

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 12.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol43/iss3/12>

Slavery in America: Its Legal History. By Barnett Hollander.
(New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963, xx, 184 pp. Appendix.
\$7.00.)

This book does not make a significant contribution to American history. In his foreword, the author states quite accurately that it is not a " 'History Book' *qua* History. . . ." American slavery proves to be an extremely tenuous thread for the stringing of a bewildering assortment of historical miscellany. The book contains very little if any material which is the product of original research and makes heavy use of encyclopedias, old history books, and oft-published speeches and documents. Far the larger part of the book is quoted material, not altogether undesirable, since the author writes poorly and is often very difficult to understand. This book is neither a source of new light upon American slavery nor a synthesis of the already known data. In addition, it must be noted that it contains enough errors - some demonstrable by internal criticism - to preclude its use as a ready reference book. This reviewer searched in vain for any significant feature worthy of commendation.

THEODORE B. WILSON

Gaston (North Carolina) Junior College

The Stonewall Brigade. By James I. Robertson, Jr. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963. xiii, 271 pp. Illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. \$6.00.)

The Stonewall Brigade is well-written and will hold the reader's interest. Dr. Robertson's final chapter is one of the best that this reviewer has read. Like Douglas S. Freeman, in writing of the passing of Robert E. Lee, Robertson will make even the most hard-hearted get a lump in his throat as he tells of how the brigade faded away after the war and of the dedication of the Jackson monument at Lexington in 1891.

Robertson tells the story of one of the famous units of the Civil War. *The Stonewall Brigade* is well-documented, but although illustrated, it has no maps. Since it deals with military history and troop movements, the failure to provide maps is a serious omission.

Robertson, through a study of the muster rolls and other primary source materials, provides valuable information concerning the background of the brigade personnel which all too often is lacking in studies of this type. Through his use of diaries, war-time letters, and reminiscences, he tells the story of the brigade in detail from its organization at Harpers Ferry to that disastrous day in May 1864, when the unit was all but destroyed at Spotsylvania. It is unfortunate that only one chapter was devoted to the history of the brigade and the units with which it was consolidated after Spotsylvania. Like many historians writing of the Army of Northern Virginia, or its officers, Dr. Robertson is guilty of telescoping the final months of the war.

Dr. Robertson is at his best when he writes of camp life and the battles as seen by the individual - the Civil War GI. Much of the volume, however, treats with troop movements. Apparently, this is not Robertson's forte, because his battle descriptions, when they involve troop movements, become vague and confusing. Perhaps this is because he concentrates on the Stonewall Brigade. To understand correctly and evaluate a unit's tactical employment one must know what the brigades to the right and left and those in support are doing. This reviewer also feels that it would have been better if the author, when introducing the various general officers had used their full rank, rather than general.

A number of errors, most of which are of a minor character, are present. Charles Town is repeatedly referred to as Charlestown. The standard infantry weapon in the Civil War was a rifle-musket not a musket. Parrott rifles fired shells or bolts not balls. At the battle of McDowell, Milroy and Schenck commanded brigades not divisions. The correct name of our nation's highest award for gallantry is "Medal of Honor," not "Congressional Medal of Honor." During the Seven Days Battles, Brigadier General Charles S. Winder wore two hats. In addition to leading the Stonewall Brigade, he commanded the division which had been Jackson's during the Valley Campaign.

All in all, *The Stonewall Brigade*, even with its short-comings, will prove of lasting value to the thousands of readers interested in Stonewall Jackson, the Army of Northern Virginia, and the trials and tribulations of the Civil War soldier.

Vicksburg, Mississippi

EDWIN C. BEARSS

The Galvanized Yankees. By D. Alexander Brown. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963. 243 pp. Index, illustrations, footnotes, bibliography. \$5.50.)

In late September 1864, Abraham Lincoln sent one of his favorite young officers, Captain Henry R. Rathbone, to the Rock Island, Illinois prison camp to enlist Confederate prisoners-of-war. It was a matter of politics. Engaged in a bitter presidential campaign with General George B. McClellan and concerned with the growing resentment to his administration because of draft calls and conscription laws, he hoped to ward off public discontent by easing northern recruitment. Because of these circumstances, the "galvanized Yankees" became a reality.

