught my attention when she said, "The origin of "landscape" in Western thought and thus archaeology and anthropology is traceable

to the appearance of countryside paintings beginning in the early 16<sup>th</sup>-century canvases of Albrecht Altdorfer (Wood 2014)" (p. xiii).

Describing the paintings, Claassen goes on to reveal these landscape paintings "renders the land passive, docile and subjective, the same attitude projected by men onto women." By references to the sea and the land as feminine, using "mother earth" as an example, Claassen reminds us that the native peoples' landscapes were also filled with female spirits, caves, waterfalls, the earth and the night sky. Claassen raises the question of how differently men and women interacted with landscapes. Answers may differ as most stories we read tell us that men traveled the landscapes as hunters, warriors, and explorers while women "remained at home" and tended the land.

Through a series of nine essays, the mostly female authors explore topics of landscapes, storyscapes and ritescapes. Efforts are made to reveal how native women explored the landscapes that surrounded them and viewed them as gendered spaces. The landscape was a place for family and rituals.

As an opening to begin future research on differing peoples' perceptions of landscapes, Claassen has set the challenge for anthropology, archeology, art, environmental research, and globalization scholars to follow. Do our perceptions as male or female differ and if so, how and why?

Recommended for academic libraries, museum libraries and scholars who may study native people. Reference citations: p. 276-284.

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