


1962

## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Politics of Mis-Representation: Rural-Urban Conflict in the Florida Legislature.* By William C. Havard and Loren P. Beth. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962. xiii, 293 pp. Index. \$5.00.)

In this book two distinguished professors of government inspect the Florida legislature as a political institution serving a state whose population pattern between 1920 and 1950 reversed itself, changing from two-thirds rural to two-thirds urban. The authors appraise the response to this massive demographic event against generally accepted standards developed in the critical literature of American political theory. By their method they demonstrate that in terms of representativeness, responsibility, and rationality as criteria for judging the moral authority of legislative bodies, the Florida legislature compares "very unfavorably with the authority legally vested in it."

The co-authors allege that three basic malfunctions are responsible for the present quality of Florida politics : (1) rural-urban conflict; (2) lack of a party system; and (3) the race question. The book holds that the resolution of the urban-rural conflict is the key to the improvement of the interlocking constellation of other debasing influences. *The solvent in the first instance begins with equitable, automatic reapportionment.*

From this basic thesis the authors take their point of departure to propose changes which they believe will add to the capability of a representative assembly to translate intelligible public desires into law. Among their recommendations are these: (1) shift state elections to odd-numbered years, with the salutary objective of broadening the discussion of issues; (2) give the legislature more discretion to determine the frequency and length of sessions, not now possible because of restrictive constitutional provisions requiring short biennial meetings; (3) increase salaries of legislators, at least to a minimum level which would enable a citizen to serve without financial loss; (4) overhaul the committee system in the legislature, reduce interpersonal control by

rotating committee chairmanships, cut the number of committees themselves, and clarify the criteria by which bills are assigned to particular committees; (5) develop a concern for ethical legislative standards by tightening control of lobbying, by establishing uniform rules dealing with interest representatives in both houses, and by making the taking of fees by legislators from private sources a criminal offense; (6) strengthen the Legislative Council and the Legislative Reference Bureau; and (7) develop more effective coordination between the executive and legislative branches.

In less than 300 pages William Havard and Loren Beth bring the issues related to an effective legislature into focus and place them before the public mind for discussion. They set up a schedule of problems to be faced and light a path toward their solution. Their penetrating diagnoses and specific prescriptions prick the Florida political conscience and prod citizen opinion to action with a challenge toward the generation of a therapeutic and wholesome responsibility. The book, holding as it does a mirror before the legislative face, should be required reading for every senator and representative in Tallahassee.

PAUL DOUGLASS

*Rollins College*

*Gonzalia, 1770-1880.* By Leora M. Sutton. (Pensacola: Elite Mimeographing Service, 1961. 45 pp. Charts, illustrations, acknowledgements. \$10.00.)

Perhaps the greatest value of *Gonzalia* is release to the general student of Florida history and to the reading public of documents which hitherto have been cherished in the Gonzalez family archives. This reviewer and others interested in Pensacola and Escambia County personalities and annals have been privileged to consult the Gonzalez papers, but here for the first time a compilation of these documents and the better known accounts of "Don Manuel," against the background of Alexander McGillivray and Andrew Jackson and their parts in history, has been produced.

Mrs. Sutton has exhaustively searched source materials-family papers and anecdotes, official documents, and related biographies. The illustrations and facsimiles of plats of land add the

savor of the times. Few native Pensacolians will be able to put the book down until the last page has been read.

The most serious fault of the work is the inadequate bibliography. Mrs. Sutton if she continues her writing career will doubtless adopt the practice of the trained historical student and list author, title, and publisher with address, and date. The curious reader will want to know page references and, in the case of local and rare sources, where these may be consulted. Many prefer the footnotes on the page with the related text. While *ibid.*, *op. cit.*, etc., would give the book a more scholarly and pleasing format, *Gonzalia* has a freshness of its own and is another link toward an adequate history of Pensacola in thus telling the story of one of its master builders who was born nearly 200 years ago.

Mrs. Sutton is to be highly commended for her tireless research, monetary expenditures, and her knack for probing the fruitful spots. Her genuine contribution, it is hoped, will be followed by later studies. She has made an excellent beginning.

OCCIE CLUBBS

*Pensacola, Florida*

*The Murder Trial of Judge Peel.* By Jim Bishop. (New York: Trident Press, 1962. Pp. xi, 210. \$3.95.)

This book deals with one of the most incredible murder trials of all time. It also deals with the baffling murder which had to precede the trial and it is concerned with the unbelievably intricate investigation that was sandwiched in between the murder and the trial. The stuff of the Chillingworth murders and the Peel trial is that of which high drama is made. Mr. Bishop presents it as tawdry melodrama written in the poorest journalese. The bare bones of the facts of the case are fascinating enough—a respected judge and his wife disappear without any apparent trace from their beach house; five years later a formerly highly-thought-of young lawyer and city judge is put on trial for the murders; the bulk of the state's evidence comes from a convicted bootlegger and “numbers” man and from an admitted murderer, both of whom had been associated with the accused when he served as city judge in West Palm Beach; the young judge is found

guilty after a long trial in which disputed evidence from tape recordings is presented. Mr. Bishop chose not to tell the terse, tight story which would have stood up to scrutiny on its own merits. He rather chose to attempt a character analysis which he has neither the penetration, empathy, nor skill to pull off. The undoubted complexities of Joe Peel's personality are not revealed and the unexpected heavy of the piece is the state's attorney Phil O'Connell who must, one gets the strong feeling, have offended Mr. Bishop.

Perhaps the story is too bizarre to be adequately presented, perhaps the skills of a master story teller with the training of a social psychologist are required. This book is only a re-hash of the newspaper articles that were written at the time of the trial.

GEORGE ELLIOTT WOLFF

*University of Florida*

*Georgia Rivers.* Edited by George Hatcher. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1962. x, 76 pp. Illustrations. \$3.00.)

In this attractive little volume the story of the principal rivers of Georgia is told. The eight sketches deal briefly but informatively with the history and with the economic past, present, and future of the Savannah, Ogeechee, Altamaha, St. Marys, Suwannee, Coosa, Flint, and Chattahoochee rivers. The volume is a compilation of a series that originally appeared in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, all of the articles being by members of its staff. It is handsomely illustrated.

Florida readers will be interested in the story of the St. Marys River, which borders a long stretch of the two states, the account of the Suwannee which Stephen Foster accidentally immortalized, and in the sketches of the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers which unite at the Georgia-Florida border to form the Apalachicola. Of the Chattahoochee Ralph McGill writes in one of the articles, "Some years ago former Mayor James Nichols of Apalachicola gave Atlanta a 1,000-pound anchor, inscribed 'The Port of Apalachicola salutes the Port of Atlanta.' On the day the ocean tugs and barges come the anchor will be a part of the celebration. And that day is a part of the river's future."

ALEXANDER A. LAWRENCE

*Savannah, Georgia*