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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Richard Keith Call: Southern Unionist.* By Herbert J. Doherty, Jr. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1961. vii, 195 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$5.50.)

Richard Keith Call was a complex personality. Mercurial in temperament, proud, propelled by a sense of mission, he repelled more than he attracted. Though Call's childhood was often marked by straitened economic circumstances, he was saturated with the ideals and beliefs of the planter class. He only once held elective office, but his prolonged tenure in appointive offices almost imperceptibly made him feel that he was needed to guide government and progress in Florida. As one reads this excellent biography the motivations of Call's character emerge but they were never simple, since he was not a simple man.

Early in his military career he came into the favor of General Andrew Jackson, who promoted his young friend too fast for his own good. The blessings of Jackson gave him a feeling he had military talent, yet he hardly had military experience enough to prove this. He had no training for command yet Jackson gave him command. Through Jackson's good offices he achieved a succession of civil and military appointments, ultimately being named Florida territorial governor by Jackson's own hand. In that capacity he briefly, and unhappily, commanded all United States forces in the Seminole War (1835-1842). After his removal from command, his continued interference in military affairs was a cause of his removal from the governorship by Martin Van Buren. Less than two years before he died he still thought that he had military usefulness; he offered his services to the Confederacy for the Civil War, but was rejected. Certainly he was no military man although he thought he was.

Politically, Call aped Jackson who was patriarchal, domineering, and used to ordering people around. Holding so many appointive offices, Call came to feel a right to hold office and to lead and direct, but people did not follow and resented his proud and dictatorial ways. Call never learned the lesson of democracy from his old mentor. He never made the transition from the earlier

leaders who "stood" for election to the post-Jackson men who got down and drank and wallowed with the populace.

Call's public career was involved in the wide-open days of bank craze and internal improvements. Involved in projects in both of these areas, he did not emerge very well from either. He was close to the center of the bank craze in Florida and was later embarrassed when the panic-crazed legislature repudiated the "faith bonds," through which the territorial government had implied it would save the stockholders if the banks failed. Call was the president of the Tallahassee Rail Road Company, which charged its contractors with having built "the very worse road known in the United States." Its only engine blew up; a hurricane destroyed its installations at Port Leon, and its bridge across the St. Marks River was carried away.

As a planter Call did better. When he died in 1862, he left extensive lands and 197 slaves. At his Lake Jackson plantation seat, he raised cotton, corn, vegetables, and livestock. Late in his life he tried to forget politics and lose himself in the management of his lands, but these periods were always interrupted by the tensions of the 1850's, which seemed to demand his influence to quiet and soothe - but the people in the 1850's would not be soothed by him. The last ten years of his life were spent in trying to persuade southern leaders and voters to support the Union. Here again he failed.

Call's personality appears at its best in this splendid biography when portrayed as a planter and family man. He was romantic and super-charged with determination to do what he wanted to do. When the mother of his beloved wife, Mary, had opposed their marriage, the two young people had eloped to the Hermitage where they were married with the approval and assistance of "Old Hickory." Jackson later undertook to reconcile the mother-in-law to the disobedient and impetuous event, but the bride's mother ordered him out of her house at pistol point. In their happy marriage, the Calls had six children of whom only two lived. After his wife's death in 1836, Call increasingly confided in and relied upon his elder daughter and it was she who took him back to Tallahassee in 1862 shortly before his own passing.

This biography is the first detailed account of this fascinating figure. Any future studies of this man will have to add to Professor Doherty's basic and attractive work. Call was so important

in Florida history from the end of the War of 1812 until the Civil War that the collateral research needed was prodigious. Consultation of the Call papers, state and federal records, and archival materials was all done and the salient events of Call's life, the history of Florida, and the relation of national events to Florida are presented in splendid proportion.

Professor Doherty's writing is carefully done, painstakingly correct, and pervaded by both understanding and forbearance for his subject. Call emerges with more dignity in this volume than he deserved.

