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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume XXV, The Territory of Florida, 1834-1839. Compiled and edited by Clarence Edwin Carter. (Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960. 790 pp. Index. \$6.00.)

No other territory of the United States produced as many papers as Florida did from 1821 to 1845; at least, no other has been allotted as many volumes in *The Territorial Papers of the United States*. The present volume is the fourth dealing with Florida Territory, yet it brings the series only to the close of 1839. The closest rival so far in this monumental set is Arkansas Territory with three volumes.

Volume XXV contains 500 documents, more or less (substantially fewer than the preceding ones), covering nearly everything which could possibly pertain to government. Nothing ties the documents together except that they all relate to Florida, hence the reader marvels that the editors are able to choose from among the mass of manuscripts what should go in and what be excluded. They are organized into Parts 8, 9, and 10 of the consecutive series of Florida; eight relating to the administration of Governor Eaton, 1834-1836; nine to the first administration of Governor Call, 1836-1839; and ten to the second administration of the same governor in 1839.

Although arranged chronologically in the book, the documents fall into several broad categories. Perhaps the largest one pertains to internal improvements. Concerning this, let anyone who thinks that the people of the territory were determined on principle not to rely on government for assistance read through this and previous volumes. Here appear numerous requests to the Federal Government to donate millions of dollars and equivalent numbers of acres of public lands to aid the development of roads, canals, and railroads.

Another conspicuous category has to do with the disposition of the public land and with land titles and survey in general. Citizens accused the public land agents of discrimination and of speculation while the agents retaliated by charging certain citi-

zens with having engrossed far more land than their patents allowed them.

Another category, less voluminous but of equal interest, pertains to banks. Here we see that the territory issued its own bonds to the value of \$640,000 and turned them over to the Union Bank of Tallahassee to give it starting capital (pp. 109-112). When the Panic of 1837 struck the nation, we find this bank - although it had stopped the payment of specie to the public - earning the commendation of the federal government by continuing to pay the deposits of the Post Office and Treasury departments in hard money (pp. 391-392). We find it petitioning to have its notes accepted for the public lands in lieu of specie, and the Treasury replying that this could not be allowed (pp. 607, 608). But when the full weight of the depression finally percolated into Florida the territory's bank currency fell into a more chaotic condition than that of any other section of the country. Finally, in regard to banks, we note an old Jacksonian, a hater of the "money power," writing to President Van Buren, "I have deprecated [*sic*] . . . the insidious encroachments of a Paper aristocracy" (p. 584). He represented a numerous body of Floridians who believed it was not right to use the Territory's resources to foster a private bank, however pressing the need for one.

Also important is the category concerning political subdivisions. Within this we find conflicts over the dividing of counties and judicial districts; but most important of all, papers on both sides of the issue of whether Florida ought to become one state or two.

In the opening volume of the series on Florida (Volume XXII), the editor made it clear that military actions against the Indians would be passed over as far as possible in selecting documents for printing. But during the years covered by Volume XXV, when the Seminole War began and waxed fierce, it became impossible to exclude a part of the story of that war. As a result, there are in the neighborhood of 140 items (about twenty per cent of the total) related to the Indian conflict. Most of them have been published elsewhere, but a significant number are new, at least to me. Some of them make it clear that the presence of Negroes with the Indians and the danger to slavery which the Indians constituted was a first-rank cause of the Seminole

War (see pp. 90, 91, 132, and 133). Otherwise the volume contains almost no papers relating to slavery.

Public documents are usually not distinguished for human interest, wit, and tragedy; but if the reader approaches this set with enough sophistication, and with historical imagination, he will find much more to them than might be expected. For example, he will find Joseph White, delegate to Congress from the territory, reporting his interview with Andrew Jackson concerning defense against the savages. "Let the damned cowards defend their country," White quoted the President as saying. Give him fifty women and he could whip every warrior who had crossed the Suwannee. There was more in the same vein (p. 378), but by that time it was too late to change the name of Jacksonville.

The vicissitudes of the governing element are of great interest. In December, 1834, Governor John H. Eaton, friend of Jackson and husband of Peggy, complained that every bureau office in Washington was allowed someone to clean the rooms, make fires, and so forth, but that these services were refused the governor of the territory (p. 57). Moreover, how could he sustain the dignity of the governorship when the governor's office had only "A few chairs, some stained desks and an old pine table . . . there are no curtains to the windows, no settees . . . and no carpet on the floor" (p. 158). In addition, if Secretary John P. DuVal's word is to be relied on, the pay was poor. DuVal said that whereas his salary was \$1,500, it cost him \$2,300 to maintain his family in a private boarding house (p. 444). Yet he continued to hold the appointment until Governor R. K. Call complained so often that DuVal was summering elsewhere, or for some other reason was not on duty, that the President removed him (pp. 392, 394, 519, 520, 616-618, 621, 649, 650).

Perhaps accidentally (because of the fact that the documents are arranged by the administrations of the governors) this volume ends on a dramatic note. On November 29, 1839, the Secretary of War, Joel R. Poinsett, asked for the removal of R. K. Call on the grounds that he and the Regular Army officers simply could not cooperate effectively to coerce the Seminoles. The last sentence in the documentary portion of the volume is that which Martin Van Buren endorsed on the back of Poinsett's re-

quest. "Let Govr. Call be superseded & Judge Reed appointed in his place" (p. 657).

