

1964

Book Reviews

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Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1964) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 43 : No. 4 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol43/iss4/10>

Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia, 1790-1830. By Richard Beale Davis. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964. x, 507 pp. Illustrations, foreword, bibliography, notes, index. \$8.75.)

Given the first American Association for State and Local History award, this book is offered by Mr. Davis largely as "an assemblage of evidence" about intellectual life in Jefferson's Virginia, and as a defense of Virginia's culture against critics who have urged that creativity in Virginia was expressed only in politics. The evidence Mr. Davis gives about intellectual life is of a particular sort: descriptions of social conditions and institutions, brief biographies of key figures, and summaries of work in the arts, literature, and science. He carefully describes the external circumstances of intellectual life in Virginia, telling us much about schools, newspapers, libraries, churches, and agricultural organizations, and provides considerable information about the contributions of Virginians to literature, science, the fine arts, and oratory. But the author does not analyze ideas—the heart of intellectual life; his concern is to provide a massive array of evidence about the range of intellectual activity in Virginia.

The evidence Mr. Davis offers constitutes his defense of the proposition that Virginia's culture was broad and not defined solely by a concern for politics. As impressive as the evidence is, his defense is not altogether successful. It is not successful because he has been unable to assess the quality of Virginia's intellectual life within the limits he has imposed upon his work. Moreover, he has not fully explored the implications of genteel attitudes toward ideas. A writer in Virginia had to contend with a pervasive doubt that literature and "professional" life were compatible. Thus, "George Tucker's reputation as a serious professor was actually hurt by the public's knowledge that he wrote fiction." The extent to which such views inhibited intellectuals is not investigated by Davis.

There is one other problem raised in this book that is especially troubling: the old issue of southern "agrarianism." The author properly stresses Virginia's rural setting and the concern felt by its intellectuals about farming. In this connection, his account of their innovations and experiments in farm practice

is especially interesting. What he fails to do is to explain the enormous gulf that existed between the Virginians' thinking about their society and the commercial, as well as agrarian, cast of that society. Virginians, after all, worked the soil, but they also depended upon the market. They praised the virtues of the countryside, especially the independence and the simple purity that life on the soil offered, but they used Negro slaves to do the hard work. These disparities between their understanding of themselves and the conditions of their lives deserve investigation.

If the author's conception of his task has prevented him from satisfactorily treating such problems, it has carried him through an impressive array of other questions. He is determined to discover exactly who among the Virginians were writing and working in the arts and sciences. He has identified an extraordinary number of people, and he has passed on an impressive amount of information about them. His notes, as well as his text, will long be used by other scholars.

Mr. Davis' massive accumulation of fact gives his book its value. He has not given us a portrait of a mind, but he has provided many useful materials that other scholars will wish to use. One hopes that other historians with a different conception of history and of what constitutes intellectual life will use this book.

ROBERT MIDDLEKAUFF

University of California, Berkeley

Prologue to Conflict: The Crisis and Compromise of 1850. By Holman Hamilton. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1964. viii, 240 pp. Maps, index, bibliographical essay. \$5.00.)

Almost fifteen years ago the first fruits of Professor Hamilton's concern with the political crisis of 1850 appeared as a substantial segment of his two-volume biography of Zachary Taylor. That interest again reflected itself in his "Democratic Senate Leadership and the Compromise of 1850," published in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*. At first glance, *Prologue to Conflict* appears to complete a sort of triad centering on the

Compromise, with the Taylor biography concentrating on the White House, the article on the Senate, and the present volume on the House of Representatives.

Such a grand design would merit commendation if only for its conception and scope. And to be sure, in *Prologue*, as in his earlier work on the Compromise theme, Hamilton has performed some substantial service. As example of this contribution, *Prologue* moved away from the overshadowing figures of Calhoun, Clay, and Webster, and without artificially ignoring them turned the spotlight of intensive research onto then-lesser known personages such as Stephen A. Douglas and William Wilson Corcoran. In the process, Hamilton constructed an analysis of congressional party lines and power relationships strikingly reminiscent of recent useful examinations of the complicated party and power structures in today's Congress.

Prologue painstakingly describes the deadlock of the congressional democracy arising out of the augmenting impact on politics of the most controversial issue of mid-nineteenth century America. Hamilton concludes that lubrication for Congress's grating machinery flowed from the hands of certain lobbyists who were primarily concerned with Texas bonds. The role of these bonds with respect to the Compromise picture has been unclear for a long time (the Beards in 1930 noted how badly clarification was needed), and Hamilton's description brings the matter into relatively sharper focus.

