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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

William Augustus Bowles: Director General of the Creek Nation.

By J. Leitch Wright, Jr. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967. viii, 211 pp. Preface, illustration, map, bibliography, index. \$6.95.)

One of the most interesting of the freebooters, fillibusterers, or adventurers who were so numerous in the region of Florida and the Gulf coast during the period following the American Revolution was William Augustus Bowles. Although few American historians have had very much detailed knowledge of his activities, he was known to have had great influence among the Creek and Seminole Indians.

Bowles, born in Frederick County, Maryland, was the son of Thomas Bowles, a man of considerable means. A Loyalist during the American Revolution, William Bowles saw active service as an ensign in a Maryland Loyalist regiment. After garrison duty in New York and Philadelphia, he participated in the defense of Pensacola against Bernardo de Galvez. William left his regiment during his stay in Florida and lived for a time among the Indians, acquiring two Indian wives. The first was a Cherokee, whom he soon abandoned; the second was Mary, daughter of Chief Perryman, an influential Lower Creek half-breed.

After the Revolution Bowles took up residence in Nassau and fell under the influence of John Miller, a Loyalist merchant, and the Earl of Dunmore, the new governor of the Bahamas and former governor of New York and Virginia. Both of these men were extremely interested in reestablishing their profitable trade with the southern Indians and possibly establishing an independent Indian state on the Gulf coast, ideas strikingly similar to some of the British plans for the Great Lakes area. The key to the Indian trade at that time was probably the loyalty of Alexander McGillivray, and in 1787, Bowles, because of his friendship and his Indian relatives, was chosen by Miller and Dunmore to win the support of McGillivray. Unfortunately, Bowles and McGillivray were really rivals for power, and although they cooperated for a time, McGillivray eventually sided with William Panton of Panton,

Leslie and Company of Pensacola, principal rival of Miller and Dunmore.

The Nootka controversy gave young William and his partners considerable unofficial British support, but the settlement of this dispute dashed any hope of official English involvement. During his stay with the Creeks, William proclaimed himself Director General of the Creek nation and was known among the Indians as Eastajoca. In his effort to reduce the influence of the rival Panton, Leslie and Company, and to supply goods for his followers, Bowles seized Panton's store near Apalachicola in 1792. The Spanish unable to protect Panton's holdings, lured Bowles aboard a Spanish ship under the pretext of entering into negotiations. Once on board ship William was captured and remained a prisoner until he escaped five years later. By 1799 Eastajoca was again in the West Indies. Aided by new international hostilities Bowles was soon back in power in the Muskogee nation. By early 1801 the Director General was not only enjoying some success on land, having temporarily captured St. Marks, but had commissioned a small fleet of ships to operate as raiders against Spanish commerce. The Muskogee navy, manned by Britishers, Americans, and Indians, proved to be extremely damaging not only to Spanish commerce but also to Spanish prestige.

Improved relations between Britain and Spain and the arrival of John Halkett as the new governor of the Bahamas led to the downfall of Bowles and the Muskogee navy, thus severing Bowles' source of supply. Halkett was the avowed enemy of Lord Dunmore and Miller and anxious to restore good relations between Spain and Britain. By the summer of 1803 the fortunes of the Muskogee were at their lowest ebb and Bowles in desperation decided to gamble on regaining his power by attending a meeting at the Hickory Ground where he hoped to win back his lost followers. While attending this meeting William was arrested and delivered to the Spanish, who imprisoned him at Morro Castle in Cuba. He remained there until his death, thus ending for the time all hope of establishing the state of Muskogee.

This short but significant study is well written and carefully researched, largely from hitherto little-used manuscript materials. The author has used British, Spanish, and American archives as well as private papers to good advantage in digging out an accurate

account of the elusive Bowles. The work is well worth the time of the scholar and general reader alike and is indispensable to those who wish to understand the history of Florida and the Gulf coast. Relatively little research of this scope has been done by United States historians and in producing this work Professor Wright has opened much virgin territory.

Although much has been written concerning the border conspiracies and Indian troubles in the Northwest, less has been done with this type of activities on the southern frontier. Perhaps with the exception of Arthur P. Whitaker, John W. Caughey, I. J. Cox, and a few others, relatively little use has been made of either the Archivo General de Indias or the Public Record Office materials which constitute an enormous and necessary source for any work on this area. Dr. Wright's work has shown perhaps more clearly than any so far the importance of the British West Indies to the southern frontier.

