

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 46
Number 1 *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol 46,
Number 1

Article 11

1967

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 (1967) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 46: No. 1, Article 11.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol46/iss1/11>

The House Divides: The Age of Jackson and Lincoln, from the War of 1812 to the Civil War. By Paul I. Wellman. (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966. 488 pp. Maps, notes on bibliography, index. \$6.95.)

Not only Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln but many other American leaders - and some non-leaders - come to life on the pages of this book. The theme is evident in the title and subtitle. Nationalistic and sectionalistic tendencies and trends are graphically developed. Background is sketched in the second and third chapters. And the drama of American development is colorful throughout.

Certain characteristics of *The House Divides* fail to meet academic standards. There is no detailed documentation; footnotes are few and far between, and most of the few are anecdotal. There is no bibliography in the scholarly sense. The "Notes on Bibliography" near the end of the volume are, as the author indicates, for "the general reader." The reviewer shares Wellman's enjoyment of Marquis James' Jackson and Houston biographies and of *The Age of Jackson* by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., but to praise these works without mentioning Llerena Friend's *Sam Houston: The Great Designer* and a number of recent studies of Old Hickory's presidency, with their provocative interpretations, is to open the library door only a crack. Carl Sandburg's six Lincoln volumes, we are told, "are written with the fervor of a poet and the careful study of a scholar." Yet, in fact, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* is distinctly unscholarly. Moreover, Mr. Wellman's uneven bibliographical remarks are sometimes preceded by comparable errors in his narrative—from the reference to "Harrisburg, Kentucky" (p. 42) to the statement (p. 458) that Lincoln "in his ordinary conversation was careless, almost crude at times." Let's face it: Lincoln in his ordinary conversation *was* crude at times, without the "almost." And "Harrisburg" is more than a nit, for it suggests ignorance of the importance of Harrodsburg and of James Harrod at one stage of our frontier history.

Considerable critical space might logically be allocated to dependence in 1966, on an assertion of the notorious Augustus C. Buell, or to such a needed addition as "in the North" to "the Republican party became a catch-all for every discontented

segment of citizens." Far more to the point is the fact that Mr. Wellman tells a very good story. He has an eye for arresting detail, as well as a stylistic skill reminiscent of James, Sandburg, Schlesinger, and Bernard De Voto. Yet this is not to imply that he should be classified as a mere imitator of those men.

Time and again, people - and especially young people - are drawn into history and into an abiding appreciation of the glory and wonder of the American heritage by books like *The House Divides*. Horizons are widened and curiosity is aroused by the sweep, verve, and vivid pen portraiture of which Mr. Wellman is capable. His success in capturing and then holding readers' attention is the most consequential truth a reviewer can convey. It is an asset which, in a presentation of this sort, more than compensates for various procedural and evaluative deficiencies.

HOLMAN HAMILTON

University of Kentucky

The Rattling Chains: Slave Unrest and Revolt in the Antebellum South. By Nicholas Halasz. (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1966. 274 pp. Notes on sources, index. \$4.95.)

This book was obviously intended for the general reader rather than the professional historian. It is not documented, quotations sometimes are unidentified, and the research was done entirely in printed sources. It attempts to cover, superficially, the slave trade, development of the slave codes, slave revolts, slavery, abolition, and the Negro in the Civil War. There is little new in the book. Every subject treated by the author is covered in greater detail or in a more scholarly fashion in John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom*.

Still, *The Rattling Chains*, is of value. It should be welcomed as an adequately written, popular history for the general reader. Those with just a vague knowledge of Negro history will find it not only interesting but enlightening. Halasz effectively demonstrates that slaves were not all docile and child-like. Many slaves strongly resented their bondage and revolted against insurmountable odds to try to change their status. It was not without justification that the fear of slave insurrections haunted the antebellum white South.