In conclusion, one has to mention the index, not only because it occupies about one-fifth of the book, but because it is superb, a real working tool. Nothing appears to be left out.

JOHN K. MAHON

University of Florida

Archivo General de Indias de Sevilla, Guia del Visitante, By Jose Maria de la Pena y Camara. (Madrid, Direccion General de Archivos y Bibliotecas, 1958. 206 pp. Charts and illustrations. 65 pesetas.)

Perhaps it is too obvious to say that Florida was in the hands of the Spanish for 238 years. But it is not too obvious to state that in order to recreate accurately these nearly three centuries of Spanish rule Spanish documents must be used. Truly the amount of Spanish manuscripts dealing with Florida is overwhelming. Thanks to the efforts of the late John B. Stetson, Jr., Jeanette Thurber Connor, James A. Robertson, the ageless Irene A. Wright and Julien C. Yonge, plus the energetic Rembert W. Patrick, over 100,000 sheets of photostats dealing with early Florida from the archives in Seville have been gathered and are now located at the University of Florida.

The *Archivo de Indias de Sevilla* with its 38,903 *legajos* (bundles) of documents is the nearly exclusive reservoir of Spanish Florida history. The valuable Stetson Collection at the University of Florida has failed to exhaust all the Florida documents in the Seville archives. This haughty institution at Seville—the king of all archives—remains to many a place and source of mystery, fascination, and inspiration.

Jose Maria de la Pena y Camara, the forceful and helpful director of the Seville archives, has done an admirable service in publishing this condensed guide crammed with information. It is well written and well organized; a thoroughly adequate guide. Moreover, it sketches the history of the Seville archives and provides the reader with a truthful but sympathetic story of Seville and its great archival depository.

The archives are divided into sixteen sections. Pena y Camara clearly describes each section, providing the reader with the history, chronology, number of *legajos*, subdivisions, and a critical bibliography (unpublished or published guides) for each section or subdivision. In the geographical and historical vastness that is covered by this guide, it mentions Florida thirteen times. The number of Florida *legajos* is surprising. It shows that we have only scratched the surface in our Spanish Florida research.

The ponderous shadow of Seville will always hang over our early Florida historical investigations. This booklet which modestly claims to be a guide - but it is much more-is priced at sixty-five pesetas and should be in every Florida library.

CHARLES W. ARNADE

State University of Iowa

Marion Zaiser, The Beneficent Blaze: The Story of Major Lew D. Brown. (New York, Pageant Press, 1960. 347 pp. Plates. \$4.00.)

The principal purpose of a novel is to entertain, whereas a biography aims at informing. The good novelist follows the art rules of literature. The good biographer meticulously follows the strict rules of historical research and criticism. When these two forms are mixed, one or the other, or both, suffer in the process. The work under consideration attempts this mixture and suffers accordingly. It is neither a good novel nor a good biography. Your reviewer is chiefly interested in it as a biography.

The bibliography is not only not comprehensive, it is negligible, and there are only five footnotes which refer to sources used. In such circumstances the reader has no way of checking the accuracy of the material in the book. Furthermore, the serious student could use this book as a source only with extreme caution and advance warning to his audience.

The attempt to make fire the key to turning points in Major Brown's life, a theme running through his life, is very strained and unreal. Then to equate the early fires with his discovery of Florida's sun, *The Beneficent Blaze*, is, to say the least, limp.

It is not necessary that every biography be concerned with a

great man. Nor is it good biography for the writer to try to make his subject great, as is done here, when the subject is not. If our biographer is accurate, Major Brown was a good and talented man. He was an important figure in the development of St. Petersburg and the west coast of Florida. As publisher and editor of the *St. Petersburg Independent*, he enthusiastically and judiciously set out to advertise and build this area.

Because of this importance it is most unfortunate that this work is so poorly written and so unreliable a source.

J. RYAN BEISER

University of Tampa

Prelude to Empire: Portugal Overseas before Henry the Navigator. By Bailey W. Diffie. (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1960. 127 pp. Index. Paper, \$1.95.)

The Age of Conquest which culminated in the discovery and settlement of America is always a fascinating and also important chapter in world history. And Florida's written history's beginning chapter is part of this Age of Conquest and is indeed quite a colorful episode. It is my contention that anyone interested in the whole sweep of Florida's past should also possess some information about the Age of Conquest. The bibliography of this period is extensive and perhaps too vast. Consequently, the average Florida student interested in history has little or confusing knowledge of this age in which Florida figures conspicuously. It was Portugal and not Spain that pioneered this Age of Conquest. It may be that Portuguese sailors were the first Europeans to see Florida!

