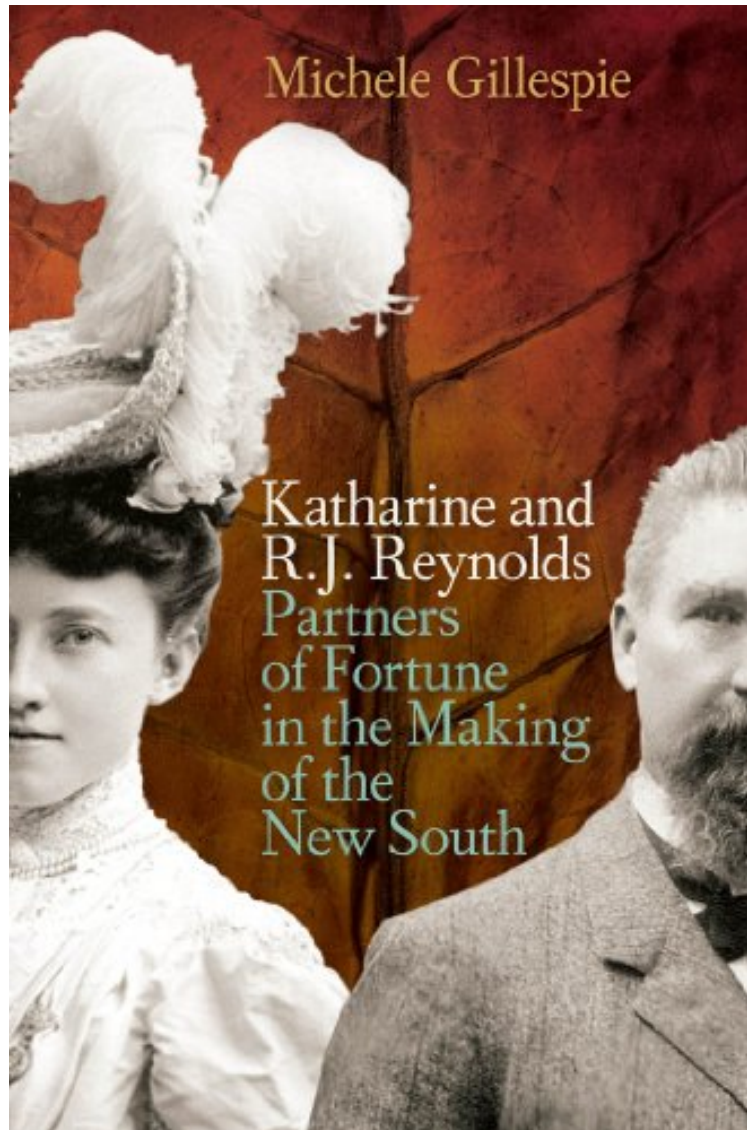


(Free) Katharine and R. J. Reynolds: Partners of Fortune in the Making of the New South

Katharine and R. J. Reynolds: Partners of Fortune in the Making of the New South

Michele Gillespie

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Michele Gillespie : Katharine and R. J. Reynolds: Partners of Fortune in the Making of the New South before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Katharine and R. J. Reynolds: Partners of Fortune in the Making of the New South:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An Insider's Perspective By Marshall Marvelli For anyone interested in the South, modern Southern culture, feminism and racism in the new (post Civil War) South, the history of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the impact of industrialism on the early twentieth century South, this book is a must read.

Before this reviewer proceeds, he must make two disclaimers: first, I am an RJR man having worked for the company nearly 20 years of my professional life; second, I know Dr. Gillespie personally and have an inordinate (unrestrained) respect for her research, teaching and writing having been a recipient of the fruits thereof. So, I admit a bias; but, I feel that my opinion is sufficiently buttressed by the limpid quality of the written expression and thoroughness of the research that created this book. It's an enjoyable read. The characters come alive on the pages. Their hopes and dreams, both dashed and realized, are presented for all the see. For a Winstonian, the names and places of our community come alive with a history that few of us know. For the student of the new South, the partnership of Katharine and Richard, a pair of equals according to RJR, seeks to achieve a a company and community that would not have existed without these two remarkable people. In Dr. Gillespie's newest book, Winston-Salem becomes a microcosm for a South that has come of age in the past 40 years. Michele Gillespie's book helps to make sense of this brave new world in which we live and for which we have so much hope. Good reading to one and all. Buy the book! [ASIN:0820332267 Katharine and R. J. Reynolds: Partners of Fortune in the Making of the New South]