After discussing several slave rebellions, Halasz contends that the number of actual revolts has been magnified. Many of the over two hundred cases recorded in Herbert Aptheker's *American Negro Slave Revolts*, Halasz says, were simply figments of a feverish and over active southern imagination. Nevertheless, enough insurrections occurred to prove that a substantial number of slaves were willing to chance almost certain death to escape bondage.

JOE M. RICHARDSON

Florida State University

Frontier Mission: A History of Religion West of the Southern Appalachians to 1861. By Walter B. Posey. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966. viii, 436 pp. Appendix, map, diagrams, index. \$9.00.)

Professor Posey of Agnes Scott College and Emory University has written the first major survey of religion along the moving southern frontier from the Revolution to the Civil War. Besides summarizing the spread of the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Cumberland Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, and Roman Catholic denominations into the region which now includes Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri, the author in his most synthetic chapters has also considered the relation between religion and the Indians, Negroes, education, and the monumental events leading to the Civil War. The volume is at its best in a sympathetic understanding of the two totally American denominations on the frontier, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Disciples of Christ. The author should be commended for the considerable attention he pays to important Roman Catholic developments on the southern frontier, a long neglected field of study.

Posey writes in the grand comprehensive manner of the founder of American church history, William Warren Sweet, and the volume is dedicated to him. With a winsome and felicitous style, Posey has placed frontier religion in the broader framework of all of American church history, but important non-religious factors are largely ignored. Yet Posey has not moved be-

yond his master, while the study of religion in America has taken giant steps since the days of Sweet. The text attempts a straight narrative history, with a wealth of external detail but remains woefully short in analysis of a crucial era for American religion. The volume is accurate but superficial, largely dependent upon secondary sources and without the comprehensive documentation a definitive study should have. Pusey adheres to Sweet's hypothesis that American religion can be explained in terms of a successful Baptist-Methodist response to the challenge of the frontier. And he continues to accept Sweet's oddly inconsistent attempt to explain church growth and ferment on the frontier as a conflict between Calvinism and Arminianism, while sustaining the argument not on theological grounds but by a largely external sociological methodology. Posey rarely includes any new material not available elsewhere in print, but the data has not been collected in one volume before.

JOHN OPIE

Duquesne University

Yankee Rebel: The Civil War Journal of Edmund DeWiti Patterson. Edited by John G. Barrett. Biographical Essay by Edmund Brooks Patterson. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966. ix, 256 pp. \$6.00.)

Though long withheld, this is one of the better of the Civil War diaries, written by an Ohioan who served with an Alabama regiment in Lee's army. Patterson went South from Lorain County, on the shores of Lake Erie, to sell books, teach school, and after residence of less than two years in Waterloo, Alabama, enlist in the Lauderdale Rifles, which became a part of the Ninth Alabama of Cadmus M. Wilcox's Brigade.

He cut home ties for ideological as much as geographical reasons and believed he was fighting northern "tyranny" and "fanaticism." He was wounded on the Peninsula, rejoined before Fredericksburg, and was captured at Gettysburg. He was imprisoned at Fort Delaware - "a respectable hog would have turned up his nose in disgust at it" - and at Johnson's Island

in Lake Erie. His family looked on his course as treason and allowed him to suffer near starvation. He was exchanged before Lee's surrender and walked the 600 miles from Appomattox to Northwestern Alabama. After the war he read law in the office of General Edward O'Neal, before O'Neal became governor; he continued his studies in Baltimore, returned South, married a girl from Savannah, Tennessee, entered a law partnership with her father, and, in later life, became a distinguished lawyer and judge and president of the Bank of Savannah. He never deviated in his devotion to his adopted cause, and after the war his beliefs were never "reconstructed," though he made it a policy not to discuss the conflict. Decades passed before he consented to a reconciliation with his family in the North.

