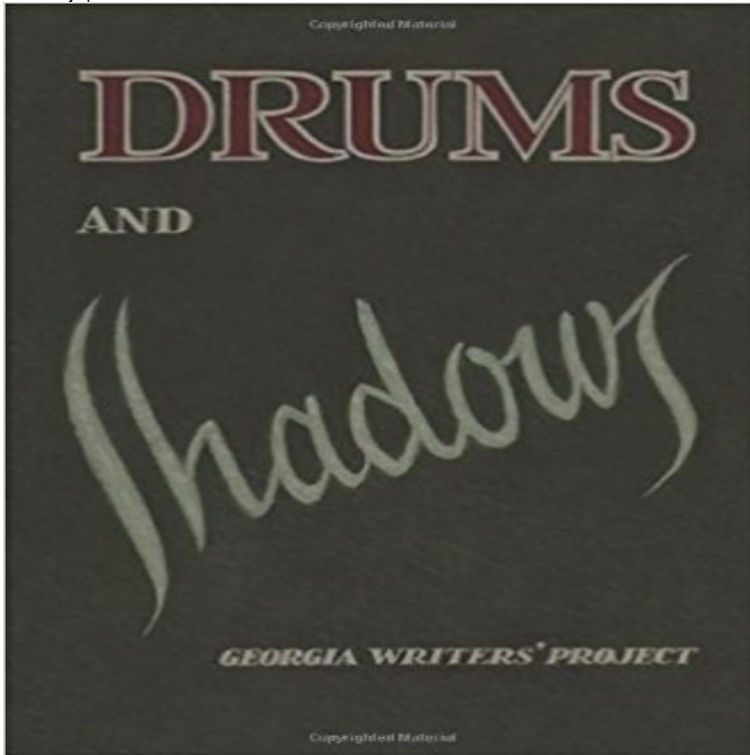


Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes



This collection of oral folklore from coastal Georgia was assembled during the 1930s as part of a WPA writers program, under the supervision of Mary Granger. The accounts in this book, framed by colorful descriptions of the rural locales where they were collected, were principally from elderly African-Americans, some of them centenarians. Most had been slaves. In some cases they had known first generation slaves who had been born in Africa. This book focuses on a set of beliefs and magical practices (some of which are today known as Hoodoo), including root doctoring, the existence of spirits, talismans, lucky and unlucky acts and omens and more. The interviewer also investigates the use of drums and dancing during celebrations, funeral and baptism rituals, food taboos, and other aspects of folklore and ethnology. This study dispels any lingering doubt that these beliefs are derived directly from Africa--it exhaustively cross-references the narratives with an appendix of quotes from African ethnographers, folklorists and explorers. Do not be put off by the use of phonetic dialect spelling. This is not being used here to belittle the speakers or cast them as ignorant. Rather, this book is scrupulously non-judgmental. This is simply how oral accounts were transcribed before there were portable tape recorders or camcorders. It takes a bit of work, but after a few pages, these potent and long-dead voices come to life. John Bruno Hare, March 23, 2007

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