Gulf Coast Historical Review

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From The Editors . . .

In this issue of the *Gulf Coast Historical Review* we offer two articles and a document that provide keen insights into the legal, social, and cultural history of the region during two very different periods. Paul Pruitt's and Robert Higgins's fine study of the conviction and execution of Charles R. S. Boyington opens a window on the workings of Alabama's justice system during the state's formative period, revealing that justice has always been rather subjective. Their article also exposes the tensions and anxieties that existed in a city still lacking fully developed institutions of social order.

James Brennan's study of Escambia County, Alabama's lumber is a story of the consequences of economic and social change after the Civil War. Unlike many historians of the New South, Brennan argues that Escambia County's timber industry developed as a result of the efforts of local investors and laborers. He too creates for the reader vivid images of life and work in the county during a time of profound change.

The final article in this edition is a wonderfully vivid account of sixteen-year-old Senta Jonas's 1908 encounter with Mobile's Mardi Gras. Her diary is one of the few personal reminiscences available for study of a drama performed each year along the Gulf Coast. Mardi Gras is a display that tells us much about the culture and society of the region, and this diary should shed more light on the event.

"From the Archives" comes to us from the Center for Regional Studies at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. As readers will see, the center has a rich collection that ranges from the colonial period in Louisiana through the modern era. Geneologists, local historians, and professional historians interested in Louisiana will certainly want to visit the center.

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A STATEMENT

OF THE

TRIAL OF CHARLES R. S. BOYINGTON,

WHO WAS INDICTED AND EXECUTED

FOR THE

MURDER OF NATHANIEL FROST.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A NUMBER OF FUGITIVE PIECES, IN VERSE.

ALSO WRITTEN AND COMPOSED BY HIM.

Mobile:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE MERCANTILE ADVERTISER.

1835

Courtesy, Local History and Genealogy Division, Mobile Public Library.

Crime and Punishment in Antebellum Mobile: The Long Story of Charles R. S. Boyington

Paul M. Pruitt, Jr. and Robert Bond Higgins

One of the most dramatic trials in Mobile history was that of the *State v. Boyington*, held in the fall of 1834. At its conclusion Charles R.S. Boyington, a Connecticut Yankee and unemployed printer, was convicted of a horrifying and treacherous murder. In many ways the case had tested, and would continue to test, the impact of public opinion upon justice and the impartiality of Alabama courts. The full story will never be told, for primary trial records no longer exist.[1] Yet *The Statement of Charles R.S. Boyington*, a very personal account of his troubles, has survived. So has a pamphlet published by the Reverend William T. Hamilton, an eyewitness of many of the events following the trial.[2] Used in context with newspaper accounts, appellate records, and the works of other chroniclers, these pamphlets provide a view of the darker complexities of "Flush Times" Alabama.[3] Yet in order to understand the implications of the Boyington case, one must know something of the social, legal, and ethical currents of antebellum Mobile. Perhaps it is best to begin by glancing at a more conventional prosecution.

Early in April 1834, Charles Stuart and Samuel Stockton fought a duel. It was no sham affair. After it was over Stockton was dead and Stuart was in the hands of the authorities. Circuit court was then in session, and the case was handled quickly. A jury heard the evidence, and freed Stuart in fifteen minutes–after an "elaborate investigation" of the facts! Both men had been employees of the Mobile *Commercial Register and Patriot*, which handled the story with a restraint bordering on reticence.[4] Evidently there was no public outcry. Two men had quarreled, faced each other in open conflict, and a jury had decided that the result was in some sense justifiable. A majority of citizens might not have approved of such affrays; but they were prepared to put up with them.[5]

Duels, after all, were part of a widely accepted code of honor. They were easily comprehensible–certainly when compared to other disturbances experienced by Mobilians during the boom times of the 1830s. Attracted by what one author has called the "Alabama delusion," thousands of immigrants came through the port in hopes of making a fortune in land, cotton, or trade. The number of actual inhabitants quadrupled during the decade, growing from three to

twelve thousand; not surprisingly, single white men predominated. Many of these new inhabitants were from Ireland, Germany, or the Northern states, adding their accents and customs to a community whose population (composed of the descendants of French, Spanish, English and American settlers, black slaves, and a substantial number of creoles and other free blacks) was already one of the most diverse in America.[6]

In such a swirling environment, many temptations presented themselves to persons whose funds were exhausted by Mobile's inflated cost of living.[7] Murder, burglaries, robberies at gunpoint, assaults, and disorderly behavior at taverns or houses of prostitution were distressingly common in the 1830s, as were gambling and betting on horse races.[8] The police force (until 1835, essentially a volunteer patrol) was ill-equipped to prevent crimes or to catch wrong-doers. When caught, accused criminals often escaped from the town's rickety jail. When tried, defendants were often acquitted by juries who were reluctant to subject even felons to whipping, branding, or other brutal punishments mandated by the penal code of the day.[9]

Much of the time, it seemed, respectable citizens shrugged off the prevalence of crime.[10] Yet in the summer of 1834, given an opportunity to vote on whether the state should build a central penitentiary, Mobile County residents voted 707 to 193 in favor. Most of them thoroughly approved of a scheme which seemed to hold out hope of reforming criminals, or at least of removing them to some secure location. Their vote may reflect the willingness of town-dwellers to trust governments with power, a view which a majority of Alabamians did not share in 1834.[11] Or their vote may have stemmed from a growing uneasiness over what a Mobile journalist would call "the ill-organization of society." If rampant crime were ignored, if moral standards were not enforced, how long could the fabric of society hold together? How could any man be safe?[12]

The merchants, professionals, and craftsmen who made up the core of Mobile's white community assumed that their troubles came from outside. According to this view most crimes were committed by sailors, transients, foreigners–or those perpetual outsiders, slaves, who were considered to be prone to thievery and whose resentments might lead to violence, poisoning, or arson.[13] Impatience with the course of official justice sometimes led such citizens to take direct action, which often took the form of protest meetings and the formation of vigilance committees. An expected influx of "gamblers, swindlers, and

other profligate individuals" met with such responses in 1835, as would a suspected outbreak of arson in 1850.[14]

But when outsiders committed shocking offenses, or when their actions posed a threat to the psychic well-being of law-abiding folk, direct action could take more violent forms. A striking example was the response, in the summer of 1835, to a kidnapping by several brothers, described as "Frenchmen." These men held a French physician's five year old boy for a $30,000 ransom, never dreaming that the man assigned to receive the money would be seized and given "a strict and efficient, though somewhat extra-official examination." When a crowd of citizens learned that the child was being kept on an island, they borrowed a steamboat, the *Don Juan*, and effected a rescue. At least two of the brothers remained on the island–dangling from trees. The Mobile *Commercial Register and Patriot* defended the hangings, and likewise applauded the actions of a mob which gave four recently-arrived free blacks, suspected of being abolitionists, a "little lynch discipline" before they were forced to leave the port.[15] From the point of view of newcomers, Mobile could be a doubly dangerous town.