FRANK L. OWSLEY, JR.

Auburn University

Man in the Everglades: 2,000 Years of Human History in the Everglades National Park. By Charlton W. Tebeau. (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1968. 192 pp. Preface, illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$4.95; paperback \$2.95.)

Professor Tebeau's new book is the third in the series entitled "Copeland Studies in Florida History" published by the University of Miami Press. Its subtitle, "2,000 Years of Human History in the Everglades National Park," is a fairly good outline of the book itself. The first chapter, "A Subtropical Wilderness," deals chiefly with a general description of the geography, the flora and fauna of the Glades. From that point on emphasis is on the people who have lived in the area. They are a tough and colorful lot. But since there has always been more water, mangroves, and mosquitoes than people in the Everglades, nature still dominates the story.

Chapter headings will serve to summarize the book. "Glades Indians - Calusa, Tequesta, and Seminole" tells what little is

known of the pre-Columbian Indians, of their disappearance, and the arrival of the Seminoles. "Exploration and Indian Removal" deals with the Seminole Wars and with the white man's struggle to learn something of the mystery of the Glades. (He learned slowly and the hard way because there was no other.) Professor Tebeau then divides the Park (his attention throughout is centered on that part of the Everglades with the National Park) into four sections: "Chatam Bend and Possum Key," "Lostman's and Shark Rivers," "Down at the Cape," and "Flamingo," and discusses the persons who have lived in each section. There is a final chapter describing how the National Park came into being. This device of dealing with the Park section by section is not always successful. Where men and events have not been confined to one area, their stories are sometimes incomplete in one chapter but repetitious in another. Occasionally the time element tends to become confused. This organization of material is the weakest part of the book.

It would be difficult, however, to fault Professor Tebeau on his research. He has had a longtime love affair with the Everglades. At least two of his earlier books, *Florida's Last Frontier* and *Chokoloskee Bay Country* have dealt with much of this same area. *Man in the Everglades* is, quite obviously, the result of years of dedicated research. Sometimes it seems that Dr. Tebeau has tracked down the names and dates for everybody who ever built a shack or lived for a month on a fishing boat within the confines of the Everglades.

"History," Tebeau writes in his preface, "is stacked in favor of those who leave records, and few of those who have lived on isolated frontiers either produce or preserve historical documents of any sort." As a result, many of the best stories about men in the Everglades are based on hearsay, gossip, or sometimes pure speculation. Professor Tebeau is too much the professional historian to allow himself or his reader to confuse legend with documented truth. Indeed, this reviewer wishes he had allowed himself a bit more freedom with hearsay and personal speculation in order to flesh out the bare bones of some of his facts. For instance, Tebeau writes that Guy Bradley "was killed in 1905 protecting a rookery from plume hunters. He was buried at East Cape where a memorial to him was erected." And that's that.

There are places in *Man in the Everglades* where Professor Tebeau seems almost self consciously aware that he is reworking material he has used in other books, and drops it before he has done full justice to the material. Whether this be true or not, some of the writing lacks the verve and enthusiasm of his *Florida's Last Frontier*. But there are also times when the splendid stories of the Everglades get the best of the professional historian's restraint and come leaping wonderfully to life. There is an excellent retelling of the Ed Watson legend with one side of Watson's character revealed that, so far as I know, has not been shown before. There are some very good bootlegging stories. And on the subject of Everglade's mosquitoes, Tebeau writes like a man who has been there and truly knows that you can "swing a pint cup and catch a quart of mosquitoes."

Maps accompany each sectional chapter on the Glades, and these are good. I wish, however, that the overall map had been more complete. The photographs, old and new, are excellent. Two pictures of the Poinciana Company on Onion Key before and after the 1926 hurricane tell a story that needs no words.

WYATT BLASSINGAME

Anna Maria, Florida

Rear Admiral John Rodgers, 1812-1882. By Robert E. Johnson. (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1966. xiv. 426 pp. Preface, illustrations, appendix, bibliography, index. \$10.00.)

John Rodgers, a little known but important figure in the nineteenth century American Navy, was born to the sea. He was the son of Commodore John Rodgers. As there was no naval academy at the time sixteen-year old John was ready to enter the navy in 1829, and he was shipped as an acting-midshipman. Assigned to the frigate *Constellation*, Rodgers spent the next three years with the Mediterranean Squadron. He passed the examination for lieutenant in 1834, but as there were no billets then open in that rank, he was granted a year's leave of absence to attend the University of Virginia.

