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Book Reviews

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The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783. By David H. Corkran. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967. xv, 343 pp. Foreword, introduction, maps, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$5.95.)

Research for this book appears to have occupied the author ever since he published his work on the Cherokee Frontier in 1962. The intervening years were not too many, for he has had to examine thousands of documents merely to unravel the narrative. No one had ever pieced together that record before. The resulting chronology is not exciting reading; moreover, it obscures the generalizations lying somewhere behind the endless specific negotiations. Except for the introduction dealing with Creek culture, the book is a history of Creek diplomacy and war. The author credits the Creeks with a diplomatic triumph in following a policy of neutrality, and in playing off the European nations against each other. Even though the Creeks lost a little ground steadily, at the end of the colonial period they still held most of the area where they were situated when the white men first intruded upon them. Moreover, although they had more enemies than friends, they were not decimated by warfare, as were their neighbors and sometimes-friends sometimes-enemies, the Cherokees.

The initial architect of successful Creek neutrality was Brims, a chief of the Lower Creeks, who gained authority over most of the scattered settlements during the second and third decades of the eighteenth century. Creek organization did not naturally produce centralization; indeed, "too often," Corkran says, "Creek political life presents the picture of bitter division which prevented the councils from taking any stand at all while a species of anarchy exists." But by personal force and hereditary prestige, a leader like Brims could gather a great deal of power. His like was not seen again until the coming of Alexander McGillivray, another great practitioner of neutrality, who appears at the end of the book.

Warfare among the Indians themselves intensified after the white man came because he set the tribes against each other for his own political purposes. The Creeks negotiated and fought almost continuously with the Cherokees and Choctaws, and had incidental negotiations with the Chickasaws, Shawnees, and

others. The European colonizing powers regulated these wars to some degree by imposing trade sanctions to suit their interests. As the Indians had to obtain supplies to live, trade-sanctions were a potent weapon. Thus, there was constant negotiating with the English, French, and Spanish, and then with the United States. As a result of the "Great War for Empire," England pushed France out. This reviewer was astonished to learn how little that critical conflict seemed to have affected the Creeks while it went on; the war is hardly mentioned in the book. Unfortunately for the Creeks, it was of deeper concern to them than they realized. They ought to have heeded the Shawnees, who from time to time sent emissaries to try to unite all the tribes of the Mississippi Valley and of the South against the white invader. As it was, within two years after the expulsion of the French, the Creeks were forced to surrender several million acres to the conquering English.

In general it is sad to note how similar is the mood of Creek diplomacy to that of Europe. It seems dynastic and petty, and the wars seem to have been fought over incidents not worth waging war about. Yet Indian diplomacy, at least with the European powers, touched the vitals of their life at one place: they were utterly dependent upon white men for firearms and ammunition, and they could not live without these. Thus, perhaps the central objective of Indian diplomacy was to assure themselves of a supply of firearms. Corkran does not make this point, but it is one of those generalizations which the mass of detailed narrative seems to force upon the perceptive reader.

JOHN K. MAHON

University of Florida

The Quasi-War: The Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France, 1797-1801. By Alexander De Conde. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966. xiv, 498 pp. Preface, chronology, illustrations, comments on sources, index. \$10.00.)

Some fifteen years ago Professor De Conde, then a young instructor at Whittier College, started reading the materials relat-

ing to the Quasi-War which he found in the Henry E. Huntington Library. Several articles on the subject appeared in due course in the Library's *Quarterly*, offprints of which the present reviewer still retains in his pamphlet collection. This impressive monograph is the end result of these early accomplishments. Of its kind, the book is exceptionally good, free of national bias, and giving full attention to the various points of view and conflicting interests in the three countries mainly concerned—Britain, France, and the United States. Even Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Negro rebel of Saint Domingue, is given his share of attention and made to seem like a real person rather than just a name in the diplomatic histories. He was "a small, ugly man of remarkable ability and intelligence, had been a trusted slave who had not suffered ill-treatment. He was not a bloodthirsty revolutionary. He was, instead, a gifted leader who wielded virtually independent power . . ." (p. 131). A picture (the publisher has been laudably generous with pictures) confirms the characterization.

