

Death in the Everglades: The Murder of Guy Bradley, America's First Martyr to Environmentalism (Florida History and Culture (Paperback))

By *Stuart B. McIver*

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"Guy Bradley's colorful life and violent death have always seemed the stuff of myth. . . . *Death in the Everglades* is both compelling history and a heart-tugging drama."—*Audubon*

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"Rescues from obscurity a key chapter in the history of American environmentalism. . . . With great finesse, McIver evokes Bradley's tumultuous world, chronicles the pitched battle to save wild birds, and resurrects a true folk hero."—*Booklist*

"Reminds us that Glades once was so wild that armed men quaked with fear."—*St. Petersburg Times*

Guy Bradley, born in Chicago in 1870, was killed in 1905 only three years into his tenure as game warden in a south Florida that was still very much a frontier. His murderer, never prosecuted, was a one-eyed former Civil War sharpshooter who made his living supplying exotic plumage for women's hats. At the time, an ounce of feathers was worth more than an ounce of gold. Bradley's death sent shock waves across America and helped give impetus to the burgeoning environmental movement.

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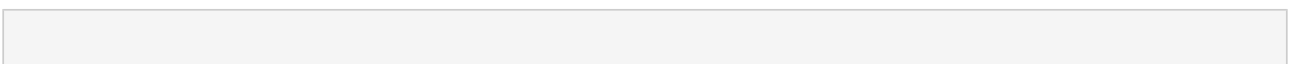
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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In the late 19th century, McIver explains, as many as five million egrets, herons, flamingos, spoonbills, terns, cormorants and other species were killed each year in Florida, shot by plume hunters who often decimated entire rookeries and sold the feathers to the American millinery trade to decorate women's hats. In 1901, to save them from extinction, the American Ornithologists' Union, backed by the newly formed Audubon Society, persuaded the Florida legislature to pass a law making the killing of birds other than game birds illegal. In his carefully researched account of the struggle between environmentalists and plume hunters, McIver (Hemingway's Key West) tells the story of Guy Bradley, a reformed plume hunter in the frontier town of Flamingo, who was hired in 1902 as game warden of Monroe County and three years later was killed while trying to enforce the unpopular law. McIver spends a lot of time on details of Bradley's family history and on the changes wrought on southern Florida by the developer and railroad magnate Henry Morrison Flagler, a story that is important in its own right but adds little to the account of Bradley's murder. His killer, a plume hunter whose son the game warden was trying to arrest for shooting birds, got off scot-free because there was so little sympathy for the Florida bird protection law. McIver's story might have been more effective if he had spent more time looking into the lives of the Everglades' settlers and showing how a law that increased their economic hardship could lead to murder. Photos not seen by PW.

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From [Booklist](#)

It's one thing to dedicate your life to speaking out about the need to protect endangered species; it's another to put your life on the line. By vividly relating the highly dramatic story of Guy Bradley (1870-1905), "first martyr in the fight to protect wild birds," prolific writer and documentary filmmaker McIver rescues from obscurity a key chapter in the history of American environmentalism. Bradley came of age in the wilds of south Florida at the height of the mania for feather-festooned women's hats, a craze that decimated the Everglades' once gloriously fecund rookeries. As wealthy entrepreneur Henry Morrison Flagler conjured Palm Beach and Miami out of the swampy wilderness, and tough, well-armed men did whatever it took to earn a living, millions of egrets, flamingos, and herons were systematically slaughtered. The first bird protection law was finally passed in 1901, and Bradley, smart and courageous, was hired to enforce it as game warden and deputy sheriff, a harrowing undertaking that ended in a fatal confrontation. With great finesse, McIver evokes Bradley's tumultuous world, chronicles the pitched battle to save wild birds, and resurrects a true folk hero. *Donna Seaman*

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Review

"A moving account of a raw frontier and a hero who lost his life trying to enforce the law."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jack Crawford:

The reason? Because this *Death in the Everglades: The Murder of Guy Bradley, America's First Martyr to Environmentalism (Florida History and Culture (Paperback))* is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-

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