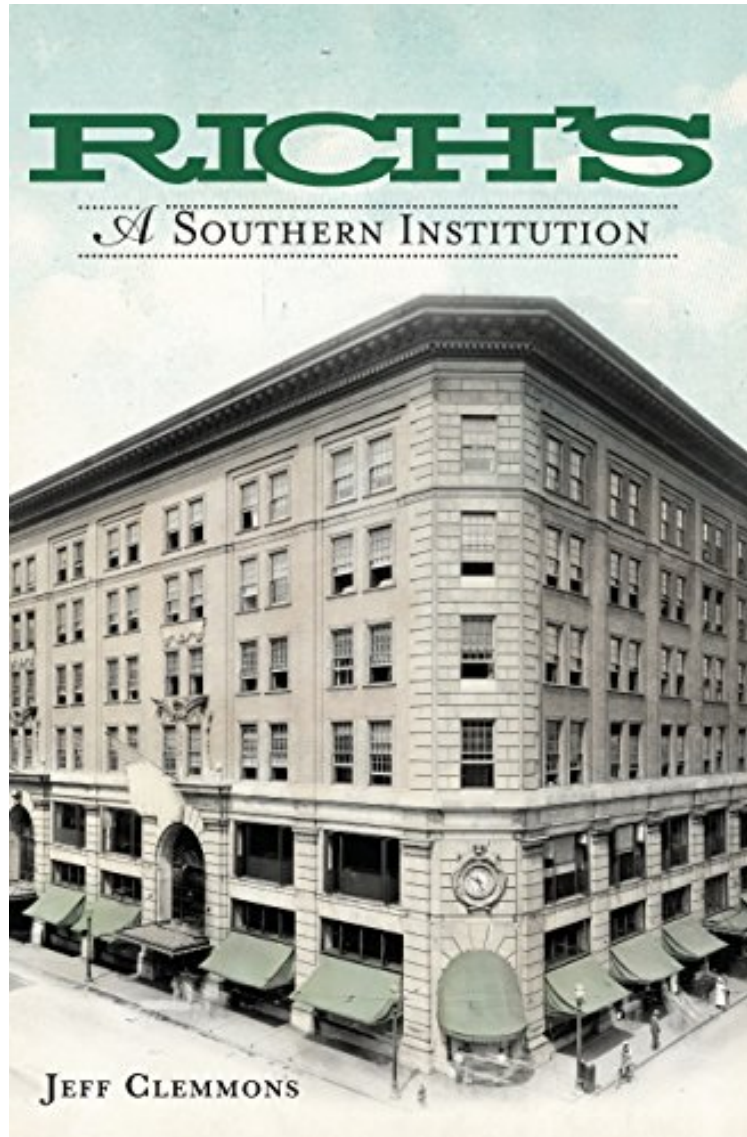


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Rich's: A Southern Institution (Landmarks)

Jeff Clemmons

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Jeff Clemmons : Rich's: A Southern Institution (Landmarks) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rich's: A Southern Institution (Landmarks):

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Richs Department Stores--Southern InstitutionBy MerrillJeff Clemmons has written a rather remarkable book, touching really. I notice that many reviewers have fond memories of Richs from years having lived in Atlanta and enjoying that great store. My experiences were a little different in that I joined them at the beginning of my career, and probably didn't know back then just how important a job it was. This book brings it all back to me. I relived it all on a 6 hour flight and it was a powerful read. Jeff mentions the stores, the