Faced with the option of rotting away, possibly dying in a prison, or guarding the western frontier against Indians, hundreds of Confederate prisoners decided to enlist in the Union army. And for many who formed the six regiments of U. S. Volunteers, the choice - they soon realized - was an extremely poor one. The West was not a land of health, wealth, or opportunity. In fact, with 1865 often remembered as "the bloody year on the Plains," with summer heat and dust oppressive and winter gales numbing, with death by diarrhea, rattlesnake, and Indian attack commonplace, with a "forestless waste," exhausting physically and mentally anyone who dared enter its lonely, seemingly endless solitude, Southerners, especially of the 4th U. S. Volunteers, were ready to "give it [the plains] back to the Indians."

Yet during 1865 and 1866, these soldiers served their repatriated country well. From the Dakotas to Kansas to Utah they fought aggressive, unrelenting Indian adversaries almost continually; escorted surveying parties for the Union Pacific or supply trains along the Santa Fe and Oregon trails; guarded the isolated relay stations of Ben Holliday's Overland Stage and David Butterfield's Overland Despatch; and rebuilt, then protected hundreds of miles of telegraph lines. Nor in the face of such odds, with the war over, and with more lucrative and less dangerous fields of endeavor beckoning them, did they forsake their trust. In fact, D. Alexander Brown points out that the percentage of desertions was much lower among these southern regiments than the overall average on the western frontier.

In practically any work a reviewer may find fault with the

author's method of approach, his interpretation of facts, his style. *The Galvanized Yankees* is no exception. Overall, however, Brown, together with good illustrations, extensive footnotes, and bibliography, and an excellent job of printing, has fashioned a scholarly, interesting account of a little-known, almost forgotten page of American history.

BEN H. PROCTER

Texas Christian University

Politics, Principle, and Prejudice, 1865-1866. By LaWanda and John H. Cox. (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963. xiii, 294 pp. Preface, notes, bibliography, index. \$6.00.)

Whether the civil rights battles of contemporary times are the cause or not, the ranks of the new revisionists have been increasing. Add to their number now Lawanda and John Cox who have delved into manuscript and newspaper sources and emerged with a thesis which, they admit, would delight Eric McKittrick, Bernard Weisberger, Harold Hyman, *et al.* The Coxes' conclude that Andrew Johnson was not the wronged party in the post-Civil War struggle for power in the North. Rather, his ambiguity on the major issues of Reconstruction and his personal prejudice against the Negro were responsible for his justly-earned political demise.

In a series of well-written essays, the authors deal with patronage, the passage of the thirteenth amendment, civil rights, and, most significantly, the politics of the age. The third party movement is discussed and the Coxes reveal Seward's role in its formation. Johnson's connection with this movement is also analyzed. New information from the important Samuel L. M. Barlow papers is used to provide a revealing look at the machinations of the Democratic Party.

Johnson, the Coxes feel, was a very ambitious politician who hoped to develop a powerful third party which would secure his re-election in 1868. As for the president's relationship to the Democracy, the authors, on the one hand, declare him to be free of charges of capitulation to the party, but, on the other, claim that his vetoes were "an accommodation to the sentiment of the South and of the Northern Democracy."

It is with this latter point that it is most necessary to take exception. The implication is clear that the president sought the support of Democrats through this "accommodation." Obviously Johnson wanted to be supported in his aims, but the question here is what he was willing to do for this support. The charge of accommodation is not proven by the fact that Johnson did something which the Democracy supported. The Barlow papers tend to demonstrate that the president refused to do the things which the party, through Blair, asked of him. Certainly there is much evidence to indicate a similarity of views between the president and the Democracy, and the party cheered while Johnson vetoed, but this shows only parallel philosophy not political accommodation.

