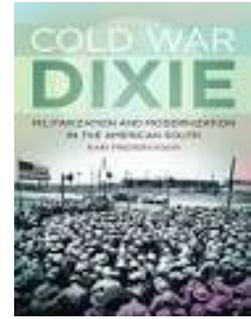


A Book Review by Theresa Schuster

Sweet Tea and Sunshine Book Club

Cold War Dixie
by
Kari Frederickson



I stumbled into this book by accident in 2016. No one had recommended it to me, I had just finished taking in the 17,000 foot Aiken County Historic Museum and felt a little overwhelmed. While browsing in the museum's gift shop, I found this book and bought it.

This book helps to explain Aiken. Why is Aiken different than the surrounding areas? How does it support a symphony, a ballet, two theatres and a college? And even more importantly we moved here not knowing about the "Bomb Plant" nearby. Hmmm, explain that!

Cold War Dixie tells the story of Aiken and the surrounding areas briefly summarizing the Winter Colony time period as well as the Graniteville and other Midland Valley Mills. But the real story starts in 1949 when the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb that was exactly like the ones that we had developed in the Manhattan Project. The Cold War was already underway, and President Truman declared in January of 1950 that the United States needed a new hydrogen bomb, to combat Soviet aggression.

This book explains the South prior to 1950, and the politics that set this area up to be chosen by Dupont as the site to manufacture both plutonium and tritium for our nuclear weapons arsenal. Over 6000 people left their homes in Ellenton, Dunbarton, Meyers Mill, and Leigh (home of the Leigh Banana Case Company) to make way for the 250,000 acres that comprised the Savannah River Plant. Just short of 6000 graves were relocated to nearby cemeteries. 35,000 workers descended upon the site from 1950-1953, and ultimately, over the years, more than 180,000 people came to this small agricultural area changing it forever.

Cold War Dixie by no means explains everything; however it really goes quite a long way. I recommend this book every single chance I get and even treated both my book clubs to it, and despite themselves, they had a great time!

Give this book a try. I love it and continue to love it to this day. And consider visiting the Savannah River Site Museum on Laurens Street.