This diary rarely descends to the humdrum nor does it undertake the flamboyant. With crisp, clear sentences, a sprightly style, and only an occasional drop to clichés, it describes battle actions grippingly. Of equal fascination are experiences behind the lines, including visits to the Confederate Congress. Editing and footnotes add little to the interest, relate at times to matters so well known as to be superfluous, and show some evidence of haste. The seasoned buffs are perhaps the only ones who will value this book, and they are reassured that Sharpsburg is the Confederate name for Antietam. When Patterson refers to Westminster, Maryland, which he reached as a prisoner of war from Gettysburg, the editor's footnote explains that the town is Westminster, which is incorrect. Patterson spelled it properly in the first instance and should not have been bothered, but he did load in the excess *i* in a second mention. The footnotes, telling mostly what buffs already know, might have been reduced severely.

When Patterson mentions passing in rear of Pryor's Brigade at Seven Pines, the editor makes this the occasion to say that Pryor was under Longstreet and that "Longstreet's mistakes were the primary reason for the failure of the operation." In addition to being extraneous, this disparagement of Longstreet is factually incorrect. Vacillating General Gustavus W. Smith raised quibbles about Longstreet, but Joseph E. Johnston mentioned him first among the commendations and described his operations as "worthy of the highest praise." Longstreet's conduct must have pleased President Davis and General Lee as well. They were on the field

at Seven Pines. Longstreet was shortly elevated to corps command. Patterson reflected the soldier's confidence in Longstreet: "We always like to see Longstreet about. . . . He always knows what he is about, and has won the name of the old 'war horse.'" This entry was made August 30, 1862. It shows that Lee did not impulsively coin the name for Longstreet on the field at Sharpsburg, September 17, 1862, as is often stated. Lee must have repeated what the army was already saying.

The book suffers for want of an index, for which some of the notes might have been sacrificed.

GLENN TUCKER

Fairview, North Carolina.

Civil War Naval Chronology, 1861-1865: Part VI - Special Studies and Cumulative Index. Edited by E. M. Eller. (Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966. 477 pp. Introduction, illustrations, table, index. Paperback \$2.50.)

The sixth and concluding part of the *Civil War Naval Chronology* is an extremely valuable reference work. First, and most important, it contains an index for the whole chronology, which greatly facilitates pinpointing of desired information. A table listing all illustrations appearing in the six-part chronology and their sources is also included.

Admiral E. M. Eller and his capable staff, having provided this key to a vast storehouse of knowledge, decided to make another contribution by adding to Part VI a series of special studies. The first of these describes dramatic events in and around Washington. Early in the war, the capital was nearly engulfed by a Confederate tide, and the navy's role in the city's defense is told. We also learn of activities centering at the Washington Navy Yard. Of interest to students of Lincoln's assassination is the copy of a letter describing the identification of John Wilkes Booth's body aboard a warship anchored in the Anacostia River. Charles O. Paullin's article, "President Lincoln and the Navy," which appeared first in the *American Historical Review* in 1909 is reprinted. Many articles and several books have ap-

peared on the subject in the intervening years, yet none have yet equalled Paullin's terse and moving story of the President as commander-in-chief of the navy during those troubled and vexing years.

The journal of Marine Private Charles Brothers, who served aboard Farragut's flagship *Hartford* during the summer of 1864, gives spice to the *Chronology*. Such a diary, is certain to fire the interest of readers who care little for strategy and statistics. Journals kept by enlisted men aboard the ships are not common, and this one helps make history live. A heretofore unpublished eye-witness account of the battle of Mobile Bay by Harrie Webster should delight the reader. This account is especially timely in view of the recent rediscovery of *Tecumseh* and the dispute as to who will raise her - the government or private individuals. As we read of the second battle of Mobile Bay, we can fully appreciate Webster's soul-stirring description of the loss of *Tecumseh* and her gallant crew.

Civil War buffs will be delighted with the decision to include in the *Chronology* a dictionary of "Confederate Forces Afloat." This study, which appeared several years ago as an appendix to Volume II of the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, contains statistics and histories of over 500 Confederate boats and ships. Scattered at strategic points through the *Chronology* are four profusely illustrated chapters telling of the navy man's life afloat, naval sheet music, blockade runners, and ships salvaged or memorialized. It is the first time that a number of these illustrations have appeared in a readily available publication.

