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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Florida During the Civil War.* By John E. Johns. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963. ix, 265 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$6.00.)

This volume is the first comprehensive study of Florida in the Civil War since William Watson Davis' *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, which was published in 1913. It is appropriate, therefore, that its publication should have been sponsored by the Florida Civil War Centennial Committee. And it is doubly welcome because Davis' book has long been out of print and because Dr. Johns has been able to draw upon material, primary and secondary, unavailable a half century ago.

The narrative falls roughly into three parts-secession and military affairs to 1863; the domestic scene, economic, social, and political; and military affairs from 1863 to the end. The discussions of such matters as secession, seizure of the forts, the Fort Pickens truce, Governor Milton's relations with the Confederacy, the occupation of the east coast towns, and the Olustee campaign traverse familiar ground. The chapters on domestic affairs, to which more than half the text is devoted, constitute, both literally and figuratively, the heart of the book.

Dr. Johns evidently grasped every shred of material illustrative of daily life, and it is surprising how much he found. His chapters on planter and slave and the home front are the most interesting in the book and will appeal especially to the general reader. His treatments of state politics, finances, and the breakdown of local government are also good. Particularly enlightening is the discussion of Governor Milton's successful fight against the radical element for control of the administrative machinery of the state.

There are omissions. The reader will look in vain for a systematic account of the blockade in Florida waters, for any notice of the operation of the Federal Direct Tax Commission in East Florida, or for the stories of such minor military actions as the Battle of Gainesville and the West Florida raids. Exclusion of such matters was no doubt dictated by considerations of space.

A more serious shortcoming consists of inaccuracies due ap-

parently to an uncritical acceptance of secondary accounts, to unfamiliarity with contemporary names, and to carelessness. Madison S. Perry was not, and had not been, a trustee of the internal improvement fund in 1856 (p. 4), and Harrison Reed, of course, was never provisional governor of Florida (p. 200). McQueen McIntosh was a Confederate, not a state, appointee (p. 155). Federal losses at New Smyrna were eight killed and seven wounded-not 42 killed (p. 73). The legislature did not establish a system of circuit courts in 1861 (p. 78), but merely transferred cases in federal courts to existing state courts.

Errors in spelling are numerous: "Vallandingham" for "Vallandigham" (p. 48); "Juda" for "Judah" (p. 50); "Brosenham" for "Brosnaham" (p. 60); "Gailbraith" for "Galbraith" (pp. 87, 92, 96); "J. S. G. Baker" for "J. L. G. Baker" and "Lowe" for "Love" (p. 210); "Pauleston" for "Puleston" (p. 172); and "Boker" for "Baker" (p. 218, 219). "Henry" (p. 197) is incorrectly indexed as "Hendry." Similarly, A. B. Noyes is mentioned as "Albert B." in the text (p. 138) and as "Alonzo B." in the bibliography (p. 246).

It is too bad that an otherwise creditable and credible book should be marred by such errors. They will force the scholar to use with caution a work which is too important for him to ignore. They will not, fortunately, affect the general reader, whose enjoyment and edification they will in no wise diminish.

DOROTHY DODD

*Florida State Library*

*Lore of the Wreckers.* By Birse Shepard. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961. viii, 278 pp. Foreword, illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. \$5.95.)

Since man first put out to sea in a craft of his own design he has placed his life in jeopardy. Since he first launched ships laden with cargo he has risked both life and property. From the very beginning some men have waited on land ready to comb the beaches for such treasures as wind and wave might wrest from troubled ships and toss ashore. But there were also mariners who stood by with their own ships, scanning the treacherous

waters, ready to help rescue distressed ships. These were the wreckers, men who made a living from rescue and salvage operations and who, by the very nature of their work, rendered themselves both heroic and suspect.

It is of the wreckers that Miss Shepard has written. They are her own special brand of heroes, and in her account they come off very well indeed, although she has not hesitated to label some as scoundrels. Like any other segment of men constantly challenged by danger, the wreckers exhibited the very best and the very worst of human traits.

With the discovery of America the pace of maritime commerce quickened. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries hundreds of vessels made their way across the ocean following sea-lanes which often skirted perilous waters. Scores of treasure-bearing ships broke up at sea or ran aground near Sable Island off Nova Scotia, Cape Cod, the Long Island area, and the Diamond Shoals of North Carolina. The Florida Straits, bounded on the south and east by the Bahamas and Cuba and on the north and west by the Florida Keys, were particularly treacherous. The Florida reefs took a heavy toll of the ships that sailed to and from the ports of the Gulf of Mexico, Central America, and the Spanish Main. And here wrecking flourished to a degree unequalled elsewhere.