NATHAN D. SHAPPEE

*University of Miami*

*Nuevas fuentes para la historia de Puerto Rico.* By Aurelio Tio. (San German: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 1961. 653 pp. Notes, maps, bibliography, charts, appendix, index.)

Aurelio Tio, an energetic and wealthy amateur historian from Puerto Rico, has gone unnoticed in Florida (Mr. David True in Miami is highly appreciative of Tio). In 1956 Tio published a book about the town of San German in Puerto Rico which was the embarkation point of Juan Ponce de Leon for his Florida discovery. Both his earlier and this newer and more voluminous book deal very much with Tio's hero: Juan Ponce de Leon.

In the book under review, the author has carefully transcribed fourteen groups of unpublished documents from Seville. He has transcribed Ponce de Leon's contract with the Crown, dated Burgos [Spain], February 23, 1512, for the conquest of Bimini (which resulted in the discovery of Florida) - indeed a vital document in Florida history. But it has already been transcribed and very well translated by the late Edward W. Lawson in his Ponce de Leon book. Another document is two printed pages long yet Tio has appended forty-five pages of notes and then another seven of sub-notes. The notes for the first document alone run from pages 110 to 191. All this is too much; instead of showing erudition it confuses the reader and beclouds the issues.

There are still with us two controversial issues: the origins

of Ponce de Leon, which includes when and where he was born and who were his parents, and where did Ponce de Leon land in Florida. Tio tackles these two issues in the appendices, which contain seven subjects of discussion unrelated to his notes and sub-notes. As commendable as these appendices are they do not shed too much new light on the two points of debate. Tio does not question that someplace in the neighborhood of St. Augustine is probably the landing place.

As to genealogy, Tio presents one of the most complicated descriptions that I have ever encountered in my career. I read it three times and later asked my colleague, Dr. John TePaske, to read it. I (and he concurred) could not solve the riddle with which Tio presents us. It has an amazing amount of new and good data but it is badly digested and presented. Tio also gives all the supposed descendents of Ponce de Leon in Puerto Rico, and the blood of the conquistador reaches the Tios.

This voluminous and undigested book looks beautiful and is well printed. Nevertheless, I agree with TePaske, who writes in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* that Tio "is not completely convincing. Rather than pursuing the more Rankean course of letting the documents speak for themselves he uses inference, deduction, and dialectics to make his case." At the same time, it is a work that must be commended as an important new addition to Ponce de Leon research. Mr. Tio's own theories should be studied with scholarly respect. It is not a piece of clear and lucid writing but it is loaded.

CHARLES W. ARNADE

*University of South Florida*

*The Pied Piper of Peru.* By Henry Hanson. (Jacksonville: Florida Public Health Association, 1961. \$2.00 cloth; \$1.50 paper.)

Since the *Pied Piper of Peru* is an account of a fight against yellow fever (yellow jack) and plague (black death) in Peru from 1919 to 1922, one may be prompted to ask why it is reviewed in the *Quarterly* which is usually reserved for Floridiana. The author, Dr. Henry Hanson, however, prior to this experience was Director of the Division of Bacteriological Laboratories of

the Florida State Board of Health, later was Florida's State Health Officer on two occasions, lived in Jacksonville for an extended period of time and had a host of Florida friends who will greet the book with more than common interest.

Preserved among Dr. Hanson's papers, posthumously edited and published through the efforts of the Florida State Board of Health, this highly readable volume is a contribution to medical history in the Americas. Facing great odds and at times seemingly unsurmountable difficulties, Dr. Hanson's success in the fight was notable.

Highly personal, at times quietly humorous, and at times tragic, it is written with a clarity that makes it enjoyable to readers without scientific training as well as to physicians. For instance, the author clearly instructs the reader in the signs and symptoms of yellow jack, and keeps him on the edge of his seat at the same time, when he describes the disease and one of its complications as he himself suffered it, hour by hour, day by day.

For the lover of history who looks for more than just another scientific treatise or diary of adventure, this warm, human document is recommended reading.

