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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Settlement of Florida.* By Charles E. Bennett. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1968. xvi, 253 pp. Introduction, illustrations, appendixes, index. \$12.50.)

“No man who gives his life to support a worthwhile principle,” writes Congressman Charles Bennett, “should be ignored by history.” In Bennett’s new book, Florida’s early heroes are their own historians. And the portraits they evoke are giant size and in full color. *Settlement of Florida* is a source book, printing translations of records that illuminate mainly the French colony of Fort Caroline. Bennett has purposely narrowed the spotlight in order to stress “the role of the French Protestant colony in bringing about the settlement off St. Augustine.” If his singleness of purpose be a fault, it is an admirable one which for the moment at least ensconces Florida in an unaccustomed position at the center of the historical universe.

Chronologically the book spans the years 1561 to 1574, and divides into four sections which are *not* necessarily chronological: the forty-two sketches of Jacques LeMoyne de Morgues relating to the French expeditions of 1562 and 1564; LeMoyne’s Florida narrative; fifteen letters spaced over the years 1561-1566, written by such diverse individuals as Spain’s Philip II, Charles IX of France, Catherine de Medici (his mother), Pedro Menendez de Aviles, and the Spanish ambassadors to England (Alvarez de Quadra and Guzman de Silva); and a contemporary account of Dominique de Gourgues’ vengeful raid on Spanish Florida in 1568.

There have been numerous editions of the LeMoyne sketches since the first printing in 1591. This one reproduces the color plates of the Paris edition of 1928, which came from a unique presentation copy of the first edition. Color adds much to eye appeal, though it tends to obscure some of the fine detail in the engravings, and the printer has cropped the plates slightly. The competent 1875 translation by Fred Perkins is used both for the narrative and the picture captions. LeMoyne’s straightforward narrative is a classic example of the eyewitness report relating

epic adventure on a new frontier. It lays the groundwork for the more complicated documents that follow. The first of these, written in 1561 by Philip II, requires his viceroy in Mexico to advise on whether attempts to colonize inhospitable Florida should continue. It is a poor land, says Philip, and *there is no danger of the French taking it*. Even Menendez has advised against colonizing it! This short letter, as source papers so often do, reveals that groping for the best decision was as frustrating in the sixteenth century as it is in the twentieth. Actually Jean Ribault was ashore at Charlesfort (South Carolina) only a few months later, and by 1565 Menendez had to move against Fort Caroline. Other letters tell of Ribault's imprisonment in the Tower of London after refusing to betray Charlesfort to the English, and of interviews with Captain John Hawkins after his visit to Fort Caroline.

At the front of the book, in color, is the little-known family portrait of Pedro Menendez de Aviles. It accurately depicts his physical appearance. But the real spirit of the man comes to us through a trio of his letters, translated and annotated by Jeanette Thurber Connor. The longest of these, written after the defeat of the French, is not only a masterful account of the military action, but a succinct resume of Florida's strategic importance as well as an outline of Menendez' enthusiastic plans for coastal fortification and settlement so that "Your Majesty . . . being master of Florida . . . will secure the Indies and the navigation thereto." The exciting *denouement* to the melodrama is, in a sense, the de Gourgues raid. The translation is by Connor, the first publication in English of the unabridged text. It is preceded by her biographical sketch of de Gourgues. An engraving of the attack, though not by a contemporary hand, is a rare and curious interpretation. Social historians will be interested in the proposal, presumably by de Gourgues, to eliminate France's poverty by shipping the poor to Florida, where all would become rich.

Appendixes include the last testament of Menendez (1574), in which he tried to assure the continued involvement of his family in Florida affairs, and a list of Florida governors from 1513 to 1967. Among source books on early Florida, *Settlement of Florida* helps to fill the hiatus between the publications devoted to Ribault, Laudonniere, and Menendez, and Connor's *Colonial Records*. While most of the volume is taken up with

description and narratives of action the selections also expose rather neatly the opposing outlooks of the principal protagonists. Regrettably, the bibliography was omitted and the documentation, not always present nor precise, does not fully supply its lack.