Into this chaotic atmosphere, in November 1833, stepped Charles R.S. Boyington, twenty-three years old. A printer who had served his apprenticeship in New Haven, Connecticut, Boyington probably worked out his passage as a sailor. Little else was known of his past–which probably included numerous brushes with the law, culminating in a charge of horse-stealing in Charleston, South Carolina.[16] Yet his appearance was certainly in his favor. Five feet nine inches tall with dark hair and complexion, he was an "imposing" man who "walked remarkably strait [*sic*]." Soon after his arrival, he obtained work in Pollard & Dade's print shop, and commenced to learn the ways of the town.[17] Like other young men in his situation, Boyington was essentially an adventurer. His talents were such that for a brief time, the world must have seemed a very fine place.

Boyington plunged immediately into a fast life. Most likely he lived at a succession of boarding houses; by his own account, he became a lodger at the house of Captain William George, on Royal Street, as late as April 30.[18] In such houses he would have easily fallen in with other young men–printers, clerks, laborers–who spent their off duty hours at Mobile's taverns, theatres, gambling dens and houses of prostitution.[19] Sitting in a jail cell, Boyington would later admit that he had been "what the world calls a gay youth," and that his life had "been an almost constant scene of adventures."[20] Yet it seems clear that he aimed higher than common dissipations.

High society in Mobile was interestingly fluid; armed with letters of introduction, even a journeyman printer might be "received into the social circle of a highly respectable family."[21] When prominent families sponsored dances at local hotels, it was not difficult to obtain admission. At such a ball held in December 1833 Boyington is said to have met Rose de Fleur, daughter of a Napoleonic refugee; soon (if tradition is correct) the two were exchanging letters and meeting discreetly for walks.[22] In order to keep up such high-toned contacts, Boyington had to dress well, which must have consumed much of his income. In May 1834 he would be described as wearing a "dark olive dress coat, dark satinett pantaloons, and a double-breasted silk velvet vest"–and this after some weeks of unemployment![23]

By the spring of 1834, Boyington was also exhibiting an intellectual and artistic side of his personality. He began to publish poems, "Extracts from a Young Rambler's Port Folio," in the Mobile *Mercantile Advertiser.* Such poems as "The Wanderer" and "The Misanthrope" portray a character who has suffered much adversity, has fought storms and pirates, and who scoffs at love but has clearly had his heart broken–all carried off with an air of world-weary superiority. After all, he was "not form'd like common men." On the other hand, in "My Mother's Blessing–At Parting," Boyington reveals both a vein of conventional sentimentality and a premonition that he would not see his mother again on earth. Written with a fair amount of technical skill, these works are the product of a young man who had read his Romantic poets and was more than willing to pose as a Byronic hero. Their publication must have given him great pleasure, and might have helped to gain him a respectable place in Mobile society.[24]

Unfortunately, Boyington's finances did not keep pace with his social successes. Literature did not pay–and while Mssrs. Pollard and Dade did, he earned only about a hundred dollars with them over the winter. Occasionally he received money from his family (his mother lived in Litchfield, Connecticut, and one brother was a clergyman in New York), and he may have won some money by betting. As long as his luck held out he was able to scrape by, paying his rent and keeping a good name with clothiers, tavern-keepers, and other likely creditors. But in April he was laid off by his employers due, as he said, to "decrease of business."[25] Now he was thrown upon the kindness of his brother printers, one of whom, George Williamson, was a sick man who might welcome the assistance of an able-bodied friend.

Late in April 1834, according to Boyington, he consented to change his lodgings in order to become Williamson's roommate and caretaker. This meant a move to Captain William George's boarding house, where he made the acquaintance of Nathaniel Frost–a printer by trade, a New Englander by birth, and a hopeless consumptive. Frost, in one journalist's words, was a man of "retiring and unobtrusive habits" whose manner, "although not calculated to inspire friendship in every breast, yet never failed to elicit esteem."[26] Most versions of the story assume that Boyington also took care of Frost; the former admitted that "we often sat, read, conversed, and walked together: we were friends." Frost was in easy circumstances; apparently he "had not squandered so much as five dollars since he came to Mobile." Boyington probably borrowed money from Frost; he would later state that Captain George owed money to Frost.[27]

It was perfectly natural that two men who had so much in common should enjoy each other's company, perhaps all the more so since their personalities were quite unalike. In any case, many people noticed Boyington's kindness to Frost, though some of them concluded that his motives were selfish.[28] And truly, as the spring wore on, Boyington needed money more than ever. He had planned to meet his mother in June at his brother's house in New York. But he owed so much that he could either pay up or make the trip–not both. One of his creditors had threatened him with prosecution, and he was well aware that imprisonment for debt was a possible result in such cases. He wanted to leave Mobile by May 1 and had applied to "northern friends" for aid. The days went by and no money came.[29]

While he waited Boyington gave thought to the journey ahead. By his own account, he considered only two possibilities–an "expeditious" boat trip up the Alabama River to Montgomery, overland to Georgia and thence to parts north, and a cheaper, longer route by ship from New Orleans. He told his troubles to George Williamson, plotting out the favored overland route on a pocket map. However, "after some hesitation" he decided to go by sea. Here a new difficulty arose. The sea trip began with a coach ride from Mobile, and his boarding house was located so near the stage office that "my departure from that place would attract attention." By the morning of May 10, he had decided to solve this problem by riding to Spring Hill, a community north of town, and catching the stagecoach there.[30]