Readers of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* will find interesting the chapters dealing with Rodgers' service in the Florida Squadron during the Seminole War. The ships of the squadron operated off the Florida coast, and on a number of occasions Rodgers led landing parties which penetrated deep into unexplored reaches of the Everglades. Although contact with the hostiles was infrequent, these patrols added to the geographic knowledge of the area. While assigned to the Coast Survey in the period 1849-1852, Rodgers and his men charted the Florida Keys, Mosquito Inlet, and the shoals off St. Andrew's Sound and Cape Canaveral.

Rodgers' next assignment was with the expedition fitting to conduct "a survey and reconnaissance for naval and commercial purposes, of such parts of Behrings Strait of the North Pacific Ocean and of the China Seas, as are frequented by American whaleships . . ." When the commanding officer was relieved by a medical survey board, Rodgers, as senior officer present assumed charge of the expedition. This was his most important command to date. In the summer of 1855, he took *Vincennes* through Bering Straits and into the Artic Ocean.

When the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, Rodgers, although he was from Maryland and had many close friends who supported the South, had no difficulty deciding his future; it was unthinkable that he should not fight for the Union. His first assignment, while exciting, was unsuccessful. He was given the mission of destroying the drydock at the Gosport Navy Yard, but was captured instead by the Virginians. Upon being released, he was sent to the midwest to help outfit an inland navy, and although he was soon superceded, Rodgers had a leading role in the creation of what was destined to become the Mississippi Squadron. Besides outfitting three timberclads, he, along with several others, can be considered the father of the river ironclads.

On his return to the Atlantic coast, Rodgers participated in the expedition that led to the capture of the forts guarding the approaches to Port Royal. In April 1862, in command of the ironclad *Galena*, he led a small force up the James River in a thrust, which if undertaken several days earlier, might have led to the fall of Richmond. It was now too late, and Rodgers' vessels were checked by the Confederate battery at Drewery's Bluff. As befitting one of the few officers having confidence in the monitors, Rodgers' next command was *Weehawken*. With this ship he par-

ticipated in the unsuccessful April 7, 1863, attack on the defense of Charleston Harbor. Two months later, he engaged and compelled the surrender of the Confederate ironclad *Atlanta*, for which he received the thanks of Congress.

Rodgers' post war career was as varied as it was outstanding. He led a squadron through the Straits of Magellen and up the west coast of South America. There he became passively involved in the conflict between Spain and a triple alliance consisting of Chile, Peru, and Ecuador. Two years were spent in the Far East as commander of the Asiatic Squadron. On his return to the United States Rodgers first served as commandant of the Mare Island Navy Yard, and at the time of his death in 1882 he was superintendent of the Naval Observatory.

Professor Johnson has performed a masterful task in telling the John Rodgers story, which in essence is a capsule history of our navy from 1829 to 1882. His book is well-written and is one that the reader will not wish to lay aside. He has consulted all sources, both primary and secondary. It is apparent to your reviewer that in working his way through hundreds of feet of documents Dr. Johnson has winnowed the seed from the chaff. The subject matter is well organized and synthesized. His interpretations are sound. This book is a must for naval historians, for those interested in the history of Florida, and for Civil War buffs. In the opinion of your reviewer, *Rear Admiral John Rodgers* is a first rate publication, and Dr. Johnson in naval jargon rates a 4.0 for his efforts.

EDWIN C. BEARSS

National Park Service
Washington, D. C.

Founders and Frontiersmen: Historic Places Commemorating Early Nationhood and the Westward Movement, 1783-1828.
Edited by Robert G. Ferris and Richard Morris. (Washington: National Park Service, 1967. xii, 410 pp. Foreword, illustrations, maps, index. \$3.00 from supt. doc.)

Founders and Frontiersmen fits a particular bracket of time and endeavors to select the most nationally significant historic places "commemorating early nationhood and westward move-

ment, 1783-1828." This is the "theme" approach which the National Park Service has adopted for this excellent and very helpful series. It does, however, introduce a great many problems for the editors in terms of what sites to include and which to exclude, since they must select them in terms of chronology as well as significance, the latter already determined by the selection committee. (See map of the historic sites, unpagged between pp. 102-03.)