In discussing the civil rights aspect of reconstruction, the Coxes provide both a valuable contribution and, once again, an unfortunate inference which their evidence does not fully support. They call civil rights "The issue of Reconstruction." They demonstrate that many leading supporters of the president were prejudiced against the Negro. However, this does not prove that the issue in the Reconstruction conflict was civil rights. The authors have looked at only one of the parties in the struggle. Those who would admire the Radicals for their far-sighted racial policy must answer the question of why most of them supported the all-white Nebraska state constitution. If the Coxes wish to call civil rights the issue of Reconstruction, they must show why political and economic motives were not as significant. To do this the authors must do more than show that Johnson supporters disliked Negroes. They must refute the evidence of participants in the struggle like Shelby Cullom of Illinois who insisted that political motives dominated. That civil rights was an important element in the Reconstruction struggle none can now doubt, for the Coxes have shown this to be the case. But the authors claim more than they prove by calling civil rights the issue of Reconstruction,

Yet these criticisms, though elaborated at length, should not be considered sufficient reasons for setting aside this book. No one who wants to understand the politics of the post-Civil War era can afford to do that. The work is so filled with valuable information, it so often provides important insights into Johnson-Radi-

cal collision that it earns for itself, in spite of its faults, a significant place in the literature of Reconstruction.

PHILLIP S. PALUDAN

University of Illinois

The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal. Edited by H. Wayne Morgan. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963. vii, 286 pp. Preface, notes, index. \$5.50.)

As Ari Hoogenboom colorfully notes in the fourth chapter of this book, "The reaction of an American historian to the phrase 'Gilded Age' is nearly as predictable as that of a Pavlov dog to a bell." Immediately conjured up are images of long-suffering, suppressed workers, impoverished, embattled farmers, boorish tastes, horrible architecture, dull politicians - epitomized by Benjamin Harrison, who was repeatedly depicted as a tiny man lost in an oversized hat - and evil businessmen like Jay Gould, who sucked the blood out of every railroad he touched and supposedly broke any firm that dared to fire his son, George.

In ten essays the ten authors of this book examine and appraise some of the legends connected with the period from 1865 to 1890. As a result, the Gilded Age emerges with new dimensions. In four of the finest articles, Herbert Gutman finds the roots of American concern for the laborer; Ari Hoogenboom, the origins of civil service reform; Milton Plesur, the beginnings of the expansionism of the 1890's; and John Tipple, the rise of both the modern, dynamic corporation and the concept of the robber baron. Other specialists discuss public tastes, literature, science, the Republican Party, and the currency issue.

But if in these essays the Gilded Age comes through as an era of greater accomplishment and less sensationalism than heretofore supposed, it also emerges as something far less exciting than the years Vernon L. Parrington or Matthew Josephson saw and depicted. As H. Wayne Morgan, editor of the volume, points out, "Few are the generations that can match for political effectiveness and appeal such figures as Grant, James G. Blaine, 'Lord Roscoe' Conkling and his New York cohorts, or the Boys in Blue." But you would seldom know it from this book. Too often colorful

people and events are engulfed in a sea of argument and emerge only as names. Unfortunately, many of the essayists have been given assignments that are much too broad. Forced to cover vast topics, some of the authors move so fast and jump about so much they make the head swim. Vincent P. De Santis, for example, has been asked to describe in twenty pages the nature of Republican politics during this period and, in effect, to refute the arguments Josephson took 700 pages to develop in *The Politicos*. The result is an account shorter and no more convincing than a chapter in a two-volume American history textbook. There seems, moreover, to have been no agreement among the authors on documentation and the kinds of materials to be used in these articles. One essay has twenty-one footnotes, almost all of which cite secondary sources available at any library, while another has 103 footnotes, many of which refer to manuscripts, newspapers, and other primary sources.

Still, the articles in this book will reward the patient and diligent reader. Almost every essay says something important. Thoughtful and provocative, *The Gilded Age* has within its pages ideas enough for a half dozen volumes. The pity is that too much of it is unpalatable.

