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Book Reviews

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The Alabama Confederate Reader. By Malcolm C. McMillan. (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1963. 468 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$7.75.)

The Alabama Confederate Reader is a refreshing departure from the usual publication which has appeared during the centennial of the Civil War. Malcolm C. McMillan, research professor of history, Auburn University, begins each chapter, the first being "The Gathering Storm," with a page or less of his own text preceding a verbatim account of the chapter's subject taken from current newspapers, letters of prominent participants in the events, diaries, reports, and other original documents.

Grand strategy and the over-all picture have gotten most of the attention in commemorative works heretofore. Now works like this one of Dr. McMillan are giving us intimate views of life on many levels - legislative, departmental, military, domestic. Witness Thomas R. R. Cobb, brother of Howell Cobb, who wrote to his wife almost daily, begging her to come to Montgomery, certainly to be there by the time of the inauguration and reporting, "By the way, there is a great uniformity in suppers in this city [Montgomery]. They commence with oyster soup, then comes fish salad and fried oysters, then grated ham or beef and sardines with waffles and coffee or tea, then cakes and jellies, Charlotte Russe and what is considered here the greatest delicacy 'Ambrosia' which is nothing but sliced oranges and grated coconut."

A foreign correspondent reports, "I was glad when bedtime approached, that I was not among the mattress men. One of the gentlemen in the bed next the door was a tremendous projector in the tobacco juice line."

A war clerk reports on Bob Toombs, whom he described as "a portly gentleman but with the pale face of the student and the marks of a deep thinker. To gaze at him in repose, the casual spectator would suppose from his neglect of dress, that he was a planter in moderate circumstances, and of course not gifted with extraordinary powers of intellect; but let him open his mouth, and the delusion vanishes. At the time alluded to he was surrounded by the rest of the cabinet, in our office, and the topic was the policy of the war. He was for taking the initiative, and carrying the war into the enemy's country. And as he warmed

with the subject, the *man* seemed to vanish, and the *genius* alone was visible.”

From letters of Kate Cumming of Mobile, who arrived at Corinth immediately after Shiloh, we learn that “The men are lying all over the house, on their blankets, just as they were brought from the battle-field. They are in the hall, on the galley, and crowded into very small rooms. The foul air from this mass of human beings at first made me giddy and sick, but I soon got over it. We have to walk, and when we give the men anything, kneel in blood and water; but we think nothing of it at all.”

There are also included annual reports of General Josiah Gorgas, chief of ordnance, recounting the difficulties of securing saltpetre and sulphur for powder: “I feel more uneasiness on this point [securing lead] than on all the others. The requisitions have, however, been fully made, through the energy of the Nitre and Mining Bureau and *our own exertions in gleanng the battle-fields.*”

Dr. McMillan has woven matter like the above into a most satisfactory account of the war in general, and, particularly, of the role played by the citizens of Alabama.

ADAM G. ADAMS

Coral Gables, Florida

Nine Men In Gray. By Charles L. Dufour. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1963. xviii, 364 pp. Preface, illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$4.95.)

Here are sketches of nine Confederates, some better known than others, but all of them in the category of the less well-known men. Author Dufour did well in his selection, for all had interesting careers, and Dufour made the most of his opportunity in bringing them to life again. Most of them he chose because they commanded his admiration, as they will likewise do for the readers of this volume; but there was one who was execrated by apparently everybody except his wife, President Jefferson Davis, and himself - and history apparently has never added a fourth to these admirers. This person was Lucius B. Northrop, commissary general of the Confederacy.

There are five generals in the group, and it would be difficult to determine which one might be best known today: probably it would be Richard "Dick" Taylor, a son of old "Rough and Ready" Zachary Taylor and a brother-in-law of President Davis, who is remembered best for his excellent book, *Destruction and Reconstruction*. But that fighting Irishman Patrick Cleburne would run Dick a close race, if not outdistance him. And where could we put Edward Porter Alexander, if not near the top? - a man who saved First Manassas for the Confederacy by his system of signals. William Mahone gained as much infamy after the war by going over to the Republicans, as he won fame during the struggle. The great artilleryman Turner Ashby, the "Beau Sabreur of the Valley," became a great sentimental hero of the war, in which both he and Cleburne were killed. All but one of the others lived for varying periods afterwards, Alexander not dying until 1910.

Another sentimental hero was William (Willie) Ransom Johnson Pegram, the least warlike-looking hero of the Confederacy, but a superb cannoneer, who was killed shortly before Appomattox. Only one naval hero made Dufour's list, Charles W. "Savez" Read, whose sketch seems less well done and whose place in Confederate annals is less well-known. The one whose military career was short and whose early life was as little known as was his later life, was the incomparable propagandist Henry Hotze. He was born in Switzerland and there he died. As de one to interpret the Confederacy to England (and incidentally to France and Ireland) no one could have improved on his work. Residing in England mostly during the war, he never returned to the United States. Another candidate for these sketches would undoubtedly have been Roberdeau Wheat of the Louisiana Tigers, had not Dufour already done a whole book on him.