The volume is introduced by ninety-eight pages of competent descriptive text by Charles H. McCormack which sets the historical background and makes no pretense by footnotes or original research to new contributions to the field. The general editor, Robert G. Ferris, has been assisted in this particular volume by Richard E. Morris who has assembled much of the historical and factual data relative to the sites selected. This, as the editor points out, has been compiled and written by a long list of N.P.S. historians who remain anonymous as respects their particular contributions, in the N.P.S. tradition of staff work. Involved in the total process is a consulting committee of outside scholars, which assists the advisory board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, which recommends the final selections to the secretary of the interior. "Selection" means "eligibility;" the owner may then apply for the appropriate certificate and plaque, "attesting to the distinction."

Selection has been a problem, even for the Park Service. They have had internal problems, with such spots as "Wakefield," George Washington's birthplace site. A perfectly valid historic site, it has on it a house reconstructed originally to be the birthplace home, but without any real archeological or documentary evidence. The importance of terminology in historic site description was never more clear than in the delicate, almost apologetic approach to this problem: "This memorial mansion at this site symbolizes 'Wakefield,' where George Washington was born . . . and is only a general representation of a Virginia plantation house of the 18th century . . . based on tradition and surviving houses of the period. Archeological excavations by the National Park Service and others have revealed foundation remnants that might well have been those of the original house."

Readers of *Florida Historical Quarterly* will, of course, be interested to know how Florida is represented, and it can be reported

that West Florida is very well represented. While there are no "sites in the National Park System" in the list of "sites eligible for the registry of National Historic Landmarks," we find two from Pensacola: Fort San Carlos de Barrancas and Plaza Ferdinand VII, the first a significant step in the Spanish fort building in Florida which began at Castillo San Marcos in St. Augustine, and the second the site of Jackson's acceptance of the transfer of West Florida to the United States, March 12, 1821. Among "other sites considered" is the Pantan-Leslie warehouse site in Pensacola and San Marcos de Apalache near Tallahassee (which just as the book was going to press, was declared eligible for the Registry). Nothing else in Florida was deemed significant during this period.

In a volume of this sort, there are scores of acknowledgements, and it is hard to make distinctions among them. But the names of Ronald F. Lee, former assistant director and chief of the Division of Interpretation, and Herbert E. Kahler, former chief of the Division of History and Archeology, should be noted particularly in any review of volumes in this series. It was their pioneering scholarship and persistence which brought the historic site work within the National Park Service to its present level of professional distinction.

Being a guidebook and not an original contribution to scholarly research, the book has "Suggested Reading" instead of a bibliography, and the thirty volumes listed are the standard useful ones. Special attention should be drawn to the most significant two pages in the volume (319-20) where are listed the "Criteria for Selection for Historic Sites of Exceptional Value." Before any reader begins to wonder why something is in and something else is out, he must thoroughly digest these twelve criteria, put together after many years of intensive discussions, revision, and criticism.

In a staff approach, there will obviously be inconsistencies. Sometimes the photographs do not seem to be well coordinated with the text, at least in respect to captions. An example is the notation in one spot that Gallatin returned in 1823 and sold Friendship Hill; in another that he added a wing 1823-1824. Dates are notoriously tricky for buildings, and there are questionable ones. But on the whole, the historians have been properly skeptical of "traditional" claims and modest in their own.

These are pioneer volumes which emphasize that not all historic sources are on paper. Archeologists, of course, have always

known this; historians sometimes overlook it. Amongst those remnants of our past preserved in historic sites or within the compass of our indoor and outdoor museums, lie many of the indispensable social and economic materials for an understanding of where we came from and how we came to be what we are. The N.P.S. in this series attempts to make an orderly assessment of those we call "historic sites."

EARLE W. NEWTON

*Pensacola Historical Restoration
and Preservation Commission*

The Papers of John C. Calhoun. Volume III, 1818-1819.

Edited by W. Edwin Hemphill. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1967. xxxiii, 772 pp. Preface, introduction, bibliography, index. \$10.00.)

