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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Los Cubanos en Tampa. By Jose Rivero Muniz. A *separata* of the *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, Vol. LXXIV (1958), (Havana, 1958. 144 pp. Bibliography.)

ALTHOUGH MY SPECIALTY IS Florida history I have failed to do research on the emergence of the Latin population of Tampa. Therefore I read this book with an amateur's point of view. Often this is a better approach in determining if the book is good and readable since the reviewer is barred from becoming pedantic and supercritical.

Mr. Jose Rivero Muniz, a dedicated Cuban intellectual, has already published vital studies about Florida history. He is extremely well versed in Tampa's development. This newest monograph sketches in a simple but scholarly vein the arrival of Cubans in Tampa in the last century. With a facile pen he develops the origins, growth, and to a lesser extent, the problems of the cigar industry in Tampa.

The author gives Tampa's Cubans, especially the various "readers" of the cigar factories, great credit for laying the basis of Cuba's independence. Another interesting point is Professor Rivero Muniz' assertion that "White and Negro Cubans lived in harmony, all being admitted without exception to the various revolutionary clubs and no one ever protested." This is in contrast to today's rigid separation of the races. While living in Tampa I often noticed that Tampa's Latin people of Cuban descent were the most outspoken segregationists. A further interesting affirmation of the author is his sketch of the Catholic church where he says that the Cubans of Tampa "were not interested in religious affairs," and consequently there were few churches for the vast number of Catholics. All these little points add color and new information to the book.

No work is ever perfect and this monograph has some apparent pitfalls. I believe that the author is somewhat too enthusiastic about his subject. He fails to tell about the more unpleasant aspects of life in Tampa. Obviously not everything was as happy and easy going as the impression we receive in reading the book. At some point the reader, impressed by Mr. Rivero Muniz' sketch, feels that of all the places in world history, he ought to have lived

in Tampa as a Cuban cigar worker at the end of the last century! I am also somewhat reluctant to accept the author's belief that the Cuban emigration to Tampa was the single most important factor in the emergence of Tampa as a city.

Finally, Mr. Rivero Muniz is open to the same criticism as most Spanish American historians. They do not know or ignore American writings. In this case Rivero Muniz ought to have consulted American secondary sources such as the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, and others, which do have studies or related items about Tampa and its cigar industry. His bibliography is meager. In his text the author cites the various papers and magazines that the Cubans in Tampa published in Spanish during the last century. These are vital source material for Florida history. From Mr. Rivero Muniz' monograph I fail to detect where these items (I presume rare) are located. Someone should search for and microfilm them to preserve them in a Florida library, possibly connected with a university. With the thought that some reader may know the whereabouts of some of these items they are listed here:

El Yara, Revista de Florida, Heraldo de Tampa, La Conciencia, El Critico de Ibor City, Liceo Cubano, El Patriota, La Traduccion, La Revista de Cuba Libre, Cuba, El Eco de Cuba La Opinion, La Nueva Republica. El Expedicionario, La Libertad, El Oriente, El Mosquito, El Emigrado Cubano, El Guaimaro, Verdad, Tierra, El Esclavo, La Yaya.

In sum, this is a good monograph distinguished by a smooth style, written with a sympathetic pen. I believe it to be one of the most welcome additions to Florida history in recent years.

CHARLES W. ARNADE

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Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse. By Kate Cumming. Edited by Richard Barksdale Harwell. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1959. 321 pp. Notes, illustrations, and index. \$6.00.)

WHEN THE HORRORS OF WAR pass through the eyes and the mind of a dedicated woman every shred of glamour is stripped away.

Kate Cumming and some other ladies of Mobile, inspired by Florence Nightingale as were many women of the Confederacy, not only volunteered but begged for an opportunity to serve in Confederate army hospitals. Army surgeons were prejudiced against employing women and the general public felt that any woman so employed was outside the pale of respectability. Yet in four years opinions changed. Medically speaking, the Civil War has been called the end of the middle ages and the beginning of modern medicine. If in 1861 women in hospital service were disdained, by 1865 they had become indispensable.

Miss Cumming was approaching thirty when the war started. She had had no nursing experience but she had willing hands and a stalwart character. She yearned to care for the wounded and to comfort the dying. To those who tried to keep women from hospital service for reasons of propriety she replied "that a lady's respectability must be at a low ebb when it can be endangered by going into a hospital." Miss Cumming was always a lady. So secure was she in that knowledge that she wasted no time on status. With a quiet demeanor she went about doing the most menial tasks, thereby setting an example for other women and winning for herself the respect of even the most crusty surgeons and the gratitude of countless soldiers.

In September 1862, the Confederate Congress authorized army hospitals to employ women as matrons and assistant matrons. From this time on Miss Cumming was always employed in a hospital. Yet she was never a nurse in the modern sense. The nurses were all men, often those too incapacitated to return to the front. Miss Cumming had been at work for three years before she actually changed a bandage. What she and the other hospital matrons did was housekeeping- kitchen and laundry supervision, linen repairing, sewing, and bandage rolling. In the wards they comforted the men, wrote letters for them, brought their food and often fed them. On days when the wounded were streaming in the women did a hundred chores, whatever came to hand, often working day and night.

Miss Cumming's first hospital experience was in Corinth after the Battle of Shiloh. Most of her service, however, was in Chattanooga or along the path of the retreat into Georgia. Time and again the hospital drew back, each move a hasty, confused exodus.

There were never enough stoves, cooking utensils, dishes, spoons, rags, soap, medicines, or bed clothes.

Throughout the war Miss Cumming faithfully recorded her experiences in a journal. Though the journal is necessarily grim, with death on every page, the reader, like Miss Cumming, has some pleasant escapes. When Miss Cumming was frustrated by the inevitable bungling of officialdom, or bitter at the extortionists whom she called "Shylocks preying on the very heart-blood of our country," she took to the hills, usually on horseback. The view from Lookout Mountain which she called "entrancing" always restored her balance.

There are intimate glimpses of Miss Cumming decorating the wards with flowers, begging milk for the sick, taking the train to Atlanta to buy calico for a dress, singing in the church choir, clipping a lock of hair from a dying soldier to send his mother. She is always forthright, often witty, sometimes ingenuous, with a passion in her journal for accurate details, for names, places, and dates. Her book has a double appeal: it is thoroughly readable and for that quality alone deserves wide circulation, and it is also a valuable source for students of hospitals at the time of the Civil War. H. H. Cunningham in preparing his *Doctors in Gray* found it particularly useful.

Kate is not only for adults. High school librarians, always in search of books which combine readability with substance, will welcome this personal narrative to their shelves. High school history teachers will find it excellent for class assignment.

Miss Cumming's journal was obscurely published in 1866 and had long been out of print. This reprinting under the editorial pen of Richard Barksdale Harwell makes it available again. It comes at a time when the centennial years of the Civil War are focusing attention on our most tragic episode. In his introduction and in numerous footnotes the editor further identifies some of the hundreds of persons mentioned by Miss Cummings. An index includes these names for ready reference.

THELMA PETERS

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