It should surprise no one that several of the documents in this book appear for the first time in English print. Language—whether Latin, French, Spanish, or English— is no small barrier in the study of American colonial history. Coming upon competent translations is like finding a welcome mat at the door.

ALBERT MANUCY

*National Park Service*  
*Richmond, Virginia*

*The Mulberry Tree.* By John Frasca. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968. 184 pp. \$4.95.)

John Frasca, onetime press secretary to the late Governor David L. Lawrence of Pennsylvania and a reporter for United Press, and *The Boston American*, came to Florida from Lynn, Massachusetts, and started to work as a reporter for the *Tampa Tribune* early in 1965.

A rash of minor robberies in the town of Mulberry, the phosphate mining town thirty-two miles east of Tampa, precipitated Frasca into an investigation which kept him busy from July through September 1965, and resulted in the freeing of an innocent man, Robert Watson, and the arrest of four guilty ones. Before he was finished, this demon reporter had dragged in no less a person, or persons, than Sy Deeb, millionaire Tallahassee industrialist; Manuel Garcia, fire-eating Tampa mouthpiece; and Major Clark Stone with his associate, Jack Alderman, a firm of Lakeland modern investigators. So great was the honest charm of Mr. Frasca's reporting for the *Tampa Tribune* that he not only hooked in the services of the big-wheels mentioned for free, but performed the almost impossible feat of stirring up some justice in an apathetic community—Polk County—certainly not an atypical county or condition from any other county in the State. Mr. Frasca emerged with the well-deserved bonus of a superb book, *The Mulberry Tree*, plus a Pulitzer Prize for reporting awarded him in 1966. This is all yours for \$4.95, provided you

are lucky enough to have a bookstore in your Florida home town, and can rush there fast enough to secure this BEST BUY!

Mr. Frasca begins his book by telling how the city, although deriving its prosperity from the mines, received its name from the stunted dying mulberry tree in the yard of the railroad station, only a block from the center of town. From its limbs several whites and Negroes were hanged during the turbulent 1880s when the mines were first operated. It is significant that Mr. Frasca titled his book *The Mulberry Tree*. "One old-timer remembered seeing the bodies of three murderers, two Negroes and a white man, moving softly in the early morning wind of a sun-spattered day in 1907. Some who were hanged may not have been guilty at all. Vigilante justice was not meant to be terribly just but awfully quick." So what's new? Mr. Frasca's book will convince any fair-minded reader that justice under the Mulberry tree is not too different today.

On March 11, 1965, according to two unshakable women witnesses, "a very tall, slim, blond, blue-eyed bandit wearing coveralls and a blue bandana," stuck up the Kwik-Serv grocery store and escaped with \$900 in cash. A fast, almost farcical, trial before Judge Roy H. Amidon (a local landmark) and a six-man jury, in the face of an alibi from a man named Mims that Robert Lamar Watson (5' 10" tall) was 100 miles away in Sanford, sent Watson up for a ten-year stretch. Four days after Watson was imprisoned, Harold Weston, manager of a local supermarket, and an escort officer, Patrolman Dudley, were held up and robbed of \$1,200 cash and \$500 checks as they were about to place it in the night depository. Officer Dudley said: "I didn't see him when he put that gun in my back. . . . I got the idea that he was a tall man, though. It seemed like his voice was coming from a long way up."

"I think we've got something!" Frasca told Managing Editor Harold Tyler of the *Tampa Tribune* after Frasca had talked long-distance to Mr. Mims, Watson's Sanford alibi. "They've got a young fellow in prison for a robbery he probably didn't commit. There were two holdups in Mulberry that were very much alike. He was in prison when the second was committed. There was a white convertible in town the night of the first robbery. A man was seen leaving it and returning to it about ten minutes later, carrying a bag that might have contained the loot. The

man in prison, Robert Lamar Watson, has an old green Oldsmobile. It wasn't his car." They had something, indeed, as proved by *The Mulberry Tree*, and credit it not only due to Mr. Frasca for his persistence, but to Harold Tyler for his editorial "go ahead." Any managing editor might have been forgiven for being slightly skeptical about involving his paper with doin's under the ruins of that Mulberry tree.