My quarrel is with the astigmatic lens through which Hamilton achieved his image of the men and measures of 1850. With Beard and Woodward, he holds to a conviction that political parties and politicians move primarily in response to economic considerations. With the major "revisionists," Hamilton sees the Civil War as a needless tragedy and that retrospectively the events of 1850 must be accounted a failure. By his measure antislavery men were simply "fanatics" bent on rule or ruin.

Nowhere in *Prologue* does Professor Hamilton examine alternatives, however, or question the validity of his prejudgments. Where is proof that the bonds altered men's votes; or, stated differently, how able is the historian flatly to ascribe motivation? How do the "fanatics" of 1850 manage to build a sober-sided second party on all levels of the federal-state labyrinth? Hamilton sees only sadness in the incapacity of the 1850 legislation

to stabilize politics with respect to the slave institution. But he does not come to grips with the fact that the sort of imaginative leadership which he wistfully described on pages 184-88, did not and probably could not emerge until the 1820 and 1850 "settlements" ruptured.

The real weakness of *Prologue* is not that Professor Hamilton failed to answer such questions but that he did not ask them. He has travelled the Compromise ground for a long time and perhaps he accepts the familiar configurations as the only ones to see. Whatever the reason for the inadequacies of this volume, *Prologue* remains a prologue for further inquiry instead of the capstone the subject deserves.

HAROLD M. HYMAN

University of Illinois

Jewish Participants in the Civil War. By Harry Simonhoff. (New York: Arco Publishing Company, 1963. xxiv, 336 pp. Introduction, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$5.00).

According to the introduction and bibliography, one would conclude that this volume was meant to be a serious, scholarly study, but unfortunately, whatever other virtues the book may have, it does not add very much to the subject of "American Jews in the Civil War." While the author pays tribute to the sound studies included in the publications of the American Jewish Historical Society and of the American Jewish Archives, and to the painstaking researches of Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus and Rabbi Bertram W. Korn, little use of these materials has been made.

The volume is composed of a series of essays or vignettes dealing with individual Jewish (some, at least, in origin) men and women who played a significant role on both sides of the embattled states plus articles on anti-Semitism. No new material is introduced in either area, and, unfortunately, the essays have not been carefully edited. Consequently, we find numerous repetitions, as well as the introduction of extraneous and irrelevant material.

Of interest to Floridians are the articles dealing with the

Seminole War period and David Levy Yulee, Florida's first United States senator. Reference is made to Abraham C. Myers of Charleston, who served in the Seminole War; to David Camden deLeon of Camden, South Carolina, who, after studying medicine, "was sent to the Florida tropics to treat the sick and wounded soldiers of the Seminole War"; and to Levi Charles Harby of South Carolina. Although much material is included about Yulee, a great deal of it is repetitious and some of it is in error, such as the assertion that he served in the Southern Confederacy. A brief note also is made pertaining to Raphael Jacob Moses who, after a disastrous fire in Charleston, South Carolina, shipped whatever merchandise could be salvaged to Florida and sold it to advantage in Tallahassee. He was also the secretary of one of the first railroads to operate in Florida, and, after it failed, became a lawyer and practiced for a few years in Apalachicola, after which he moved to Columbus, Georgia. A minuscule note is also made of Congressman Hilton (representative from Florida in the Confederate Congress) who is included among those in official positions who made derogatory remarks about Jews.

There yet remains rich ore, if not large nuggets, in the archives of Florida's history awaiting the historian.

SIDNEY LEFKOWITZ

Jacksonville, Florida

The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 1861-1867. Edited by James C. Bonner. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964. vii, 131 pp. Index. \$3.00.)

This journal was kept very sporadically by Anna Maria Green, daughter of the superintendent of the Georgia Insane Asylum. Anna was sixteen when she began this journal, and she seems to have matured very little during the seven years it was continued. She describes herself as "tolerable good looking moderately intelligent and altogether mediocre. . . ." Anna is concerned with religion, but just why she believes that she is not saved, or how sermons helped her, or what she does to aid her religious growth is never clear. She listens to the legislative debates, but she never reveals what was said.

