

Where We Find Ourselves: The Photographs of Hugh Mangum, 1897-1922 [book review]

By: [Kathelene McCarty Smith](#)

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Abstract:

“A picture is worth a thousand words” is the perfect idiom for a book that so effectively conveys the power and intimacy that can be captured by portrait photography. Before the reader even opens the book, Where We Find Ourselves: The Photographs of Hugh Mangum, 1897-1922, they will notice the striking image of a young African American woman on the cover. Her eyes are compelling, and they beckon you to look inside where you will discover a striking collection of portraits created from Mangum’s original multiple-image glass plate negatives. His subjects’ gazes give silent testimony to life in Post-Reconstruction North Carolina and Virginia.

Keywords: Hugh Mangum | photography | book review

Article:

***Note: Full text of article below

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Where We Find Ourselves: The Photographs of Hugh Mangum, 1897-1922

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Ford's dynamic photographs appear true and real as they present the people and their environments between 1971-1975.

As a followup Ford returned to Oxford and the areas he visited in 1971-1975. The photographs taken in 2013 thru 2016 give us a "then and now" contrast of a "way of life" that disappeared or is disappearing. The drama of the change seems directly related to mechanization, environmental observations and ways of life of those who now live in North Mississippi.

As an added opportunity to see Ford's research through the eyes of a film camera, see Ford's 1975 documentary award winning film, "Homeplace". It can be viewed on YouTube. Also to learn more about the Michael Ford Materials Collection, go to the American Folklife Center, at the Library of Congress. www.loc.gov. Recommended for public and academic libraries and archival centers.

Carol Walker Jordan
Librarian and Consultant

The Power of the Plan: Building a University in Historic Columbia, South Carolina. Richard F. Galehouse. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-61117-970-5 (Hard); 978-1-61117-971-2 (Ebook). 196 p. \$44.99.



On the day that a review copy of *The Power of the Plan: Building a University in Historic Columbia, South Carolina* arrived at my door, I wondered, "Is this another over-sized coffee table book?" To my delight, Richard Galehouse's beautiful and historically fascinating book is not a mere coffee table treasure.

As a graduate of both the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Education and the master's program in the College of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina, I may not have been the best reviewer to give my thoughts on Galehouse's book. Certainly bias may have entered into my praise as you will see below. Inside the pages, the research provides to the reader the University's planning history from its beginning days in 1801 through the 200 years that have followed. The book is a journey documenting planning, vision and the

leadership the University has provided to integrate and enrich its provenance within the city of Columbia.

This story shows the evolution of this state university's involvement and enrichment in and of the City of Columbia. Richard Galehouse tells the story that explains the first days of the South Carolina College plan of 1801--the famed Horseshoe concept for the campus. Situated in the center of the town of Columbia, the evolution of the college into a university spread and grew within the city. Sometimes troubles impeded plans and sometimes successes allowed the growth needed to continue within the confines of the city. Galehouse's outstanding and highly readable research documents his stories.

Of great interest are today's vigorous plans for the **Innovista** research campus and its potential great value to the city and surrounding areas.

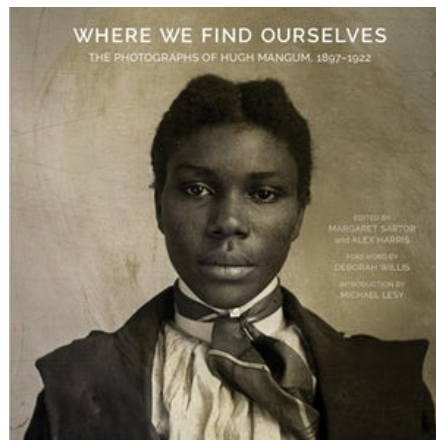
Mere words cannot explain the beauty of the graphics within each chapter – full color photographs, intricate plans for building sites, notations for all inserts, portraits of famous individuals who have spurred planning and nurtured growth of both campus and city. Historical research into manuscripts, interviews, many valued documents explain and verify planning over the years and photographs, maps and charts are the highlights of this book.

The book offers an insider's view of how a city and a university's leadership worked together tirelessly over those 200 years to produce "a university in a city".

Recommended for public, academic and graduate school collections (particularly architecture, landscaping and land management).

Carol Walker Jordan
Librarian and Consultant

Where We Find Ourselves: The Photographs of Hugh Mangum, 1897-1922. Margaret Sartor and Alex Harris, editors. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-4696-4831-6 (Hard). \$45.00. 184 p.



“A picture is worth a thousand words” is the perfect idiom for a book that so effectively conveys the power and intimacy that can be captured by portrait photography. Before the reader even opens the book, *Where We Find Ourselves: The Photographs of Hugh Mangum, 1897-1922*, they will notice the striking image of a young African American woman on the cover. Her eyes are compelling, and they beckon you to look inside where you will discover a striking collection of portraits created from Mangum’s original multiple-image glass plate negatives. His subjects’ gazes give silent testimony to life in Post-Reconstruction North Carolina and Virginia.

The reader may find themselves leafing through the many images before they realize that there is also significant text that constructs a narrative about Mangum’s life as an itinerant photographer traveling through the Jim Crow South. Carefully researched and curated by Elizabeth Sartor and Alex Harris, the book traces Mangum’s career from a young photographer developing images in his father’s barn, to an established businessman. His interest in capturing “Penny Portraits” of both white and black citizens from a range of economic backgrounds, reflects a “democratic attitude” that was very unusual for the time.

The book begins with a thought-provoking introduction by Michael Lesy, who gives perspective to the political and social climate of the Jim Crow South. He points out how Mangum’s photographs have the ability to subvert conventional historical narratives, such as segregation. Mangum seems to capture all of his subjects equally, suggesting an “open door policy” during a time when racial inequality was the norm. This liberal outlook is reflected in the serial exposures on the glass plates, showing black and white customers in successive images. The juxtaposition could point to a desegregated waiting room and leads to interesting questions about Mangum’s political views.

While Mangum’s position on racial equality can only be guessed, the reader does get a sense of the photographer’s personality through several self-portraits included in the book. These images are supplemented by Margaret Santor’s

text, which describes the artist as a young man, showing an early aptitude for art and photography. This natural talent was nurtured at several state female colleges resulting in him turning away from his family’s business and traveling throughout North Carolina, Virginia, and beyond, making fast and affordable photographs to be displayed or worn, and meticulously logging his travels. Whether his nomadic tendencies were a result of wanderlust or simple curiosity, his eye for an artistic viewpoint resulted in intriguing and personal photographs, capturing his clients individually, as well as in groups. In some cases, these photographs suggest friendships or family relationships, leading the reader to wonder who they were and how they saw themselves. Other subjects were less conventional, such as prisoners and gypsies, revealing his interests in a variety of different people.

After Mangum’s death in 1922, his glass plate negatives remained stored like a time-capsule in his father’s barn. It was not until the 1970s, when the structure was scheduled to be demolished, that the images were discovered and saved. While many are thought to have disappeared, over 750 were recovered, although some were badly damaged. In Alex Harris’ chapter, “Through the Lens,” he discusses how the images were chosen for the book. Sartor and Harris reviewed the glass plate negatives that had been donated to Duke University in 1986, as well as recent images still held by the family of the original donors. Harris points out that Mangum’s photographs would not have been widely circulated during his lifetime. More than likely, they were only viewed by his clients, and perhaps his family. Only now can these images be appreciated by a broader audience, which will be able to draw a deeper understanding of his clientele, his wanderlust, and perhaps even his politics. This book should have a strong appeal for anyone interested in photography, portraiture, and the history of the post-Reconstruction South.

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