This reviewer remembers only too well when the miners went out on strike, led by the Mineral Workers' Union, nearly fifty years ago in 1919, and more than 1,000 men held a noonday parade in town. Working ten to twelve hours a day for \$2.50, white and Negro miners demanded an eight-hour day with a minimum of thirty-seven cents an hour as recommended by the National War Labor Board. Counsel for the mine owners was quoted by the *Tampa Tribune* as saying: "There are, of course, going to be no conferences nor any adjustment of matters between mine owners and the union because there is nothing to confer about, nor is there anything to discuss."

Blood ran in the streets! Mulberry was "shot up" by mine guards in a powerhouse at the edge of town. A train was stopped, fired on, and tank cars of oil emptied. This incident provoked a court injunction against the strikers, which in the end broke the strike. Did the miners win? Sure! They returned to work at an increased wage scale of \$3.00 for an eight to ten-hour day.

Today, justice prevails in Imperial Polk (a name self-bestowed by a committee of prominent citizens some fifteen years ago which has somehow missed the state guide books) and there is fairness and prosperity for all. Well, so long as we have some John Frascas around, backed by the *Tampa Tribune*. Don't hang under the Mulberry Tree with anyone else but me!

BAYNARD KENDRICK

*Leesburg, Florida*

*Vexed and Troubled Englishmen, 1590-1642.* By Carl Bridenbaugh. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968. xix, 487 pp. Preface, note on documentation, index. \$10.00.)

With this fine study, Professor Bridenbaugh has auspiciously launched a projected multi-volume series on "The Beginnings of

the American People." And those beginnings, in his view, can be discerned in the half century of English life he has selected for the present study. His focus is on ordinary men and women—those common folk who bulked so large in the great migration of English settlers to North America during the reigns of James I and Charles I. His aim is to recapture imaginatively the quality of their lives by viewing them in the perspective of their contemporary concerns and by permitting them to speak for themselves. The result is one of the finest books of its kind to appear in the eighty-odd years since Edward Eggleston and J. B. McMaster attempted to make early American social history a respectable enterprise for serious historians.

The climax of the present volume comes in two chapters on the "First Swarming of the English" and the "Puritan Hegira," which follow ten chapters describing several aspects of the old world life of the first Anglo settlers who came to America. His descriptive method is the conventional one of the social historian, but since his inquiry is so broad and penetrating it suffers little from a lack of analysis. His conclusions emerge almost automatically from the narrative and are largely conveyed in the title he has selected. The generation of migrants that peopled the first Chesapeake and New England settlements was a deeply disturbed one, troubled by fundamental social, economic, political, and religious problems. In short, this great movement of English people, which was directed to the continent of Europe as well as to America, was much more the result of a push than a pull.

Those familiar with Bridenbaugh's earlier works and his presidential address before the American Historical Association in 1962 will not wonder that he features so prominently the urban dimension of seventeenth century English life or that he has so successfully recaptured the flavor of the bygone age. What is neglected, surprisingly, is a detailed examination of the collective or organizational activities that lay behind the great migration. And this neglect, I feel sure, is more the product of his method than of his perception. Had he devoted more attention to analyzing his subject, many insights that are implicit in his work could have been probed more thoroughly and a few contradictions thereby resolved. Why, one wonders, is this "swarming of tens of thousands of Englishmen" "almost impossible to explain except as a consequence of what we may call national shock,"

(p.411) when we are assured that incessant internal migration was characteristic of English life and that loyalties were local rather than national? And can religion be assigned such a primary role in the "Puritan Hegira" when it is clearly implied that the religious malaise itself was a derivative of the social and economic unrest of the period?