She castigates herself for not writing more often in her journal, for spending too much time building air castles, wasting her time, and living an unproductive life. Love is a matter that concerns her: "Bryan Thomas is handsome and I think a man I could admire, but still it is unmaidenly to write this and my face burns . . . the key to my heart is that simple word love." A military hospital is opened in Milledgeville, and Anna enjoys the company of the staff officers but volunteers little information about the patients. She mentions knitting only two pairs of socks for the soldiers. When a relative dies in most distressed circumstance, she "would drop a tear to thy memory and sigh for thy misfortune," yet she had done nothing to alleviate the misfortune of which she had known for some weeks.

Only occasionally do important events break through this preoccupation with trivia and show something of historical value: the secession of Georgia, Union forces in Milledgeville in 1864, and the arrival of Federals in 1865 after Lee's surrender. But to get such useful items, the reader must plow through pages of trivia. Luckily the editor omitted "approximately a third of the original journal, judged . . . too trivial for reproducing." This reviewer wonders if more could not have been omitted on the same criteria.

KENNETH COLEMAN

University of Georgia

The Negro in North Carolina, 1876-1894. By Frenise A. Logan. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964. ix, 244 pp. Bibliography, index. \$6.00.)

In this well-researched monograph, Professor Logan furnishes a valuable account of Negro life in North Carolina after Reconstruction. Using a topical chapter arrangement, he shows how white Democratic political control was insured, first by making local offices appointive, then by giving decisive powers to local voting registrars, poll inspectors, and canvassing boards. Although large numbers of Negroes moved to town where they found desirable jobs closed to them, most of them remained on the land where they became victims of the vicious mortgage and

lien bond system and low, discriminatory wages. Landowners opposed Negro emigration during the period, and Professor Logan indicates that much of it could have been prevented had they given the Negro something more than perpetual misery for which to strive. Negro education was never discontinued as extremists demanded, but, soon after Democratic resumption of power, education became much more separate than equal. No Jim Crow laws were enacted between 1876 and 1894, but despite occasional social mixing at the higher levels of both races, extra-legal segregation on the basis of white supremacy was in force. And this social system was based on legislation enacted by North Carolina legislators in the areas of voting, office-holding, education, and contractual obligations between landlord and tenant.

Despite this bleak picture, Logan sees glimmerings of hope. There was a small Negro middle class composed of businessmen, ministers, teachers, lawyers, and doctors who offered intelligent leadership. There was also hostility between whites of the mountain areas and those of the eastern black-belt regarding legislative policy affecting the Negro. Furthermore, the author found that despite racial hostility, segregation, and lynching in North Carolina, there was not the same degree of bitterness and violence found in other Deep South states.

Professor Logan is to be commended for successfully amassing his information from an area in which documentary evidence is extremely elusive. His work is a valuable contribution, not for any daring new interpretation, but because it is a well-documented account of Negro life in one state during the period in which the white supremacy system was being perfected by legal, extra-legal, and illegal means. I disagree with the author's prefatory assertion that segregation and white supremacy in North Carolina are products of the twentieth-century. Though Jim Crow legislation may date from that period, his work is replete with proof that white North Carolinians would go to any length to avoid social equality and that legislation of the late nineteenth-century prepared the way for legal segregation.

JERRELL H. SHOFNER

Texas Woman's University

A Southern Prophecy: The Prosperity of the South Dependent Upon the Elevation of the Negro. By Lewis H. Blair. Edited with an introduction by C. Vann Woodward. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964. xlvii, 201 pp. Index. \$5.00.)

In 1889, a Richmond, Virginia, businessman named Lewis Harvie Blair published a remarkable book on race relations in the South. Using irony and satire and common sense, he attacked racial segregation, discrimination, and injustice of any kind; demanded full civil rights for Negroes, including all political rights and equal access to all places of amusement and public accommodations; and boldly challenged the dogmas of white supremacy and Negro inferiority, as well as the dominant mythology about the southern past. The author could scarcely be dismissed as an outside "agitator" or "Yankee fanatic," for his southern credentials were impeccable: he was a Confederate veteran and member of a distinguished Virginia family. Indeed, Blair insisted that his book, the result of long study and extensive observation, was inspired by his intense devotion to the future well-being and happiness of his native state and section and by his mounting disquietude over certain new currents in the relations between whites and Negroes in the South. Although he stated his case in terms of the South's material self-interest and was unable to free himself completely from the paternalistic tradition, Blair could not disguise a substantial egalitarianism and a strong moral indignation over racial injustice.