The able Latin American historian from City College, Professor Bailey W. Diffie, has just published a most valuable paperback, most of which was written in Miami. In the book Diffie summarizes clearly and precisely the story of Portugal as it slowly but definitely emerged as the precursor, and then leader, of the Age of Exploration. In the early fifteenth century Portugal was the leader, with Henry the Navigator as the dominant figure. The splendid enterprise of Henry served as the key to Columbus' voyages. In turn, decades of navigation experience and adventures

of the Portuguese laid the basis for Henry's achievements. This is the crux of Diffie's book. The complexity of centuries of history is neatly explained. This paperback is a must for the introductory chapter of Spanish Florida history. Undergraduates, graduates, and professors will all enjoy this book. More such syntheses are needed.

CHARLES W. ARNADE

State University of Iowa

The Haskell Memoirs. By John Haskell. Edited by Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood. (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960. 176 pp. Selected bibliography, index. \$3.95.)

This is a fascinating document written by one of Lee's outstanding artillery officers, John Haskell. Unlike many authors of memoirs, Haskell recognized the greatest single failing of the autobiographer - "that it is practically impossible for one writing to avoid giving undue prominence to those fragments of the picture in which he took part." In his effort to avoid exaggeration Haskell sometimes minimized his own role, but the reader cannot escape the impression that Haskell was always trying to be fair. His writing is not only relatively objective, but it is also extremely realistic and exciting. Haskell could describe a battle in detail in such a way that the reader is transported to the battlefield. In a few deftly constructed sentences he brings his associates quickly to life. Moreover, he was extremely forthright in his judgment. His observations of people were keen and critical, and the opinions which were the result of his analysis were certainly strongly held.

This volume will be of great interest to the general reader, for it moves with the pace of an adventure novel. It will be of great interest to the student and teacher of history because of the many new insights it provides. All who are interested in the Civil War owe a debt of gratitude to Professors Govan and Livingood for resurrecting, editing, and publishing an extremely valuable piece of source material.

Unfortunately, in the opinion of this reviewer, this brilliantly written document is far too cluttered with scholarly para-

phernalia. In the first place, the footnotes are far too numerous, and many of them are unnecessary. Anyone who is at all familiar with Civil War history does not need long, explanatory notes on A. P. Hill, or Jubal Early, or Stonewall Jackson. Furthermore, a multitude of minor characters are carefully identified in the notes although the narrative does not require such identification. Frequently a single sentence has several such footnote references. Moreover, these notes are all placed in the back of the book and are thus not readily accessible. Anyone reading the *Memoirs*, and pausing every time he arrives at a number to turn to the back of the book and read carefully the long, appropriate footnote, is almost certain to miss the tremendous impact of the narrative. There is also a rather long appendix on the Haskell family which, though interesting, is only remotely connected with the *Memoirs* themselves. Both the appendix and the notes could easily have been combined with the Foreword into a ten-page introductory section without omitting much essential information. As a matter of fact, a reader completely ignorant concerning the Civil War could read this document with interest if notes, appendix, and foreword were omitted entirely. Also, the book would probably cost less.

BEN F. ROGERS

Jacksonville University

General John Glover and His Marblehead Mariners. By George Athan Billias. (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1960. vii, 243 pp. Illustrations, maps, and index. \$5.50.)

This small volume will enlighten those who have been bemused by the Emanuel Leutze painting of Washington crossing the Delaware standing with his foot on the gunwale of a small craft. It is the first full-length biography of General John Glover, whose mariners ferried Washington across the Delaware in 1776 and aided in evacuating his troops from Long Island earlier the same year. The author cogently argues that the Delaware crossing and the Long Island evacuation were the most brilliant amphibious operations of the American Revolution. The book is also a biography of Glover's regiment.

The author was a military historian for the United States Air

Force from 1951 to 1954. He is a graduate of Bates College, Lewiston, Maine, and he completed his doctorate at Columbia University, evidently under Richard B. Morris. He is now an associate professor at the University of Maine.

The study has many of the earmarks of a doctoral thesis on a relatively obscure historical figure. The author follows the pattern of emphasizing the importance of his subject, but he has done so with commendable restraint. The work for example does not credit Glover with the evacuation off Rhode Island in 1778. Other historians have erroneously given him this honor. Nor does Billias gloss over Glover's grouching and exaggeration of his personal problems toward the end of the Revolution.

The most novel chapter in the book is "Pelham Bay: a Forgotten Battle" in which Glover is portrayed as an able land fighter whose delaying action against General Sir William Howe's landing at Pelham Bay off Long Island Sound prevented Washington's army from being surrounded.

The author notes that although Glover was not responsible for the evacuation of Rhode Island in 1778, he was a brigade commander at the Battle of Quaker Hill and prevented the Rhode Island retreat from becoming a riot. In this and other land engagements Glover is seen in a hitherto neglected role as an able land commander.

The major weakness of the book results from the lack of sources about Glover. Only some seventy-four Glover letters are cited, and the author's research indicates that no large body of Glover papers exists. The author admits, relative to Glover's pre-Revolutionary merchant marine activities, that he cannot in some cases be sure that his sources relate to his subject and not to another Glover. At times the reader gets only fleeting and disconnected glimpses of the subject, and at no time does he gain much understanding of Glover's personality.

This well-written book will be appreciated by specialists in the Revolutionary field.

EVANS C. JOHNSON

Stetson University