The famous Brilanders established a lucrative wrecking business on Harbour Island in the Bahamas in the eighteenth century. In the 1820's, with the transfer of Florida to the United States, the wrecking center shifted to the Florida Keys, with Key West its capital. It is with this area that some of the soundest and best-documented portions of Miss Shepard's book deal. Although she has slighted no part of the wrecking scene, Key West looms particularly important in her scheme. Wrecking was the life of Key West throughout the nineteenth century. When the Key West Wrecking Register was officially closed in 1921, its pages bore the names of some of America's most prosperous entrepreneurs, many persons of cultivation and high intelligence. William Curry, when he died in 1896, was one of the richest men in Florida. He had built his fortune on wrecking.

This book has obviously been a labor of great love. Miss Shepard has exhumed much material from remote and romantic

places. She confesses to having spent many "happy days on the keys and cays, browsing in libraries and museums, and poking around the edges of the sea, listening to tales of the olden days." It is written with charm and good humor. She has released herself from the rigid demands of documented history by designating her work as only "a lighthearted approximation of it [history], offered with clean hands and a frank warning that much of it can never be verified." Disarming as this admission may be, it should not be assumed that this book has no historical word. It must be given a place among the important books written about wrecking.

E. ASHBY HAMMOND

*University of Florida*

*I Take This Land.* By Richard Powell. (New York: Scribners, 1962. 437 pp. \$5.95.)

Mr. Powell's novel opens aboard a wood-burning Baldwin 10 Wheeler railroad locomotive in South Georgia in 1895. It moves swiftly to Tampa, and from Tampa to the town of "Fort Taylor," which, as Mr. Powell explains in an "Author's Note," bears a close and deliberate resemblance to Fort Myers. The country between Fort Myers and Lake Okeechobee is the setting for most of the story. The period is from 1895 to 1946, and the historical theme is the development of a frontier village into a modern city.

The goals of the historical novelist differ from those of the academic historian. The academic historian might spend half a lifetime trying to determine whether Ponce de Leon landed in Florida in 1512 or 1513, and consider the time well spent if he came up with a definite answer. To the historical novelist the difference between 1512 and 1513 is not particularly important; he would much rather know whether or not it was raining, or if there was a high surf when Juan Ponce went ashore.

The purpose of the historical novelist is to create a visual picture, and in this way help his reader relive some specific era. If there is nothing known about the weather, then the novelist feels free to create his own. On the other hand, he must never (if he takes his work seriously) be demonstrably wrong.

He can create his own weather only when the real weather is not known, and what he creates must fit in with those facts that are known.

This means that the historical novelist must do a tremendous amount of research, and not only on one phase of his subject, as the academic historian may limit himself. In *I Take This Land* Mr. Powell deals at some length with railroads and railroad building in South Florida, with citrus and the development of the citrus industry, the cattle industry, the business of egret hunting, and, of course, the daily life of his people. On all these subjects it was necessary to acquire a vast amount of major and minor information. For example: the exact cost of oranges in 1896, the amount of fruit produced per acre, the cost of egret plumes, the usual width of an ox-drawn wagon. If he has made any errors I did not catch them, and I carefully checked a number of items.

On the other hand it may annoy the precise historian that Powell has deliberately taken some liberties with history. He brings his railroad into Fort Taylor eight years before a railroad actually reached Fort Myers, and he moves Julia Tuttle's railroad-snaring orange blossom from the east coast to the west. But in his "Author's Note" he makes these facts clear, and the changes do not alter the accuracy of the broad picture.

All in all, the average reader, the non-professional historian, may quite possibly learn more about life in South Florida in the first half of this century from Mr. Powell's novel, than he would from a half dozen books of straight history.

And it also tells a good story.

WYATT BLASSINGAME

*Anna Maria, Florida*

*Ninety Years of Service 1873-1963: The Story of St. Luke's Hospital, Jacksonville, Florida* (Jacksonville: 1963. vi, 170 pp. Preface, illustrations.)

Ninety years are but a second in history as we know it, but in the development of St. Luke's Hospital it represents the period of its birth in a tiny frame structure to a large metropolitan hospital. Although Jacksonville's temperate climate had encouraged

many infirm and elderly people to move there, 1873 was a year of adversity. The financial panics which were sweeping the country had repercussions in Florida, and there were many in Jacksonville who thought the establishment of a hospital was not necessary, at least at that moment. Only through the determined efforts of a group of dedicated Jacksonville women—Mrs. Theodore Hartridge, Mrs. J. D. Mitchell, and Mrs. Aristides Doggett—was the goal achieved.

