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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Story of the Florida Railroads, 1834-1903. By George W. Pettengill, Jr. (The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, Harvard Business School. Boston, 1952. 133 pp. \$2.00).

A glance at a modern map of Florida shows three main railroad systems - the Seaboard Air Line, Atlantic Coast Line, and Florida East Coast. The forging of these great trunklines from 174 short lines built between 1836 and 1900 is "The Story of the Florida Railroads."

Florida's efforts to develop adequate rail transportation began as early as 1831, when the Leon Railway Company was incorporated. This was one of the 255 roads chartered during the nineteenth century that never got beyond the paper stage. The territorial period did see the building of three railroads, the St. Joseph, the Iola, and the Tallahassee, although the first two were abandoned before statehood.

The first effective period of railroad building was in the last half of the 1850's and was the direct result of the passage of the Internal Improvement Act of 1855. Under this act, companies constructing roads over state-approved east-and-west and north-and-south routes not only received generous land grants but had the interest on their construction bonds guaranteed by the state. The interest guaranty protected investors but did not relieve the railroads of the obligation to repay the Internal Improvement Fund out of corporate earnings.

By 1861, the Florida Railroad had completed its line from Fernandina to Cedar Key and the Florida, Atlantic and Gulf Central had built from Jacksonville to Lake City, where it joined the Pensacola and Georgia, running to Tallahassee. The Pensacola and Georgia had also bought and rebuilt the Tallahassee Railroad. In addition to these major lines, the Florida and Alabama Railroad had built from the Alabama boundary to Pensacola and the little St. Johns Railroad spanned the fifteen miles from Toco to St. Augustine. In all, there were 433 miles of track.

Railroad property was seriously damaged by the Civil War, the loss amounting to more than a million dollars, or one-seventh of the total valuation of the entire rail system at that time, according to Mr. Pettingill. The companies had also been unable to meet their interest obligations to the Internal Improvement Fund and, as a result, faced bankruptcy. The period of political Reconstruction was also a period of forced sales and reorganization of the corporate structures of the railroad companies, as well as of physical rehabilitation of existing lines.

The second great stimulus to railroad construction in Florida was the sale of four million acres of Internal Improvement lands to Hamilton Disston in 1881, which freed the Internal Improvement Fund of debt. The sale was effected by Governor William D. Bloxham, and during his administration 804 miles of railroad were built. Ten years after the Disston sale there were 2,566 miles in operation, exclusive of several hundred miles of private logging roads.

This rapid expansion necessitated two things, standardization and consolidation. The gauge of railroad tracks in Florida varied from three to six feet, the broad gauge of five feet being considered standard in the state. In 1886, however, to conform to the standard being established by roads to the north, the gauge of most of the Florida roads was changed to four feet, eight and a half inches.

Consolidation was the work of Florida's two best-known developers, Henry B. Plant and Henry M. Flagler, and of syndicates of outside capitalists. The first two important mergers, which occurred in 1884, revealed the shape of the future SAL and ACL systems. The first was the work of an English syndicate, headed by Sir Edward J. Reed, to whom Disston had sold one-half of his interests. The second was engineered by Henry B. Plant. About the same time, Henry M. Flagler began his operations on the East Coast.

The heart of Mr. Pettingill's book is three chapters in which

he discusses the development of the three big modern systems. Taking their predecessor roads up one by one, he traces mergers and new construction which resulted in the formation of the Florida East Coast Railway Company in 1895 and extension of its line to Homestead by 1903, the transfer of the Plant System to the Atlantic Coast Line in 1902, and acquisition by the Seaboard of its early Florida holdings in 1900 and 1903.

Mr. Pettingill is a railroad and locomotive enthusiast, and much of his book is directed toward the reader of very specialized interests. This is especially true of the rosters of locomotives, showing names, builders, dates, and other technical data, which are appended to the discussion of each railroad company.

There is much of interest, however, for the general reader who is willing to skip the technical details. In fact, there are some good stories of early railroading, such as the one of the alligator that got stuck in a culvert, causing water to back up and wash out half a mile of track. And nowhere else has there been brought together all available material, company by company, on Florida's nineteenth century railroads.