Actually the book does more than deal with the Quasi-War alone. It reaches back almost to Jay's Treaty (1794) and forward in a sense to the Louisiana Purchase (both of which are intertwined in the history of Florida), showing how French hostility was the response to Jay's Treaty, viewed in France as an Anglo-American alliance, and how in turn the termination of the Quasi-War opened the way for the negotiations culminating in the acquisition of Louisiana. Talleyrand becomes an attractive, fascinating figure in the book, an able and well-informed diplomat who knows full well it is against French interest to carry matters to extremities with the United States. I could wish that the author had been able to throw more light on just how the French emissaries in the United States, MM. Fauchet and Adet, tried to manipulate internal American politics to their advantage; but since De Conde was so thorough with his sources, it seems likely that precise evidence in this regard simply does not exist. His description of the "black cockade fever" in the United States which nearly forced a war declaration against France and led to the alien and sedition laws is very effective.

All in all this is a very successful monograph which historians interested in the affairs of the rising American Republic at a crucial turning point in its career will need to consult. The pub-

lisher too deserves a word of thanks for the handsome book which he has produced.

RICHARD W. VAN ALSTYNE

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Robert Toombs of Georgia. By William Y. Thompson. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966. xiii, 281 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$7.50.)

Robert Toombs was a product of southern culture, a man caught up in the furor of an emotion-filled era, a victim of his environment. Like so many Southerners of good background, wealth, and training, he followed a certain pattern. As a youth he was a reckless southern cavalier, an undisciplined, obstreperous lad, impatient with authority and unobservant of it. Excessive drinking, gambling, fighting, expulsion from schools - such activities made up his record. Because of his family and his potential ability, however, Georgians overlooked these early indiscretions, and after he settled down, rewarded him with public office. In the 1840s he represented the Whigs in Congress and supported their tendency towards nationalism, their desire for a high tariff, a national bank, and internal improvements. Then in the 1850s as slavery became more and more dominant, he evolved into a States' Righter, a man fraught with suspicion and distrust of Northerners.

In spite of an astute mind, personal magnetism, and an unusual dramatic flare for politics, Toombs became a pathetic political figure, a man who nearly - but not quite - achieved greatness. His Achilles' heel was a voracious, excessive, almost self-destructive egotism. He was like the man who said to a friend: "I don't trust anyone but you and me, and I'm not so sure about you." If he could not lead, he would not follow. It seemed that no one could measure up to his standards or was capable enough to please him, not Howell Cobb, surely not Jefferson Davis, and not even Robert E. Lee. Only his close friend and colleague, Alexander H. Stephens, was accorded his confidence and trust. Even after the Civil War he remained aloof, therefore often alone. To Georgians

he personified the "unreconstructed rebel," the proud Southerner undaunted by defeat. Nor was he out of character in 1880 by supporting Ulysses S. Grant for a third presidential term, for, as he put it, "if a crisis should come he [Grant] would be more apt to destroy the Union which I so earnestly desire."

This life of Robert Toombs is a noteworthy and welcome addition to the Southern Biographical Series. Despite certain stylistic lapses, William Y. Thompson, chairman of the Social Science Department at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, has written a thoroughly researched, readable work. At times he may have contracted the "biographer's disease," that of being overly sympathetic or of underplaying certain questionable actions of his hero. But overall, he has developed for the reader an understanding of Toombs and the period in which he lived.

BEN PROCTER

Texas Christian University

Dear Ones at Home: Letters from Contraband Camps. Selected and edited by Henry L. Swint. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1966. 274 pp. Introduction, map, bibliography, index. \$6.95.)

Almost all the letters in this book were written by Lucy and Sarah Chase, two sisters who came South from Massachusetts in 1863, to be teachers of Negro slaves living in "contraband camps" behind the Union army lines. In an account of their first several months' work in Virginia, Lucy wrote: "Upon Craney Island we 'cared for' (very indifferently and superficially, of course) two thousand negroes [*sic*]. . . . We clothed them; helped them patch their rags; caused them to make bed-ticks for themselves; tried to teach them cleanliness. . . . Taught some - yes, many, to read and write, working ourselves twelve hours a day."

