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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Crusade for Democracy*. By V. M. Newton. (Ames: Iowa University Press, 1961. v, 308 pp. Bibliography, index. \$3.95.)

The author, who is the *Tampa Tribune's* colorful and aggressive managing editor, is journalism's most active campaigner (and one of the nation's) in behalf of the people's right to know what goes on in their government. Here he presents that theme with verve, an abundance of documentation, and sustained interest.

In guaranteeing the freedom of the press the Constitution also implicitly placed an obligation on newspapers to meet their responsibility under that trust. Yet, it is the agencies of the government itself which undertake to thwart that "contract" through secret meetings, closed-door sessions, and by overgenerous use of the various classification labels which restrict and make unavailable public documents: "A free press simply cannot exist in a secret government."

In his capacity as chairman of the freedom of information committee of Sigma Delta Chi, the newspaper fraternity, Newton's incessant and frequently successful war against the secrecy evil reached into many high places in many states of the United States, into both houses of Congress, offices of the cabinet members, and into the White House. His book takes you with him on these excursions.

In *Crusade* he is at his best when he discusses the activities of his newspaper and others in keeping the people of Florida informed of the wiles of their own government at all levels.

This phase, dealing with the reorganization of Tampa's one-time gang and boss-controlled government; the extraction of politics from much of Florida's public school system; the exposure of corruption and waste at the state level; the prison system's sweat-box scandals; and politics, industry, and business as bedfellows, is relatively contemporary. The list is as modern as integration and reapportionment. It is an exciting and compelling recitation of some of the less-than-holy conduct that went into public administration in the years when Florida was emerging from its rural to its urban economy; a succession of sparkling side bars on the se-

ductions that mar history's moral progress. These chapters especially recommend *Crusade* to *Quarterly* readers.

Newton has no patience with the numerous or expensive and extravagant press agents who have attached themselves to public payrolls to conceal or taint the facts so as to give official conduct a better complexion and flavor. He has even less patience with newspapers and newspapermen who accept the situation, whose discernment is inadequate to penetrate pretense, and who are incapable or indifferent to endless digging in the available public records which reveal much more than comes to public attention.

Many resourceful newspapermen deplore being termed crusaders because enemies of the craft have invested the word with opprobrium. Not so Newton: "I am one newspaperman who sees nothing disgraceful in the word 'crusade.' "

JOHN D. PENNEKAMP

*Miami Herald*

*Bethell's History of Point Pinellas.* By John A. Bethell with Foreword by Florence Bethell Loader. (St. Petersburg: Great Outdoors Publishing Co., 1962. 95 pp. Foreword and illustrations. Hard cover \$2.50. Soft cover \$1.00.)

*An Informal History of St. Petersburg.* By Page S. Jackson. (St. Petersburg: Great Outdoors Publishing Co., 1962. 93 pp. Biography, table of contents, foreword, maps, and illustrations. Hard cover \$2.50. Soft cover \$1.00.)

Floridians new and old will welcome the reprinting of the earliest existing record of the lower Pinellas peninsula. John Bethell was a true historian, dedicated to accuracy. His appreciation of humanity, nature, and drama; his homely philosophy; and his keen humor color this delightful historical sketch of forty-five years - from the first settlement, in 1843, to completion of a railroad to "deadend" St. Petersburg - without sacrificing scrupulous truth or detail.

At the outset of Civil War, Bethell's was one of only five families on the peninsula. After the conflict, Lieutenant Bethell returned to stay. At eighty-one, he succeeded admirably with his aim to "lay a foundation for future historians to build upon."

Page Jackson is the third author (following Straub and Gris-

mer) to build scaffolding on Bethell's firm foundation. Not the painstaking historian Bethell was, he candidly aims "as much at entertaining as informing," with "no apology for inaccuracies." The story of St. Petersburg (which now practically encompasses the entire lower peninsular which Bethell fished, hunted, and grubbed) is capsuled from very early geological formation to the spanning of lower Tampa Bay. Perceiving the significance of Pinellas' accessibility, Jackson hails the Sunshine Skyway just as Bethell hailed the Orange Belt Railroad as the launching of a new historical era.

Jackson gives the impression that St. Petersburg's phenomenal growth and present-day metropolitan assets sprang from stark nothingness. He has not seen the pristine beauty and abundance which pioneers like Bethell saw, or known those hard-working, foresighted men and women who made the most of Pinellas' and their own innate resources.

Notwithstanding typographical and punctuation errors, misspellings (e. g., one "1" in "Bethell" on the cover!), mismating of illustrations with the texts, and disappointing absence of credit for some fine pencil drawings in *Point Pinellas*, both books are well worth the paperback price.

MARION ZAISER

(Author of *The Beneficent Blaze:  
The Story of Major Lew B. Brown*)

*Tales of West Pasco.* By Ralph Bellwood. (Hudson, Florida: Albert J. Makovec, Printer, 1962. 108 pp. Foreword, illustrations. \$1.50.)

This little book is appropriately titled for it consists of more than a hundred tales of the west Pasco area, each complete in itself, which were first printed separately in the *New Port Richey Press* and the *Hudson News*. The stories reflect a deep nostalgic interest in the "good old days" beginning with the coming of A. M. Richey from Missouri to the Gulf coast of Florida in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to give his name to Port Richey and later to the more modern New Port Richey. Hudson was born as a community when Isaac Washington Hudson brought his ten children there in 1875. Fishermen, cattlemen, and grove owners settled around Elfers, originally known as Sapling Woods, when

“bear, deer, wildcats and panthers frequented the area around Orange Lake, that is the heart of New Port Richey now.” Readers will get a glimpse of sponge fishing boats lying offshore and five acres of crawls in shoal water where the sponges were kept until ready to be cleaned and dried, and of commercial and sports fishing when fish were plentiful and fishing gear less elaborate, when, for example, Babe Ruth used a cane pole. Yarns about piney woods cattle and razorback hogs and quail in such quantities that hunters exceeded the bag limit of 30 per day and 350 for a season add color to the pictures of a bygone era. Obvious, too, is the impact of the booming twenties in such stories as the ‘Hudson-Aripeka Board of Trade’ (pp. 30-33) and the names of newcomers in those years. The author himself came from Virginia for a brief vacation and found himself called to the pastorate of the Baptist Churches at Aripeka and Elfers. Like many a newcomer he became interested in the stories told by old timers and watched with keen interest the changes in the passing scene. He certainly “went native” and expressed the sentiment of many Floridians of an earlier day in “The Yankee and the Cracker” when he wrote: “We feel that the Cracker has been far more gracious in many respects than the Yankee. Oh, we are fully conscious of the money the Yankee has brought and invested, and by no means do we argue against it, for it has brought progress and opened up avenues for thousands who came to enjoy the fabulous climate, but it broke up a way of life and invaded the privacy of people that were satisfied and content with the environment. Frankly it was similar in a sense to the white man taking over the land from the Indians” (p. 52).

The volume is well illustrated with reproductions of old photographs which add authenticity as well as color to the stories. A locations map would add measurably to the value of the book for people less familiar with the region. One could also wish that these stories were woven into a more complete narrative account of the origin and development of settlements whose past can too easily be lost in the rapid transformation of the Florida landscape being wrought in places like West Pasco.

CHARLTON W. TEBEAU

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