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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Edmund Pendleton Gaines, Frontier General. By James W. Silver. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949. pp. XVIII, 291. \$4.50.

In a period prolific in the production of biographies, the lives of military leaders have been by no means neglected. Among these, two monumental masterpieces stand out: Freeman's *Robert E. Lee* and Churchill's *Marlborough*, four volume studies, thorough in research, each brilliant in its own distinguished narrative style.

Among the shorter, but none the less excellent military biographies of the last two decades, there are two, each of which should lead the careful reader to read the other. They are Major Charles Winslow Elliott's *Winfield Scott, The Soldier and the Man* (1937) and in 1949, twelve years after Elliott's *Scott* and one hundred years after Gaines's death, there appeared an adequate biography of Scott's great rival, the volume by Professor Silver which is the subject of this review.

Now, we have a scholarly and adequate life of Gaines, for Professor Silver has done a thorough and extensive piece of research, and has embodied the results of that research in a well-written and compact biography-the story of a picturesque frontier character-one who for more than a half century was a prominent figure of his day.

Although Gaines was for many years a highly controversial character and although he frequently crossed or was crossed by others quite as controversial as himself, Professor Silver has treated Gaines and also his opponents with critical judgment and scholarly restraint. Nowhere does he seem to have allowed bias, preconceived notions, or personal prejudices to warp or distort his findings, or conclusions to invalidate his judgments.

Especially fair and impartial is his treatment of such difficult matters as the Gaines-Troup and Gaines-Scott controversies-particularly the friction between the two generals in the Second Seminole War. This quarrel led to recrimination and counter-recrimination that did no

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credit to either of the participants. Certainly, Scott's charge that Gaines interfered with him in Florida does not rest on factual foundation; nor did Gaines's putting Scott in the Benedict Arnold category have any basis in fact. Here were two loyal courageous generals behaving like hot-tempered school boys.

Professor Silver has traced the development of Gaines from his early experiences in Tennessee, to which his family had migrated from his birthplace in Culpeper County, Virginia *via* North Carolina. Even at the outset of his career Gaines passed through exciting experiences—the survey of the Natchez Trace, the capture of Aaron Burr, the dangers and difficulties of frontier militia service. From the War of 1812, he and his great rival Scott both emerged with distinction as generals, and here the long *and* at times bitter rivalry between them began.

To Floridians many pages of this Gaines biography will be of fascinating interest. Gaines had a major part in the capture of Burr just short of the Florida border and later became involved in the West Florida boundary controversy. He was with Jackson in the invasion of Florida and presided over the court-martial that condemned Arbuthnot and Ambrister. Gaines was in command of the forces that expelled the "freebooters" from Amelia Island. He played an important part in the early stages of the Second Seminole War. The city of Gainesville at which the University of Florida is located is named in his honor. Florida readers will enjoy the chapter entitled "Seminole Fiasco", in which Gaines's part in the Second Seminole War is covered in detail. That it was a "fiasco" was probably more the fault of the War Department and Congress than of the military forces and their generals. To herd up and remove the Seminoles was a task the government planners had woefully underestimated.

The attitude of General Gaines toward Texas independence and annexation, his views on National security, and frontier transportation are covered in appropriate chapters. One wonders to what degree Gaines's ideas on transportation may have been influenced by Monroe's great

Secretary of War Calhoun, who certainly in his early advocacy of "Internal Improvements", favored better transportation for defense purposes.

With the Mexican War, Scott gained the military ascendancy over Gaines, who was now getting to be an elderly man, and over another Scott rival, Zachary Taylor, who like Scott and Gaines had participated in a phase of the war against the Seminoles in Florida..

The closing months of Gaines's life were happy ones : In November of 1848, Taylor was elected on the Whig ticket to the presidency, after which he resigned his commission in the army. On December 15 Gaines was ordered to resume his command in the West, making his home in New Orleans until his death about midway of the next year. Your reviewer is grateful to Professor Silver for giving him a better understanding of General Gaines.

The format of this biography is excellent, and one feels that the author and his publishers are to be congratulated for adding another most creditable volume to the well-known Southern Biography Series.

JAMES MILLER LEAKE

University of Florida

Southern Politics in State and Nation, by V. O.. Key, Jr., with the assistance of Alexander Heard. (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1949). 675,xiv pp.

The author of *Southern Politics* says Florida is a political curiosity in that it ranks high in political atomization, being unled and unbossed ; and although giving occasionally a faintly tropical rebel yell, it is in other respects a world of its own unlike the other states of Dixieland.

While this has undoubtedly been true since the Broward Era, today Florida, as the most highly urbanized of the southern states and, with a rapid increase in population, is moving away from atomization towards the integration of state-wide political groups within the framework of the Democratic party.

The hopes of many in this state for a two-party system in the near future receive only cold water from Key, as he characterizes the southern wing of the G.O.P. as not a vote-getting organization but rather a combination of business men to whom the Republican party is an expensive hobby joined with old-time patronage seekers, with only the foggiest notions on voter organization.

In taking up the significance of the Negro switch from Republican to Democrat since 1932, the author quotes from the *Florida Sentinel* (Tampa, Nov. 29, 1947) in which the editor points out that inasmuch as political issues have long been settled in the Democratic primary, the colored voters are no longer willing to be "Lincoln children."

The treatment given the recent political battles in Florida is excellent, with numerous maps and charts which bring out the results. Out of the political past only Sidney J. Catts and Napoleon B. Broward are dealt with -and they briefly. *Southern Politics* is best in its factual coverage of the Florida political situation, weakest in its generalizations.

EDWARD C. WILLIAMSON

Two forthcoming publications of the University of Florida Press relate to Florida history. *Napoleon Bonaparte Broward: Florida's Fighting Democrat*, by Samuel Proctor, is a full biography of Florida's liberal governor. Here *They Once Stood* by Mark F. Boyd, Hale G. Smith, and John W. Griffin is a translation of documents describing the end of the mission era in Florida, together with an account of the first excavations of any mission sites east of the Mississippi river.

These are in press and will appear in November and December. They will be reviewed in the next issue of this QUARTERLY.

A HISTORY OF WINTER PARK

A recent publication is *Chronological History of Win-*

ter Park by Claire Leavitt MacDowell. This is a copiously illustrated volume of 332 pages printed by the Orange Press. The contents were collected- largely. from newspaper files, and have been arranged by decades and years from 1881 to the present. The history. of Rollins College is included *passim*.