Finally, the assumption that these few thousand earliest emigrants to North America played the dominant role in shaping "The American People" has long been an unexamined major premise among colonial historians that deserves critical examination by anyone who seeks to understand our "beginnings." Thus we can hope that Professor Bridenbaugh will in subsequent volumes make more explicit the precise influence of their experience compared with that of the several million emigrants from other regions who later made North America their home. I hope, but am not confident, that the old world background of many of those non-English settlers will ultimately receive as much attention as he has lavished on the chief characters of the present volume, which is an obvious labor of love.

PAUL H. SMITH

*University of Florida*

*Was America A Mistake? An Eighteenth-Century Controversy.*

By Henry Steele Commager and Elmo Giordanetti. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968. 240 pp. Preface, illustrations, bibliography. \$5.95.)

The European conception of America in the eighteenth century is the subject of this volume, which includes four succinct essays by Henry Steele Commager, followed by ten major selections edited by the author and Elmo Giordanetti. Though the essays are brief and largely descriptive, they summarize admirably the eighteenth-century European thought and debate about the New World. Some *philosophes* argued that the conquest of America, the exploitation of the Indians, and the extension of Negro slavery were unfortunate, and that therefore the discovery of America was indeed a mistake. Abbe Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et Politique des Etablissemens et du Commerce des Europeens dans les Deux Indes* (1770) asserted that nature was

generally weaker in the New World than in the Old. The Abbe wrote that not only were the Indians degenerate, but the English in America "had visibly degenerated" as a result of transplantation or "mixture." During the American Revolution the Abbe changed his thinking, at least about English America, which had produced Benjamin Franklin and original writings on "the rights of mankind and the rights of nations." However, America had always had its defenders, who maintained that the discovery of the New World had not been a mistake, but, in fact, a blessing, for in the pristine and uncorrupted environment of America, man could pursue happiness on earth. The defenders of America imagined the Indians not as degenerate humans, but as uncorrupted and noble savages. Professor Commager believes that the English "had never really subscribed to the degeneracy theory, nor could they, as long as their own colonies were loyal and flourishing, accept the notion that the whole enterprise of discovery and colonization had been a mistake." During the American Revolution, Englishmen such as Tom Paine, Dr. Richard Price, and the Reverend Joseph Priestley transferred their loyalty to America; others such as George III, Lord North, and Dean Josiah Tucker admitted that America was not "a weak and degenerate offshoot of the British race, but a formidable rival." However, as Professor Commager emphasizes correctly, the vehement debate about the nature of the environment and achievements of the New World was essentially a debate about Europe and European ideals and values. "With each passing year," Commager explains, "it became increasingly clear that those who took sides on the Problem of America were really using America as a kind of stalking horse for their own battles, campaigns, and crusades."

Professor Commager's brief and informal essays summarize the dialogue about America and suggest the significance of America in eighteenth-century European thought, particularly French thought. Moreover, the volume will be especially useful because it is the only anthology illustrating the principal arguments of such European writers as the Comte de Buffon, the Abbe Corneille de Pauw, the Marquis de Condorcet, and Friedrich van Gentz, as they debate the Abbe de Raynal's question, "Was America A Mistake?"

CHURCHILL E. WARD

*Hiram College*

*The Mississippi Valley Frontier.* By John Anthony Caruso. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. x, 423 pp. Preface, maps, bibliography, index. \$8.50.)

This volume is the fourth of a projected multi-volume narrative history of the American frontier and is the first of two volumes on the history of the Mississippi Valley frontier. As its subtitle indicates, it covers the period of French exploration and settlement. The study begins with a general description of the Mississippi River and the country through which it flows. Then follow six chapters containing rather brief accounts of the history and culture of some of the major Indian tribes who inhabited the region: the Sioux, Chippewa, Sac and Fox, Osage, Quapaw, and Caddo. While a number of the most important tribes of the region are covered, several equally important ones, like the Pawnee and Kansa, are not mentioned, and the descriptions of those included are rather fragmentary. Twelve chapters, constituting the main body of the book, contain descriptions of the activities of the principal French explorers of the Mississippi Valley in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Notable among them are Nicolet, Radisson and Groseilliers, Jolliet and Marquette, Hennepin, La Salle, Le Sueur, Bourgmond, and La Verendrye and his sons. Although the author has used primary, as well as secondary, materials in his research, these are essentially standard accounts of French exploration of the interior of North America. On a related subject, one short chapter treats the Fox Indian wars of the eighteenth century.