The Naval History Division has produced a volume that is a must not only for the researcher and Civil War buff, but also for those with only a casual interest in naval history. Admiral Eller and his staff are to be commended for a well-planned and executed publication program, designed to familiarize the people of our country with the role of the Union and Confederate navies and development of the United States Navy.

EDWIN C. BEARSS

Arlington, Virginia

New Frontiers of the American Reconstruction. Edited by Harold M. Hyman. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966. x, 156 pp. \$4.95.)

Reconstruction lacks the heroic appeal of the Civil War. The problems involved in restoring the Union and granting rights to Afro-Americans produced neither outstanding politician nor great statesman. Although there will be no commemoration of Reconstruction, this period, perhaps the most misinterpreted of any in American history, will be clarified by scholars whose ideas will alter long-held concepts.

The conference held at the University of Illinois in 1965, concentrated on reappraisals of Reconstruction. Five noted historians spoke, and three others commented on the papers presented. The published record of the conference deserves reading and contemplation. Some facts and interpretations are new, others emphasize revision, and altogether they provide a stimulating contribution to Reconstruction literature.

In "Reconstruction and Political-Constitutional Institutions: The Popular Expression," Professor Hyman states that constitutional concepts underlying Reconstruction were formed soon after the firing on Fort Sumter. Reconstruction planning, therefore, began early as individuals pondered the value of the Constitution, quickly found it adequate for a new order, and relied on it as a guide. He emphasizes the inactivity of the federal government for decades before the war and the change to positive government during the conflict. Hyman concludes that "Constitutional concepts and political attitudes analogous to those of the Civil War and Reconstruction scene are again current." Alfred H. Kelly believes the radicals of 100 years ago chose constitutional legitimacy and finds a tremendous revival in the 1860s of old nationalist doctrines associated with Hamilton-Marshall interpretations of the Constitution.

John Hope Franklin reviews the historiography of the post-war period in "Reconstruction and the Negro." He relies on his excellent summary of the era, *Reconstruction: After the Civil War*, to place the Negro in perspective. Franklin condenses instead of adding information and interpretation. In his comment, August Meier raises questions about what the Negro wanted and calls for studies of Negro acts and aspirations.

Harry Bernstein, "South America Looks at North American Reconstruction," and W. L. Morton, "Canada and Reconstruction, 1863-79," investigate the lasting impact of American Reconstruction on Latin America and Canada. Professor Bernstein finds that the assassination of Lincoln overshadowed emancipation and states that the anti-*yanqui* feeling and antimaterialism of Latin American intellectuals date from April 1865. The masses of Latin Americans had no noticeable awareness of events in the United States, and the educated class continued to rely on Europe for their roots, ideas, and prejudices. Yet the death note of American slavery doomed the institution in the New World. The example of freedom did not take hold in Brazil, for Brazilians were concerned with state rights, centralism, finance, and exploitation. When Latin Americans finally looked at Reconstruction, they did not like what they saw. Professor Morton points out that Canada did not exist in 1860; residents of the provinces saw two possible results of the Civil War. One was southern success resulting in a balance-of-power system in North America; the other was northern success resulting in one overpowering country. Canadians feared either possibility. Some by-products of Civil War and Reconstruction were the formation of a Canadian army, controversies arising from the Fenian agitation which led to the creation of a Dominion police force, and American demands for the annexation of Canada which stimulated Canadian unity. These articles on Latin America and Canada demonstrate the effects of the Civil War more than reaction to Reconstruction.

