

1957

Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society
membership@myfloridahistory.org



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1957) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 36 : No. 4 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol36/iss4/8>

BOOK REVIEWS

When the World Ended: The Dairy of Emma LeConte. Edited by Earl Schenck Miers. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1957. xviii, 124, pp. Illustrations. \$4.00.)

EMMA LECONTE was the daughter of the famed geologist and professor Joseph LeConte. When she wrote this diary she was seventeen years old and was living with her family on the grounds of South Carolina College in Columbia.

The diary begins on December 31, 1864, and ends on August 6, 1865. In November General William Tecumseh Sherman and his Yankee army had begun its northward march from Savannah, Georgia, across South Carolina. They had entered Columbia on February 17, and that night most of the city was burned to the ground. Her account of this tragic event is the high point in Emma LeConte's little book.

Emma was only a young girl and the daughter of a very respectable family. She was not on the streets watching the soldiers and exposing herself to probable insult and possible danger. She was at home, watching the flames from a third-story window; hearing shots, shouts, and "the thunder of falling buildings;" and listening with facinated horror to reports and rumors brought by the Negroes and others who felt free to go out and see what was happening. She was not in a position to be able to answer that most-debated question, "Who started the Fire?," though in her mind there was "no shadow of doubt that the town was burned by Sherman's order."

Perhaps the most significant thing Emma is able to tell us as a really first-hand observer is how she herself felt - and by extension how other upper class women and girls of the Confederacy must have felt. She hated. "Before they came here," she wrote of Sherman's troopers three days after the fire, "I thought I hated them as much as was possible - now I know there are no limits to the feeling of hatred." She romantically wished that President Jefferson Davis might call out the women to fight and die, rather than let them "be ruled by such horrible and contemptible creatures . . . when we hate them so bitterly." She hurrahed when Lincoln was assassinated, though she admitted that his murder

would hurt the South, not help it: "Never mind, our hated enemy has met the just reward of his life."

Yet even in the brief time span of this book there is evidence of a slight abatement of Emma's hatred. Colonel Nathaniel Haughton took charge of Columbia on May 25. He kept order in the town, set the Negroes to work, and was courteous to southern ladies and gentlemen. He helped Professor LeConte make a living bringing corn to Columbia by letting him have a flatboat that had belonged to the Confederacy. He even refrained from going to church so that he might not officially know that the Episcopal minister was omitting the prayer for the president of the United States. Emma wrote on July 5, "We are very fortunate in having Col. Haughton here . . . He has been all kindness and consideration to the citizens . . . It goes against the grain to admit anything good of a Yankee, but I have to own that he has acted well towards us."

Emma would probably have recoiled from the thought, but such words, coming from one who lived in Columbia on February 17, 1865, offered fair prospects of reconciliation between the South and the North.

GEORGE R. BENTLEY

University of Florida

Florida's Last Frontier; The History of Collier County. By Charlton W. Tebeau. Copeland Studies in Florida History. (Coral Gables, University of Miami Press, 1957. 260 pp. Illustrations, maps, index. \$3.50.)

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA has been as remote and inaccessible historically as it has seemed to be physically. Now, Professor Charlton W. Tebeau has written the much needed *Florida's Last Frontier, the History of Collier County*. Based upon numerous interviews with Collier County pioneers and their descendants, upon extensive research, and upon notes and maps collected by David Graham Copeland, *Florida's Last Frontier* can be enjoyed as readily by the neophyte as by the scholar.

In his foreword the author makes it clear that it was inaccessibility or natural barriers, not distance, that made Collier County "Florida's Last Frontier." This was so from the white man's

point of view, but to the Mikasuki Seminole it was the last refuge. "Unknown" was the interior of the region until the wars of Indian removal when military maps were prepared. Even after the official close of hostilities in 1842, there was another flareup (called Bowlegs War) as late as 1855-58, when the last shots were fired. The pre-history of Collier County is dealt with briefly because of lack of available information. The Spanish period is touched on lightly for the same reason.

It is in the era of white settlement, beginning about 1870, that Dr. Tebeau's exhaustive research becomes apparent. His many acknowledgments and photographic illustrations bear witness to the thoroughness of his efforts. Here, where his information comes from sources, he gives free rein to his easy-going, narrative style. In review pass pioneer settlers driving ox teams; truck farmers dependent on a hundred miles of boat transportation to market; the coming of capital in the person of Barron G. Collier; and the final conquest of The Last Frontier - the construction of the Tamiami Trail, followed by the railroad. Modern pioneering, based on the County's recent past as well as present natural resources, and their possibilities, concludes the story.

As local history, *Florida's Last Frontier* is complete in the light of present knowledge. Only the "digs" of archeologists or the discovery of some "lost" document in Spanish archives could add to it. It provides a reliable source of material for future writers and answers many questions for South Florida residents and visitors.