Boyington would later write that on the morning of Saturday, May 10, he walked toward the livery stable of a Mr. Smith (south

down Royal Street), and engaged a horse for the next day. Returning to Captain George's house, he met Frost and walked with him a short distance north, then in a westerly direction down Dauphin Street. The two returned and ate dinner (lunch) at about 1:30, then sat together on the porch talking about their mutual friend Williamson. At some point after three o'clock Frost went into the house and Boyington rose because–for whatever reasons–he had decided to go to Spring Hill that very evening. As he walked off the porch he was rejoined by Frost. After a pause while Frost spoke about blackberries to a fellow-boarder, a Mrs. Creighton, the two men walked off together, first south, then west down Government Street–toward the Church Street Cemetery, where blackberries were presumably to be had. Frost was talking about his medical treatments, and Boyington wrote that he listened while they covered the space of two or three blocks. Then he excused himself, faced about, and followed a winding course south back to Smith's stable.[31]

Boyington's decision to leave town immediately had plunged him into a comedy of errors. At Smith's he learned that his horse had "gone to the races" for the afternoon, and that no other good saddle horses were available. Momentarily stymied, he returned to George's lodging house but did not stay long. He then walked about town, visiting a livery stable on Dauphin Street without success, stopping in at a coffee house, conducting business with one Reuben Vail, and finally returning for a third time to Smith's. Smith was absent but Boyington hired a white horse–which he almost immediately returned because it was a "rough trotting beast." By now it was probably five o'clock, and Boyington tried one more stable without result. Almost at the end of his tether, he came again to Dauphin Street and saw at its easterly "foot" a steamboat, the *James Monroe*, getting ready to depart. Stopping only to buy a pair of pistols at Dunning and Knapp's store and to chat with friends, he spoke to the captain and went on board just as the sun was setting.[32]

Most of the preceding account is based on Boyington's own self-justification, written under sentence of death. It is a persuasive document, but it cannot conceal the fact that Boyington was doing his best to "skip town." He had run up debts he had no ability to pay; and while he took Williamson into his confidence, he apparently failed to inform either the Georges or Nathaniel Frost of his departure. Had he quarreled over money with Frost during the day? No one can say for certain, though local lore has it that Boyington was flustered when he returned to the boarding house after their final walk, made evasive replies to several printers who asked him about

Frost's whereabouts, rushed up to his room, and soon left again.[33] Indeed, Boyington's manner on May 10 was bound to cause talk–particularly when, the following morning, the body of Nathaniel Frost was discovered lying near the graveyard.

Frost had been killed by repeated blows from a knife, probably a dirk with which he had been accustomed to whittle. He had been robbed of fifty or sixty dollars and a silver "Lepine" watch. News of his killing raced over the community on Sunday, May 11, and somehow, this homicide excited and outraged Mobilians far more than previous killings. Quite apart from the loss of Frost, there was the brutality of the crime, and the fact that it had been commited against a sick man. Again, citizens must have asked themselves–Was nothing safe? Suspicion fell quickly on Boyington, who had fled town, and who had been seen walking with Frost *toward* the graveyard. That the two men had been friends was a gift from the gods for gossips and journalists. The *Commercial Register and Patriot* lost no time in painting Boyington as an arch-fiend who had "cultivated" Frost "by acts of kindness and attention," only to kill him "for the sake of plunder." "The annals of crime," the article proclaimed, "have seldom been stained with a more diabolical act of atrocity."[34]

Newspaper articles and talk soon moved Boyington beyond the category of suspected criminal. From May 12 onward he would figure in the realm of archetypes and deep anxieties. Mobilians knew that the unsettled world of the frontier attracted men who recognized no moral boundaries and who believed, like the literary character Simon Suggs, that it was "good to be shifty in a new country."[35] Rowdies and swindlers people the pages of "Southwestern Humorists" like Johnson Jones Hooper and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, proving that people can enjoy laughing at their troubles–at least up to a point.[36] Yet the traveling confidence man, working behind a mask of seeming virtue and good will, was at best an uneasy object of laughter. It should be noted, too, that white men living in a slave society were notoriously ready to sniff out threats, real or imagined, to the established order.[37]

As for Boyington, his escape was short-lived. The authorities knew how he had left town; and when Mobile Mayor John Stocking offered a reward of $250 for his arrest and $250 more for his conviction, the race was on to see whether horses could outrun a steamboat. The pursuit reached Claiborne, about 150 miles up-river, just three hours after the *James Monroe* had left that town. Two enterprising lawmen, Joseph Taylor and M. Dubois (or DuBose), caught up with the boat at Black's Bluff and arrested the astonished

Boyington, who was in the "ladies' cabin" studying the hand of a man who was playing "brag." Searched, Boyington was found to have the pistols he had bought, a pocket map, a pocket book, some silver coins, and ninety-five dollars in notes of the United States Bank, including a fifty dollar bill. He did *not* have Frost's silver watch, though there were reports that he had kicked or thrown it overboard.[38]

On May 15 Boyington arrived back in Mobile and was conducted by his captors to the city jail. The huge, excited crowds which met him were not disorderly, according to the Mobile *Commercial Register.* Boyington recalled that they made repeated efforts to kill him. If they did try, it was with the understanding and approval of the Mobile *Mercantile Advertiser,* which was "with the public in their feelings of astonishment and exasperation"–and which gloried in an anger "founded on the better feelings of human nature, and on such principles...as will secure the quiet of our homes and our firesides from the invasion of the murderer..."[39]

On May 16, Boyington was brought before magistrates Samuel Garrow and John F. Everett, who conducted a preliminary hearing. One of their tasks was to assign Boyington counsel, possibly because he could not afford one himself. Indeed the justices appointed two lawyers, perhaps in recognition of the importance of the case or because one of the two was inexperienced.[40] Little is known of Edward R. Olcott, who represented Boyington both at his subsequent trial and on appeal. The prisoner's other trial lawyer, Isaac H. Erwin, was a well-connected but youthful practitioner with political aspirations. Neither was counted among the great advocates of the day; given the events to come in the case, Erwin's competence is open to doubt. The evidence against Boyington was most likely presented by Solicitor Berriman B. Breedin, who would stay with the case to the end.[41]