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. HOME TOWN BOOK By myrna LIVE IN WINSTON-SALEM, NC SO IT HELPED ME UNDERSTAND A LOT ABOUT HOW THE TOWN WAS FORMED AND ALSO WHAT THE PEOPLE THOUGHT ABOUT THEIR CITY. IT WAS ALSO AN INSIGHT OF THE TIMES AND HOW WOMAN AND BLACKS WERE COMING INTO THEIR OWN. OF COURSE THE HOUSE AND MANY OF THE BUILDINGS ARE STILL THERE BUT THE LAND IS MUCH REDUCED. I VISITED THE HOUSE MANY TIMES AND YOU CAN SEE THE CARE THAT WAS PUT INTO IT, TO BE THE MOST MODERN OF ITS TIME. IT IS VERY LIVABLE AND THE ART IS OUTSTANDING. KATHARINE WAS A VERY STRONG WOMAN AND GOT A LOT OF THINGS DONE I WOULD NOT CALL HER THE MOTHER OF THE YEAR.

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Katharine and R. J. Reynolds: Partners of Fortune in the Making of the New South By Ken Badgett With at least some memory of the blood, sweat, tears and just plain hard work supplied by generations of North Carolinians represented by the state's obsolete tobacco barns and adaptively-reused auction warehouses, by "Winston's" refurbished-for-new-uses tobacco factories, and by the preserved finery of the former Reynolds family estate in Winston-Salem known as Reynolda, readers should have serious historical interest in two people who are among the most visible icons of tobacco culture in the American South, Richard Joshua Reynolds and Katharine Smith Reynolds. Their exceptional lives were made possible and were maintained through social and economic networks tied to the cultivation and the processing of the golden leaf by thousands of black and white workers in the Winston-Salem area through the still successful operation of the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (now Reynolds American, Inc.). Of importance to readers in northwestern North Carolina are the facts that Katharine Smith Reynolds was a native to the Blue Ridge foothills town of Mount Airy; that the Reynolds family had strong historical ties to neighboring Patrick County, VA; and that R. J. and Katharine's son, Dick, Jr., their grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren have maintained all or parts of a massive estate, known as Devotion, below Roaring Gap mountain in the far western section of Surry County. In her new book, Michele Gillespie adds flesh to what has been barely skeletal knowledge of the first two facts. Maybe the Devotion estate will be the subject of a future book. As Gillespie demonstrates, evidence of Katharine Smith Reynolds' life is quite evident in traditional historical resources - archives, newspapers, libraries, etc. - throughout the region. However, it is sad to note that her life is hardly remembered in her own hometown, Mount Airy, a place well-known for its disdain of academic history and the avoidance of serious, meticulous research that might tie powerful local families to negative issues. While ignoring (or avoiding) the social complexity of the town's fascinating people and past, Mount Airy's boosters can be seen today endlessly celebrating the faux simplicity of the fictional lives of barely-fleshed-out television characters from a 1960's sit-com, "The Andy Griffith Show." Being first a booster and second a journalist, the editor of "The Mount Airy News" even opposes historical writing that is not grossly simplistic, or what he calls "accessible." The editor and many local residents appear to support a notion that the readability of history must always be on a juvenile level, with lots of illustrations and few difficult words, so as not to engage anyone on any subject at any level of sophistication. While good for tabloid journalism, chamber-of-commerce marketing and hero worship, academic historians cannot justify the presentation of half-truths and nonsensical hyperbole. Professor Gillespie's joint biography of the Reynoldses is descriptive and thoroughly contextualized. Her chapters flow in time and focus alternately on R. J. and Katharine as young people then as adults in a complex world where some women were expected to fit into traditional domestic roles while others were able to make choices in a changing civic and business climate. Gillespie is blunt in her review of racial issues and the manipulation of black labor after the Civil War, an approach that is needed for topics that involve towns like Mount Airy in Surry County. Reading this book will make residents of Katharine's hometown embarrassed by the comparatively poor quality of Mount Airy's historiography with regard to racial and most other topics. Katharine and R. J. Reynolds: Partners of Fortune in the Making of the New South provides a necessary corrective to inadequate and often fictionalized local history in Surry County, NC. The Reynoldses' fortunes and legacies are vital to any understanding of recent history in North Carolina and the American South. Professional historians like Gillespie expect readers to appreciate facts and to search for truth; tabloid writers throughout the English-speaking world want to entertain and are happy to cater to petty sensitivities and to promote chamber-of-

commerce marketing schemes - insert Mount Airy's MAYBERRY fetish here! Hopefully, more professional historians will consider people and places in northwestern North Carolina as suitable topics for serious academic research. It was a pleasure to read this excellent book.