Professor Charlton W. Tebeau is chairman of the Department of History at the University of Miami, past president of the Florida Historical Society and, for many years, editor of *Tequesta*, the journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida. He is a native Georgian and at home in the Florida woods, thus his knowledge of pioneers and their problems. This sympathetic approach enabled him to gain access to sources of information that to others might have remained closed.

Dr. Tebeau is also the author of *The Story of the Chokoloskee Bay Country*, the first of the Copeland Studies in Florida History which are published by the University of Miami under a grant made by the sons of the late Barron G. Collier to honor the

memory of David Graham Copeland who for twenty years before his death collected notes and maps from all available sources on the early history of Southwest Florida.

CHARLES M. BROOKFIELD

Miami, Florida

Negro Militia and Reconstruction. By Otis A. Singletary.
(Austin, University of Texas Press, 1957. xi, 181 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. \$3.75.)

COMING AS THIS BOOK does at the height of considerable excitement about integration, one finds the work unusually interesting. The book points up the inescapable fact that the race difficulties during Reconstruction were largely political. It is somewhat consoling to have this knowledge when so many evidences of political activity now attend racial unrest.

Dr. Singletary has a deep South background but has approached this subject in an objective, unemotional fashion. He has condensed in 152 pages of well-documented text the history of the Negro militia during Radical Reconstruction in the South. From the creation of the militia to "fill the vacuum that resulted from the withdrawal of Federal troops," the author carries his story through the organization of the militia, the difficulty of recruiting and arming, low morale, southern-white counter measures, and a summation of its effect and effectiveness. Perhaps the most striking chapter in the book is that entitled "Minstrels and Brindle-Tails." These names were attached to the opponents in the "Brooks-Baxter War," which was fought in Arkansas by factions of the Republican Party with Federal troops standing by.

The Negro militia movement, observes Dr. Singletary, was a "dismal failure" and he concludes with the significant observation that, "It is ironic that the organization of this protective force, because of its racial implications, actually aided in the destruction of the very political movement it was created to protect."

The author has presented his material in a factual but pleasant style that will appeal to the casual as well as the informed

reader.. The book's format is attractive and the choice of illustrations excellent.

ADAM G. ADAMS

Miami, Florida

Our Journey Through Florida. By Cleo Rainwater and Kathryn Abbey Hanna. (New York, American Book Company, 1957. x, 350 pp. Illustrations, maps and index.)

La Florida; Its Land and People. By Leeila S. Copeland and J. E. Dovell. (Austin, Texas, The Steck Company, 1957. x, 358 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliographies and index.)

The Story of Florida. By Rembert W. and Eleanor B. Patrick and Hester B. Fisackerly. (Austin, Texas, The Steck Company, 1957. vi, 362 pp. Illustrations, maps and index.)

TODAY, WHEN THERE is an increasing emphasis upon state and local history we are indeed fortunate to have made available to our public schools these three texts which detail the story of Florida so well. It should be emphasized, too, that they will be as attractive to adults as they will be to the young people in the schools. Each book has a Teacher's guide or manual which makes it much more usable and, of course, valuable.

Dr. Kathryn Abbey Hanna, distinguished Florida scholar and historian, and Cleo Rainwater, gifted educator of Florida State University, in their book, *Our Journey Through Florida*, use the device of chronicling the travels of a family to tell the story of Florida. The Wilder family begins its journey at Wakulla Springs and visits all of the more important sections of Florida. After investigating the state, first hand, from mastodon remains to the chemical industry developing in northwest Florida, the Wilders are so intrigued that they decide to make Florida their home.

So comprehensive and attractive is the presentation, that one has a feeling of suspense and speculates where the Wilders decide to locate - Florida East Coast, the cattle country, near one of the numerous springs, state parks or Seminole Reservations. Maybe the early vegetable or plantation sites will appeal most to them! The book is well-written and easily read.

Two noteworthy features of *La Florida* are the wrenching from obscurity of men and events, both human and pictorial, and the reversal of geographical and political features. As to the latter, the interest whetted by the preceding pages, will stimulate the student to desire accurate orientation and the wish to know the why and the wherefore of the determination of persons and events by physical features.

From a preface distinguished by beautiful diction, the pages that follow present a well-integrated account of the great figures of Florida history, its cultural and educational institutions, its part in the wars, its ups and downs, the developments, some apt quotations, and the whole is crowned by a helpful bibliography and a useful appendix.

The Story of Florida has the prestige afforded by having as its authors the Head of the History Department of the University of Florida and two other persons equally well-known in educational circles of the state. The contents are related in dialogue form, which experience with a series of reading texts now in use has demonstrated to be most attractive and valuable to young readers. Unusual facts are related with just the right amount of suspense.

There is general travel information keyed to the fourth grader, fine geographical information, and the text is comprehensive of every part of the state. It is equally interesting to the adult reader and projects its narrative into the modern aspects of the state. The print is large and the general format, pleasing. The appendix with its excellent chronological tables and lists of counties, cities, state parks and governors, and the Teacher's Guide-book will prove most helpful.

OCCIE CLUBBS

Pensacola, Florida