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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Kentucky Cavaliers in Dixie. By George Dallas Mosgrove, Edited by Bell Irwin Wiley. (Jackson, Tenn., McCowat-Mercer Press Inc., 1957. \$6.00)

As we approach April, 1961, the number of books having a Civil War theme flows in an ever-increasing tempo from the various publishing houses, and one wonders if by July, 1963, there could be any subject yet unnoticed by the relentless historian. Some of the current books concerning the Civil War are excellent, and some others should never have been printed. How many ancient and dusty dissertations have been rewritten, padded, patched-up, and sent to the publishers in an effort to "cash in" on the coming centennial?

The Monographs, Sources, and Reprints in Southern History series, published by the McCowat-Mercer Press with Bell Wiley as editor, has issued an impressive list of books pertaining to the Southern side of the war. *Kentucky Cavaliers*, written by one who served with the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry, is a good account of the fighting through the eyes of a Confederate cavalryman. The book was first published in a limited edition in 1895, and prices for this rare item have been very high. Judging from style and reliability, the account certainly deserves reprinting.

When he was eighteen years old, George Dallas Mosgrove enlisted in the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry Regiment in September, 1862, and remained an enlisted man during his period of service. He fought in the important battles during that period in eastern Tennessee and southwest Virginia. The account of the Saltville, Virginia, raid is outstanding and is one of the few available views concerning the Confederates' successful defense of the salt works.

Mosgrove's views of soldiers' life are particularly good. He tells about a Confederate soldier writing in the diary of a dead blue-coat the words, "today I was killed." He writes about stupid and smart leaders, cowards and brave men, fun and despair. War veteran and school teacher, Mosgrove has written a good book.

Editor Wiley might have added a few footnotes to help clarify or correct certain parts of the text. Even this famed writer and authority in Civil War history seems to have been unbalanced by the mad rush to write and publish Civil War material, and his work here hardly deserves the title of editor. A map showing the travels of Mosgrove during the war would indeed have been very helpful. The introduction by the editor, however, is most adequate and stimulating.

JAMES W. COVINGTON

University of Tampa

Parson Clapp of the Strangers' Church of New Orleans. Edited by John Duffy. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1957. 191 pp. \$5.00)

Unitarianism, cholera, infant damnation, Congregationalism, yellow fever, Presbyterianism and numerous other theological and epidemiological matters are treated in this fascinating volume.

The main portion of the book consists of the autobiography of Theodore Clapp, written in 1857. John Duffy, the editor of the work, has prefaced this with an excellent review of the main events in the life of Clapp.

In Clapp's own career, one finds a strange summary of much of the theological struggle that gripped New England and New Englanders throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Schooled at Williams, Yale, and Andover Theological Seminary, Clapp found himself caught up in the aftermath of the struggle between orthodox Puritanism and the liberalism of Boston that ultimately flowered into Unitarianism and Transcendentalism. Clapp was always groping for more light in his theological quest as he migrated from his native New England to Kentucky and finally to New Orleans. Ordained a Congregationalist, he became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New Orleans. This was not an unusual arrangement at the time, for the Plan of Union between the two denominations was in effect.

Liberalism and so-called heresy finally led to Clapp's expulsion from the Presbyterian ministry. This led to the organization of what he called "The First Congregational Unitarian Church

of New Orleans." The church became a real attraction for visitors though it never had a large number of regular communicants. So radical had the church become, that when the structure burned in 1851, all the churches in New Orleans refused to permit temporary shelter to the congregation. A new building was erected in 1855. True to his principle that sectarianism had no place in Christianity, Clapp refused to associate either Unitarianism or Congregationalism with the name of the new church and finally selected the name "Church of the Messiah." There was no denominational affiliation of any kind and so completely had Clapp discarded the trappings and rituals of orthodoxy that he refused to hold any kind of dedication ceremony.

Strangely intermixed with extreme liberalism in theology was Clapp's view on slavery. He was thoroughly convinced that slavery was both morally and economically sound.

The recurrent epidemics of cholera and yellow fever form an almost constant back-drop against which the drama of the career of Theodore Clapp was unfolded. The editor's natural emphasis upon religious matters in no way obscures the fact that from the standpoint of historical value the great worth of the book is in its vivid and accurate picture of life in New Orleans in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The venerable clergyman is at his best in relating the events of the epidemic years. His graphic accounts recreate the atmosphere of terror and suffering, of filth and despair, and of fear and hope as found in ante-bellum New Orleans.

CHARLES T. THRIFT, JR.

Florida Southern College.

The Baptist Church in the Lower Mississippi Valley, 1776-1845.