C. Vann Woodward, "Seeds of Failure in Radical Race Policy," notes that Republican leaders agreed on who should reconstruct the South and govern the United States, but differed on the rights of the Negro. Since northern congressmen came from a race-conscious and segregated society devoted to white supremacy and Negro inferiority, their purposes were to protect white Northerners from an influx of freedmen. Those interpretations contravene Professor Woodward's previous ideas, and, by his admission of error, he adds to his stature as a historian. The seeds of failure, he states, were the ambiguous and partisan motives in writing and enforcing Reconstruction laws. The laws, however, outlasted the ambiguity of their origin to make the "Second Reconstruction" of our century profoundly indebted

to the first. In his comment, Russel B. Nye believes the antebellum abolition movement to have been concerned more with slavery than with the slave. Before 1860 slavery was a moral problem; after the Civil War the freedman had become a political problem. Reform before the war was individualistic; after the conflict it became collective. Whereas antebellum reformers gradually coalesced on abolition, after the Civil War they dispersed their work to advocate many reforms, none of which possessed the grand quality of freedom.

REMBERT W. PATRICK

University of Georgia

The Hidalgo Revolt: Prelude to Mexican Independence. By Hugh M. Hamill, Jr. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966. xl, 284 pp. Introduction, appendix, bibliography, index. \$7.50.)

The independence movement is a highpoint in the history of Mexico, ranking in interest and importance with the Spanish Conquest, La Reforma, and the Revolution of 1910. But scholarly treatment of the man and the revolt that initiated independence in 1810, has remained incomplete and inadequate in general, and in English, virtually non-existent. Therefore, this impressive study by Professor Hamill is much needed and most welcome. This work is neither a detailed biography of Father Hidalgo nor a minute description of his four-month military campaign. Rather it is a lucid and intelligent analysis of the origin, nature, and course of the famous revolt, viewed as an integral part of the society that spawned it between 1765 and 1811. The author provides a convincing explanation of how the movement developed, why it moved in the direction it did, and why it failed to realize its objectives.

The author begins with a general treatment of the impact of the Enlightenment and Napoleonic policies on the literate populace of colonial New Spain. In examining the response to these influences, he stresses the traditional antagonisms between the dominant Spanish classes, Gachupine and Criollo, against the backdrop of the sullen and occasionally tumultuous resentment

of the Indians and castes. But he adds a new dimension by making a further distinction between "European Criollo" and "American Criollo" and by emphasizing the importance of the unique character of the Bajío region, where the revolt originated, explored, and burned itself out. One of these "American Criollos" of the Bajío was Hidalgo, whose background, education, activities, associations, and aspirations are examined in depth, as are the economic innovations and intellectual ferment he introduced as parish priest in Dolores. The Queretaro conspiracy and the Dolores uprising of September 1810 are analyzed, and the subsequent events are interpreted against the highlights of the Alhondiga massacre, the battle of Monte de las Cruces, the retreat from Mexico City, the defeat at Aculco, the disaster at the bridge of Calderon, and the flight, betrayal, trial, and execution of the rebel leaders in 1811.

Hamill has done extensive research with primary sources in Mexico and the United States, including those in the Archivo General and the Latin American collection of the University of Texas, and has used a wide variety of published primary and secondary materials. The study is well documented, although the publisher's practice of placing the footnotes in the back of the book will exasperate the reader. The two maps are most useful, and the text is written in a clear, readable style.

The interpretation of this explosive era is sound and convincing, but will undoubtedly prove controversial. As the symbolic father of Mexican independence, Hidalgo is that frustrating combination of man and myth, the object both of historical study and national adoration. Hamill's portrayal of Hidalgo is an unimpassioned, scholarly appraisal and, as such, does not shrink from the conclusions pointed up by the evidence. I personally would agree with his arguments but expect that others will take issue on many points. He does not hesitate to point out Hidalgo's failings and his responsibility for some of the worst excesses committed by his horde of undisciplined followers. He considers the failure to attack Mexico City more a symptom of defeat than a cause, and he believes that after his capture Hidalgo did abjure his revolt and regretted his role in it. In conclusion, he astutely observes that in reality there were two overlapping movements - one sparked by the Criollo desire to wrest political con-

trol from the Gachupine; the other ignited by the need of the Indian and caste multitude for social and economic amelioration. These two were antipathetic and their confused intermingling largely explains Hidalgo's failure to achieve either.

ROBERT A. NAYLOR

Fairleigh Dickinson University