In these nine sketches Dufour has contributed an interesting volume to Civil War literature and has rescued for a great many people eight heroes and one misanthrope. Of course, the heart of all these sketches is the four years of the war, but enough is added in bringing these men up to the war and in dismissing them (those who were not killed in the struggle) to round out their lives. This book is not a pot-boiler, but a scholarly, interestingly-written work based on proper sources.

E. MERTON COULTER

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We Dissent. Edited by Hoke Norris. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962. vii, 211 pp. Introduction, index. \$4.95.)

To judge the South of today solely on the basis of newspaper headlines about "massive resistance" and racial violence may make the segregationist, South and North, complacently confident and the integrationist despairingly disturbed. What makes news in the mass media is never the whole truth and seldom reflects the most enduring forces at work. In this book, the editor has brought together an impressive series of articles providing evidence of the growing opposition to the dominantly segregationist sentiment of the South. The viewpoints included are rarely reported in news stories, but they represent a trend of considerable importance.

A single theme pervades these varied offerings: "There are many Souths." The book is ample reminder of this truth, which Southerners as well as Northerners and Westerners at times forget. The perceptive background article which opens the volume, written by Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely, denies that there is a "monolithic South." Lenoir Chambers, discussing the challenge of the United States Supreme Court decision on public school desegregation, states this theme parenthetically. Editor Hoke Norris, in juxtaposing the stubborn South and the new South, announces it directly. Jonathan Daniels make indirect (and overly optimistic) use of the theme, and the entire collection bears witness to the variety.

The inclusion of Florida Governor LeRoy Collins' radio-TV plea to the people of the state in a tense 1960 racial situation provides an illustration of a raw political courage exhibited rarely by Southern leaders. Ralph McGill's article, reprinted from *The Saturday Evening Post*, is probably the most direct and powerful in this collection. Thomas D. Clark's "A Decade of Decision" reminds us of the economic factors which will weigh heavily in the struggle for racial justice. Kathleen Kern Sennett depicts vividly a white Southerner's reactions to integration. Hodding Carter reports on the White Citizens' Council in Mississippi and analyses the basis of its strength, while Francis Pickens Miller professes to see, somewhat prematurely to this reviewer, "Dawn in the South." Borden Deal's "The Sign on the Highway" represents the most "conservative" of these "liberal" views, yet he speaks

for many a moderate Southerner when he reports, "There is no communication between me and the Southern Negro."

Clearly the most poignant and poetic offering is "Into the Modern World" by James McBride Dabbs. "Some say that I dissent from the South," he writes. "But as strange as it sounds, I am hardly conscious of dissenting from the South at all. It dissents from me." None of these authors reflects more sensitively the tragic cleavage in the soul of many a white Southerner: ". . . when I was a little boy, I had stumbled upon a strange sense of the sadness of life. My parents spoke occasionally of someone's having lost a child. I didn't know what they meant, but since, if children were to be lost, the dark, endless woods back of the house would be the place for losing. I imagined them there, not frightened but each of them alone, the woods starred with lost, wandering children. Was this image some faint premonition against the time when I myself should be lost in the dark woods of the world? Was I innoculating myself against sadness long before its coming? More important than this, was I entering life with the pathos of an old defeat, enshrined in my grandmother and in the still unfurled Confederate banners, hanging like a mist about my boyish head?"

Paul Green's plaintive, mawkish piece bemoaning the excesses and blood-thirsty greed of the Civil War Centennial is the only unhappy inclusion. To say that the Civil War was "witless folly," though obviously and terribly true, can be uttered with Green's lofty dogmatism only by one who has lost a firm grasp on the tragic realities of man's endless follies and has created for himself an idealistic heaven of rational perfection where "folly" is the sole remaining sin deserving damnation.

The Introduction notes that "all the writers represented here are Southern-born, Southern-raised, white Protestants." Why the emphasis? Perhaps because this group is most often stereotyped as "segregationist," and the intention is to shatter this neat picture. Perhaps it is to white Protestants of the South that the writers wish especially to witness; certainly no group is more deeply enmeshed in the power structure of Southern society and could, if it would, do more to overthrow racial segregation. In any event we are given an instructive spectrum of insights from another South than that which burns buses and crosses, riots over

school integration, arrests Freedom Riders, and attacks sit-in demonstrators.

We Dissent must be read by anyone seeking a deeper and more significant South than that proclaimed in reportorial sensationalism.

CHARLES S. McCoy

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The Public Lands: Studies in the History of the Public Domain.

Edited by Vernon Carstensen. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1963. xxvi, 522 pp. Editor's note, introduction, index. \$6.75.)

This volume is a reproduction of thirty-one carefully selected articles which have appeared in various scholarly journals since 1905. More than half of these articles were published after 1945 in either the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* or *Agricultural History*. Except for functional editorial changes the papers are reprinted as they were first published. The work is divided somewhat chronologically into five parts. The final section is an appendix on source materials for a study of the history of the public lands, and it also carries a reproduction of useful materials on this subject.

