

1964

Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society
membership@myfloridahistory.org

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1964) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 43 : No. 3 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol43/iss3/10>

BOOK REVIEWS

Zespedes in East Florida, 1784-1790. By Helen Hornbeck Tanner. (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1963. *University of Miami Hispanic American Studies, No. 19.* ix, 253 pp. Maps, illustrations, index. \$3.50.)

The P. K. Yonge Library at the University of Florida houses the Stetson Papers and the Lockey Collection, basic sources for the colonial history of Spanish Florida. Mrs. Tanner has tapped these materials for her excellent study of the governorship of Vizente Manuel Zespedes y Velasco. She has chosen a significant period. During the Zespedes' years, 1784-90, the governor had to reshape colonial institutions to fit the Spanish mold and to redefine the relationship of his colony to the new United States, the French and English, and the Indians. Zespedes also had to cope with a myriad of internal problems, many of which had burdened his predecessors for two centuries. In developing these themes Mrs. Tanner skillfully blends the chronological and topical approaches. Her early chapters deal with Zespedes' appointment, arrival in Saint Augustine, and the early problems of his administration. Later chapters are more topical and concern the Indians, economic and religious problems, border difficulties and defense, census taking, manners and morals, fiestas, and the details of the courtship and marriage of Zespedes' daughter, Maria Dominga. An epilogue traces the careers of some of the principal characters on the Florida scene past the chronological limits of Zespedes' term in Saint Augustine.

There are two main threads running through Mrs. Tanner's work. One is the basic historical narrative—the analysis of the Zespedes' governorship. The author has discussed virtually all the problems of his administration and implemented her narrative by following the activities of such figures as Carlos Howard, Daniel McGirt, Francisco Sanchez, Alexander McGillivray, Juan O'Donovan, Ignacio Penalver, and Fray Cyril de Barcelona. For this reviewer the historical narrative had one principal defect—lack of documentation of primary sources. Although Mrs. Tanner

has combed the manuscript materials, she has chosen not to footnote her manuscript references. Instead, she has referred her readers to the citations in the doctoral dissertation from which this book stems. Ordinarily this would not be objectionable, but the author oftentimes seems presumptive in imputing motives and causation. Citation of the sources would have put her in a stronger position to support her allegations and interpretations and protected her against the charge of apriorism.

This weakness in the historical analysis is greatly overbalanced by Mrs. Tanner's success in recapturing the texture of life in late eighteenth-century Florida. With a light touch and an eye for the type of evidence that many investigators would ignore as superfluous or frivolous, she has presented the intimate personal details of life in Saint Augustine. At times her vignettes, such as the account of the escapades of Antonio Garriaga and the chapters on "Romantic Springtime" and "Fiesta in Saint Augustine" overshadow her quest for basic historical currents, but Mrs. Tanner has an enthusiasm and ingenuousness in her style that should win over the most scrupulous critic. It is obvious that she knows late eighteenth-century Saint Augustine.

In sum, this is a significant book which makes an important contribution to Florida history in the second Spanish period. It is an attractive volume with useful maps, photographs, and bibliography. Florida history needs more indefatigable investigators like Mrs. Tanner.

Ohio State University

JOHN J. TEPASKE

The Fountain of Youth and Juan Ponce de Leon. By Ethel King. (Brooklyn: Theo. Gaus' Sons, 1963. 152 pp. Index. \$2.75.)

As book review editor of a scholarly journal, I am well aware that all too many reviewers are quick to debunk a book, and that to write a book is no easy task, and there is no such thing as a perfect and faultless book. In short, reviewers often lack compassion and humility, this is especially true of people in the academic world. Yet, occasionally a book appears, usually privately printed or by a little known press—that is worthless. This is the case of this book with an exciting title and of apparent interest to Florida

history. The author is unaware of the basic bibliography, missing a half dozen *must* sources; she is not versed in Spanish, Latin American, or Florida history. She apparently does not know Spanish, and she has failed to compose a well organized text.

The editing is poor, full of errors, especially of basic Spanish words and proper names (the same applies to German words)-there are also errors in English. The text is full of trivia not at all related to the story of Ponce de Leon; there is much guessing and much rehashing of a few printed sources, many of them hardly important to the subject.

The author is aware of the Murga Sanz biography of Ponce de Leon but misses all the other recent Spanish publications. It is to her credit that she considers the Fountain of Youth a myth.

University of South Florida

CHARLES W. ARNADE

Unknown Florida. By Florence I. Fritz. (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1963. v, 213 pp. Illustrations, map, bibliography, appendix, index. \$3.95.)

This most interesting book relates in detail the history of the several counties, Glades, Hendry, and Lee, which are found within the Caloosahatchee River region. The author has done an excellent job in reporting the history of this area from the pleistocene epoch to 1962. A survey of the initial chapters indicates the detailed study which is made: Shell Mounds, Calusa Indians, Spanish explorers Including Ponce de Leon, De Soto, Narvaez, and Menendez, the Seminole Indian Wars, and the Civil War in the Caloosahatchee area.

The great value of the work lies in the period following the Civil War when settlers begin to move into the area. The story of cattle kings and cowboys at Punta Rassa is related, and the effect of the Great Freeze is shown. As settlements grow, river and coastal steamboat traffic expand, and railroads and highways push their way southward. The roles played by such diverse and colorful characters as Jacob Summerlin, Thomas Edison, Cyrus Teed, Barron Collier, Bill Piper, James A. Moore, and Deaconess Bedell are related. The photographs illustrating this part of the book are excellent and to the reviewer's knowledge have not been reproduced elsewhere.