The *Commercial Register and Patriot* referred to the May 16 hearing as another "very elaborate investigation."[42] It was, in fact, a preliminary trial beset with many problems for the prosecution; and though Boyington probably did not realize it, this hearing would give him his best opportunity to clear himself. One of the chief prosecution witnesses was Captain George, who had constituted himself a one-man committee to see the prisoner hanged. George testified to a definite agreement between Boyington and Frost to pick blackberries at the graveyard, and to their having departed together on the fatal afternoon. George remembered that Mrs. Creighton had been on the porch at the time; yet *she* would testify that she had

been sitting at a window completely away from the porch, saying that she had heard nothing about the graveyard.[43]

Taylor and Dubois testified as to the capture, and declared that when told the charge, Boyington had looked stunned and had gasped out the single word "Murder!" Taylor also told of searching his prisoner in the men's cabin. In so doing he described a moment when Boyington had made a kicking motion and there had been a jingling or metallic noise. Several passengers cried out "a watch, a watch!"–but as Taylor himself admitted, he had seen no watch and no watch was found. Boyington later accounted for the whole incident by stating that he had started when Taylor thrust his hand into his pants pocket, that a coin purse and keys had been in his pocket, that he had been inside the cabin (eight feet from the door) and that his hands were tied behind him. How could he have thrown a watch overboard? However, he offered no explanations. He had kept silent on the boat because of the rudeness of his questioners; he kept silent in court on advice of counsel.[44]

During the preliminary hearing the state made rather ineffectual attempts to show that other items found on Boyington had belonged to Frost. A witness named Morrison stated that he had given Frost a fifty dollar bill in change not long before the murder. Yet Morrison admitted that the bill had been a "red bill," a note on the Bank of Alabama–not a fifty dollar United States Bank note such as had been seized from Boyington. Similarly, the prosecution tried to show that Boyington had stolen Frost's pocket book. It came out, however, that while the dead man's property had been red, Boyington's was dark green. Captain George's claim that "to his eyes, it appeared possible that the green pocket book might have been red" did little to harm the defense.[45]

Much of the evidence given on May 16 was capable of more than one interpretation–and none more so than Joseph Taylor's account of a conversation he had had with his prisoner on the return journey from Black's Bluff. Because of Boyington's "manner and conduct," Taylor said, he had begun to doubt whether he had captured the right man. Devising a test, he offered to let Boyington escape in exchange for all the money seized with him. Boyington refused, and there followed a negotiation which ended with Taylor promising to let his prisoner keep "twenty dollars, all his things, and a horse to ride." Probing for a reaction, he told Boyington that he had heard that Frost's money could be "proved." Boyington responded that the money under discussion was his, but agreed that "there might be danger in passing it." Under cross examination Taylor recalled that

his prisoner had talked about how difficult it was to prove the ownership of paper money–after advising him not to pass the fifty dollar bill until he was away from home.[46]

Obviously, nothing came of Taylor's offer, either because he found no opportunity to keep his word or because he had sought only to startle a confession from Boyington. At the hearing, he was decent enough to recall Boyington saying that he wanted to stay away from Mobile for reasons "unconnected with the murder"–namely, that "his other affairs were in such a state that he did not like to go there." Yet even though Boyington had maintained his innocence and had not been frantic to escape at any cost, the fact that he *had* been willing to escape was bound to appear to some citizens as "a 'confession,' and an 'attempt at bribery and escape.'" Worse, his advice to Taylor about passing the money might be taken as the speech of a man with criminal experience or a guilty mind. Recognizing that the Taylor evidence would form an important part of the state's case in any future proceedings, Boyington's lawyers later asked him to set down a detailed transcript of the conversation. For the moment, the damage was done.[47]

From the point of view of the defense, the most welcome (if double-edged) testimony was that of George Williamson, who testified to his former roommate's financial troubles, fear of creditors, possession of a pocket map and plans for leaving Mobile. Williamson's account gave Boyington a motive for fleeing town and provided an explanation of his nervous energy on May 10–but at the cost of damaging his character as an honest man and revealing a strong motive for getting money quickly. Of course, Boyington could have gone far toward clearing himself had he explained the source of the money he was captured with. He did not do so in court, on May 16 or later, and this silence was one of worst burdens the defense had to bear.[48]

In summing up the tangle of circumstances and contradictions before him, magistrate Garrow admitted that Breedin had not shown "sufficient proof to warrant a conviction, before a jury." He and his colleague Stocking were local politicians; for them, such an admission was an act of courageous honesty. Yet they knew that the prosecution's investigations had scarcely begun; perhaps more and better evidence would turn up. Therefore they returned Boyington to jail to await the action of the next grand jury, which would meet prior to the November session of Circuit Court. Boyington's lawyers asked the magistrates to set bail. They refused–as well they might, in the case of a man who had already fled the scene once. But in

refusing, the court asked journalists to mention the request "as an act of justice to prisoner's counsel." Apparently, public feeling was so high against Boyington that his attorneys were to be praised for trying to promote his interests.[49]

During the summer and early fall, Boyington sat shackled in his cell, working with lawyers, composing poetry and publishing it in the local press. It is impossible to say how hard Olcott and Erwin worked to find favorable evidence, though they surely must have asked George Williamson to stay in touch.[50] Solicitor Breedin and his men, in the meantime, were most likely scouring the town for witnesses to Boyington's movements on May 10. Other citizens were busy as well, going (in Boyington's words) "from street to street, and house to house," relating "the exaggerated tale of the 'monster's depravity.'" Boyington also believed that there were efforts made to persuade lawyers "either to plead against me or to remain neutral!"[51] Be that as it may, the prosecution did engage the services of the distinguished advocate and politician James Dellet, which should have been a clear signal that Breedin was out for blood.[52]

In response to the outcry against him, Boyington adopted a pose of calm assurance and elaborate gentility. As he later explained, he had resolved "that no tear should bedim my eye, nor tremor shake my frame, in the presence of those who had dealt thus basely by me." A determined romantic, he congratulated himself that he had been given "features so composed, and feelings so deep, as to resist the force of excitement and look undaunted upon the threats of malice."[53] Yet given the burgeoning image of Boyington as a hypocritical fiend, his proud air of unconcern only damaged his reputation further. Observers must have wondered if such calm did not in truth mask an utter depravity–the depravity of a man who would smile upon a friend before murdering him?[54]