The usefulness of the book is curtailed by its lack of an index. Citations to sources would have been appreciated by serious students of railroad history, and a map or maps would have been a welcome addition. The illustrations, consisting of photographs of locomotives and early railroad folders, are pleasing and interesting.

DOROTHY DODD

Florida State Library

Mandarin on the St. Johns. By Mary G. Graff. University of Florida Press, 1953 (128 pp. Illus. \$3.75).

This is a carefully chronicled story of a quiet little town whose pulse-beat throbbed with the ebb and flow of life on the river.

For 340 years the story of the present Mandarin site paralleled the story of the St. Johns. It began with Ribault's discovery of

the River May (as he dubbed it on May 1, 1562), the early Indian and mission life, and continued on with fortunes blighted by warfare contingent to the changes and near-changes of flags over Florida. A respite from these troubles came in progress under British rule for a brief twenty years, then prosperity at last when the United States acquired Florida. The terror of the Seminole War passed into the grand days of river traffic, and with it Mandarin was born. The turn of the twentieth century brought swifter means of transportation to Florida and the opening up of the peninsula to citrus and vegetable growing, ending, sadly, the dreams of those who saw their Mandarin as a future commercial and agricultural center of importance.

But there were others who dreamed. To them Mandarin was a winter home with an incomparably lovely, restful, and restorative climate and environs. Best known of these was Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. In this volume Miss Graff has made a valuable addition to factual and interpretative information on the life of Mrs. Stowe. Because of this, *Mandarin on the St. Johns* has an especial appeal to many readers throughout the nation.

Other homeseekers have found the "quaint odd peace" of life in Mandarin. Today it is virtually a commuters' town for those who are fortunate enough to escape there from the busy Jacksonville, twenty miles away.

So close to the heart of every home-towner is the story of his beloved home; so lost in legend, is fact. Thus is the local historian's task doubly constricted. The author has admirably surmounted these difficulties as she delineates the lives of these gentle people - the ancestors or predecessors of her own neighbors.

Nothing was too small to find its place in the story as, with a sense attuned to time and change, the author selected from the local press of 1879, the old and the new: "venison would be available in the Mandarin market" and "ice cream at all village stores for only two cents a pound".

Mandarin on the St. Johns is a welcome contribution to local Floridiana for which there is a great need.

Miss Graffs references are extensive, although it is noted she turned to secondary sources on a few occasions when original data were available. A critical eye might note something to be desired in the presentation of background history outside the Mandarin area and perhaps in the organization of the local material-but neither of these faults, if they are such, are significant.

The physical features of the book are unusually fine. Perhaps the omission of a detailed map of the area is the only criticism worthy of mention.

DENA SNODGRASS

Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry of the South, 1753-1950.

By J. Carlyle Sitterson. (University of Kentucky Press, 1953
414 pp. \$6.00).

In recent years a number of regional studies of the economy of the South have appeared in print. This has been especially true of studies of life and labor in the "cotton kingdom." With the publication of Sitterson's *Sugar Country* the student of southern history is introduced to a full account of the cane sugar producing areas of the United States.

Since the sugar cane plantations of Louisiana never produced less than ninety-five per cent of the sugar crop before 1860 this unique story of the sugar economy is largely concerned with the Mississippi, Lafourche, and Attakapas sections of that state. In these sections the cultivation of cane and the manufacture of sugar generated a way of life which outshone, in many ways, the better-known culture of "king cotton" in the other southern states.

The author has divided the study into two major parts: "The Slavery Regime, 1753-1865" and "The Modern Industry, 1865-1950." Under the slavery regime is found the history of the introduction of the cane into the South, the plantations and farms, the planters and the labor forces, the cultivation of the cane and the manufacture of sugar, and the economic aspects of politics, profits,

losses, credit, and markets. Under the modern industry is found the history of the changes after the Civil War in the land holding, labor forces, manufacturing, and marketing. The political and economic aspects of the fights for the tariff and against the sugar trust are outlined in some detail, and the volume is concluded with a survey of the contemporary scene in southern sugar planting and manufacture.

Although essentially a study of an industry, the author never loses sight of the colorful cultural effects that have surrounded the complex social order which accompanied the development of the sugar cane economy.

