

1941

## Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society  
membership@myfloridahistory.org

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

### Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1941) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 20 : No. 3 , Article 7.  
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol20/iss3/7>

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Defenses of Spanish Florida 1565 to 1763* by Verne E. Chatelain. (Washington, D. C. : Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 511, 1941) vii, 192 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography and index.

In the foreword Mr. Chatelain in discovering the intent of his work has gone far toward evaluating it: "Inasmuch as the predominant note in the history of St. Augustine for the first two centuries of Spanish occupation is military, it appeared logical to investigate as carefully as possible that particular aspect of the story, and to emphasize the written sources and physical sites relating to it. The present study will, it is hoped, help to suggest both the great number and the variety of problems presented in the study of the military history of Spanish Florida, as well as some of the many contributions of Spain to the processes of growth of our nation."

*The Defenses of Spanish Florida* is essentially a result of the researches conducted by the St. Augustine Historical Program, of which Mr. Chatelain, as research associate with Carnegie Institution of Washington, is director. St. Augustine, the capital of Spanish East Florida, receives major stress in the work, but the entire southeast is the theatre of action.

The book is eclectic. Based mainly upon documentary sources, it also incorporates searches in the fields of archeology, cartography, and, to a lesser extent, architecture. The author has utilized the vast store of relatively unworked Spanish photostats in the John B. Stetson jr. collection and numerous translations (by Miss Ruth Kuykendall for the North Carolina Historical Records Survey) from the Spanish records of the North

Carolina Historical Commission, and in addition has borrowed liberally from Averette's translations, the Lowery transcripts, the more or less rare Spanish history publications, the works of Geiger, Bolton, Connor, and numerous others, as is shown in the comprehensive and lengthy critical bibliography. Documentation is generally very thorough. The author has relied rather heavily upon translations, which, in the highly technical field which he chose to study, is occasionally precarious procedure, though minimized in this case by careful evaluation of the materials used as sources.

The study divides logically into four parts: a background essay, a second essay in which the author develops his thesis, an encyclopedic note section, and a source book composed of twenty-two beautifully reproduced maps, most of which are vital to the main thesis.

The first essay, entitled "The Colonization of Spanish Florida", begins with a considered evaluation of the significance of Florida history, goes on to identify the locale and the characters, to indicate certain international complications, and then continues to an illuminating discussion of pertinent economic, religious, political and social institutions.

The second essay is the meat of the work and comprises five progressive parts. At the beginning there is a careful and comprehensive analysis of basic defense problems; the second and third sections are devoted mostly to the several wooden forts that preceded Castillo de San Marcos (now Fort Marion National Monument) at St. Augustine; the fourth emphasizes the climactic events that led to the building of the stone fort and the almost insuperable obstacles that confronted the builders; the last continues the story of the fort

and traces the completion of supplementary defenses, which were to make St. Augustine "one of the most formidable Spanish military centers in the Western Hemisphere."

This essay admittedly leaves work to be done. Yet there is a great amount of down-to-earth detail, and while inclusion of such minutiae may tend to dismay the average reader, it is an illuminating presentation for the closer student of historic sites, military architecture and the like. Somewhat at variance with the studied profundity of the characteristic essay style, is the rather abrupt finish, where an interesting conclusion is summarized in one brief paragraph. This treatment leaves the reader with the impression that the author was not thoroughly convinced of his concluding point, which is something of a paradox: the Spanish failed to develop a self-sufficient economy in Florida yet paved the way for the later British and American exploitation of Florida's latent resources.

In his notes, Mr. Chatelain has consciously included much more material than might be warranted by the title of the book, and therein lies part of the value of the work to the student of Florida history. These notes comprise the major portion of the book, and are far more than documentation of the essays: they point out related information, furnish revealing statistics, suggest bibliography, and are so thoroughly indexed that they can be used as a handbook.

*The Defenses of Spanish Florida* is leisurely and unexciting reading in comparison with the colorful and racy type of narrative history, but it is not primarily intended for the layman; as a highly specialized study, it will see a great deal of use by the historian and may open new vistas for the less profound student. Recognition of the significance of early Florida history by the Carnegie

Institution of Washington, under whose aegis the research results were obtained and published, is not only gratifying to students of Florida history, but to an extent suggests the present-day importance of Florida's cultural bond with Latin America.

ALBERT MANUCY .

---

*John and William Bartram*, by Ernest Earnest. (Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940) vi, 187 pp. \$2.