Eventually the machinery of the law began to work. Boyington's lawyer Isaac Erwin was present on November 3 when grand jurors were sworn in.[55] Like most grand juries, this was a respectable body, many of whose members were merchants and craftsmen.[56] Erwin should have objected, however, to the inclusion of George Davis, Jr., a British citizen whose presence violated the principle that grand jurors be "good and lawful" men of the county. Likewise Erwin should have challenged grocer Chandler Waldo, who had already said of Boyington that "if he should be on the jury to try him, he would hang him." On November 4 Erwin brought these problems to the attention of the court, stating that he had known the facts concerning the two jurors on the previous day. He further remarked that he had

James Dellet, attorney for the prosecution. Courtesy, Charles Torrey.

chosen not to object on the spot, deciding instead to make a "suggestion" "at some subsequent period" before Boyington was indicted. (After an indictment, grand jury proceedings were considered a matter of record and were more difficult to challenge.)[57] Evidently, his November 4 remarks were not treated as a formal objection to Davis and Waldo's presence.

Curiously, Erwin had still not made an effective objection by November 12, the day the grand jury found a true bill against "Charles Boyington" for the murder of Nathaniel Frost. Was Erwin merely careless, or was he incompetent? What was Olcott's role in allowing such a delay? In the *Statement* written after his trial, Boyington was mildly complimentary of his lawyers. But he was no fool, and in the days following his indictment he determined to do what he could.[58]

On November 15, Boyington appeared before Circuit Judge Samuel Chapman and swore "in his own proper person" that his real name was Charles R.S. Boyington; the indictment, he argued, was invalid because it had not properly named him. This feeble effort to gain time was submitted to a sitting jury the same day and rejected as "untrue." On November 17, Boyington made two more pleas in abatement, based respectively on the alien status of grand juror Davis and the prejudices of grand juror Waldo. This effort too was doomed, since the indictment–stating that the grand jury was composed of "good and lawful men"–was by now a record of the court, assumed to be valid. Under Common Law, as Breedin would put it, "no record can be questioned or controverted by a plea."[59]

Accordingly, the pleas were immediately "stricken out, as being illegal"–though Chapman and Breedin knew that objections to the presence of the two jurors would have been valid had they been presented before the indictment was found. For the moment, Boyington had exhausted all hopes short of persuading a petit (trial) jury of his innocence. He was arraigned and pled not guilty, and November 20 was set as the date of his trial.[60] On that day a petit jury was empanneled.[61]

Having had their way throughout the pretrial maneuvers, Breedin and Dellet now showed themselves to be intelligent prosecutors, omitting from their presentation anything that might have clouded the image they wanted to present–that of a crafty and impulsive man who had befriended an invalid only to kill him for money. To testify to Boyington's part in the alleged graveyard expedition, for example, they brought forth young William Henry George, not his father; the latter had probably damaged his credibility as a witness by efforts to

blacken Boyington's character.[62] Probably, too, the prosecutors dropped their effort to show that Boyington, when captured, had kicked Frost's silver watch overboard.[63] Thus Breedin and Dellet tried when possible to keep their story simple.

The story of Boyington's movements on the afternoon of May 10, however, was nothing if not complex. Throughout the case, the prosecution did a fine job of assembling witnesses–such as William Moore, who claimed to have seen Boyington and Frost walking arm-in-arm on the afternoon in question, at 3:30 or 4:00 P.M. on Dauphin Street. Later, Boyington would state that he and Frost had walked on Dauphin Street in the morning; and he would point out that Dauphin Street was well out of Frost's path to the graveyard. Yet on the strength of the evidence put before them, the jury was left to conlude that the two friends had walked together over a "meandering course" shortly before Frost's murder.[64]

Similarly damaging was the testimony of Smith, the livery stable owner. Boyington, in his written version, would maintain that he had been to Smith's livery stable three times on May 10–once in the morning, to reserve a horse for the next day (Sunday), and twice in the late afternoon. Smith remembered only two visits, placing Boyington's first inquiry at 3:30 or 4:00 P.M. The first time, according to Smith, he had wanted a horse for Sunday. The second time he wanted to take the horse at once, but was frustrated because the one he wanted had been sent "to the races." Smith was ill when he gave this testimony, and his recollections, particularly of Boyington's brief attempt to ride a white horse, were not particularly clear. Yet Boyington's counsel did not press him hard.[65] The impression Smith gave was that Boyington had made plans, then changed them with great haste–presumably, about the time that Frost was murdered.

The defense was less courteous with Taylor, Boyington's captor, when the latter took the stand to describe how he had offered to let his prisoner escape. At this point, Olcott or Erwin objected, claiming that Boyington's responses to the deputy had been made under duress (in this case, under "fear or promise of escape") and thus were not lawful evidence. Judge Chapman accepted with reservations Taylor's claim that the promise of escape was offered "during the latter part of the conversation," and allowed him to tell his story. Yet during cross-examination, Taylor admitted that he had opened the discussion by saying: "I asked prisoner what he would give me, if I would let him go."[66]

Yet Taylor's testimony was effective, and his latest account was even more dangerous to Boyington's hopes than his first one had

been. Probably the jury cared little about the question of duress; they were more interested in Boyington as a man who was ready to run from the law, and who seemed to know too much about proving and passing stolen money. Once more Taylor quoted Boyington as saying "that he did not fear to go to Mobile on account of this affair, but for other reasons." But this time Taylor quoted an additional remark that "there had been several persons arrested for murder in Mobile, but...no one had been convicted, for want of positive proof."[67]

This remark, whether Boyington said it or not, was perfectly true. In the common course of legal business, killers had fared rather well in Mobile. However, Boyington was an outsider–the sort of person a jury would be more willing to hang–and he was standing trial at a time when fears of disorder were mounting. To their credit as psychologists, Breedin and Dellet had found a way to make their prisoner seem unconcerned about Mobile justice.[68] Overall the prosecution managed to highlight the Boyington of local gossip: facile, treacherous, an enemy of society despite his charm and abilities. As for Boyington's present steadfast demeanor, the prosecution had a theory as well as a quotation to back it up. Beneath his hypocrisies, they believed, the accused was like Milton's Moloch, who calmly "looked the great Omnipotent in his everlasting face, and proudly exclaimed `my sentence is for open war!"[69]

If the prosecution's case was formidable, it was also confusing and inconsistent. Would a murderer seeking to escape have engaged in so many conversations? Would he have returned his getaway horse just because it was rough-gaited?[70] A clever attorney might have made such points in cross-examination. Similarly the defense might have asked when–if Boyington was seeing so many people, doing so many things–he found time to commit murder? Finally, anyone who had inflicted such terrible wounds should have had bloodstains upon his person and clothes. Forensic law was in its infancy, yet an intelligent lawyer could persuade a jury with common-sense arguments.[71] Surviving records do not show whether Olcott and Erwin asked witnesses about signs of a struggle. It seems probable that they did not.

