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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Diplomacy and the Borderlands: The Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819. By Philip Coolidge Brooks. *University of California Publications in History*, Volume 24. (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1939. x, 251 pp. Illustrations, appendices and bibliography. Cloth, \$2.50 ; paper \$2.00).

Many authors of the past have penned the story of the treaty of 1819, but none have succeeded in producing such a clear, well-balanced account as that of Philip C. Brooks. In the brief space of 196 pp. of text, Brooks successfully guides the reader through a maze of diplomatic intrigue, maneuvers and monotonous negotiations, to a clear understanding of the events which led to the signing of the treaty.

The title suggests a division of space between diplomatic negotiation and borderland activity. Some readers, perhaps, will be disappointed at not finding more about Lewis and Clark, Pike, Wilkinson, George Mathews, Jose Alvarez de Toledo, Jackson, Robert Grey, and Astor, to mention only a few. But the author's object was to present only enough to form the background to the more important problem of negotiation. This he has done very well.

Luis de Onis, Spanish Minister to the United States, 1809-1819, is the central figure. This man, representative of a decaying nation, faced the astute John Quincy Adams in a diplomatic duel for an empire. Brooks comes to the conclusion that Onis "acquitted himself ably," saving Texas and the northern Mexican provinces for his country.

Numerous are the points of dispute in which Adams and Onis engaged. To record but a few: spoliation claims of the United States, the West Florida controversy, invasions of the Floridas, aid

to Spain's revolting colonies, validity of the Louisiana Purchase, and the transcontinental boundary. Brooks neatly covers all these problems in a minimum of space with a maximum of understanding. The diplomatic battle began in earnest in 1815, with James Monroe and Pedro Cevallos exchanging numerous notes. From 1816-1818 the negotiations were carried on in Madrid. Washington, however, was the scene of the final negotiations, with Onís, backed by a weak and constantly changing home government, endeavoring to forestall the ever encroaching demands of Adams. The contest between Adams and Onís came to an end on February 22, 1819, when they appended their signatures to the treaty. The Senate immediately gave its consent to the ratification, but ratification on the part of Spain was delayed. This was due primarily to the lack of foresight of the Spanish *consejo* and to the tactless endeavors of John Forsyth, who was sent to Madrid to speed ratification there. Fear of United States aggression and a final realization that Spain had received a fair bargain caused Ferdinand VII to ratify the treaty, which he did on October 24, 1820. Notice of Spanish approval was despatched to Washington where the Senate, with only four dissenting votes, reaffirmed its consent to ratification exactly two years after the signature.

Chapter V introduces a long needed account of Spanish efforts to obtain foreign aid during the years 1814-1819, particularly from England, France, and Russia. The results were negative as far as the British and the Russians were concerned. The French however gave some assistance, as Guillaume Hyde de Neuville, French Minister to the United States, played a successful role as go-between in Washington.

Of particular interest to the readers of the *Quarterly* is the fact that "there was 'no purchase' of the Floridas. The claims discussion . . . was kept

quite separate during the whole course of the negotiations from that on the boundary. Adams always spoke of sacrifices in other sections of the frontier, particularly in Texas and the Northwest, as the price of the Floridas, and never mentioned the claims assumption in that connection." (p. 162). Spanish land-grants in Florida involving large acreages to Alagon, Punonrostro and Vargas, were a constant stumbling block to final agreement. A compromise that all grants made after January 24, 1819, were null and void solved this problem. The West Florida controversy was cleverly solved in Article II of the treaty, where the omission of a comma after the word 'territory' satisfied both contestants. Brooks, however, places Florida in a minor role and stresses the fact that the treaty was a 'transcontinental' one, the importance of which lies not so much in the acquisition of the Floridas as in the establishment of a definite cross-country boundary.

The treaty is printed in Appendix I, and in Appendix II is an excellent short account of the Melish Map of 1818 with which is included a copy of the map. This was the official map used by the negotiators. The bibliography is found in the third appendix. It is carefully selected and well annotated.

Portraits of Onis and Adams, a despatch of Onis announcing the signature of the treaty, and a map depicting the final boundary, add interest for the reader. The work is the result of excellent research and is written in a style which makes for easy reading.

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Guide to the Material in The National Archives.
(Washington : U. S. Government Printing Office,
1940. Pp. xviii, 303.)

This is a general guide to the more than 320,000 linear feet of records received by The National Archives to December 31, 1939. Part of the records are described in some detail in the main portion of the Guide, the others being listed in an appendix. In both cases records are listed under the names of the Government agencies that created them or that have continued them after their transfer from the agencies with which they originated. A full index serves as a topical guide so far as names and subjects are mentioned, but, as stated in the introduction, "since the guide is not a detailed statement of the contents of the material in The National Archives, it follows that the index to the guide cannot be considered as an index to that material."

To readers of the *Quarterly*, those records which pertain to Florida are of especial interest. The most important groups of Florida material appear to be in records transferred from the State Department. A series of Territorial Papers, 1787-1873, described as consisting "chiefly of volumes containing original letters from the governors and secretaries of the Territories to the President or the Secretary of State; the journals of executive proceedings in the Territories; and acts of the Territorial legislatures," includes 12 volumes for Florida, 1777-1828, and "a small file of correspondence with the War Department and others pertaining to the capture of Pensacola, 1813-18." Copies of communications sent by the State Department to Territorial and State officials are to be found in a series of Domestic Letters, 1792-1906. Also mentioned as being among the State Department records are "originals and transcripts of documents pertaining to the Spanish territories of Florida and Louisiana, which were obtained by Jeremy Robinson and Nicholas P. Trist in Cuba, 1830-35."

Apart from the records mentioned above, the only material specifically identified as pertaining to

Florida are Miscellaneous Records Relating to Private Land Claims in Florida, 1824-98, transferred from the Private Land Claims Division, General Land Office; field correspondence files relative to Everglades drainage surveys, from the Agricultural Engineering Bureau, Agriculture Department ; and aerial photographic negatives, 1922-30, from the Hydrographic Office, Navy Department. There can be little doubt, however, that numerous other records contain Florida material.

The Guide does not profess to be definitive, and future revisions are promised. Meanwhile it is to be supplemented by quarterly and annual lists of new accessions, the latter to be published in the *Annual Reports* of the Archivist of the United States. - DOROTHY DODD.

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Four Centuries of Florida Ranching by George H. Dacy. (Miami. Published by the author. 310 pages. Illustrated. \$3.00).

Cattle-raising on the open range in central Florida had grown to be an extensive industry before the Civil War, and towards its close the beef ration of the Confederate armies came in large part from there. Previously Havana was the principal market for Florida cattle, and that trade was not wholly suspended during the war period, for the herds supplied the outgoing cargoes for the blockade-runners from the lower Florida ports. In the 1870's shipments were extensive and grew through the 1880's, and this was the only large industry of the region until the wide expansion of citrus planting. But today's vast ranches with one and one-half million head of beef cattle were made possible only by the elimination of the fever-tick.

All of this and much more is told of in detail in the volume, with the help of numerous illustrations. It is interesting, but apparently undue credence is given to hearsay.