Obviously teaching was only one of the tasks the Misses Chase accepted for themselves. Since the Negroes came to the camps with only the clothing on their backs, and often in rags, the ladies sent home to freedmen's aid societies for "broad, coarse shoes . . . stockings, Dresses, coarse and stout, petticoats, and blankets." When they got cloth, they cut it out and set Negro women to work-

ing with their needles. "We consider it feasible to unite study and sewing," wrote Lucy, "so we hang our A. B. C. card upon the walls, and keep heads and fingers busy." In doling out clothing and blankets-and sometimes food and medicine-the sisters took pains not to make paupers of the Negroes. They taught them that a free man must work and support his own family. In their letters to aid societies they emphasized that opportunities to earn a living would benefit the Negroes "more than any other kind of help." They helped organize an "Industrial School" and a savings bank for the freedmen of Norfolk, and they urged that northern charity be withheld from Negroes able but unwilling to earn their livelihood.

Gradually, as time passed, and as the Negroes' condition somewhat improved, the Chase sisters were able to give more and more of their attention to teaching the freedmen reading and writing. In 1869, shortly before ending her work in the South, Lucy wrote from Gordonsville, Virginia, where she was the only teacher in an ungraded school. She required her pupils "to learn the meaning of all the important words in every-days reading-lessons," she spent "a good deal of time in teaching Arithmetic both Mental and Written," she had three classes in geography, and she heard "the whole school spell daily from a speller."

Between Craney Island and Gordonsville, Lucy and Sarah Chase traveled and taught in many parts of the South Atlantic states. Their letters from such places as Richmond, New Bern, Charleston, Savannah, and Columbus are graphic in their descriptions both of places and of people. There is one letter from Florida, written in Lake City on January 14, 1869, which describes a Christmas party in the freedmen's schoolroom. There is one comment more generally descriptive of life in Lake City in 1869: Lucy reported that she had given one of the nicer gifts available to a "reverent and faithful Union man" who had told her, "The people here would starve, before they would buy bread of a Republican!" There were, of course, teachers like the Chase sisters who taught in Florida towns and cities and who left reports of their work in Freedmen's Bureau and freedmen's aid society records. It would be a service if their letters and reports could be published in a book similar to Professor Swint's *Dear Ones At Home*. Except for "local color," however, freedmen's school experiences in one part of the South were very similar to those

in any other part. The Chase sisters, with Professor Swint's able editing, give an excellent and interesting portrayal of these experiences.

GEORGE R. BENTLEY

University of Florida

At Ease in Zion: A Social History of Southern Baptists, 1865-1900. By Rufus B. Spain. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967. xiii, 247 pp. Preface, introduction, bibliography, appendixes, index. \$6.95.)

Recently, historians have explored with increasing profit the role of religion in American life. Charles Hopkins and Robert M. Miller have demonstrated the dynamic interaction between Protestantism and social issues. *At Ease in Zion* attempts to locate the enigmatic Southern Baptists within this interaction. This study of the years from 1865 to 1900 provides some excellent insights into the Baptist view of politics, race relations, economics, and social morality. It also leaves some lingering questions.

The author certainly supports his premise that Southern Baptists conformed to their society more than they influenced it. They fulminated against church-state relations, big government, northern agitators, and politically-oriented preachers. But the major portion of this study deals with the enduring dilemma of a Christian church trying to rationalize white-only Christianity. Perhaps the author's most intriguing conclusion involves Negro initiative in establishing segregated churches. Denied a role of leadership in white-dominated congregations, he sought "emancipation" in his own church where he could be free of white supervision and leadership. Actually, some white Baptists resisted this separation, feeling safer when they could keep a wary eye on their colored brethren. The traditional response that Baptists were interested in the souls of black folks if not in their living conditions is exploded by Professor Spain. In 1871, the Domestic Mission Board supported only one missionary to the South's 4,000,000 Negroes, while it sponsored twelve missionaries to the American Indians, two among Germans, and even one to California's Chinese. A Florida Baptist summarized his denomination's apathy when he wrote that the "Knotty problem" of race must be left to an "All-Wise Providence."

Spain contends that Baptists were generally conservative on economic matters. Though applauding improved farming methods, their religious periodicals either avoided or condemned the Populists. In the tradition of the "Gospel of Wealth," Southern Baptists considered poverty and wealth ordained by God. The *Florida Baptist Witness* pronounced labor unions "undemocratic" and "un-American." Gradually attitudes changed, and by the end of the nineteenth century some Baptist publications were attacking child labor and calling for government arbitration of labor disputes. In the realm of personal morality, Florida Baptists, together with Baptists throughout the South, were diligent in their assaults on state lotteries and legalized gambling. Strong drink drew their condemnation, though a surprising minority championed such biblical literalism that they insisted on using wine in communion services. A more typical Baptist position was reflected by the Florida Baptist Convention in 1895, which adjudged liquor the most "destructive curse of the 19th century. . . ."