As for the defense, it was soon clear that Boyington's lawyers had little to offer. Of the witnesses whose testimony had been helpful at the preliminary hearing, none were present. Mrs. Creighton was not there to give her version of events at the boardinghouse. Mr. Morrison was not there to state the color of the bill he had given Frost. Above all, George Williamson, "although he had repeatedly promised to be in Mobile," had not returned to explain his friend's

prior plans for leaving town, his possession of a map, or his choice of route. Had these witnesses been intimidated, or had they (like many others who had stopped briefly in Mobile) simply moved on? Boyington, in his own account of the trial, states only that they were "beyond the jurisdiction of the court." Nor did the defense produce the man from whom Boyington later claimed to have "won several wagers" and who might have explained his possession of so much money.[72]

The trial concluded at about midnight on Friday November 21. The outcome was scarcely in doubt, given the state of public opinion, the mountain of circumstantial evidence piled up by the prosecution, and the weakness of the defense. Yet one or more jurors must have had doubts, for the jury deliberated an hour and fifteen minutes before bringing in a verdict of guilty.[73] Boyington was brought back for sentencing on November 28, where he heard a flowery speech by Judge Chapman, complete with references to his mother in Connecticut. At this well-intentioned effort, the Moloch-like prisoner was observed to weep, though whether from sentiment or sheer tension is hard to say. In the end, the judge exchanged his flowers for hemp, and sentenced Boyington to hang before four o'clock in the afternoon of February 20, 1835.[74]

Judge Chapman, however, had also been puzzling over Boyington's November 17 pleas of abatement. Though he had rejected them at the time, by November 28 he had decided to refer them to the state Supreme Court as "novel and difficult" points of law.[75] Thereby he guaranteed Boyington another chance to argue that his indictment should have been quashed, and opened the possibility that (with a favorable decision) the state might have to start over from the beginning. Whether Chapman had questions about Boyington's guilt is impossible to say.

Boyington's post-trial state of mind is hard to capture. He himself professed to be surprised by the verdict, and to have endured "a sensation deep, fearful, and indescribable" afterwards. Yet other sources declare that for weeks after sentencing, Boyington refused to consider the possibility that he might hang. In fact the condemned man acted as if he expected to survive his ordeal. He wrote letters and poetry, consulted with his lawyers, received from Solicitor Breedin the transcripts of his preliminary hearing and trial, and prepared to write an account of his ordeal. He also may have continued his courtship of Rose de Fleur.[76] Finally, he received a number of visitors, including the Reverend William Hamilton, a Presbyterian divine who spoke with him several times, and who

would witness his death and write an important account of the case. Hamilton's purpose was to see that Boyington died a Christian. Yet though they spoke long of theological and philosophical matters, Boyington–to the clergyman's distress and annoyance–remained an agnostic and declared his innocence in passionate terms.[77]

Writing his own version of the Frost murder and the events surrounding it consumed much of Boyington's time. The single most important document which has survived from the case, his *Statement* is an invaluable glimpse into a controversial personality. Boyington was a skilled and careful writer, but the reader is most struck by his emotional control. Occasionally he allows a bolt of indignation to break through, as when he asks: "Reader–do you believe me an idiot?" Sometimes he boasts a bit, claiming that he is "incapable" of fearing death. Toward the end of his writing he indulges in self-pity. Yet for the most part the *Statement* is devoid of excesses. Boyington's authorial pose is of a man earnestly convinced that his readers are creatures of reason and good will. After a full rehearsal of the facts, surely the people will see things his way.[78]

In keeping with this mood of reason, Boyington is studiously polite to everyone who played a part in his story–to prosecutors, judges, lawyers and witnesses, even to Deputy Taylor and Captain George. He is so judicious that it is possible to glimpse why contemporaries considered his behavior to be unnatural. Boyington, however, intended his writing to clear his name. He was determined to make nothing but the most high-toned and candid impression, even while confessing to youthful follies.[79] Nowhere in the *Statement*, either, does Boyington discuss the legalities of his indictment or the progress of his appeal. For the purpose of his writing, everything but the question of his innocence was a side issue. If it seems that he was more concerned about vindicating his honor than he was about his own neck, it may have been so; or it may be that he merely worked to convey that feeling.[80] Yet he does make one decidedly practical assertion–namely, that after the trial, a man named John Caselle had sworn to having seen Frost walking alone on Water Street, at three o'clock or later on the afternoon of May 10.[81]

If true, this information lends credence to the prosecution's theory of a "meandering" route, since Water Street is near the Mobile River, some distance from the graveyard. But it also shows that Frost and Boyington had separated after leaving their boarding house, which would mean that anyone could have murdered Frost. Who was Caselle, and why was he so late in coming forward? Boyington does not say. Nor is there indication, in either the *Statement* or the

appellate record, of any intention to use Caselle's statement as the basis of a motion for a new trial. Such an appeal would have been irregular but not impossible; and Boyington had earlier shown himself willing to catch at straws. Either Caselle was an invention, or Erwin and Olcott were less than zealous.[82]

It was Olcott, in any case, who prepared to travel to Tuscaloosa to address a Supreme Court that had recently gone through significant changes. Prior to 1832, the high court had met as an assembly of the state's circuit judges. That year, as the culmination of an arduous debate over the future of the judiciary, the legislature had made the Supreme Court a separate entity and set its membership at three justices.[83] Then in January 1835, just a few days before the court received Boyington's papers, Chief Justice Abner Lipscomb retired. He was replaced as chief justice by Reuben Saffold, a veteran of the court, a stout man whose manner on the bench was "firm" and "impartial." The vacant seat was filled by Henry Hitchcock, a Mobilian whose local sympathies were tempered by a humanitarian bent.[84]

