

The Georgia Peach

Imprinted on license plates, plastered on billboards, stamped on the tail side of the state quarter, and inscribed on the state map, the peach is easily Georgia's most visible symbol. Yet *Prunus persica* itself is surprisingly rare in Georgia, and it has never been central to the southern agricultural economy. Why, then, have southerners – and Georgians in particular – clung to the fruit? *The Georgia Peach: Culture, Agriculture, and Environment in the American South* shows that the peach emerged as a viable commodity at a moment when the South was desperate for a reputation makeover. This agricultural success made the fruit an enduring cultural icon despite the increasing difficulties of growing it. A delectable contribution to the renaissance in food writing, *The Georgia Peach* will be of great interest to connoisseurs of food, southern, environmental, rural, and agricultural history.

William Thomas Okie is Assistant Professor at Kennesaw State University, where he teaches American history, food history, and history education. Trained in environmental and agricultural history at the University of Georgia, he has produced work that has won prizes from the Society of American Historians, the Southern Historical Association, and the Agricultural History Society. He has written for the journal *Agricultural History* and the Southern Foodways Alliance's quarterly, *Gravy*.

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*Culture, Agriculture, and Environment
in the American South*

WILLIAM THOMAS OKIE

Kennesaw State University



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For Mom and Dad
And, as always, for Kelly

Take from me apples of cider flesh,
Rob me of plum and pear,
Lose every orange of juicy gold,
Let not a vineyard bear:
Apricots' rose from its cheek may fade,
Melons may dry and bleach.
If thick in the low green orchard hangs
That beautiful Georgia peach!

*Mabel Swartz Withoft,
"The Georgia Peach," 1903*

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