While the author has revealed dominant threads in Baptist thought, some basic questions remain. Professor Spain has relied almost entirely on convention reports and the Baptist press, both more representative of the denominational hierarchy than the rank and file. It is true that Baptists could refuse to subscribe to the privately owned denominational papers as a means of protesting their editorial positions; but only a small minority ever did subscribe, undoubtedly representing the most prosperous of the faithful. Research in southern organized labor, progressivism, and the Populist movement demonstrates that many Baptists most certainly did not fit into the Baptist consensus, especially in the 1890s. Deeper research into accounts of sermons and denominational affiliation of labor union activists and Populists would have revealed a number of liberal Baptist politicians and reformers. Statistical analysis of voting trends in predominantly Baptist counties might reveal conclusions at variance with the author's conclusions on economic thought, particularly during periods of economic crisis such as strikes or depression.

Despite this criticism, *At Ease in Zion* is still a valuable contribution to the study of the southern religious mind. This book is an important summary of the organizational influence of the denomination.

WAYNE FLINT

Samford University

Forgotten Voices: Dissenting Southerners in an Age of Conformity.

Edited by Charles E. Wynes. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967. xi, 138 pp. Introduction, photographs, bibliography. \$4.50.)

This is a collection of essays by Southerners who protested against the prevailing racism of the period 1885-1909. As the editor notes, it is a small volume because there were few courageous enough openly to take such a stand against a still militant South. Yet, a few did. Segregation, legal inequities, lynching, convict labor, the full gamut of racial inequality were eloquently condemned by George Washington Cable, Thomas U. Dudley, Thomas E. Watson, Lewis Harvey Blair, Andrew Sledd, John Spenser Bassett, and Quincy Ewing. Blair and Watson later recanted; the others held firm, maintaining in differing degrees what the two turncoats had shared with them in believing, that morality, economics, justice, and common sense argued irrefutably against continued American apartheid.

Two major lessons emerge from the essays. First, the hold of racist sentiment on the southern mind was so strong that the reasoned arguments of these men either could be ignored or, in the cases of Cable and Bassett, the cause of violent denunciation. As all the writers understood, the rebuttal to the logic of self-interest and common decency was the cry of "Nigger equality!" Minds snapped shut and the South lay with broken limbs in its self-sprung trap of ignorance and poverty. The second lesson is that despite a prevailing climate of active anti-Negro sentiment such ideas could grow, be circulated, and the writers, in most instances, remained unvictimized for their nonconformist views. As Wynes observes, southern society apparently allowed minority views in those cases where the minority was sure to remain small.

Despite their loneliness these voices deserve to be forgotten no longer. They tried to explain the South to itself. They sought to encourage liberation from the incubus of racism. These criticisms of southern mores by Southerners illuminate with sympathetic understanding the major tragedy of Dixie life. However, we could wish that this illumination had been increased by more editorial analysis. The introductory material provided by Wynes is too brief. His comments do suggest the limited nature of southern liberalism. He observes that all the essayists believed in white

supremacy, and he notes that their environments played an important role in determining popular reaction to their writings. His providing of biographical data is useful.

Wynes ignores, however, other possibilities suggested by the material. Of significance is the fact that most of the essayists accepted the mythology of Reconstruction as a period of near military despotism. Their hatred for what they conceived of as total national control of southern society led them to seek the solution to local problems primarily in the South itself. Surely it would be worth analysis to try to understand what was the effect of combining race superiority with local sovereignty to produce part of southern liberal thought. Perhaps the materials of this most useful book would have been even more usefully presented in an analytical article. There we could not only hear these forgotten voices, but could better understand the logical weaknesses which led to their tragic lack of influence.

PHILLIP S. PALUDAN

University of Illinois

The South Since Appomattox: A Century of Regional Change.

By Thomas D. Clark and Albert D. Kirwan. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. vii, 438 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$7.50.)