Blair's book never attracted much attention and was soon forgotten. It was rediscovered by Professor C. Vann Woodward, who is responsible for this new edition. Woodward has supplied editorial notes and a magnificent introduction which places Blair and his book in the broad historical sweep of race relations in the New South and modern America. The volume is a revealing document for the student of race relations. It adds weight to a significant thesis set forth by Professor Woodward in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*: the southern system of racial proscription and caste did not emerge in its completed form until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the time the Richmond businessman wrote, there still existed a surprising degree of legal, political, and practical equality in the relations between

the two races, particularly in the upper South, southern ideas and institutions were still fluid, and alternatives were still open. Ironically, Lewis H. Blair himself became a victim of the very system he warned against, for in an unpublished work written years later he demonstrated the inexorable operation of southern racism and white conformity by attacking the arguments he had once advanced in a freer time and place.

There is a peculiar timeliness in the reappearance of Blair's book, three quarters of a century after its original publication, at a moment in the American experience when the Virginian's subject has become an absorbing national issue. Those who would probe the past in search of perspective will find *A Southern Prophecy* instructive. Prophetic in many places, it is a refreshingly realistic and understanding appraisal by a man who was tough-minded but compassionate. The new edition is appropriately dedicated to the man currently residing at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C., "in Hope of the Fulfillment of A Southern Prophecy."

DEWEY W. GRANTHAM, JR.

Vanderbilt University

The Social and Political Ideas of the Muckrakers. By David Mark Chalmers. (New York: Citadel Press, 1964. 127 pp. Notes. \$3.50.)

Professor Chalmers of the University of Florida has challenged the "revisionist" analysis of the muckrakers put forward by Professor Richard Hofstadter. He has defended Louis Filler's earlier judgment of these journalists: "The crux of muckraking was the realistic analysis of the deeper maladjustments of society." Chalmers argues that we should not be persuaded that the muckrakers were "motivated by Jeffersonian longings" or that they were "shallow moralists who told 'bad men' to be 'good.'" He criticizes the Hofstadter thesis that muckrakers were part of a middle-class revolution which sought to regain status lost to the new men of power who controlled that new phenomenon, the corporation. He finds them motivated by an intellectual concern for the corruption which accompanied the urban-industrial revolution, 1865-1900. He believes that the realistic acceptance of this new economy and society has been slighted by many his-

torians because they have not read exhaustively in the writings of the muckrakers. He claims greater accuracy for his interpretation because he has read all the articles, books, and available manuscript materials of thirteen leading muckrakers: Samuel H. Adams, Ray Stannard Baker, Christopher P. Connolly, Burton J. Hendrick, Will Irwin, Thomas W. Lamont, Alfred H. Lewis, David Graham Phillips, Charles E. Russell, Upton Sinclair, Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, and George K. Turner.

Professor Chalmers has not chosen, however, to criticize the Hofstadter thesis which relates muckraking to the Protestant tradition. And to a large extent, the argument which he rejects, that the muckrakers were "shallow moralists who told 'bad men' to be 'good,'" is based on the identification of muckraking with Protestantism. This is a weakness. Arguing that the muckrakers were toughminded and realistic, he proves beyond doubt that they were willing to accept urban-industrial America. But he does not concern himself with the way in which these writers defined the new America which was acceptable to them. However, he provides important evidence that the muckrakers were concerned with persuading "bad men" to become "good." He points out that Turner believed big business was essentially constructive; that Connolly, Lewis, Irwin, Hendrick, and Tarbell all believed that Jeffersonian individualism, operating through the laws of *laissez-faire*, could be restored in an America that was essentially sound. For them, bad businessmen were confused men; education would end confusion and restore goodness. He finds that Baker, Steffens, Phillips, Sinclair, and Russell were drawn toward socialism because they did not believe in the soundness of our business institutions. But he presents evidence that these more radical writers found that a new economic system existed in America which was good, and reform, therefore, meant education to accept this new reality. And education meant conversion, spiritual conversion, of "bad" confused men into "good" enlightened ones.

Since Professor Chalmers has presented so much evidence of the importance of spiritual conversion in the outlook of the muckrakers, we still need a study of these writers which places them within the cultural tradition of the nineteenth century.

DAVID W. NOBLE

University of Minnesota