

**Born in the Delta: Reflections on the Making of a Southern White Sensibility**



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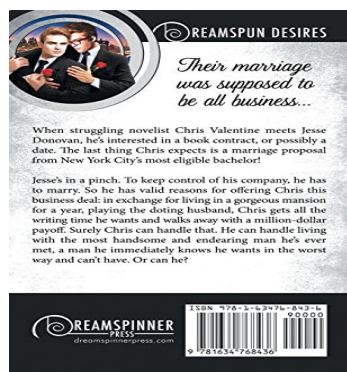
**Born in the Delta: Reflections on the Making of a Southern White Sensibility**

In this gracefully written memoir, Margaret Jones Bolsterli recounts her experiences as a lively, observant girl coming of age on an Arkansas cotton farm during the 1930s and 1940s. The Mississippi River's broad, flat floodplain provides the setting for her vivid strokes of memory and history each portraying key elements of the "southern sensibility." Bolsterli's themes include the southerner's strong sense of place, the penchant for stories rather than true dialog, a caste system based on formality and race, the underlying current of violence, and the repressive function of evangelical religion. She also examines manners, the patriarchal family structure, the "southern belle" concept, and



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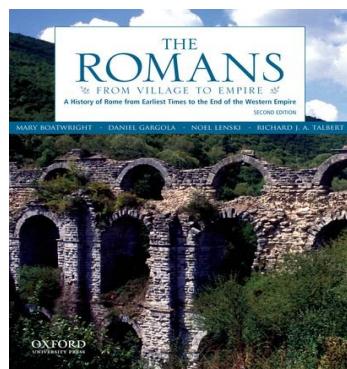
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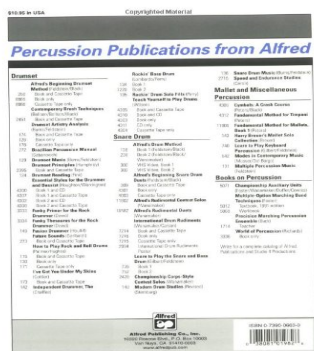
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What others say about this ebook:

**Review 1:**

This is a fascinating book that everybody with a southern heritage would enjoy and that people without a southern heritage ought to read so they wouldn't be tempted to misconstrue certain patterns of life in the South.

**Review 2:**

This small book should be must reading for those, both Northerners and Southerners, who want to know why we Southerners think like we do. Dr. Bolsterli's book about growing up in the 30's and 40's in the Arkansas Delta is wonderful. In writing about race, food, violence, the Confederacy, family, etc., she hits a lot of targets. At the risk of being trite, you will indeed laugh and cry. I suggest to better experience the book that it be read while eating a bowl of pot likker with some cornbread crumbled up in it. Buttermilk might also be helpful

**Review 3:**

Very much like my childhood, sans the farm. A wonderfully written memoir that would make an excellent gift to anyone who grew up in the South before integration. The phrase "common" was something I learned as a child - to be "common" was to bring shame or disgrace to one's self and family. "Don't do that, Rachel," my friend's mother said "it's common." No other explanation was needed.

The carefree childhood days of Bolsterli's (and my own) South are gone now, having long been replaced by asphalt, industry, and the complexities that seem to be a necessary part of modernization. Bolsterli tells of daring feats with neighbor children, of playing without the constant adult supervision that is a must for today's child. I well remember long afternoons spent in our neighborhood, without anyone worried about my whereabouts, let alone my safety. Then there is the dark time, a murder in the family, with the polite perceptions and differing accounts - it's all there and Bolsterli tells it so well.

A good book to read at least once more.

**Review 4:**

As I child, I passed by the author's childhood home many times when visiting my friends the Rices in nearby Watson, Arkansas. There were always brief comments about the stately Southern home at the end of the long drive and the important, cultured family that had lived there for generations. So, when I first read BORN IN THE DELTA, immediately after it was published, my reaction was partly personal.

It is a beautifully crafted portrait of unique aspects of the Southern culture that still persists in the Mississippi Delta region. Each chapter tells a readable, retell-able story about everyday topics that range from the manners we taught our children, to Southern cooking at home. From the meaningfulness to children of a lively backyard pond, to the way proud Southern families artfully coped with the financial stresses of a volatile agricultural economy. And each chapter is more colorful, more rich with imagery, more authentic than the one before.

Berstoli's book is also informed by her deep knowledge of language and sociology. Her years in the University of Arkansas' English department provided a platform for continued research into Southern communication styles and social conventions. She has localized this book to a very small sub-region (focused in and around Desha County in Southeast Arkansas), which allows for observations that are much more precise than the popular, overgeneralized Southern stereotypes.

If I taught a class in American History, I would certainly include BORN IN THE DELTA as a text.



**Born in the Delta: Reflections on the Making of a Southern White ...**

Bolsterli's wonderful autobiographical essay, *Born in the Delta: Reflections on the Making of a Southern White Sensibility*, is rife with generalizations, but implied generalizations, Southern style, grounded and embedded in stories. It is both a revelation and an analysis of what the South is like; and it draws on Bolsterli's ...

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*Born in the Delta: Reflections on the Making of a Southern White Sensibility* Paperback – July 1, 2000. ... In this gracefully written memoir, Margaret Jones Bolsterli recounts her experiences as a lively, observant girl coming of age on an Arkansas cotton farm during the 1930s and ...

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Available in the National Library of Australia collection. Author: Bolsterli, Margaret Jones; Format: Book; xiv, 132 p. : ill., map ; 23 cm.

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