In two chapters Caruso sketches briefly the history of the early French settlements in Louisiana and the Illinois Country up to the Louisiana Purchase. He concludes with a short description of Creole society as found in the Mississippi Valley. It covers their customs and manners, dress, houses, food, and fur trade activities. Caruso makes a point of declaring that Creoles were not persons of mixed Caucasian and Negro blood but were pure white persons born in the New World of French or Spanish blood or of both. The term is more commonly defined to include all non-Indians, including Negroes, born in Louisiana not only in the colonial period but even in the early nineteenth century. Inserted at appropriate places in the book are eight small maps which show generally the locations of the major Indian tribes of the region and the routes of the principal French explorers.

While this volume is designed to be a part of a series, it also stands alone. Some of the subjects discussed, however, are covered more fully in one of the other volumes of the series. Iberville's role in the founding of Louisiana, for example, is much more fully treated in Caruso's *Southern Frontier*. This work is rather well written; it is clear and easy to read. Its treatment is of necessity selective, but the basis of selection is not readily discernible. Furthermore, some topics are treated rather sketchily, while others, like the American Revolution in the West and the events leading up to the Louisiana Purchase, which would seem to be somewhat peripheral subjects for this study, are discussed at rather great length. This book appears to be directed mainly to the general reader for it contains little, if any, information not known to scholars in the field. While the notes and bibliography give a fairly comprehensive coverage of the pertinent sources, some of the works cited are outdated.

The work is marred by a number of errors. Some of the geographical information is misleading, as for example the indication that Kaskaskia is up the Mississippi from Cahokia, rather than down. Several historical facts are incorrect. The formal transfer of Upper Louisiana to the United States occurred on March 10, not March 4, 1804. The Winnebago and Puant are one and the same tribe; Puant is the name by which the French referred to these Indians. Some generalizations are not valid. The assertion that, "The French, moreover, were much more successful than the English in supplying the Indians, even the remotest tribes, with merchandise," is not in keeping with the evidence. Neither is the statement that, in punishing an Indian for a crime, the Americans, unlike the French, "hardly ever bothered" to impress his tribe with the fact that his sentence "was fully justified." Despite these and other shortcomings, Professor Caruso has written a book which the reader is likely to find both interesting and informative.

JOHN L. LOOS

*Louisiana State University*

*Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Founding Father.* By Marvin R. Zahniser. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967. ix, 295 pp. Preface, bibliography, index. \$7.50.)

This is a well-researched, well-organized book which brings together the pertinent data on one of the most important of the South Carolina patriots, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, particularly information that pertains to the diplomatic phases of Pinckney's career. This account is based upon the Pinckney Papers in the Library of Congress, supplemented by a study of newspapers, public documents, the letters of Pinckney's friends, as well as material already published in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine*. The organization is that of the usual biographical account, in this instance of a gentleman who became a rebel.

The central purpose is to reveal the personality of Pinckney and to explain the motives that moved this member of the South Carolina elite to become a rebel. This is difficult to do because of the paucity of personal material which provides insights into character and into the formation of ideas. The author must therefore rely upon biographies of similar figures to help him solve his problems. Mr. Zahniser does not have much help in the existing biographies of Thomas Pinckney and John Rutledge. Edward Rutledge, John Rutledge, Jr., and Charles Pinckney await biographers. The close relationship between Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and his brother-in-law Edward Rutledge is the tie that binds the South Carolina Federalists together. Zahniser probes this relationship, explaining in the end how the death of Edward Rutledge undermines the political career of Pinckney. The relationship between the Pinckney brothers and their young cousin Charles Pinckney may be even more important because it is amid this family friction that the historian may find an explanation for the differences between the Federalist gentlemen and the Republican gentlemen in South Carolina, differences that chart South Carolina's change from ratification in 1788 to nullification in 1832. Zahniser speculates on the reasons for this friction but admits, as others have done, that the enigma is still there. Rather than a rivalry stemming from personal jealousies, this friction may have originated in the constitutional convention where the Pinckneys took different views concerning the protection of southern economic interests. But even if the historians should explain fully the motives of all of the Pinckneys and the Rutledges, the student would still need full-scale portraits of Rawlins Lowndes, Ralph Izard, John F. Grimke, Robert Goodloe Harper, Isaac Huger, Robert Barnwell, and many more. Out of a massing of such por-

traits there might then emerge the characteristics of these South Carolina Federalists.