actual locations in which I worked, Shannon Mall, Cumberland, and Perimeter. He reminded me when Birmingham opened, and I was part of the team loading merchandise into that store. No way--I didn't know that eating in the top floor Magnolia Room, as I worked in Richs downtown headquarters, that Dr King held sit ins and didn't get such great service in that restaurant many years before I ever worked for them. I'd often strolled through the Finale on Five clearance floor, and the main floor in the store for fashion, often struggling with those heavy doors to the street. You'd leave one world and enter the world of Richs. I remember the cooking school and Natalie, back when I was a lowly Richs cookware buyer. Going up to the roof to inspect the Pink Pig during the daytime when no customers were there. I've never encountered anything quite like Richs--working for them. I remember Richs giving me a chance when others would not and I owe many great experiences in my career to them. All of this, all the essence of Richs, I give the author tremendous credit for quality of research and living Richs, even though he didn't actually. Really well done. Sadly, I also recall the beginning of the end, working as a Federated buyer when they were acquired and major things started to go wrong. Here too, Jeff told the story correctly. Federated was starting to spin out of control and Richs and all Federated divisions and stores were impacted. Jeff tells the tale as Richs name and the name of all Federated stores were changed to Macys. I agree with another reviewer that this book is perfect for Atlantans, lovers of Richs, ex-store employees of Richs, lovers of retail and history. I've got to personally thank Jeff, because I lived some of this, he told it correctly and he made me realize just how special that early career job was for me (even though I didn't really understand that at the time). Amazing to have been part of Richs. Jeff, thank you for putting it down for posterity.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Those were the days By PTC Mom I purchased "Rich's: A Southern Institution" for my mother. She worked for Rich's for over 20 years and then made the transition with them to Macy's. She has thoroughly enjoyed reading the book. I can't wait for her to finish so I can read it too. She keeps telling me about things she read like the nursery downtown (I remember being dropped off there), the lighting of the big tree, the Pink Pig on the ceiling of the toy department (rode it as part of my birthday celebration), and the bakery. The memories go on and on. If you grew up in Atlanta, you'll love this book!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. AN OLD FRIEND LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN By richard e whitelock Lost History should be a secondary title for this book. The store named Rich's is a name in the past of post Civil War history. Its economic contribution to the reconstruction of the south, its role as a major distributor of goods and services, its introduction of retail credit, its support of Atlanta and the city's attempt to grow the south, as well as its recognition of women in the retail trade at this time of our development; only begins to scratch the surface of Rich's overall importance and support of a fragile economy and a city desperately in need of support and economic growth. The store became a beacon for giving back to the community that it served. It was a tradition as well as a distant relative to so many Atlanta families composed of many generations. And for nearly 150 years, it was there and never once did it disappoint. I was there in the 1950's. Once graduated from the University of Georgia I was offered a position on their management training program in the early 1960's. I shopped Rich's on a regular basis. It was a supporting pillar of Atlanta's economy for many generations. It was more than a department store. It was a friend you could count on until the day you died. Once you walked through the front doors of the downtown Rich's Store, you were magically transformed into another time and place. Each department reflected the character of its buyers, managers, and long time associates. When you joined Rich's, you usually joined for a life time. Over the years, your home slowly became a Rich's museum of seasons past. Its associates were your second family, and in time they became cherished members of your actual family. Rich's became your favorite Uncle Joe. You celebrated birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and most all major holidays together. Rich's was your extended family and as you spent more time shopping with these associates, you developed a close and trusted friendship. A loss of a fellow associate was deeply felt by associates and customers alike. Somehow things would never be the same when you returned to that department. The Coconut Cake just didn't taste as sweet and satisfying as it used to. I remember one summer day I went outside of our home as a Rich's delivery truck pulled up our driveway. My mom and I had been waiting in great anticipation for a furniture delivery. The big green truck lumbered up our driveway when our next door neighbor hollered over the fence that the Korean War had just ended in a truce. The truck event and the war news event both remained in my memory as equally exciting and meaningful. A Rich's event could certainly remain a part of your overall life experiences. And like all good things that must come to an end, it was finally consumed by Davidson's, a division of Macy's. Like the Old South, Rich's faded into the sunset and to many, became long time not forgotten. But for those of us who grew up with Rich's and literally planned our lives around its credit, merchandise, restaurants, special events services and unselfish support to the Atlanta community, there is not and never will be a merchant that did so much for the business of reconstruction Atlanta and the New South and the millions of customers Rich's faithfully served. The Rich Brothers and their associates became the face of reconstruction and they took their commitments seriously. Like Ole Dixie, Rich's has faded into the sunlight. But like ole times, it will never be forgotten as long as there are generations who remember the downtown store, especially at Christmas. The store decorations, tree atop the crystal bridge, the Pink Pig whatever, and the spirit of the holidays that permeated in every nook and cranny of that venerable store. This is a fine book. It relives many memories, all past. And its author had to have loved and respected Rich's. Decades upon decades and generations upon generations of everyday common folks wrote this story of one of the South's greatest monuments. And those suburban stores and out

of town stores, even though they served a purpose, can never equal the venerable downtown store. They lack the bones and the spirit to even be spoken about in the same sentence. The real and the important memories are surrounded by pain, happiness and an overall gladness of their very existence. Like old Confederate graves, Rich's has finally come to rest. But as the song Dixie reminds us, long time not forgotten- never look away, look away, look away Dixie Land and Rich's. Thanks for your effort. This had to have been a labor of love as well as great sadness. My greatest regret was that in 1964 I chose Sears as a career instead of Rich's. I would have cherished the traditions and pride had I only known more at the time I made my decision upon graduation from the University of Georgia. I took the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference in my life of department store memories.

In 1867, less than three years after the Civil War left the city in ruins, Hungarian Jewish immigrant Morris Rich opened a small dry goods store on what is now Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta. Over time, his brothers Emanuel and Daniel joined the business; within a century, it became a retailing dynasty. Join historian Jeff Clemmons as he traces Rich's 137-year history. For the first time, learn the true stories behind Penelope Penn, Fashionata, The Great Tree, the Pink Pig, Rich's famous coconut cake and much more, including how events at the downtown Atlanta store helped John F. Kennedy become America's thirty-fifth president. With an eye for accuracy and exacting detail, Clemmons recounts the complete history of this treasured southern institution.

"Fantastic book!" - Steve Goss, "One On One" With Steve Goss, WABE, NPR "[An] absorbing new book. ... One of the book's more fascinating sections concerns the reluctant role Rich's played in the civil rights movement in 1960, when black students from the Atlanta University Center [along with MLK, Jr.] tried to obtain service in the store's legendary Magnolia Room." - Jill Vejnaska, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution "Clemmons provides the nuts and bolts of the colorful department store's history--presenting a rather complete treatment of the Atlanta Sit Ins when students from the Atlanta University complex sought to fully integrate the store in the early 1960s." - Maria Saporta, SaportaReport "...a decade after its brand vanished from the marketplace, a first-time author has written a book that preserves the history of a store that for 138 years was part of a city's soul. "Rich's: A Southern Institution" [however] is more than the story of a retail giant." - Richard Hyatt, The Ledger-Enquirer

From the Back Cover In 1867, less than three years after the Civil War left the city in ruins, Hungarian Jewish immigrant Morris Rich opened a small dry goods store on what is now Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta. Over time, his brothers Emanuel and Daniel joined the business; within a century, it became a retailing dynasty. Join historian Jeff Clemmons as he traces Rich's 137-year history. For the first time, learn the true stories behind Penelope Penn, Fashionata, The Great Tree, the Pink Pig, Rich's famous coconut cake and much more, including how events at the downtown Atlanta store helped John F. Kennedy become America's thirty-fifth president. With an eye for accuracy and exacting detail, Clemmons recounts the complete history of this treasured southern institution.