This third volume of the Calhoun papers covers an eight month period (August 1818 through March 1819), during which, as secretary of war, and, for part of the time, acting secretary of the navy and acting President, he was so busy with administrative matters that he had little time or inclination for personal or political correspondence. So many letters addressed to him and sent out in his name are to be found in the National Archives that if all were included, a volume of this approximate size would have been required for each month. The editor, for this reason, has been reluctantly forced to abandon any thought of complete publication, and instead has provided a finding list for all entirely routine correspondence, detailed abstracts of letters and documents involving policy decisions, and has reserved verbatim transcriptions to those, which, in his opinion, have significant importance.

The way thus has been opened for each user to engage in pointless quarrels over what has been excluded or abstracted, and the editor, seeking to forestall such impatient critics, has prepared a detailed introduction in which he describes the sixteen most important topics or themes found in this volume. Here with clarity and understanding the contributions and attitudes of Calhoun are described toward such disputed questions as internal improvements, Indian trade, Jackson's actions during

the First Seminole War, and any interested user, by turning to the detailed index, can easily find the particular items he needs. There are a number of entries relating to the defenses of East and West Florida, Spanish reoccupation of Pensacola in 1818, and American acquisition of Florida in 1819.

It is to be hoped that the editor, in subsequent volumes, will be even more ruthless in his exclusion of routine administrative correspondence. Calhoun, it is entirely evident, was an excellent, innovative, and considerate administrator of the war department, and further evidence on this point is unnecessary. Students of such particular problems are so rare that their interest may be disregarded, and what is needed for the understanding of American history is that the scattered political correspondence of this important participant should be gathered together in a single and easily available source as rapidly as it can be done.

THOMAS P. GOVAN

University of Oregon

The Slave Ship Wanderer. By Tom Henderson Wells. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967. 107 pp. Illustrations, appendix, bibliography, index. \$5.00.)

Fifty years after Congress outlawed the African slave trade, the yacht *Wanderer* stealthily approached Jekyll Island, Georgia, from seaward, crossed the bar, passed through the St. Andrew Sound, anchored on the sheltered land side of the island off the Dubignon plantation landing, and off-loaded approximately 400 African slaves in the early hours of dawn on November 29, 1858. This was the last successful venture of this nature, on such a scale, to be conducted within the United States. It was, according to the author, the fulfillment of an elaborate plot conceived by Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar, a young, wealthy gentleman of Savannah, to demonstrate his "right" to bring slaves into the country despite the legal and moral condemnation of the nation's northern majority. The author's presentation is in two parts. The first four chapters provide the background and the historical events leading up to the notorious debarkation; the concluding chapters present the attempt of the authorities to gather and present evidence of this

unlawful slave voyage in various courts. The proceedings against the owners and certain crewmen were unsuccessful due to the legal and not so legal maneuvers of Lamar, aided greatly by the rising southern sectionalism over the national debate of the moral issue of slavery *per se*; whereas, in the admiralty court, the *Wanderer* was found to be a slaver and declared forfeited.

The principle objections to this book are two: the lack of a clear cut underlying theme, and the, at times, confusing presentation. In the former case the author tries to combine the history of the *Wanderer*, the affairs of Charles Lamar, and the growing emotionalism concerning slavery in the South into one central narrative, but he succeeds only in weakening and distorting the focus of his work. The later objection may possibly be due to the nature of this type of historical problem. It is more difficult to research illegal operations because of the paucity of evidence and the wilful creation of erroneous information by the principals, not to confuse later historians, but to mislead contemporary legal authorities. Thus such a problem as this may be an exciting hunt for bits and pieces of historical facts to put the puzzle together, but, unfortunately, the average reader does not share vicariously such excitement and desires only a clear and interesting presentment. The author has allowed the thrill of the research chase to cloud his narrative with many irrelevant historical facts.

This work is another study proving the undisputed fact that the South developed an emotional attitude toward slavery which overcame rational thought in the decade prior to the Civil War. Its uniqueness is its subject matter - the single successful venture of the *Wanderer*. Notwithstanding the close proximity of Jekyll Island to Florida none of the major events recorded took place south of the state line. Florida is mentioned only in a most peripheral manner. The author presents a brief and interesting account of the U. S. Navy's African Squadron. The task of curtailing the slave trade at its source, and the problems encountered in performing that mission are succinctly stated. Also the difficulty of controlling merchant vessel movements in the days before modern communication is very well taken. Finally, to this reviewer, the distribution of the slaves once landed on the Georgia coast proved most interesting.

GEORGE E. BUKER

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