The Florida reader of *Sugar Country* will be rewarded with occasional references to cane sugar production in the peninsula state in the years from 1753 to 1900. Ante bellum sugar production in Florida reached 2,750,000 pounds in 1849 only to decline before more profitable cotton production to 1,669,000 pounds in 1859. Hundreds of Florida planters and farmers cultivated from 20 to 100 acres of sugar cane and some of them manufactured up to 20 hogsheads of sugar along with the production of the more profitable bales of cotton. Promising sugar plantations and sugar mills were established on both the east coast and the west coast, but those on the east coast were destroyed during the Seminole Indian Wars which began in 1835, while those on the Manatee and Homosassa rivers did not survive the Civil War.

David L. Yulee's Homosassa plantation, which is not mentioned in this volume, consisted of several thousand acres and was one of the targets of Federal raids on the west coast from 1862 to 1864. The importance of Florida sugar was recognised when the Confederate government seized a shipment of 50,000 pounds of Yulee's sugar which the Florida planter had reputedly sold for a dollar a pound on delivery at Savannah.

A chapter on sugar in the Everglades describes the major developments on the muck soils along the shore of Lake Okeechobee after 1920. Little information on the Florida scene is added

to the several accounts which have been previously published and upon which the author depended for his survey. However, Florida readers will be interested in seeing the Everglades development in the perspective of the whole story of the southern sugar region.

The story of the Louisiana sugar country is based on the results of thorough searches through plantation records, diaries, and correspondence. The reader who is interested in the singular history of this distinct region will be well-rewarded with this authoritative and entertaining account. Professor Sitterson has made a serious, yet delightful, contribution to the economic and cultural history of the South.

J. E. DOVELL

The University of Florida

The Caribbean: Peoples, Problems, and Prospects. Edited by A. Curtis Wilgus. (University of Florida Press, 1952. 240 pp. \$4.50).

One of the interesting ways in which the University of Florida has been exercising an effective leadership has been through its annual Caribbean conferences. These serve two important purposes: they bring together those persons most interested in discussing the problems of the Caribbean area, and they make the results of these discussions available to a much larger group of interested readers by publishing the papers read at these conferences.

The Caribbean: Peoples, Problems, and Prospects is the result of the Second Caribbean Conference which was held in December, 1951.

These meetings, which have become well known throughout academic circles in the United States and the Caribbean, are under the direction of Dr. A. Curtis Wilgus, Director of the School of Inter-American Studies at the University, who has had much experience in planning conferences and publishing their

findings. Specialists from a wide variety of fields are invited to attend. Botanists, public health officials, sociologists, historians, businessmen, statesmen, writers, philosophers, city-planners, and economists all come together to discuss the one geographic area in which each has an interest - the Caribbean.

In this volume the twenty papers are grouped under the major headings of Health, Land, Trade, Culture, and Diplomacy. Although it is impossible to describe all of these in a review of this kind, attention may be called to some of those which may be of particular interest to the readers of this *Quarterly*.

Historically-minded Floridians will be interested in Dr. Fred E. Soper's analysis of the renewed yellow fever problems facing public health officials, and relieved to learn that this problem is not as serious in the Caribbean area as it may be farther south.

Economists and others will be interested in the three papers dealing with the problems and experiments taking place in land utilization, as well as in the four articles on Caribbean trade. Interesting among the latter is the one by Frank K. Bell, Vice President of the Alcoa Steamship Company which cooperates with the University of Florida in offering these conferences. In another paper George Wythe calls attention to the fact that Caribbean trade occupies relatively the same position in our foreign trade that it did in the early years of our history, providing roughly one-fifth of our commerce.

Among the excellent articles discussing various phases of culture in the Caribbean, Harriet de Onis's paper on "The Short Story in the Caribbean" stands out as possibly the best-written essay of the collection. Costa Rica's interesting experimentation with agricultural schools for those of her Indians who have been dislocated by the building of the Pan American Highway is most sympathetically and carefully described by Doris Stone. For scholars interested in research, John P. Harrison's description of opportunities for Inter-American studies in the National Archives offers a challenge.

The section on diplomacy was designed as a climax to the conference and the distinguished participants made it exactly that. Rexford Tugwell, Clarence Haring, W. H. Callcott, Alberto Lleras Camargo, and Wilfred Mauck speak from both experience and study on the various phrases of foreign relations between the United States and this area. Dr. Haring's clear exposition of the way in which the United States has arrived at a policy of non-intervention and the reasons why we shall probably continue it should interest and effectively answer those who believe that we have an obligation to support democratic groups within other countries.

These articles represent reports of progress or current surveys rather than the findings of scholarly research. Their value, for the most part, is immediate rather than permanent. They are designed to present an up-to-the-minute report on conditions in the Caribbean, a report made by experts, and one not readily available elsewhere. The assorted papers are tied together into an integrated whole by a brief, cordial foreword from President J. Hillis Miller and an imaginative introduction by the editor, Dr. A. Curtis Wilgus.

One criticism might be made. Casual opening remarks are effective in a speech but detract from a paper. Those articles which plunge directly into the subject command attention much more favorably than those which begin with remarks addressed to a former, but now absent, audience.

IONE STUESSY WRIGHT

University of Miami

Handbook of Latin American Studies: 1949. No. 15, Francisco Aguilera (Ed.) (The University of Florida Press, 1952. 289 pp. \$7.00).

Of particular interest to students of Florida history is the recent publication of Number 15 of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies*. The purpose of the publication is to ". . . furnish

a cumulative and permanent body of reference material in the fields of Latin American social sciences and humanities.”

The volume is divided into topical sections paralleling the academic disciplines embraced by the fields of the humanities and the social sciences. The *Handbook* is a cooperative project prepared by the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress and is edited by Francisco Aguilera of the Foundation. Each section of the work is edited by a recognized scholar in that field. The personnel responsible for the handling of the several sections varies from year to year, as does the exact areas covered. The fields covered in the present volume are Anthropology, Art, Economics, Education, Geography, Government, History, International Relations Since 1830, Labor and Social Welfare, Spanish American Language and Literature, Brazilian and Haitian Literature, Law, Music, Philosophy, together with a “General” section. Each section is further divided into geographic and/or chronological groupings.

Each bibliographic item is numbered (there are nearly 3,000 entries in the current volume, however, some are duplicates), complete data are given together with a brief descriptive or critical comment for each item.

Of professional interest to students of Florida history are several items to be found in the section on the History of Middle America and the Islands. Entry No. 1450 is a catalog of documents found in Section 9, *Papeles de Estado*, of the Archive of the Indies. These documents embrace the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of Florida history. Item No. 1460, edited by John Walton Caughey, is a file of documents assembled and, in many cases, translated by the late Joseph Byrne Lockey, entitled *East Florida, 1783-1785*. Of some interest is the item (No. 1498) by Jose Garcia Casteneda entitled *La municipalidad holguinera, su creacion y su desenvolvimiento hasta 1799*. Holguin was, for some time, the focal point of fairly heavy migration from Florida. Of personal interest to Florida historians is the

notice that with the publication of the current volume Dr. Raymond Crist, Department of Geography of the University of Florida, has joined the list of Contributing Editors. The current number also marks the second volume published by the University of Florida Press after having assumed this responsibility from the Harvard University Press with the publication of Number 14.

The *Handbook of Latin American Studies* is a "must" on the reference shelf of every library, and well deserves a place on the private shelf of every student of Florida history as well as of Latin American History.

MARSHALL K. POWERS

Louisiana Polytechnic Institute

INDIAN RIVER HISTORY

Stories of Early Life Along Beautiful Indian River is a noteworthy addition to local Florida histories. It was written and recorded by Anna Pearl Leonard Newman of Vero Beach, and printed by Stuart Daily News, Inc. (1953, 89 pp., 11 pp. illustrations, \$3.00).

The author says: "This is the story of the Indian River Country as it was related to me by those who should know, the early settlers themselves."

English Topographical Terms in Florida, 1563-1874 by E. Wallace McMullen, Jr., (University of Florida Press, 1953. 227 pp. \$5.50, paper), is not historical, but topographical as the title states. It is a dictionary of terms (not names), such as lagoon, hammock, key, mangrove, sink, head, pine barren, savanna, scrub, wrecking ground - many of which are local in application in Florida. There are numerous references to historical material in which the terms are used.

Origin of Names of Army and Air Corps Posts, Camps, and Stations in World War II in Florida, by Mary Moore Allen, Goldsboro, N. C. is a processed brochure of 30 pages (\$3.00).