The Supreme Court heard the Boyington case on February 11. Olcott spoke for the prisoner, Breedin and Attorney General Peter Martin for the state. The issue at law was clear-cut: Could Boyington object to the composition of the grand jury after the indictment was returned? Or had he, by having waited, waived his right to object? The arguments on both sides testified to the continuity of English law and to its continuing importance in America. Olcott and Breedin agreed that historically there was such a right, and traced it as far back as a statute of Henry IV (passed in response to grand jury abuses perpetrated by unscrupulous or incompetent officials). By Olcott's interpretation of records and commentary, such a right had also existed in Common Law, and thus was good wherever Common Law was in effect. Breedin took the position (more common among legal scholars) that the right rested solely upon the statute, which was not binding on American courts.[85]

Yet these presentations hinged upon more than our English heritage; both sides raised points of public policy. To deny the right of post-indictment objection, Olcott asserted, would be to ignore the practical fact that grand juries frequently indicted persons who were not present to make timely objections. Such persons, if indicted by improperly returned jurors, would face the odium of trial without recourse. Breedin stated that if accused persons were allowed to quash indictments by challenging the fitness of grand jurors, the result would be endless delay and obstruction. He maintained that such

rights as do exist to challenge grand jurors were "for the protection of the innocent; and not, by a perverted and incongruous system of pleading, for the advantage of the guilty."[86]

Since they knew that the Boyington decision might set an important precedent, one can imagine the three justices having a thorough discussion of law and policy. If they did, they split along lines of seniority: Saffold and his colleague Harry I. Thornton against the newly elected Hitchcock. In the end Saffold wrote the majority opinion, holding that Judge Chapman had been right to deny Boyington's pleas. After a review of the facts, state laws, and historical authorities, Saffold declared that the existence of a Common Law right to quash indictments by challenging grand jurors was "at most, very doubtful." Even if such a right existed, he continued, it was an obsolete thing, no longer valid in face of the procedural safeguards which operated in Alabama. In Saffold's judgment, American case law provided no comfort for Boyington; and he agreed with Breedin that upholding Boyington's pleas would hamper the operation of justice. In all, Saffold and the Court trusted the courts to supervise the selection and certify the status of "good and lawful" jurors.[87]

Justice Henry Hitchcock wrote a dissenting opinion, in which he maintained that since the historical record was somewhat murky, the Court was "left to decide the question, more upon principle than authority." And "what principle of public policy," he asked, "can be more sacred than that the sources of justice should be pure?"[88] No doubt Boyington would have agreed heartily, but from a practical standpoint Hitchcock was only indulging in rhetoric. As for Saffold, he was well aware of the consequences of his and Thornton's judgment. "[I]t is ever extremely painful," he wrote, "to decide against the accused, on a question *vitally* affecting him; but Judges can exercise no mercy or discretion, beyond their opinion of the law."[89] Boyington could take such comfort as he might from the Chief Justice's principles.

On the night of February 19, the prisoner had at least two visitors–one of whom, a gentleman from town, he allegedly cursed. The other was the Reverend Hamilton, who received and read by candlelight a letter in which Boyington pleaded his innocence and predicted that someday "the world will believe that they have wronged me." Hamilton was so much moved that he was almost persuaded; he readily agreed to return the next morning and accompany the young man to the gallows. When he entered the cell at ten o'clock in the morning he found Boyington finishing letters to

his mother and brother, and perhaps one last note to Rose de Fleur. The two men spent two and a half hours talking. Hamilton offered prayers and warned Boyington that he must not look for rescue or a pardon, adding that the crowd would probably kill him even if he were reprieved. These kind words did not prevent Boyington from asking his jailors whether the Governor was in town.[90]

Hangings were mass spectacles in antebellum America, and it is not surprising that thousands of people turned out to witness such a notable hanging. At 1:30 the prisoner was taken from the jail, bound for a place of execution which had been prepared a mile or two west and south of town. Because he was no common felon, Boyington was not forced to ride in a cart seated on his coffin. Rather he was allowed to walk behind, accompanied by Hamilton and Olcott. It was no place for a quiet conversation; the authorities had called out the militia, accompanied by a brass band, to accompany the march and police the execution. Dressed in a plain black suit and a silk top hat, Boyington waved occasionally to acquaintances in the crowds which lined his way. His feet kept time to "the dirge that followed him." A journalist said that he looked like the "chief personage in a grand mourning procession for another."[91]

The walk to the gallows took over an hour, the route not having been chosen out of kindness to the condemned man. An author familiar with the tales of old Mobile states that the procession marched past the city graveyard, where many hoped that Boyington, on seeing the scene of the crime, would "give in and admit he killed Nathaniel Frost."[92] He disappointed his ill-wishers, however, and was perfectly calm until he came to the place of execution, where he momentarily changed color. Yet Boyington believed that if he could delay the hanging past four o'clock (the end-point of Judge Chapman's sentence), his attorney could demand that he be set free. Anxious to put off death as long as possible, he began to read in "a clear, firm voice" from the manuscript of the *Statement*.[93]