Students of Americana, botanists, zoologists, delvers in Indian lore, and librarians who have noted with regret the soaring prices of William Bartram's *Travels* may now possess not one but two new Bartram books. Floridians have had no small part in bringing this about.

The steadily rising interest in the works of this eminent scientist and literateur was noted two years ago when Florida joined with Pennsylvania and other states in celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of a writer who introduced the *flora* and *fauna* of Florida into world literature. The Florida program included evaluations of his contributions in the fields of botany, ornithology, literature, and the American Indian. Hardly had a year elapsed after this celebration before these two new books appeared: one, a reprint of Mark Van Doren's 1928 edition of *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*, long since become rare, and the other, *John and William Bartram* by Ernest Earnest, one of a series of biographies of less familiar Pennsylvania figures being published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

It was John Bartram who, when in Charleston on his way to Florida ten years before the revolt of the thirteen colonies, renewed his acquaintance with Dr. Alexander Garden for whom the

*gardenia* was named. It was also in Charleston that he met "an elderly widow lady, who spares no pains nor cost to oblige" with whom he "contracted such a mutual correspondence that one silk bag hath passed and repassed full of seeds three times since last fall," he wrote his English patron, Peter Collinson. "I plainly see thou knowest how to fascinate the longing widow," replied the latter. This "widow lady" was none other than Martha Logan who wrote the first American book on gardening, the *Gardeners' Kalendar*.

Though brief, this biographical and interpretive treatment of the two Quakers to whom Florida owes so much is an admirable step toward a merited recognition of their achievements. It endeavors to correct the neglect deplored by Professor N. B. Fagin in his *William Bartram, Interpreter of the American Landscape*. An informing study of the background which produced these two eminent scientists is given by the author as he reveals the fascinating story of their lives and tells how John, starting as an unschooled farmer, succeeded in the difficult task of teaching himself sufficient Latin to read any book in that language. He helped Benjamin Franklin found the American Philosophical Society, and undertook many botanical expeditions. Interesting though this volume is, it is marred by inaccuracies and by neglect of natural history and it is unfortunately not adequately documented. It will, however, doubtless lay sound foundations for an appreciation of the definitive studies of the Bartrams on which Dr. Francis Harper of the John Bartram Association of Philadelphia has long been working.

Dr. Harper has within the past few years made two journeys to Florida to settle uncertainties and to clear up identification of plants fishes and animals. He has relocated and photographed sites

along the Bartram trails, as well as correctly charting them. Numerous plants, and vertebrate animals have been collected by this scientist in the localities where they were originally described by the Bartrams. Thus a fuller knowledge and appreciation of the classic *Travels* which, according to one authority, "reveal the enthusiasm of a man still young, with an eye that nothing escapes, not without poetical imagination or philosophical vision, and with a deep reverence for the Creative Spirit which he feels in all about him," will soon be available to all devotees of the Bartrams.

Dr. Harper has in preparation for publication also William's manuscript of 1773-1774 and his father's journal of 1765-1766.

A. J. HANNA.

*The Fountain of Youth Myth*

The leading article in *Hispanic American Historical Review* (XXI, 361-385, Aug. 1941) is "Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth: History of a Geographic Myth," by Leonardo Olschki (The Johns Hopkins University). This is the result of extensive research and able presentation by a scholar of the fountain myth as it is recorded from many parts of the world. The several well-known early references to the myth in connection with Ponce de Leon and his discovery of Florida are discussed. But, as is well-known also, no evidence has come down to us that the purpose of the voyage was a search for a mythical fountain, nor any proof that Ponce credited its supposed virtues.

\* \* \*

The American Association for State and Local History has issued the first number of its *Bulletins* (Oct. 1941). This contains "What Should Our Historical Society Do?" by Edward P. Alexander,

former director of the New York State Historical Association and now superintendent of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Dr. Alexander is an authority and a leader in this field, and his suggestions and advice should be a help to us in building up our organization and in our other activities.

These *Bulletins* are sent to all members of the Association and are sold at fifty cents to others.

\* \* \*

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

*T. Frederick Davis* is the author of "History of Jacksonville" published by the Florida Historical Society, and of other monographs on Florida history. His numerous contributions to the *Quarterly* include our special Ponce de Leon number (XIV no. 1, July 1935)

*Walter Martin* is an assistant professor of history in the University of Georgia.

*Stanley Faye* attended the University of Chicago and the Faculte des Lettres de l'Universite de Toulouse. He has contributed to a number of historical publications.

*Mark F. Boyd* is well known to readers of the *Quarterly* through his many contributions. He is a member of the staff of the International Health Division, Rockefeller Foundation.