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Book Review: Territorial Florida Journalism

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BOOK REVIEW

Territorial Florida Journalism. By JAMES OWEN KNAUSS. DeLand, Florida, The Florida, State Historical Society, 1926.

When it became known about three years ago that Professor James O. Knauss was planning to compile a history of the early Florida newspapers, it meant practically a guarantee that the work would be done in a thorough and scholarly way. His book on the early German newspapers of Pennsylvania, published in 1922, under the title *Social Conditions Among the Pennsylvania Germans in the Eighteenth Century*, was a monograph in which a graphic and informative narrative was most aptly joined to a wealth of bibliographical detail. This expectation is justified by the appearance of the volume, with the title *Territorial Florida Journalism*, published under the auspices of the Florida State Historical Society, in an octave volume of two hundred and fifty pages.

By territorial Florida the author means the period from 1821 to 1845, during which time the various districts were preparing for statehood, each competing for prominence in the new venture ; agriculture, commerce and railroad building were beginning to bring wealth; and settlers were flocking from other parts of the country to treble the population in these twenty-five years. In such a development newspapers play an important part, and particularly so in Florida. Whether because they were well edited or because there was little printing outside of newspapers,

Note-Clarence S. Brigham, the writer of this review, is librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, and as keeper of their extraordinary collection of early American newspapers and as author of *Bibliography of American Newspapers*, he has become the foremost authority in this field. - Ed.

they constitute a body of source material of relatively high value to the historian.

In the arrangement and proportion of his chapters, Dr. Knauss shows excellent judgment. The first chapter is a summary history of the territory. The second, devoted to "The Newspapers", contains a readable history of each of the forty-five papers, with mention of their political affiliations and place in the community, followed by general estimates of circulation, cost of advertisements, and money value of the printing establishments. The third chapter, on "The Newspaper Men", is rather a departure for such a bibliography in that it gives biographical sketches of the publishers and editors where such information could be found. Then follow three appendices, one an alphabetical list of the newspapers, the second a chronological list with a checklist of all copies located, and the third a series of newspaper extracts relating to the constitutional convention of 1838. The checklist of copies located must have meant a vast amount of research and is of the highest reference value. Finally come a bibliographical list of works consulted, an excellent index, and a folder of six photographic facsimiles of early newspapers. Incidentally, the book is finely printed and a credit to all responsible for its publication.

Although the bibliography begins with 1821, there is full mention of the known facts regarding the *East Florida Gazette* published by John Wells in 1783-1784, no copy of which has ever been located in this country. It is interesting to note that Mr. Worthington C. Ford, working in the Public Archives Office at London last year, found issues of this paper for March 1, May 3, and May 17, 1783, vol. I, nos. 5, 14 and 16, all printed at St. Augustine by Charles

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Wright for John Wells, Jr. Photostats of these three issues will shortly reach this country.

Dr. Knauss's volume is an excellent piece of historical and bibliographical work and leaves little to be desired. He had a comparatively small field to cover, but he has done it exceedingly well. The work is a model for others to follow who aspire to write the history of the newspapers of any state or town. It also shows how the history of a locality can be written from its newspapers and how color can be given to the narrative by contemporaneous accounts of social and economic events.

CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM.