Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 34
Number 1 *Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol 34, Issue 1*

Article 8

1955

Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society
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BOOK REVIEWS

Stephen R. Mallory: Confederate Navy Chief. By Joseph T. Durkin, S. J. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1954. pp. xi, 446. $6.00)

The role of sea power in the Confederacy is one of the neglected phases of Civil War history. Though writers of reputation have endeavored to explain why the South failed to achieve victory on land, naval history has received less attention. A complete understanding of the internal administration of the Navy Department, the reason for an uncoordinated plan of strategy, difficulties of transportation and supply, and political interference in the affairs of the Department could not be reached until a full-length biography of Mallory was written.

Stephen R. Mallory was a logical choice to head the Confederate Navy Department. Although the South had no well developed seafaring tradition, Mallory had spent much of his life in Key West and Pensacola, where as a customs collector and maritime lawyer he had learned a great deal about the sea. Later, as a senator in Washington, he became intimately acquainted with naval officers, ships, and shore installations, first as a member and later as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs. This combined experience was to stand him in good stead in organizing and directing Confederate Naval operations.

Almost from the beginning of his tern of office, Mallory incurred the criticism of a hostile press, and was repeatedly attacked by a disgruntled group in the Confederate Congress. "I am as sick as I am disgusted," he recorded in his diary on June 24, 1862, "with the carpings and complaints of ignorance and presumption, that I have not built a navy! I feel confident of having done my whole duty, of having done all any man could have done with the means at hand. . . ." (p. 224).

Except for John Reagan, the Postmaster General, Mallory was the only other cabinet member who occupied the same

post for the entire duration of the war. Cabinet shifts occurred frequently, but Jefferson Davis continued to rely on Mallory for advice even in matters outside the realm of naval affairs. Their relationship was one of mutual respect, which at times approached admiration. "Your minute knowledge of naval affairs and your counsel upon all important measures have been to the administration a most valuable support. For the zeal, ability and integrity with which you have so long and so constantly labored, permit one who had the best opportunity to judge, to offer testimonial and in the name of our country and its sacred cause to return thanks . . . ." (p. 343). This was a tribute of the Confederate President when Mallory resigned from the Cabinet on May 2, 1865.

Father Durkin builds a strong case for Mallory, buttressed by sound documentation and skillful detail. However, the lack of existing source materials forced the author, from time to time, to abandon his main theme and bridge the gap by a reference to the times, thus causing a break in the narrative.

Mallory is portrayed as a loyal husband and devoted father. His correspondence with his wife often revealed his innermost thoughts regarding matters of state and their mutual friends. She appears to have had an almost unbelievable influence on his state of mind and general well-being. Lack of news from Angela often depressed him, whereas a letter from her sent his spirits soaring for several days. At times she was somewhat critical of decisions which he had a part in making, and at such times his diary shows that wounded feelings were added to his already heavy burdens.

Of particular interest to Floridians is Mallory's description of Pensacola in 1866, immediately after his return from imprisonment at Fort Lafayette, the beginnings of Reconstruction, and his life with Angela's family while he began the renovation of his own home in preparation for her return. His counsel and advice on political questions was frequently sought, and his con-

stant resolve was that though the war was lost everything possible must be done to eliminate bitterness between the sections.

In general, the book is well done, with only minor errors which are remarkably few. The critical bibliography of some seventeen pages is a definite aid for the future student, and the index seems adequate. This work has long been needed, for Mallory was one of the figures of the Civil War era and will long be remembered as an outstanding citizen of Florida.

CHARLES S. DAVIS

Florida State University

The Southern Indians: The Story of the Civilized Tribes Before Removal. By R. S. Cotterill. The Civilization of the American Indian Series. (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman. 1954, vol. xiii, 255 pp. 8 plates, 5 maps. $4.00)

The Southern Indians is a continuation of the interest by the editors of the University of Oklahoma Press in the story of the Five Civilized Tribes who have played such an important part in the more recent history of Oklahoma. The subtitle is, however, perhaps confusing, as the book discusses only a small part of the story of the Civilized Tribes before removal; that part of their history which took place before the American Revolution is not included. The events in their history from 1775 until the removal in the 1830's are adequately documented. Much of the story is that of the Indians' trials and tribulations at the hands of the growing American Republic. *The Southern Indians* is the first systematic collection of the whole range of this material, and it is this service of collecting scattered documentary information that is largely served by the present volume.

The book opens with a "background" chapter on the Southern Indians as a whole. This is not the best chapter in the book, as it seems to be largely derived from older sources and to take

very little account of recent archaeological investigations in the South. Statements, such as the one that southern Indian agriculture yielded very little surplus, hardly accords with the facts. The accounts of the De Soto expedition, which subsisted very largely on supplies looted from Indian towns, suggest a definite surplus. The extensive earthworks in the southeast could have only been a produce of a culture with a successful agriculture and a large surplus. The statement, that southern Indians achieved a reconciliation of economic communism and individual liberty "by reducing their government so nearly to anarchy that it operated only by practically unanimous consent", has meaning, of course, only in a tight framework of traditional political theory. It seems to bear little relation to the known development of Creek political control. Other similar instances indicate a dependence on late sources without regard to the cultures of the southern Indians as they existed before white destruction of their traditional ways of life. The public religious practices, indicated by the large temple mounds and by the ceremonies of the Natchez, do not suggest "what religion he had was private, unorganized for public expression." The author seems to see the Indians only through eyes of the missionary, soldier, or trader. Those men, of course, had neither the understanding or desire to free themselves from ethnocentric preconceptions.

In Chapter II, The Colonial Background, we see a somewhat fragmentary picture of the conflicting aims and policies of the three colonial powers, Spain, England, and France. The story is told largely in a chronological manner that duly mentions all the wars, treaties, and many of the individuals involved. It rarely, however, comes to grips with the basic changes that were taking place in the cultures of the southern Indians; and the effects of the deerskin trade and subsequent settlement patterns is not told as a connected chronicle. The southern Indians played a significant role in the struggle between the three great powers for the control of the southeast, but we read

here little of this vital part. The Yammassee War and Emperor Brim receive scant attention, despite the fact that this man and event seem to have begun the policy of Creek diplomacy that was to endure until after the American Revolution. Even McGillivray tried to practice this over-all plan in the post-Revolutionary period. The colonial period, then, is described in episodic style that undoubtedly covers the events, but doesn't weave them into a consistent story.

The next ten chapters discuss the events in each period in a detailed and complete fashion. This is evidently the period in which the author is most interested and in which he contributes most. Each chapter deals with a definite period: the Revolutionary period, McGillivray's period from 1783-1793, and so on. There are separate chapters on McGillivray, Bowles, Tecumseh, and the Creek War. In each chapter the treatment is, in general, chronological with the scene shifting from Creek, to Cherokee, to Chickasaw, or to Choctaw in rapid succession. This gives a better sense of the movement of events in the whole period, but makes it rather difficult to follow the fortunes of any one group. The amount of land ceded in the various treaties is often not clearly stated. As the treaties are admirably presented in Royce "Indian Land Sessions in the United States" this is probably not too serious an omission. What Dr. Cotterill evidently attempted was to give a connected, narrative, description of the events which preceded these treaties and to a large extent, brought them about. This he does admirably. For the reader who seeks to place a particular event in its proper chronological position these chapters will prove invaluable.

This section, of ten chapters, is as said above, the most important part of the book and collects a great deal of widely scattered and relatively inaccessible material. Dr. Cotterill has performed a real service in making, this available to those of us who cannot travel widely to the proper archives. Used in conjunction with the treaties published by Royce, it gives us a

framework of southern Indian history in which we can understand the forces, Indian and white, at work in this section. The material seems to be very accurate and no noticable errors were found. The principal criticism must rest on the lack of a coherent theme, The Indians and whites move through the play impelled by largely personal motives that seem to be partly capricious, partly the result of self-interest. There is no sense of the historical and cultural forces that made the tribes differ from one another in their reaction to American penetration of their territory. History is described as a series of discrete events, rarely connected. When there is a connection, it is chiefly through the fact that the same peoples and the same lands are involved. The why and the development of progressive and conservative wings in each of the tribes is hardly mentioned. Bowles was certainly one of the most colorful brigands ever to attempt a political coup in his area. Here, however, he appears as a fleeting shadow, without substance or meaning to make him live again. Perhaps that is the job of a historical novelist. To give Bowles's acts meaning, is surely a historical objective. This criticism is directed less at what Dr. Cotterill does than at what he fails to do. Many historians, it is true, see the function of history as the assembling and recording of the unique events of a given period. This seems to be a failure to realize the contribution history can make to knowledge. It is true that materialism, in its search for causes, has often perverted history to a particular social theory. Nevertheless, it seems that the important, and often intrinsically interesting, events on the southern frontiers do have causes. History, political science, and anthropology have been able to develop theories as to the causal relations of historical events. These throw light on the past and help to explain the present. It seems to this reviewer that more could have been made of this fragment of man's history than a mere chronical of events.

The book closes with an epilogue, The Last Stand, which

summarizes the last efforts of the southern Indians to live at peace with the new American nation. Finally there is a very adequate bibliography and highly convenient index. In short "The Southern Indians" is a workmanlike job of assembling the unique people from the American Revolution until their removal to Oklahoma. I suspect that we will consult it often to verify these facts. In a larger field, however, we need a broader attack. We need to know what are the effective and the final causes of these events which we call history Only then, it seems to me, are we to justify our professional existence.

CHARLES H. FAIRBANKS

Florida State University

Franco-Spanish Rivalry in North America, 1524-1763. By Henry Folmer. (Spain in the West, VII. The Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, California, 1953. 352 pp. $10.00).

We have here the seventh volume in the series entitled *Spain in the West.* It was just forty years ago, in 1914, that the first volume of this series, edited by Herbert E. Bolton, came off the presses of the Arthur H. Clark Company. This present volume exemplifies the same unhurried care and scholarship characteristic of the series. Even the printing on rich paper in the magnificently legible and dignified 18th century Caslon type adds notably to the total feeling of quality surrounding the book.

Dr. Folmer, attempting a much broader theme than any of the previous authors in this series, his written of Franco-Spanish rivalry confined in area to continental North America, in nature to the diplomatic aspects, and in time to the period 1524-1783. The boundaries of this subject limit the narration, therefore, to the contest between the two powers for the conquest of the North American coastline from Canada to Mexico. The central areas of interest, after the abandonment by Spain

of any serious ambitions in the North Atlantic, are Florida's seaboard, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Missouri Valley area lying between New Mexico and the Illinois country.

There are, to me, a number of impressive qualities about this book. First is the prodigious amount of research in manuscript materials both in Europe and the United States. The narrative relies for its documentation mainly on primary sources. The second quality of this volume is the simplicity in its organization and execution. The author has related the important episodes with scholarly authority, yet in an interesting way and with an economy of detail. Each of the brief chapters concludes with a summary paragraph of a few sentences, bringing along the story in a connected and intelligible way; while the preface compresses the conclusions of the entire book into a bare page and a half. The style of writing is in a straightforward active voice, non-florid and exact. There is no straining for interpretation. The story is all on the table, lucid, and with conclusions corresponding to the facts.

The author finds that both France and Spain, having set their basic policies in the 16th century, maintained them with consistency until the Treaty of Paris of 1763 when France was expelled from North America. Spain claimed all the land west of the Line of Demarcation whether occupied or not and forbade other nations to intrude for any purpose whatsoever. France claimed the right to explore, conquer and colonize new lands not already occupied by the Spanish and to sail the high seas without intervention, This conflict in stated policy survived from the time of the bitter dynastic wars of Charles V and Francis I down into the 18th century even after the two thrones were linked under the Bourbons in the Family Compact.

The limitations of the book are precisely those which the boundaries of its subject matter impose. To treat Franco-Spanish rivalry only in the context of North America means that the author must skip an entire century (from the late 16th to the

late 17th) when the conflict was going on in the West Indies and South America but not in North America. This century of conflict is summarized, it is true; but to be obliged to treat it summarily simply because the geographical areas involved were not part of (though adjacent to) North America seems to me to weaken somewhat the total perspective and to subtract from the *raision d'etre* of the book. The 17th century was important, because it was during that time that France whipped Spain, leaving it a beaten and second rate power by 1659. The author's summary fails even to mention some of the important American colonial episodes in the conflict that were transpiring in northern Brazil from 1590 to 1615 when Portugal was part of Spain.