STANLEY P. HIRSHSON

Queens College

The United States in Cuba, 1898-1902: Generals, Politicians, and the Search for Policy. By David F. Healy. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963. xii, 260 pp. Introduction, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$5.00.)

Beginning with a very brief account of the war with Spain, Professor Healy very thoroughly examines the way in which President McKinley's administration handled the question of what to do with Cuba after the peace. The occupation of that island by the American army until May 1902, and the formulation of the policy under which it was then turned over to Cuban administration, forms the principal theme of the book.

Basing his work on a wide range of source materials, Healy makes clear the fact that the United States not only had no policy

for dealing with the situation, but that such a policy was finally produced only as a result of stumbling around by a diversified group of army officers and congressmen. The eventual solution to the question, the Platt Amendment, was the product of the minds of General Leonard Wood and Secretary of War Elihu Root. The part played by the state department was a very minor one, and, in this instance, the desires and actions of individual senators overshadow the secretary of state.

Rarely in American history has there been such an example of the wielding of influence by senior military officers. Frequently bickering among themselves, the generals stationed in Cuba never hesitated to go directly to whichever senator or congressman they thought could be of aid to them. Eventually the policy favored by General Wood was adopted in most part by Elihu Root, and was pushed through Congress as the Platt Amendment. The pressure then exerted by General Wood on the Cuban constitutional convention is shown to be a bit less than discreet, and was responsible for some ill-feeling among the Cuban leaders.

The claim made by Healy that the Cuban policy as it emerged became the basis for future American policy in other Caribbean areas needs further examination, but even this adds to the merit of the volume. It at least demonstrates that a monograph on a narrow subject does not have to be devoid of interest for other areas of study. The entire volume is well-written, and the reader does not bog down in a welter of minute details.

WILLIAM SCHELLINGS

Old Dominion College

Rum, Religion, and Votes: 1928 Re-Examined. By Ruth C. Silva. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962. ix, 76 pp. Preface, bibliography, index, tables. \$5.00.)

Miss Silva's book is a statistical study of the election, using correlation analysis. She tests, among other things, two basic hypotheses: First, "That Smith was a strong candidate in 1928," and second, "that the religious preference of de voters and their attitudes toward prohibition were significant correlates of his electoral strength or weakness." The bulk of the book is taken

up with tables that constitute convincing evidence that, contrary to some views, Smith was a strong candidate in 1928, and that his electoral strength was not significantly (in a statistical sense) related to such widely accepted factors as religion, liquor, and Smith's big city origins.

In analyzing the returns in the various states, Miss Silva concludes that Smith was a strong candidate largely because he did better in comparison with his congressional running mates than any Democratic candidate in this century except Woodrow Wilson (1916), Franklin D. Roosevelt (all four terms), and Lyndon B. Johnson (1964). This was not true of Florida in particular or the South in general, where Smith ran far behind his congressional running mates, and showed much less strength than either Cox or Davis. But as Miss Silva points out, correctly it seems to me, if strength in the South were the criterion, John W. Davis, in 1924, was the ideal candidate. Davis rolled up large majorities all across the South, including sixty-seven per cent of the vote in Florida, and an amazing 97.8 per cent of the vote in South Carolina. In 1920, Cox collected 66.9 per cent of the vote in Florida. Taking the South as a region, Cox carried the area with 58.3 per cent of the vote, and Davis was even more impressive in the region in 1924, with 63.7 per cent of the total. Such majorities were to no avail. Miss Silva argues that the problem of the Democratic Party in those years, and in 1928, was its inability to carry the large northern industrial states. In these areas Smith proved to be a far stronger candidate than either Cox or Davis, but still not strong enough to collect a victory.

This study is certainly not the ordinary approach taken to historical analysis, but it seems to me to be of considerable significance to the historian for just this reason. As Miss Silva puts it, the book is concerned, among other things, "with problems of political historiography in the study of American elections." It demonstrates clearly that there are useful approaches to the study of history that have been all too lightly mined to date. This study is well worth the careful attention of any historian on both substantive and methodological grounds.

JOHN DEGROVE

Florida Atlantic University