St. Luke's Hospital opened March 11, 1873. It was the first institution in the state devoted exclusively to the care of the sick and the first charitable institution in Jacksonville. The story of St. Luke's is a microcosm of Jacksonville and Florida's growth and development during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its history, as outlined in his book, produced by its officers and directors, reveals the sincere and enthusiastic support that it received from the whole community. People of all faiths and representing every economic group gave of their time and means to ensure the success of the hospital. The history of St. Luke's reminds us of the hardiness and individuality of our ancestors. Government subsidies and fund-raising organizations were little known at the time that St. Luke's was getting started. The hospital was erected by the people, for the people, and of the people. This brief but very readable book also reveals the ability of Americans to rebuild out of the ashes of destruction. St. Luke's had hardly begun its growth in the community when it was destroyed in the Great Fire of May, 1901. Quickly it was rebuilt, larger in size, more efficient in operation, and even better equipped to serve the public.

In 1885 Florida's first school of nursing was established in St. Luke's. It already had a woman doctor serving as superintendent. These were still the days when female doctors were regarded with a great deal of suspicion.

A large number of men and women, doctors and lay people, are responsible for this book and here again we have an example of a community project. This volume reflects the thoughts of numerous people connected with the growth and development of St. Luke's. The pictures and sketches add to its interest and value. There is a list at the end of the book showing the hundreds of donations that have been given to the hospital over the years, everything from preserves, carpentry work, whiskey, cakes, old

flannel, a copy of Schiller's poems, to fruit, men's underclothing, and children's toys.

SIDNEY STILLMAN

*Jacksonville, Florida*

*The Urban Political Community: Profiles in Town Politics.* By Gladys M. Kammerer, Charles D. Farris, John M. DeGrove, Alfred B. Clubok. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963. viii, 216 pp. Preface, appendix, index. Paper \$1.95.)

This short paper-back on local politics is a by-product of research on the problem of city manager tenure and turnover. Having completed their technical monograph on that specific problem, the authors wisely decided to re-examine their data for the light they might throw on more general problems of local politics. While the book is addressed to "the undergraduate student of political science," it will have appeal to any reader interested in the enduring problem of how man governs himself. Even those with no general interest in political science will find it a fascinating account of political life in eight Florida communities-and they can, moreover, enjoy the detective game of trying to discover which real communities are represented by the fictitious names employed by the authors.

The objective of the study is quite broad: "to acquaint the reader with the political process at the local level-with the forces that produce significant community decisions." The research sites are eight communities ranging from 5,000 to 60,000 in population. All of the communities utilize the council-manager form of government, which eliminates the possibility of tracing their differences in political style to differences in formal governmental structure. The authors take advantage of this situation, which has the effect of holding one important set of variables constant, to look for other sources of variation in political style. The data came from structured interviews with "influentials" in the communities. The authors do not dwell on technical problems of methodology, such as specifying precisely the universe of influentials or indicating the number of interviews conducted in each community. People in major governmental and civic positions in each community were interviewed, and their

reports were regarded as valid when they were in agreement. Since the researchers sought factual information about political events rather than opinions on those events, this procedure appears well suited to their task.

Each political profile offers material on the city's history, population, appearance, economy, and power structure; its political structure; major issues in deciding what kind of city it shall become; decisions on hiring and firing city managers; and trends in the clique structure of the community. As a departure from the traditional treatment of local government in primarily formal terms, these profiles offer keen insights into the political process. The reader is left to draw his own conclusions until the final chapter of the book, which brings the comparative findings together into basic generalizations about local government.

Two limitations of the book are deliberately built into the research design: it cannot deal with formal political variables as an independent influence on political behavior, and its findings can be applied to non-Florida cities or cities outside the population range included in the study only with great caution. This reader felt that another limitation came from the tendency to account for variations in political style - "monopolistic" or "competitive" - in somewhat circular terms: politics will be monopolistic where a common interest (generally socio-economic) is dominant and competitive where conflicting interests seek control. The authors would join with the reviewer in the hope that future research will address itself to the conditions under which single or conflicting interests can be expected to emerge. Non-Floridians will be impressed by the reference to the first occupant of an apartment house for "upper middle-class retirees" as a retired millionaire who was born to wealth. What does it take to be lower upper-class in Florida?

In addition to its descriptive interest and its theoretical implications, this book deserves praise for what it is not. Unlike most volumes with as many as four authors, it is not incoherent or inconsistent in concepts or organization, and its style is not such as to suggest it was written by a committee. It should prove a useful and readable supplement to the standard treatments of local government.

JAMES W. PROTHRO

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