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Editor's Foreword

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

AFTER thirty years of service Dr. Samuel Proctor stepped down from the editorship of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* in June 1993. This event marked a special point not only in his long and distinguished career but also in the history of the Florida Historical Society. Accordingly, this issue of the *Quarterly* is dedicated to Samuel Proctor—“Sam” to his many friends—and to the many years that he has faithfully and effectively guided the journal's fortunes.

In addition to making formal announcement of this issue's special purpose, this short foreword provides an opportunity to acquaint readers with the many steps involved in editing a state historical journal. Such a recounting can more clearly illuminate the nature of Sam's editorship over the past three decades. Most readers understandably know little of the inner workings of publishing ventures. Even authors who publish regularly in journals do not always appreciate the many steps that go into editing a quality scholarly journal. And under Sam Proctor's leadership the *Florida Historical Quarterly* has been noted for its high standards and editorial excellence.

The editor of a state historical journal is required to fill many roles, a number of which have little to do with the actual business of producing journal issues. The editor must be a promoter and spokesman for state history, continually prodding and cajoling interested people to explore the many unexamined aspects of the state's past. Sam's relentless and good-natured badgering of prospective authors (“When will I have the article on my desk?”) was legendary. This practice not only encouraged aspiring authors but also ensured the continued flow of quality writing into the journal's offices. Sam knew that, rain or shine, the need to publish four issues each year was always present, and deadlines ever loomed on the horizon.

Any journal serving a state as large and diverse as Florida is guaranteed to have a broad range of articles coming to its offices. Indeed, all kinds of submissions arrive at the editor's desk, requiring judgment and not inconsiderable tact in framing appropriate responses. Oftentimes, submissions require substantial work before they are able to reach the printed state. Sam's ability to

recognize the outlines of a potentially valuable article in a mass of undigested material was well known, as was his facility to work with authors and convince them of the necessity for revisions. The latter is a delicate art that not everyone masters. Authors differ widely in their willingness to accept comment and criticisms, no matter how carefully couched or delicately phrased. In these dealings, Sam's editorial thick skin and reserves of patience were handy attributes.

A particular hallmark of the *Quarterly* has been the quality and quantity of its book reviews. Sam was able to develop an extraordinary network of professional reviewers from around the country. This enabled him to supply readers with comprehensive insight into Florida history and the history of the South generally. Thus the journal has provided a means to understand developments in the state on a much wider stage. Longtime readers of the journal are well aware of these facts, but what is perhaps less well known is the amount of work needed to build, operate, and sustain such a system. Most journals have an assistant editor assigned solely to oversee book reviews because of the large amount of correspondence and detail work required to order volumes, select and assign them to reviewers, monitor completion, and ensure quality. This has never been the case with the *Quarterly* since Sam has accomplished all of this work with only the help of a half-time graduate assistant.

Sam has also found time in the midst of these many activities to write the Book Notes and History News sections of every issue during his tenure as editor. Designed to provide readers with as full a reporting of history-related activities in the state as possible, these tasks also required substantial correspondence, editorial time, and attention to detail. The same can be said of the need to find, select, and print appropriate photographs that accompany articles and grace the front covers of journal issues; respond to requests for reprint permissions; answer general questions on Florida history, editorial policies, and research techniques; and plan special issues.

The journal also fills a role in graduate student training. Graduate student assistants have worked with all phases of journal production, receiving in the process invaluable instruction in their craft as professional historians. Over the course of his editorship Sam has trained and supervised seventeen graduate

editorial assistants, imparting to them invaluable experience in journal editing and marking their early careers in special ways.

A measure of Sam Proctor's ability to master these diverse demands is evidenced in the numbers. Since Sam became editor in 1963 he has overseen the production of thirty-one volumes of the journal, which have encompassed 123 separate numbers. Included in these volumes are 575 individual articles, 2,026 book reviews, and 1,587 book notes. The total number of pages involved in this massive effort amount to 15,795. Simply to list the totals of articles, issues, and pages gives an impressive insight into the work accomplished, but it is incomplete. Not a few of the journal issues have been special publications focusing attention on important themes and events, and each has imposed its own set of production and editing problems.

The contents of this dedicatory issue have special relevance to Sam Proctor's career as editor of the *Quarterly*. The three research articles appearing within are written by former students (Canter Brown, Steven Kerber, and Peter Klingman) who worked under Sam in their degree programs and served as editorial assistants at the journal. Thus all three encountered Sam in his roles as editor and graduate mentor. Reflecting their historical training received under Sam, each has written about aspects of Florida political history, engaging themes that have long interested their advisor. Also contributing to this issue are longtime colleagues and friends at the University of Florida who have worked with Sam in many different contexts. Dr. Michael Gannon has supplied a personal sketch of Sam's career, and Dr. David Colburn has contributed a substantial review essay, which Sam commissioned as one of his last acts as editor.

In closing, this special dedicatory issue formally recognizes that the pages of the *Quarterly* have benefitted immensely from Sam's diligence and professionalism over the past thirty years. Now that he is moving into a well-deserved retirement, all readers of the journal join together to thank him for his many contributions and to wish him a happy and productive future.

George E. Pozzetta