

February Book Review Make Sure This is On Your Dance Card + 2 photos
595 words

Make Sure This is On Your Dance Card

A Book Review: *The Valley Where They Danced*

In theory, good writing is supposedly 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. If so, then Cleveland, Georgia author Emory Jones has nailed it with his first historical novel, *The Valley Where They Danced*. A 1980s newspaper story about a local mystery was the germ that started it all. For years the ideas tumbled in his subconscious, until finally, about four years ago, he got serious. His wife's "encouragement," as only a wife can urge, spurred him on.

The result is a story as graceful as a waltz, but with the frantic urgency of a polka, and as beautiful as a ballet solo. Dr. Tom Garrison and Lenore Conley's beautiful tango is based around the legend of two star-crossed Native American lovers, for whom the Sautee and Nacoochee Valleys were named.

Any story that grabs you and won't let go, is the kind of story you hate to see end. One of the reasons this book has been praised so highly, is the authenticity of even the most minute facts. Emory had knowledgeable people in many different fields to vet and advise. It was his aunt, the model for Lenore, who set him straight on the sizes of lard buckets. He was determined that all historical fact would be accurate.

Emory spent his lifetime day job writing what other people told him to write, but that's changed. He's already working on a second volume of the story and foresees a third volume.

One of the most interesting aspects of this story set in northeast Georgia, on the heels of World War I, is that Dr. Tom and his lady are fictional characters, as are many others. But other personalities actually existed. It's impossible to discern who was birthed in Emory's creative imagination, and which were plucked from history to complete the story. That is the magical quality of the story, and testimony to the word weaving skills of the author.

This novel may be Emory's first stab at historical fiction, but it's far from his first writing rodeo. Following a UGA cum laude graduation that gave him a union card into a journalism career, he joined Gold Kist, Inc., an agricultural co-operative, where he held various positions with the company's four publications. What followed is a lifetime career with various agricultural and business-to-business endeavors.

In addition, since his return to his White County, Georgia roots, the name Emory Jones has appeared on a number of history-related books, numerous articles and newspaper

columns. But it's his latest project, the story of two sweet lovers, for whom life had so much to offer, that has grabbed his readers and won't let go. "Jones has created a classic without intending to do so," one reader reported. "It's been a long, long time since I read a book as captivating as *The Valley Where They Danced*," another said. "This is seriously good literature.... This touching story will pull at your heartstrings," yet another reader enthused.

And how can heartstrings not be affected, when a smitten young physician confesses to the young woman with the limp, that he knew from their first meeting they would marry? When profession of his love brings on a dance with the woman who should never have known such magic, readers are literally dancing with them.

But eventually, all dances must end. The newlyweds follow a popular custom and honeymoon at nearby Tallulah Falls. From that charmed setting, worlds collide and produce yet another dance that will forever alter lives and futures. After Tallulah Falls, neither the dance nor the dancers would ever be the same again.

By John Shivers

BOX ITEM:

Readers may purchase the book by logging onto www.thevalleywheretheydanced.com, at local bookstores, and on Amazon.

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