Another limitation is that this history is not fully "political" as the author avers, but essentially diplomatic. The book is not and does not pretend to be an inquiry into the complete dynamics of French and Spanish national policy. For example, on the pages of this book, ambassadors, ministers of state, and the leaders of expeditions utter their plans and divulge their motives in their own words; but what were the forces of history that conditioned their utterances? To this question, the author attempts no comprehensive answers.

A basic question, handled by Dr. Folmer, is the question of the degree to which the rivalry was merely an extension of rivalry in Europe and the degree to which it grew out of and was determined by conditions in North America. The answer is twofold: On the one hand, the clash of interests and of arms in North America was not taken by either power as adequate reason for going to war in Europe. The agreement on "No peace beyond the line" (referring to the Line of Demarcation and the Tropic of Cancer) made it possible for a conflict as bitter as that on the Atlantic coast of Florida in the 1560's to take place and yet not to push the two powers into war in Europe. The author makes clear that the strain on relations was great and

that he found no evidence for the traditional view that the French crown, Catherine de Medici in particular, secretly approved the murder of the French Protestants.

On the other hand "The old policy of peace at home but war in America could not be reversed." That is, when France and Spain went to war in Europe, as they did in 1713, the colonists went to war too.

In addition to its other qualities, this book has much narrative interest. Nothing in this long colonial rivalry can surpass the 16th century for pure dramatic appeal, it seems to me, with the Ribaut-Laudonuiere-Coligny struggle against Menéndez and the avenging expedition of Dominique de Gourgues; but Dr. Folmer has succeeded in creating an intriguing account of La Salle's troubles with Peñalosa, of French ambitions against the Mexican silver mines, of Pensacola's episodic history, and of the discovery of the Santa Fe trail. The reader would, incidentally, be able to follow the narrative with more ease and understanding if a special reference map had been provided.

ROBERT CARLYLE BEYER

The University of Miami

General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A. by Joseph Howard Parks, Southern Biography Series (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1954). pp. 537, $6.00.

With complete access to the Kirby Smith Papers in the Southern Collection at the University of North Carolina, careful use of other primary source material, and with the skilled touch of the professional historian, Dr. Parks has produced a definitive biography of Florida's beloved Civil War general.

Kirby Smith's roots in Florida were surface ones of the first generation. His father, a retired army colonel and a native of Connecticut, came to the former Spanish territory to preside over a frontier Federal court. Born in St. Augustine, May 16,

1824, young Edmund felt the excitement engendered by the Seminole War as he played beneath the shadow of venerable Fort Marion. The decision to make him a soldier cut short his life in Florida when at age twelve he was sent to a military preparatory school at Alexandria, Virginia. His father's political influence obtained the expected appointment to United States Military Academy, and Edmund graduated a mediocre twenty-fifth in his class.

Commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry on the eve of the Mexican War, he served with distinguished bravery in the armies of Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott. The post-war era found him leading the routine life of a soldier, though considerably ahead of his classmates in the matter of promotions. A Southerner at heart, but not an advocate of the institution of slavery, Major E. Kirby Smith on the outbreak of the Civil War offered his sword to Florida. Although Dr. Parks calls the chapter dealing with the decision of Smith to resign from his beloved Army, "With the Land of My Birth," a more accurate title would be "With My Family," because it is obvious that the close Smith family ties swung the decision to wear the grey uniform. The Northern family had become rabid Southerners.

As in the Mexican War, Kirby Smith distinguished himself early in combat. His arrival with three regiments on the field at first Bull Run at the opportune time played a critical role in the Confederate victory. For the remainder of the war, General Kirby Smith held two of the most heartbreaking commands in the Confederate Army. The first, in the Department of East Tennessee, involved what was almost enemy territory. But even so, he managed to join Genenal Braxton Bragg in an invasion of Kentucky. The second, as commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, meant combining a military with a civil administration. And the task of husbanding the small forces in the area was not made easier by a bitter feud with General

Dick Taylor, a temperamental advocate of a vigorous offensive. Dr. Parks's objective treatment of the Smith-Taylor controversy is a high point in the volume.

At the close of the war, fearing Northern persecution, Smith crossed into Mexico. He returned a few months later via Cuba and, following several unsuccessful business efforts, became professor of mathematics at the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee. He died there, the last of the full Confederate generals, on March 28, 1893.