By Walter Brownlow Posey. (Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1957. x, 166 pp. \$5.00.)

To his two earlier books concerning the Methodists (1783-1824) and the Presbyterians (1778-1838) of the Old Southwest, Professor Posey, of Agnes Scott College and Emory University, has now added an account of the Baptists (1776-1845). The setting for his study, the Old Southwest, was a region lying

between the Ohio River and the Gulf of Mexico. The era involved ordinarily falls between the 1760's and 1815, although these are not necessarily the precise beginning or closing dates for the history of either the era or the region. The Census Bureau, for example, collected data under the heading of "Southwest" (Old Southwest in part) for many years after Mississippi and Alabama were settled. Professor Posey is making a great contribution by concentrating his research on a region and period which have been woefully neglected by professional historians. He has carried on in the tradition of one of his mentors at Vanderbilt University, Carl S. Driver, and in his particular specialty, church history, he occupies a primacy unequalled by any other historian. Let us hope that he will also write accounts of the Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, for he will then have truly covered his field.

Following a brief introduction about Baptist developments in the Anglo-American colonies, the author presents an intriguing and enlightening account of Old Southwest Baptists from the organization of their first church in Kentucky, in 1781, until the creation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. Kentucky receives more coverage than any state mentioned, but the other states come in for their appropriate share of attention. Among the subjects emphasized are interests and activities in Indian missions, typical sermons, education (as well as the lack of interest in education), discipline of wayward church members, representative ministers, revivals, camp meetings, and the break with Northern Baptists over slavery. Disputes over doctrine within the church, the organization of the church, and association with other denominations also are depicted. That Baptists were faced with all sorts of problems is shown by the fact that a Georgia minister once prayed that the Lord would remove two Baptist families from his community and that Presbyterians would move in to replace them! At one camp meeting, not mentioned by the author, everyone thereabouts was invited except Episcopalians! The Baptists were indeed up against stiff competition, but they went on to become a host in themselves - a position which they still retain - because they eventually adopted evangelistic procedures which attracted the mass of Southerners. Their driving sincerity, unrelenting missionary zeal, and appeal-

ing democratic form of church government enabled them to forge ahead of all competitors.

WEYMOUTH T. JORDAN

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Lee's Dispatches; Unpublished Letters of General Robert E. Lee, C.S.A. to Jefferson Davis and the War Department of the Confederate States of America 1862-1865. Edited by Douglas Southall Freeman and Grady McWhiney. (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1957. viii, 160 pp. Illustrations, index. \$5.00.)

This volume is chiefly a reprint of the earlier edition (1915) which was limited to 750 copies. As a consequence of the small number printed, copies are almost unobtainable. The publishers are certainly to be commended for making this treasury of Civil War documents readily available for the first time. Like the earlier one, this edition includes all of the 204 dispatches and telegrams not printed in other sources at that time. These were taken from the more than 600 dispatches and telegrams included in the two volumes that in 1914 were in the possession of Mr. W. J. DeRenne, of Georgia. The letters and telegrams from the collection that had been reprinted elsewhere prior to 1914 were not included in the original edition.

In addition to these letters, eleven other communications have been added to the collection. These also have the distinction of not having been printed in other publications. The originals, except for one letter, are in the Robert Edward Lee Papers of the Duke University Library. These eleven letters do not make any new or startling contributions, but rather complement and corroborate the rest of the collection.

Most, if not all of this correspondence, was from the personal file of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America. It may be assumed that this was his "top secret" information, maintained so he could have quick reference to the intelligence supplied by his most important field commander during the 34 months covered. This is the chief reason for the

genuine value of this file and the fact that so much of it had not been made available in published form prior to 1914.

The introduction to the first edition, written by the late Douglas Southall Freeman, has been reprinted here in its entirety. Probably no one has been any better qualified to write on the subject of General Lee. Mr. Freeman's comments on Lee's strategy, his understanding of the general situation, the relations between Lee and President Davis, and Lee's exemplary character are plainly the results of his years of concentrated study and his intricate knowledge and understanding of his subject. Admittedly, the author was biased. Even so, the introduction is of sufficient importance to warrant its reprinting separately.

Professor McWhiney's foreward is all that one could ask for or really expect. Mr. Freeman left him practically nothing to say. Who of the historical guild could compete with Mr. Freeman on this subject?

The physical characteristics of the book leave little to be desired. The type is large enough; the paper is of good quality; it is well and attractively bound; and the price of \$5.00 places the volume within easy reach of everyone. Without question, this is a "must" for all those who are interested in the history of our great Civil War.

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