WEBSTER MERRITT

*Jacksonville, Florida*

*Glimpses of the Panhandle.* By Harold W. Bell. (Chicago: Adams Press, 1961. 227 pp. Maps, bibliography. \$3.50).

This short work has to do with the Florida Panhandle-Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Jackson, and Washington Counties - the area between Pensacola and Tallahassee. Although the book is not written with the professional historical competency that might have been expected, yet it is an important step in the process of developing state and local history. Without such books as these, much local color and on-the-scene description might be irretrievably lost.

*Glimpses of the Panhandle* is recommended only as a general summation of some of the people of West Florida and their activities. There are a number of amusing incidents scattered throughout the volume, but without footnoting there is no way to check

their authenticity. An index and a more complete bibliography would be helpful.

HENRY S. MARKS

*Florence State College (Alabama)*

*The Secession Conventions of the South.* By Ralph A. Wooster. (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1962. 294 pp. Maps, bibliography, index. \$6.50.)

The title of this book precisely embraces its contents. This is a study, not of the secession movement, but of the eleven conventions and four legislatures which considered the relations of the fifteen slaveholding states to the Union in the winter and spring of 1860 and 1861. Dr. Wooster not only examines the work of each convention, but analyzes exhaustively certain characteristics of its members. In recounting the stories of the several conventions, he draws freely upon the extensive secondary literature on secession; but in assembling personal data, he utilizes a hitherto overlooked source - the population schedules of the United States census for 1860.

The author's methodology was to search the census schedules of free inhabitants for information on each convention member; then to search the schedule of slave inhabitants for the appropriate county to ascertain if the delegate was a slaveholder and, if so, the extent of his holdings. In this way he was able to determine the birthplace, occupation, property ownership, and slaveholding of 1,780 of the 1,859 members of the fifteen conventions and legislatures. Since few of the delegates were neatly labeled as to their views on secession, he determined their positions by analyses of the votes on key motions in the several deliberative bodies. Finally, he sought to correlate political positions and personal data.

Dr. Wooster found that all of the secession bodies were composed of leading public figures of their states, who were predominately middle-aged lawyers, planters, and farmers. The members were, as a rule, substantial property holders, although those of the states of the lower South were, in most cases, wealthier than those of the upper and border states. Slaveholding varied considerably, ranging from a median of 37 slaves in South Caro-

lina to less than one slave in Delaware. Similarly, the proportion of native sons ranged from 90.2 percent in the Virginia convention to none in the Texas convention.

If the reviewer interprets Dr. Wooster's findings correctly, none of the personal data analyzed accounts for the political views of the delegates in the states of the lower South. It is true that secession was supported most strongly in the heavier slave-holding counties, but the men of the lower South were overwhelmingly for secession, regardless of their nativity, occupation, wealth, or ownership of slaves. In the upper South, on the other hand, lawyers, who comprised the second largest occupation group, opposed secession by a sizeable margin, while secessionists were appreciably more wealthy in real property and slaves than their opponents.

Although Dr. Wooster nowhere states that his purpose is to explain why the members voted as they did, the hope of finding an answer to that question seems to this reader, at least, to be implicit in his research. It is a tantalizing question, and one that probably will never be answered. But Dr. Wooster has demonstrated that the answer must be sought on a plane above that of personal economics.

The story of the North Carolina convention hints at what may possibly have been a major factor. Only in that convention was the right of secession questioned by the organized majority. They recognized the natural right of revolution but not the constitutional right of secession. In the other conventions, there seems to have been no real ideological differences between the immediate secessionists, the cooperationists, and the conditional unionists. Perhaps the answer lies in a deeply and widely held conviction of a constitutional right.

It is probably unnecessary to remind the readers of the *Quarterly* of Dr. Wooster's study of the Florida secession convention which was published in the issue for April, 1958 (Vol. XXXVI, No. 4). That article is essentially the same as his chapter on Florida in the volume under review, except that the former lacks several summary tables to be found in the latter and includes a tabulation of convention members by name and personal characteristics which is not carried in the book.

DOROTHY DODD

*Florida State Library*