A note of lively interest not usually encountered in works of this type is provided by a lengthy discussion of "The Railroad Land Grant Legend in American History Texts." According to Robert S. Henry in his article by this title, the federal land grants to railroads have been greatly exaggerated by textbook writers as to both the size and worth of the grants made. The author also claimed that these transactions were not gifts but were made under terms and conditions by which the government actually profited. This article is followed by six papers whose authors are in disagreement with Henry's thesis. These disagreements vary from a mild denial by David M. Ellis that Uncle Sam was a "canny landlord" to Fred A. Shannon's suggestion that a people's lobby should demand that, after three-quarters of a century of private profit from public gifts, the railroads should be returned to the people without recompense.

In addition to serving a scholarly purpose, the volume commemorates the sesquicentennial of the Public Land Office. While the articles included are necessarily uneven in perspicuity and in general historical interest, they cover fairly adequately the major aspects of the history of the distribution and management of the public lands. Scholars working in this segment of economic history will find them useful in the form in which they are presented in this volume. There is substance of general interest in six excellently perceived introductory comments, each prepared by a specialist in the area discussed. For the general reader however, the volume offers a strong and restricted diet.

JAMES C. BONNER

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The Cherokees. By Grace Steele Woodward. (Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1962. xv, 359 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$5.95.)

The Cherokee Indians have attracted the attention of many writers who have given their views with varying degrees of skill and understanding. The volume by Grace Steele Woodward is an example of Indian tribal history at its best. The sound research that went into the writing of the book has clarified many points of controversy in Cherokee history.

John Ross "had only to tie his horse to a post in the square of any town or village in the Nation to be surrounded by hordes of Indians, most of whom were full bloods living back in the mountains or coves." In the reference to an ordinary incident the author has revealed her insight with respect to the Indians, and to the relations of a well-known chief with his people. This was John Ross at the age of thirty-eight in Georgia. The brief passage throws into sharp relief every other reference to his activities, his purposes, and his character.

The account of the factional murders in 1839 (John Ridge, Old Major Ridge, and Elias Boudinot) is based upon the records. The report of Chief John Ross to General Arbuckle, the suspicious attitude of the commandant, and the effects of the murders in the Indian Territory, are given with enough detail to provide a clear and connected story.

The author's analysis of the incident shows keen understanding. "In a sense, these assassinations were reminiscent of Doublehead's execution by Major Ridge and two accomplices in 1808. Like the Ridges and Boudinot, Doublehead had participated in land cessions to the United States without the sanction of the entire nation, in violation of Cherokee law. Too, the Ridge-Boudinot murders paralleled in some respects the Creek murders of William McIntosh, Tustennugee, and Sam Hawkins, all three of whom had been executed by their people for making land cessions without consent of the tribe. But the Creek and Cherokee murders differed in this one respect: the Creek murders were authorized by the tribal council, whereas the Cherokee murders, in 1839, were clandestinely planned and executed."

Ross's position during the American Civil War is difficult to grasp if we lose sight of the fact that the Indians had no great principle of union or of states' rights to uphold. Probably the chief himself was never in doubt at any time as to what he had to do. His purpose was clear in his mind: he would take his position and shape his activities for the benefit of the Cherokee people.

In maintaining his difficult stand, he had to adjust his actions to the varying fortunes of war on the western frontier. Neutrality was his original solution of the Indian tribe's stunning problem. Caught between the vast power of the North on one side, and the militant zeal of the South on the other, Ross maintained his commitment until Wilson's Creek in nearby Missouri had been won by the Confederate army. Then his position changed; but he had clung to the impossible dream of neutrality for a longer period than that of the peace-loving citizens of the border States - longer than the neutral stand of Kentucky's governor.

The Cherokee leader, in defense of his Civil War policies, explained the apparent shift of allegiance thus: "We are in the situation of a man standing alone upon a low naked spot of ground, with the water rising rapidly all around him. He sees the danger, but he does not know what to do. If he remains where he is, his only alternative is to be swept away and perish. The tide carries by him, in its mad course, a drifting log. It perchance comes within reach of him. By refusing it he is a

doomed man. By seizing hold of it he has a chance for his life. He can but perish in the effort, and may be able to keep his head above water until rescued or drift to where he can help himself."

This is the first comprehensive account of the Cherokees, and the value of the historical record is in no way reduced by the author's readable style and selection of interesting narrative material. Many of the great Cherokees are introduced with the revealing touch of artistic composition and deep understanding.

United States officials who were closely associated with Cherokee history, and citizens who worked with the Indians as missionaries or teachers, also receive attention. Of particular interest are the accounts of Samuel Austin Worcester, Elizur Butler, Cyrus Kingsbury, Evan Jones, Montfort Stokes, and William Wirt.

EDWIN C. McREYNOLDS

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