There are a few statements in the book that are subject to question. The author says that both De Soto and Narvaez landed near the Caloosahatchee River and that there was such a person as Jose Gaspar. It is disclosed that Billy Bowlegs talked to Hart-suff just prior to the attack that started the Third Seminole War and that a man by the name of Leslie led the volunteers when they defeated the Indians. These, and other conjectures are subject to serious dispute. There is, however, great due to this book.

It is hoped that histories of the other regions in South Florida, including the Peace River and Tampa Bay areas, will be written and published.

JAMES W. COVINGTON

University of Tampa

History of Banking in Florida: First Supplement, 1954-1963. By J. E. Dovell. (Orlando: Florida Bankers Association, 1964. x, 115 pp. Foreword, preface, portraits, tables, notes. \$8.50.)

The "First Supplement" of Dovell's *History of Banking in Florida* follows very closely his original history of Florida banking published in March 1955. Its format; its content, replete with factual tables; even its appearance are similar. Having covered the period 1828 to 1954 in his early volume, Professor Dovell now covers the years up to 1963. Tully F. Dunlap, president of the Association, explains in his foreword: "In the decade after the Florida Bankers Association published the first 'History of Banking in Florida, 1828-1954', historic events occurred in the banking industry and the economic development of the state. The population almost doubled, as did the number of banks." According to Dovell, the Florida picture during this decade is one of remarkable growth: "The gain of almost 79 per cent in population from 1950 to 1960 was the greatest gain in any of the fifty states. Florida is gaining in population at the rate 2,836 residents each week." Moreover, the growth in people is coupled with a distinct trend toward urbanization involving the majority of Florida's cities.

Florida's economy is unique "for its diversity and for its dependence upon an equable climate." As an example of this di-

versity, "more than a third of the income of Floridians is derived from the sales and services of tourism." On the other hand, the state is third in large scale farms 'those selling more than \$100,000 worth of farm products annually.' Also, "there are an estimated 800,000 retirees now residing in Florida whose combined income approaches \$300 million a year." Banks, of course, are essential to this economy. Moreover, with the advent of the space program, there has been an influx of technical and manufacturing industries. Government payrolls and contracts from twenty major installations in Florida are significant. Consequently, banking naturally grew along with Florida's expanding population and economy. "From 1954, the number of banks in Florida increased by 172 or almost 81 per cent within the ten-year period." Most of this growth, quite logically, took place in the more populous counties. Ranking facilities, methods, and equipment were changed and improved to meet expanded requirements.

Dovell has produced a useful, precise, and technical supplement to his original work. However, in his solicitude for covering the various aspects of the Association he may have forfeited the very essence of history. While bankers, with the possible exception of the Rothschilds, have not in general attained the notoriety accorded some businessmen at the turn of the century, there are colorful and important men among them, especially in Florida. It occurs to this reviewer that a history requires some allusion to the actions, the judgments, and possibly the mistakes of these men.

O. Z. TYLER, JR.

Jacksonville, Florida

The Southern Frontier. By John Anthony Caruso. (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963. 448 pp. Maps, bibliography, index. \$6.50.)

Finally, a brief but solid summary of early southeastern history is now available. John Anthony Caruso's *The Southern Frontier* presents an extremely readable and interesting narrative of the colonial southeast from the landing of Ponce de Leon to the American acquisition and statehood of Florida, 1513-1845. While this well-written work might serve the survey requirements of a college course in the regional southeast, it should be particu-

larly valuable as a text for Florida history in the state universities and colleges. Actually, Dr. Caruso's southeastern study is one volume of a planned series of frontier accounts which already include *The Appalachian Frontier* and *The Great Lakes Frontier*. His "American Frontier Series" will feature three other similar studies including "The Mississippi Valley Frontier."

The Southern Frontier is fundamentally the researched product of a broad collection of secondary works, monographs, and periodicals. Although some primary manuscripts were examined for this history, it is not a primary source production. Instead, John Caruso has presented an expansive portrait of colonial (southeastern) history based upon accessible chronicles and scholarly studies, typically lacking the chronological scope of *The Southern Frontier*. The author's contribution to American colonial historiography is thus a significant summary and synthesis of southeastern history.

Unfortunately, Caruso has too frequently failed to employ the best available secondary sources for his survey. Many related materials found in the *Florida Historical Quarterly* and the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History (Gainesville, Florida) are noticeably absent from his bibliographical listings. In the Spanish colonial period, he has apparently neglected to consult several of Charles W. Arnade's analytical articles and monographs, such as *Florida on Trial* and *The Siege of St. Augustine in 1702*. Clinton N. Howard's socio-economic evaluations of the British period of Florida history, especially *The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769*, are also seemingly ignored. Likewise, John Caruso's Minorcan bibliography appears to exclude Kenneth H. Beeson's "Fromjadas and Indigo: The Minorcan Colony in Florida," a thesis which offers important new insights and interpretations on the eighteenth-century colony at New Smyrna. Finally, *The Southern Frontier* fails to utilize Rembert Patrick's *Florida Fiasco* to trace the pre-cession imperialism of the United States in Florida. Such serious omissions definitely limit the efficacy of this survey.

Nevertheless, Dr. Caruso's colorful frontier story provides a good general description of the development of the colonial southeast.

University of South Florida

ROBERT L. GOLD