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BOOK REVIEWS

The Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1793-1796. Spanish reaction to French Intrigue and American Designs. By Richard K. Murdoch. (Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, 1951. pp. 208)

The main theme in this study, except chapter one, concerns French-American designs against the Spanish in East Florida and the Spanish reaction to these designs; and how Spain could and did make use of her limited military resources.

The author begins with a concise survey of the early history of Florida, pointing out its strategic location which made it important to Spain, England, and France.

The competition for Florida on the part of the French and Spanish is brought out, ending in a permanent settlement by Spain in 1565. Other than minor skirmishes with England, a century and a half of peaceful development followed.

The end of the Seven Year's War brought about a transfer of Florida to England, and for twenty years the colony was prosperous with some increase in population and economic development, factors that made for loyalty to England during the American Revolution. The results of the Revolution brought the colony again under the control of Spain who retained it until transferred to the United States.

Due to the expansion of the state of Georgia and the resulting conflict of its interests with those of the Indians and Spanish between the St. Johns and St. Marys rivers, the difficulties for Spain were not over. The lifting of the restrictions of the Spanish colonial policy permitted American citizens to settle between the two rivers, thus creating future problems for the Spanish authorities.

By the fall of 1793, the Spanish were aware of a new and more dangerous threat to their position in East Florida from inhabitants of the area between the St. Johns and St. Marys

rivers. The study, in chapter seven, reveals in detail the plans of the inhabitants and the counter plans and measures that the Spanish adopted and carried out to end the threat.

The author discusses the border rebellions in East Florida and the seizure of Amelia Island by the anti-Spanish forces. Although the Spanish lost border posts and the Island, they subsequently recovered them.

The punishment of the rebels, who were confined in jail and who had their property destroyed, is brought out in chapter ten.

Then follows the reappearance of General Clark along the Altamaha River, and his plan to attack East Florida through the Creek Indian lands. This threat to the security of East Florida caused Spanish authorities to bring pressure upon the United States government, who in turn put pressure upon Georgia to end the activities of Clark. Spanish authorities moved against this threat of Clark and after some negotiations peace was achieved in 1796.

This narrative and evaluation of the events along the Georgia-Florida frontier is of importance also in its relation to American development, for the struggle represented a phase in the relations of the United States, France, and Spain. It was local in scope, yet a part of the vast frontier development, revealing the conditions and ambitions of the frontiersmen. Furthermore, the monograph shows that in 1793-96, various groups were interested in freeing Florida from Spanish occupation.

An additional factor agitating the Georgia-Spanish relations was the desire of commercial interests to extend their influence into the forbidden territory. Therefore, in 1793 if the United States desired to remove the Spanish from Florida, it could find a number of causes for a quarrel and the arrival of Citizen Genet, who had plans to execute against the Spanish, did not calm the disturbed situation.

Dr. Murdoch makes clear the plans of Citizen Mangourit, the

French consul accredited to the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, a capable and enthusiastic agent of France, who hoped to activate through Samuel Hammond of Georgia, a well-known and popular individual. Mangourit's plans for an attack on East Florida were well received in Georgia, and many influential Georgians were at one time or another involved.

Murdoch states that the Spanish knew of the projected attacks, and despite the disloyalty of some of the American settlers between the St. Johns and St. Marys rivers, they formulated plans to counter the schemes of the French and Georgians. Many official messages flowed between East Florida and Cuba asking for reinforcements that were seldom forthcoming, yet the scheme of Mangourit and Hammond was not successful.

The study also reveals the different viewpoints of the federal and the state governments on how to handle the Indian problem; on the questions of recruiting for a foreign army; right of the Secretary of the Treasury to enforce the terms of the neutrality proclamation through the collection of customs; and the extent to which federal troops could be employed within a state to enforce federal regulations.

The work is well documented from abundant source material and has an extensive bibliography for those who may be interested in this phase of American border history.

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TRANSPORTATION IN FLORIDA

Anyone interested in the history of transportation in Florida by water and rail prior to 1900 may obtain on request a copy of ***The Development of Commercial Transportation in Florida*** by J. E. Dovell, published by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida.

Dr. Dovell traces the growth of water transportation, which was the principal means of communication and carriage in Florida during the colonial and territorial periods. This was the main reason why most of the early plantations were along the St. Marys and the St. Johns rivers and Indian River. In the early days each planter had his own boats, but commercial transportation steadily developed and regular lines of steamers were established in time on the St. Johns, the Suwannee, the Apalachicola, and later on the Ocklawaha. From 1877 to 1895 the St. Johns river enjoyed a traffic of great volume, with steamship lines from Charleston and Savannah to Fernandina, Jacksonville, and Palatka; and a fleet of smaller vessels to Sanford and the upper St. Johns, with a local line on Indian River. The last stand of interior water transportation was between Kissimmee and Ft. Myers.

Railroad building in Florida was almost negligible until the late 1850's when an exceedingly generous subsidy of public lands by the Internal Improvement Fund for every mile built promoted lines from Fernandina to Cedar Keys, Jacksonville to Tallahassee, and from Pensacola northwards, for a total of 416 miles before 1861. The same extraordinary or greater generosity prompted a renewal of construction after 1881, and in ten years 2,566 miles were in operation in Florida. So a large part of all Florida public lands have gone to the railroads. The Louisville and Nashville, for building its line from Pensacola to the Apalachicola river, actually received more than 2,000,000 acres of a much larger grant, which alone is one-fifteenth of the entire land area of the State.

There is a brief summary of the operations of Flagler, Plant, Chipley of the L. & N., and Williams and Warfield of the Seaboard Air Line, who were responsible for the building or consolidation of the four systems in today's Florida.