"A century of southern history," write the authors of this volume, "had been marked by hills and valleys of crises. An agrarian society surrendered slowly to modernization. A farm-oriented economy definitely shaped the nature of constitutional government, the cast of politics, and largely explained the incapacities of state governments to confront the industrial and social revolution of mid-century. So far in the past century as there was a 'New South,' it has been only since 1930 that the region could truly lay claim to 'newness,' and it is only since 1945 that this has been really true." This statement aptly summarizes the underlying theme of the book which traces the processes of change and transition. The great majority of the chapters deal with the period since 1900, and fully half of them with developments since 1930. In the first half, chapters on politics are

interspersed with chapters on social and economic change. The later chapters, however, integrate all trends in describing the impact on the South of the depression, New Deal, World War II, and the changing status of the Negro. The result is a considerable amount of overlapping and some confusion, such as the discussion of the agrarian revolt in chapter three before a description of the farmers' problems in chapter four.

The style is polished, and footnotes are used only to cite quoted material. The book cannot be described as definitive or comprehensive, because the subjects treated are highly selective. Much attention is given agricultural and educational changes both of which have been emphasized in two other recent books by Professor Clark (*The Emerging South* and *Three Paths to the Modern South*) as fundamental in bringing the South into the mainstream of national affairs. The general reader will be amply rewarded by the balanced interpretation of both the faults and accomplishments of the South, and both student and general reader can benefit by the useful summary in the last five chapters of developments in the 1950s and 1960s. An annotated bibliography includes much recently published material. More careful editing would have eliminated such errors as incorrect titles for two of C. Vann Woodward's books (p. 388).

ALLEN J. GOING

University of Houston

Negroes and the New Southern Politics. By Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966. xvi, 551 pp. Preface, introduction, figures, tables, epilogue, appendixes, index. \$12.50.)

This is the most important study of the South and the Negro since Key's *Southern Politics* and Myrdal's *The American Dilemma*. But for the historian it is likely to be a frustrating book to read. Partly this is the inevitable price one pays in the development of a self-conscious "social science," with its great and necessary concern for methodology. But the problem is heightened by the authors' emphasis on a rather shallow psychological approach (popular in voting studies in the 1950s) and by a needless

tendency to ignore the role of political leaders, the importance of individual states, and the historical dimension itself. Unlike Key and Myrdal, the authors—who are leading political scientists at the University of North Carolina—seem to have had no significant theory or overview to guide them.

The authors concentrate most of their attention on two main sources of data relating to the changing political role of the Negro in the South. First, they analyze the level of Negro voter registration for southern counties as of 1958 (a year in which the Civil Rights Commission collected such data for most areas where it is not normally reported). The level of Negro registration in a given county can be thought of as a balance achieved between the strength of factors disposing Negroes to attempt to register and strength of factors tending to prevent Negro registration (both overt white opposition and Negro apathy). Overtime methods of white opposition have been narrowed, and as Negro registration builds up there comes some positive “feedback” in the way of benefits. The problem is to disentangle the strength of Negro efforts at registration and of white opposition—econometricians face a similar dilemma in the study of supply and demand, but by using time series as well as cross-sectional data they have been able to do so. Matthews and Prothro, however, limit their efforts to a crude multiple regression analysis of the 1958 registration figures exclusively, largely in relation to 1950 census data (1960 data would be preferable), plus some political variables. The results generally confirm the view of Key and others that the percentage of Negro population is the most basic factor. But it is strange that the authors have not done more with the “causal modelling” approach developed at Chapel Hill by Hubert M. Blalock.

The second major source of data lies in the authors’ own sample survey, conducted early in 1961 by interviewers of the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. Over 600 adult Negroes and a slightly larger number of southern whites were interviewed, a tremendous and obviously difficult undertaking. Much of the analysis of the individual Negro interviews turns on a scale of political participation which is cumulative for the whites but not for the Negroes. As a result the “high” Negro participants may indeed never have succeeded in voting or regis-

tering, again introducing a serious flaw into the analytic framework.

The flaws in the analysis are the more disconcerting since the structure rests so heavily on the particular data collected, although passing attention is given to four local community studies. There are no descriptions of the evolution of politics or campaigning in individual southern states, no effort at interviewing political leaders (white or Negro), and no systematic use of local election returns. In short, most of what made Key's *Southern Politics* an important book has been jettisoned in favor of 1950s-style survey research with a maximum of psychology and a minimum of linkages to politics. Historians should find their data valuable for a cross-sectional view of the South *circa* 1960, but will have to take thought for themselves on how to relate it to the broad sweep of political change in the postwar South.

HUGH DOUGLAS PRICE

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