At the moment the picture of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney is that of a man with a strong sense of duty, instilled in him quite early by his mother, a duty to his family, his group, and his state. This duty he never shirks. Neither military nor statesmanlike genius is his strength, but there is an ability to command respect from his followers - in the militia by discipline, in his peer group by his own prestige. About Charles Cotesworth Pinckney there was not even the saving grace of humor as there was about his brother Thomas, so that he remains the most imperious figure on the Carolina scene. He was South Carolina's Washington. This book, like Marcus Cunliff's study of George Washington, reflects on both the Man and the Monument and will lead to even further studies of this founding father.

GEORGE C. ROGERS, JR.

*University of South Carolina*

*Twelve Years A Slave.* By Solomon Northrup. Edited by Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968. xxxviii, 273 pp. Introduction, illustrations, appendixes, index. \$7.50.)

Southerners of today, their concept of ante-bellum life largely formed by the newest re-release of *Gone With The Wind* in touched-up color, are often mystified by the hatred which much of Black America seems to bear toward the whites. Knowing the period only as a time when Step'n Fetchit was scared white in a graveyard, when the late Hattie McDaniel dispensed comfort and advice to weeping belles disappointed in love, and when faithful Uncle Tom guarded Little Eva, they are in for a shock when they read in *Twelve Years A Slave* what slavery was really like. Hopefully, that shock may produce more understanding and tolerance for the heritage of hatred that seems to be making black-white communication so difficult.

On January 4th, 1853, the recorder for the Parish of Avoyelles, Louisiana, witnessed the final document by which one Solomon Northrup was restored to freedom. Later that year the story of his experiences, *Twelve Years A Slave, Narrative of Solomon Northrup, a Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washington*

*City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853, from a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River in Louisiana*, appeared in book form and was an instant best seller throughout the North. David Wilson, who set down Solomon's story was, oddly enough, not an abolitionist, but the book nevertheless became a powerful weapon in the abolitionist cause. And well it might, for a more convincing or harrowing account of man's inhumanity to man could hardly be penned.

Published again by the Louisiana State University Press as part of The Library of Southern Civilization, with an excellent introduction and scholarly footnotes by the editors that give the story an authenticity which even the most skeptical can hardly doubt, Solomon Northrup's story is a shaft of ruthless white light, illuminating one of the darkest pages in American history. Beginning with the callous professional abductors who did a thriving business seizing black freedmen in the North, penning them in the barracoons of Washington and other border cities until they could be shipped like cattle to New Orleans, and selling them to professional dealers there, for resale to plantation owners and timber contractors of bayou shore and delta, the whole dirty business is graphically described by one who suffered everything with which it could flay him - except death itself.

Northrup's story is more than a simple tale of injustice and human brutality, however. He sets down in careful detail odd bits of human interest from plantation life, much of it documented by the editors, creating a conviction of authenticity. Not all his masters were bad; not all of slave life was painful, although the lash often waited at the end of the cotton rows for the laggard whose wounds from yesterday's whipping made every movement agony. And yet even the happiest events - and they were rare - cannot compensate for the degradation of being a slave or the constant threat of brutal separation on the auction block from loved ones.

*Twelve Years A Slave* should be must reading for every young Southerner. Only in accounts such as this can they understand the true nature of the curse which, more than a hundred years later, still hangs like a millstone around the neck of the South, hampering final emancipation for white and black alike.

*Jacksonville, Florida*

FRANK G. SLAUGHTER