Separately they were formidable; together they were unstoppable. Despite their intriguing lives and the deep impact they had on their community and region, the story of Richard Joshua Reynolds (1850–1918) and Katharine Smith Reynolds (1880–1924) has never been fully told. Now Michele Gillespie provides a sweeping account of how R. J. and Katharine succeeded in realizing their American dreams. From relatively modest beginnings, R. J. launched the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, which would eventually develop two hugely profitable products, Prince Albert pipe tobacco and Camel cigarettes. His marriage in 1905 to Katharine Smith, a dynamic woman thirty years his junior, marked the beginning of a unique partnership that went well beyond the family. As a couple, the Reynoldses conducted a far-ranging social life and, under Katharine's direction, built Reynolda House, a breathtaking estate and model farm. Providing leadership to a series of progressive reform movements and business innovations, they helped drive one of the South's best examples of rapid urbanization and changing race relations in the city of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Together they became one of the New South's most influential elite couples. Upon R. J.'s death, Katharine reinvented herself, marrying a World War I veteran many years her junior and engaging in a significant new set of philanthropic pursuits. Katharine and R. J. Reynolds reveals the broad economic, social, cultural, and political changes that were the backdrop to the Reynoldses' lives. Portraying a New South shaped by tensions between rural poverty and industrial transformation, white working-class inferiority and deeply entrenched racism, and the solidification of a one-party political system, Gillespie offers a masterful life-and-times biography of these important North Carolinians.

Michele Gillespie's sophisticated examination of the intertwined lives of Katharine and R. J. Reynolds represents an exceptional contribution to the historiography of the modern South. At once a penetrating portrait of a marriage and an acute analysis of the many ways in which the lives of the partners shed light on business and social history, Gillespie's book provides readers with dazzling new insights regarding the dynamics of power in the rapidly modernizing region the Reynoldses called home. (Peter A. Coclanis, Albert R. Newsome Distinguished Professor of History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) Deeply researched, beautifully written, and cogently argued, this is an engrossing study of a power couple extraordinaire, R. J. and Kate Reynolds, which will appeal to a wide readership. Telling us much about an unusual relationship, Michele Gillespie also provides a new way to understand how the post-Reconstruction New South elite helped construct business structures, social relations, and racial hierarchies. The result is an important addition to our understanding of the industrial South in the North Carolina Piedmont heartland. (William A. Link author of *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*) This innovative, beautifully written dual biography is carefully contextualized in the history and historiography of its region and era, and as a result it makes a significant scholarly contribution to several fields of history not always recognized as being related. (John B. Boles William P. Hobby Professor of History, Rice University) [T]he range and depth of Gillespie's work coupled with clarity of her writing combine to create a read that will be welcomed by students of history — both amateur and academic — who want an interview view of the world occupied by the founder of the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and Mary Katharine Smith. (Tim Revis *Northeast Georgia Living*) Gillespie . . . masterfully builds a contextual framework around which to construct and present complementary biographies of two compelling individuals. The result is engaging and thought-provoking narrative history, which is also informative about the social, economic, and political issues of the time and region. (B. M. Banta *Choice*) Ms. Gillespie uses Katharine's life and work as a kind of prism through which to view the prejudices and predilections of Southern culture in the 1910s and 1920s. The author . . . also offers an impressively researched essay on the emergence of the post-bellum Southern economy. . . . Ms. Gillespie has . . . produced a rich and original history of misunderstood period, one drawn almost entirely from primary sources. (Barton Swaim *Wall Street Journal*) Michele Gillespie provides a sweeping account of how R. J. and Katharine succeeded in realizing their American dreams. . . . Deeply researched, beautifully written, and cogently argued, this is an engrossing study of a power couple extraordinaire. (Bob Edmonds McCormick *Messenger*) In this examination of Katharine and Richard Joshua Reynolds, Michele Gillespie achieves a rare feat: turning a dual biography into a tour de force. . . . Gillespie has produced a top-notch study of a powerful couple negotiating the shifting socioeconomic world of the New South and early corporate America. (Bruce Eelman *Journal of American History*) Carefully researched and elegantly written, this thoughtful and engaging dual biography of Katharine and R. J. Reynolds is a story that needed to be told. . . . A sophisticated study that will appeal to a broad range of readers within and beyond the academy, Gillespie's work pivots on her keen insights about the dynamics of power in a political culture built on intricate hierarchies of race, class, and gender. (Mary E. Frederickson *American Historical*) In this well-researched joint biography of entrepreneur Richard Joshua Reynolds (RJR) and businesswoman Katharine Smith Reynolds, Michele Gillespie traces the rise of a husband and wife from the ranks of the middling sort to positions of great wealth and power. . . . The author takes care to situate the couple in the

economic, political, and social currents of their time, and Gillespie's diligence in this regard informs readers about southern history and conveys appreciation for the lives of the couple. (Julia Kirk Blackwelder *Journal of Southern History*)

About the Author Michele Gillespie is a professor of history and dean of the undergraduate college at Wake Forest University. She is also author of *Free Labor in an Unfree World: White Artisans in Slaveholding Georgia, 1789–1860* (Georgia) and co-editor of ten books, including *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times* (Georgia).