While most readers will be primarily interested in the military aspects of Kirby Smith's career, Dr. Parks's well balanced biography does not neglect his genealogical background, courtship and family life. Several reprints of old maps showing Smith's campaigns are of considerable assistance to the reader. Minor criticism might be made concerning the author's factual style. The reader would appreciate more evaluation by the author. And in his successful effort to be objective, Dr. Parks has been overcautious. Overall, however, the biography is a worthy study of an outstanding native of Florida.

EDWARD C. WILLLAMSON

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Early Florida Through Spanish Eyes, by W. R. Jackson, Jr. University of Miami Hispanic-American Studies, No. XII, edited by R. S. Boggs. (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1954. Pp. vi, 179. $3.50. Bibliography and glossary of geographical names.)

This book is composed chiefly of translated selections from the sixteenth century writings of Spaniards who were in the expeditions to Florida, or who received their "information" from first-hand reports. Each writer is introduced, and sufficient

historical background is given to enable the reader to gain a balanced view.

The writings discuss the Fountain of Youth and other legends from the Indians, and concerning the Indians; the naming of Florida; the searches for gold, silver, and pearls; Indian life; and the bountiful manner in which nature provided for the wants of man in Florida four hundred years ago.

The author-compiler has no particular argument to present. His arrangement of the selections, and his own explanatory paragraphs provide a fair degree of coherence. It is gratifying to observe that footnotes which the average historian might wish to read are placed at the foot of each page. Those of interest only to the expert in this field are tucked away at the back of the book, and are numbered consecutively without regard for chapters. This simplifies the task of locating a footnote. The work is well edited.

Perhaps Florida was no more the land of fantasy than other newly discovered countries have usually been; but the Fountain of Youth was but one among many of the remarkable "phenomena" they wrote about. There were also the unicorns (p. i), the deer that were herded in fields like cattle and milked like goats (p. 112), and Indians thirteen and one-half feet tall (p. 41). Nor can we tell where to draw the line between fact and exaggeration. No doubt Florida was a "fertile paradise" and a "delightful meadow" with "birds of a thousand kinds" (p. 31). There was many a turtle here "as large as a shield," but we wonder if one ever had "as much meat as a cow" (p. 111).

The most interesting part of the book is the Spainards' appraisal of the Indians. They accused them of being "treacherous, thievish, and envious" (p. 137). The Indians told "very great lies" (p. 124). (It is not difficult to imagine what the Indians thought of Spanish character.) Yet the visitors from Europe had profound respect for the physical strength and prowess of the Indian — who could shoot an arrow through four thicknesses of

mail (p. 47), and could capture a whale by driving a stake into its air vent (p. 66). And there is a distinct undertone of admiration for the Indian way of life– dancing and feasting day and night when prickly pears were in season (p. 103); catching unlimited quantities of fish by the use of a simple weir (p. 110); and living without the necessity of irksome toil (p. 113).

Both the Bibliography and Glossary of Geographical Names will be of value to other writers as well as the reader.

I think we can undersand, now, why several "sly fellows" deserted De Soto and joined up with the Indians (p. 141).

GILBERT L. LYCAN

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CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF VOLUSIA COUNTY

In the aggregate, the sum of the local histories of any region is of more importance than the history of the area as a whole. It is more interesting to know how the people lived and what they did, than to recount what the few leaders chose to do.

Most of Florida's local histories are by counties. One of the best of these has recently appeared *Centennial History of Volusia County Florida, 1854-1954.* This is published by The Volusia County Historical Commission, and edited by, and much of it written by, Ianthe Bond Hebel. There are more than twenty contributors of brief articles on a wide variety of historical subjects; but Mrs. Hebel, who should be called Volusia County's historian, we suspect not only planned and carried out the project of the county history, but she wrote a score of the articles herself.

There are fifteen sections – general subjects, with usually several articles in a section, each article by someone with especial knowledge of what he writes. For example– *Education:* the Public Schools, the Vocational School, Stetson University, Bethune-Cookman College; *the Churches,* each denomination by

a different writer; *the Newspapers;* the several cities separately; *Banking, Racing, Cultural development* (art, music, drama, forums); etc. etc.

Other Florida counties which have no written history could follow the same plan successfully by dividing the project among many, and thereby increasing interest in it greatly.

This is a volume of more than two hundred pages, well printed and bound. Copies may be had from College Publishing Company, Daytona Beach; in cloth $2.50, paper $1.25.

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