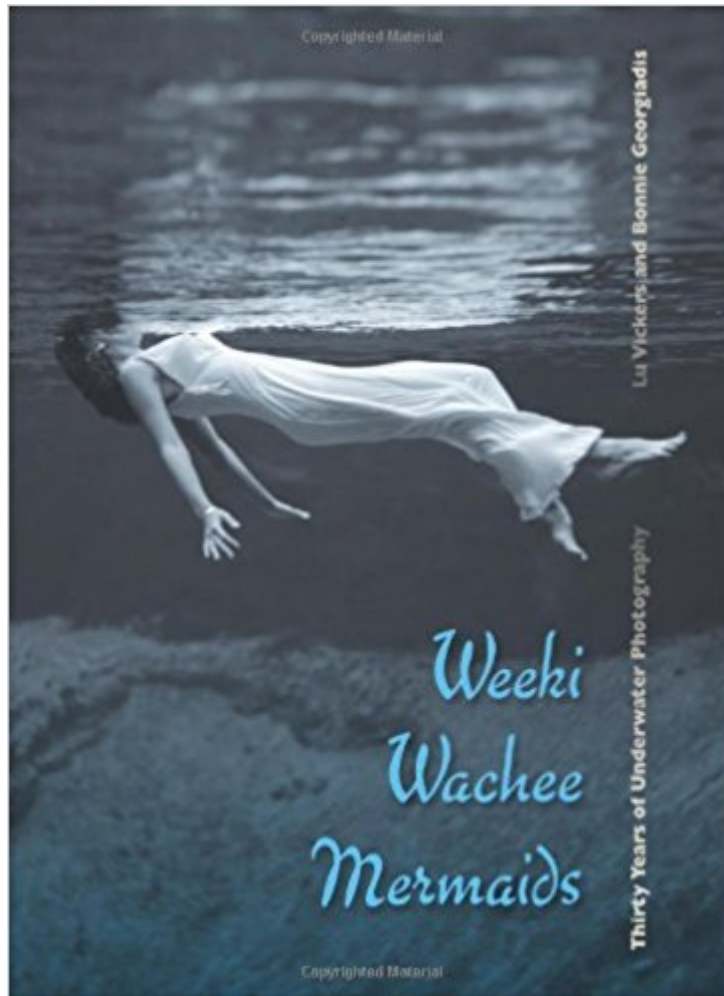




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Weeki Wachee Mermaids: Thirty Years Of Underwater Photography



Synopsis

By the late 1940s, long before Disney dreamed of building a magic kingdom in central Florida, the state had more botanical gardens, jungles, monkeys, parrots, and glass-bottomed boats than a tourist could shake a camera at. But only one place had banana-eating mermaids, and that was Weeki Wachee. Located about forty-five miles north of Tampa, and still in existence today, Weeki Wachee has been featured in major motion pictures and visited by astronauts, movie stars, and Elvis Presley. Like everyone else, they came to see the famous mermaids—in actuality, highly trained swimmers and divers. Weeki Wachee Mermaids features rare, never-before-published vintage photographs, postcards, and publicity shots taken over a thirty year period, starting with the first performance in 1947 and ending with the extravagant “underwater Broadway” shows created by the corporate owners of ABC-TV. The water was so clear, and the scenarios so cleverly straightforward that audiences initially doubted that the show was really underwater, and newspaper editors across the country suspected the photographs might be fake. Lu Vickers’s accompanying text retraces the origins of the attraction, particularly the ways that entrepreneur and underwater photography pioneer Newt Perry set Weeki Wachee apart from all the other springs in Florida. Coauthor Bonnie Georgiadis, who was in junior high when the park opened, eventually worked thirty-seven years at the park, first as a mermaid, later as a choreographer, and eventually as a falconer.

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Customer Reviews

By the late 1940s, long before Disney dreamed of building a magic kingdom in central Florida, the state had more botanical gardens, jungles, monkeys, parrots, and glass-bottomed boats than a tourist could shake a camera at. But only one place had banana-eating mermaids, and that was Weeki Wachee. Located about forty-five miles north of Tampa, and still in existence today, Weeki Wachee has been featured in major motion pictures and visited by astronauts, movie stars, and Elvis Presley. Like everyone else, they came to see the famous mermaids—in actuality, highly trained swimmers and divers. Weeki Wachee Mermaids features rare, never-before-published vintage photographs, postcards, and publicity shots taken over a thirty year period, starting with the first performance in 1947 and ending with the extravagant “underwater Broadway” shows created by the corporate owners of ABC-TV. The water was so clear, and the scenarios so cleverly straightforward that audiences initially doubted that the show was really underwater, and newspaper editors across the country suspected the photographs might be fake. Lu Vickers’s accompanying text retraces the origins of the attraction, particularly the ways that entrepreneur and underwater photography pioneer Newt Perry set Weeki Wachee apart from all the other springs in Florida. Coauthor Bonnie Georgiadis, who was in junior high when the park opened, eventually worked thirty-seven years at the park, first as a mermaid, later as a choreographer, and eventually as a falconer.

Lu Vickers is the author of *Breathing Underwater*; *Weeki Wachee, City of Mermaids*; and *Cypress Gardens, America’s Tropical Wonderland*. Bonnie Georgiadis is a former Weeki Wachee mermaid who lives in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

This is a very good book. I just wished that it had been for sixty years insted of just thirty. Maybe a volume two is in the works for the next thirty years. It is great to see what the first three decades looked like at the Weeki Wachee Spring Park. I enjoyed the book very much and would not hesitate to recommend it to anyone who is interested in history.

From a historical view of what really became the icon for Weeki Wachee Spring, this book tells the

real story. It's all about the thousands of young girls that became known as "Weeki Wachee Mermaids". Their story, their time.

Absolutely unique, clearly a labor of love. A wonderful piece of Americana. A treasure trove of photographs. A must for the lover of roadside America.

Great book with wonderful pictures. Brings back lots of memories. Terrific seller.

Excellent book. My wife is in it. She was a mermaid from 1965 to 1967.

Gave to my mother as Christmas gift because one of the authors is a family friend. It brought back many memories and she loved it!

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