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Book Reviews

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James Monroe Smith Georgia Planter, Before Death and After.
By E. Merton Coulter. (Athens: University of Georgia Press.
xii, 294 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index.
\$5.00.)

Professor Coulter has written the biography of a super farmer, James Monroe Smith of Georgia. Carefully sifting an impressive amount of material, much of it county records, the author gives order and life to a complex story.

Born in Georgia in 1839, Smith attended old-field schools. He received a law degree in 1861 from Tennessee's Hiwassee College but never practiced. Smith's Confederate military service was cut short by an eye affliction, and he spent the war years trading and peddling. By 1866 profits from this itinerant vocation enabled him to purchase land in Oglethorpe County. With Oglethorpe serving as the base of what without exaggeration can be called an empire, Smith soon purchased additional tracts in adjoining counties. He dismissed suggestions that his accumulation of real estate amounted to greed by explaining that he only wanted "All the land that's next to mine."

As a farmer Smith concentrated on cotton, but as a man of the New South he also practiced diversification. Scattered about his holdings were vegetable gardens, orchards, plots for various grains, and many livestock. He operated a dairy, had the largest cotton gin in Georgia, and maintained a cottonseed oil mill, gristmill, brickyard, fertilizer factory, and a number of wood and blacksmith shops.

Operating this farm community required a sizeable labor force, and at one time Smith worked more than one thousand people. These included wage hands, tenants, and state convicts. His use of the latter provoked criticism and prompted investigations, but apparently Smith did not violate the state convict lease laws. The small town of Smithonia grew up around his home, and by the 1880's Smith's self-sufficient holdings were crisscrossed with private railroad lines. His farm won repeated mention in the press and agricultural journals for its efficient administration and endless variety.

Politically, Smith was a Bourbon Democrat (Tom Watson was his arch-enemy). He served three terms in the lower house and one in the senate of the state legislature. In 1906 he made

an unspectacular and unsuccessful race for governor. But first and foremost, Smith was a farmer. At his death in 1915 his estate was worth, according to some estimates, \$4,000,000. Numerous claimants rushed forward to grab a share of Smith's property. Litigation continued for several years and was an unworthy end to the Smith legend.

Smith was cut from a late nineteenth century mold of rugged individualism. Had he been an oil magnate, a railroad baron, or a steel tycoon his success would have been more spectacular but no more difficult. Professor Coulter writes sympathetically but objectively. His style is highly readable and this study is a contribution to the field of southern biography and agricultural economics.

WILLIAM WARREN ROGERS

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Guide to Photocopied Historical Materials in the United States and Canada. Edited by Richard W. Hale, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, for the American Historical Association, 1961. xxxvi, 241 pp. Bibliography and index. \$5.00.)

Any guide which takes as its province the location in North American institutions of historical material photocopied from originals scattered around the world and which at the same time must depend upon the goodwill and industry of harassed curators to report and describe their holdings is going to be a hit-or-miss affair. So hit-or-miss, in fact, that it is hard to imagine what use can be made of a *Guide to Photocopied Historical Materials in the United States and Canada*.

Take the case of Ezra Stiles, that eighteenth century clergyman and historian whose voluminous manuscripts, containing everything from weather records to experiments with silkworms, are in the Yale University Library. The Guide reports that the Massachusetts Historical Society has on film some correspondence between Joseph Fish and Ezra Stiles, made from originals at Yale. What good is this snippet to anybody? So long as manuscript collections are not systematically photocopied or faithfully

reported, there seems to be little enough reason for printing a list of the fragments.

The arrangement of this guide is by country (not alphabetically) beginning with the ancient world and ending with Micronesia. Materials include government records, church records, personal papers, business papers, collections, etc. Each of the 11,137 entries includes the briefest description (log, Civil War journal, land records, letters, etc.), the location of the original manuscript, the location of the photocopy, and a symbol showing whether additional copies can be made. The *Guide* lists only bodies of manuscripts, not individual pieces, and includes only photocopies under institutional control reported before January 1, 1959.

The index has no subjects and is otherwise inadequate. A bibliography of finding aids to photocopied material—union lists, guides, indexes, sales lists, house organs—might well be the book's best feature.

MARJORIE G. WYNNE

Yale University Library