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Book reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Florida, Land of Change by Kathryn Abbey Hanna. [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948. XII, 445 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, bibliography, and index. \$4.50].

This is the second edition, revised and enlarged, of the volume published in 1941 with the same title under the author's maiden name, Kathryn Trimmer Abbey. To bring the work up to date the last two chapters have been rewritten and enlarged, and a chapter added— "The Blossoming of the Peninsula." New sources have been added to the bibliography to cover these additions; all resulting in a total of thirty pages over the first edition.

The former volume was reviewed at length in this QUARTERLY, the issue of April 1941, from the viewpoint of the historian, and that of the general reader, to both of whom it appealed. It at once took a place in the forefront of Florida histories, and the need for a reprinting is evidence of its continued popularity.

Murray, Paul, *The Whig Party in Georgia, 1825-1853*. Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina Press, 1948. Volume 29 in the James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science. (219 p. \$2.50).

With this study of the Georgia Whigs, Mr. Murray makes a notable contribution to Southern political history, for it is a welcome addition to the not too numerous works in the literature of Whiggery in the South. Like Henry H. Simms's *Rise of the Whigs in Virginia*, it is a highly specialized work which reaches far into the background of the Whig party in one Southern state. However, in its scope and wealth of detail it is more to be compared with A. C. Cole's *Whig Party in the South*. Although this very emphasis on detail will remove the book from consideration for popular reading, scholars will welcome it as a competent research work. Our espe-

* The reviewer, Herbert J. Doherty Jr., a graduate student at the University of Florida, is now at work on his master's thesis "The Whig Party in Florida." *Ed.*

cial interest is in a comparison with the similarities and differences of the party in Florida and our nearest neighbor.

Originally written as a doctoral dissertation, the author deals considerably more with factual material than interpretation. As to its style much is to be desired to improve the readability of the work, but otherwise it is adequate and satisfying.

The first four chapters are given over to extensive treatment of the origins of the political faction in Georgia which allied itself to the national Whig party. The author views the Troup party as the structural base on which the Georgia Whigs were built. Politics in early Georgia history was a highly personalized field of activity. This so-called Troup party took its name from George M. Troup, several times governor, who built his following into a party machine. The opposition was headed by John Clark and was known as the Clark party. The strength of the Troup party was largely drawn from the sections of the state devoted to cotton growing under slave conditions. Such prominent Georgians as Edward Tattnall, John Forsyth, Joel Crawford, William H. Crawford, and John M. Berrien were associated with this faction during the eighteen twenties.

The outstanding issue agitated by this group at that time was opposition to the tariff. The most violent differences between the opposing factions, however, arose over purely state issues. The Troupites favored internal improvements at state expense, particularly railroads and canals. They also favored a state owned banking system, and in 1828 established the Central Bank of Georgia through their control of the Legislature. This was the same year in which the Whig dominated Territorial Council in Florida created the first bank in the Territory over the veto of a Democratic governor.

In 1827 John Clark moved to Florida leaving his party leaderless until most of them found a place in the new Union party, which forced a reorganization of the Troup faction into the State Rights party. At this junc-

ture the Troup party was being weakened by the defection of many of its leaders, while the Clark-Union party was being strengthened by the establishment of several newspapers. One of these, the *Savannah Mercury*, was edited by Cosam Emir Bartlett who later edited the *Columbus Democrat*. Bartlett moved to Florida and for a time ably edited the *Apalachicola Gazette* and represented Franklin county in the Constitutional Convention of 1838. The Union party was the administration party and supported Jackson in the nullification controversy.

The favorable action of Jackson in the Georgia Cherokee problem saved that state from support of the South Carolina stand. Though the Troup leaders were bitterly opposed to the tariff they were not disposed to go so far as nullification of the law of the land. Conservative circles in Florida expressed much the same views, the *Pensacola Gazette*, a moderately Whig organ adding, "It is quite a pity that these kind of State proceedings had not been similarly met in the various cases of Georgia—we should have heard nothing of the Nullifiers in Carolina."¹

Although the Union party worked with the national Democratic party, Mr. Murray points out that the State Rights party was not a part of the National Republican party which preceded the Whigs on the national scene. It was purely a local party of opposition. During the years 1834-1839 the State Rights group was in the minority in Georgia. It was during this era that principles were beginning to overshadow personalism in politics. The State Rights group adopted the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions as their political faith and insisted on the right of nullification while denying the practical political value. This period was one of rapidly expanding national powers, and the parties in Georgia vied for the honor of protecting the state against federal encroachments. In 1835 the State Rights party took a stand for Hugh Lawson White for president. This was

1. *Pensacola Gazette*, Jan. 2, 1833.

their first endorsement of a presidential candidate and presaged the party's alignment with the Whigs.

In the campaign of 1836 the State Rights party began its retreat from nullification views by stating its aims to be the preservation of the Union and the sovereignty of the states. In this election the party began its march back to the leadership of the state, a march which was aided by dissention in the Union ranks over the policy of the Central Bank of Georgia. The Central Bank became the focal point of the storm that brought defeat to the Democrats in the gubernatorial race of 1837. The panic of 1837 made the position of the state owned Central Bank even more precarious and closed down scores of weak banks which had been chartered under the liberal policy of the Union legislatures. These events furnished the grounds for the newly christened "State Rights and Republican Party" to return to power.

This state of affairs was exactly the opposite of events in Florida at this time. Here the Legislative Council, dominated by the planting interests which were to benefit most by the banks and which furnished the backbone of Whig support in this state, had been responsible for a liberal bank chartering policy. When the panic came the anti-bank men were the Democrats who used the opportunity to weld their party into the dominant group it was for a decade after the panic. Such men as David Levy, James D. Westcott, and Robert Raymond Reid sparked the move which discredited the Whigs.

The Georgia elections of 1839 were a complete victory for grim reality over idealism. The Union party proposed direct relief for the economic distress, while the State Rights party proposed economy and "good business methods in state government."

During Tyler's term the Union-Democratic party opposed the revival of a national bank out of loyalty to Andrew Jackson and suspicion of corporations. They favored state banks because of their ability to control them locally. The State Rights-Whig party supported

the national bank idea because of its soundness and their enmity to Andrew Jackson. They opposed the state banks because of their instability and because the Unionists had chartered them.

The first year in which a delegation from Georgia attended the national Whig convention was 1844. From then on the history of the Georgia Whig party becomes more closely identified with the general picture of Whiggery in the South. As the slavery controversy quickened, this became increasingly the case and eventually it came to pass that the controversy not only drew together the Whig factions in the various Southern states but the Democratic and Whig supporters were joined together in defense of the "peculiar institution."

After 1850, when the issue of slavery as a social institution combined with the issue of sectional advantage in the Federal Union, the Southern Whigs slowly lost ground. The author denotes the years 1849-1853 as the period of decline and disintegration of the Whig party in Georgia. This was in line with the general pattern all over the South.

As the Whigs dropped from the picture the Democrats appropriated their county organizations and their leadership, assuming at the same time much of the conservative cast of the old Whig party. Thus by 1860 the South had only one outstanding political party.

This work by Mr. Murray should be of interest to all students of Southern history. Although it is often difficult reading, it furnishes a wealth of information for fact-seekers and ample opportunity for individual interpretation. A student of Florida history will find it particularly interesting to make comparisons in the courses of the Whig party in the two states. The many interesting contradictions only accentuate the characteristics of the national Whig party.