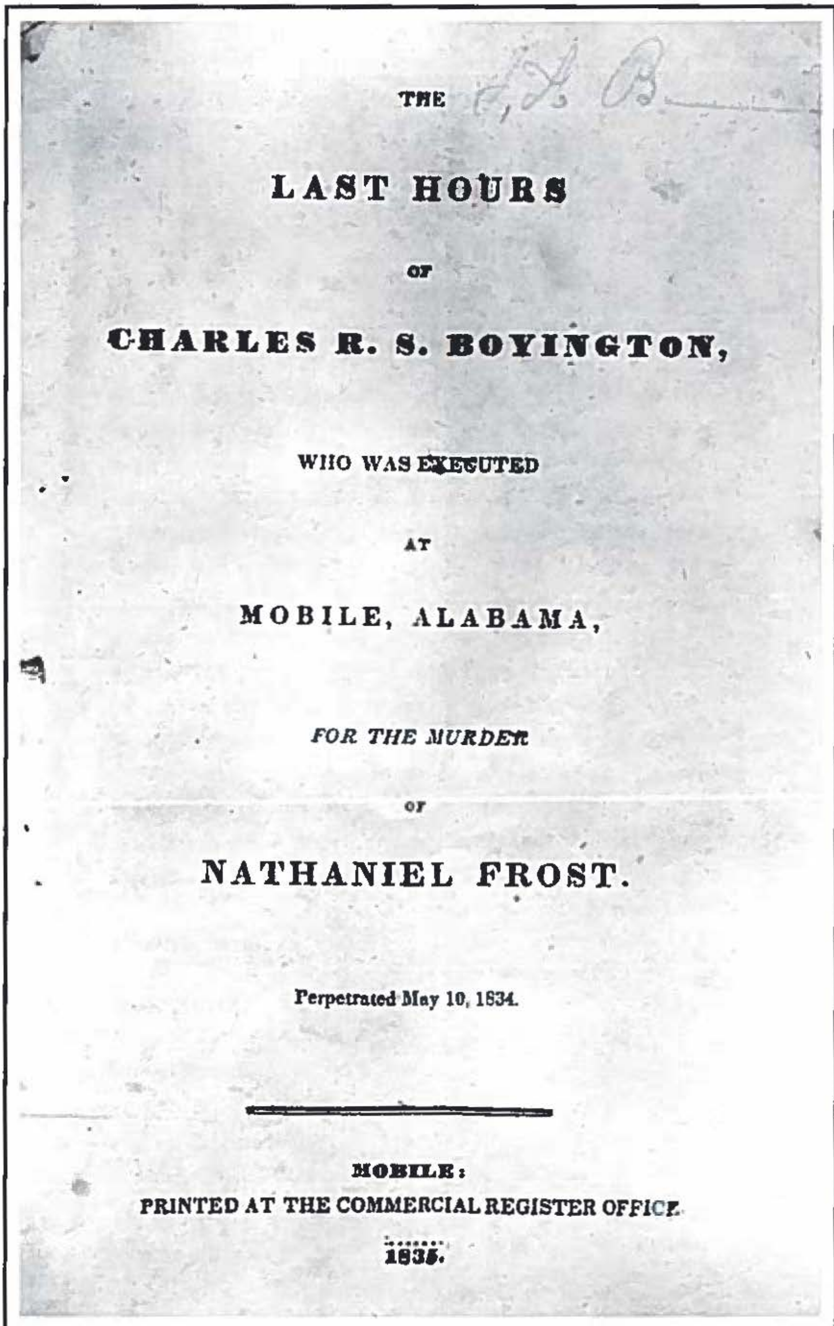
One can imagine that the populace savored a scene so utterly theatrical. One can imagine Boyington striving to keep his composure as he forced his way through a sea of words, all the while hoping for a miracle. At about four o'clock the sheriff stopped him, and Boyington rather frantically began to ask questions of those around him. He squabbled with the attending surgeon; he asked Olcott if he would intervene for him (Olcott refused); with elaborate deliberation he took off his coat and stock. At last Boyington was robed for death and had the rope placed around his neck. Nearly fainting, he turned to Hamilton with a cry, which the clergyman mistook for a

last-minute repentance. Instead the wretched man cried out that he must try to escape. He tried to run but was immediately caught by the troops who ringed the gallows. There followed a struggle which was more like a strangling than a hanging, and which evoked a cry of "Oh, it is like murder!" from the crowd. The condemned man dangled for minutes before he died, grasping at the rope with hands which he had managed to work free.[94]

Journalists and public spokesmen were quick to hold up Boyington's example before the youth of Mobile. Here, they said, is what happens to children who are not properly taught morality and self-control. Boyington's terrifying struggles at the end revealed an infidel's terror in the face of death. At the same time, such commentators (including Hamilton, who admitted that he was shattered by what he had seen and felt) took an even harsher view of Boyington's long-preserved composure. Hamilton reasoned that Boyington was determined to win his freedom by projecting an image of sincerity, of a good man falsely accused. He had deluded himself that he could be successful and died without ever seriously confronting his guilt. These views Hamilton put forth in letters, sermons, and an 1835 pamphlet, *The Last Hours of Charles R.S. Boyington*. Despite a genuine sympathy for the man, Hamilton regarded Boyington as "the archest hypocrite, the veriest villain for hardihood, the sun ever shone upon."[95]

However, Hamilton's contemporaries (and interpreters) must have realized that the Boyington affair was in many respects a fiasco. Executions in colonial and early national times were ceremonies designed to exhibit both the triumph of virtue and the solidarity of the community. As in Mobile, the presence of civil, military, and religious officials was considered necessary so that the multitude could witness the unity of Authority. It was likewise expected that those about to die should acknowledge the justice of their fate, showing contrition and trusting to God's mercy.[96] Such is the image conveyed by the pamphlet literature of executions; such was not the case with Boyington's execution.

Authority was unified in Mobile, but what of the people with whom Boyington exchanged greetings on his way to death? What of the cry of "murder!" at the end? Accounts of the hanging which derive from the newspapers or from Hamilton stress the crowd's complete lack of sympathy for Boyington. Perhaps the Mobile historians protest too much.[97] Years later, an eyewitness to the march described Boyington as "that young man, in whose innocence many people believed."[98] Certainly there was public sentiment enough


THE

LAST HOURS

OF

CHARLES R. S. BOYINGTON,

WHO WAS EXECUTED

AT

MOBILE, ALABAMA,

FOR THE MURDER

OF

NATHANIEL FROST.

Perpetrated May 10, 1834.

MOBILE:

PRINTED AT THE COMMERCIAL REGISTER OFFICE.

1835.

Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

against Boyington to facilitate his conviction and execution–but not enough to make his killing seem a self-evident act of justice. For all the effort spent to establish his hypocrisy, the fact remains that Boyington didn't act guilty. For all that he had played the gentleman, the artist, and the romantic hero, he refused to play the penitent.

Boyington's *Statement* was published after his death and no doubt circulated in Mobile. There is no telling what impact it had on public opinion; probably, Mobilians needed no formal document to keep the case alive. On a popular level, Boyington and his fate quickly became a focus of customs and tales. A modern writer notes that for more than a decade after the hanging, "it was the custom...for a young man or beau to write in his lady friend's autograph album 'a thought or two from Boyington,'" Stories of the dead man's romance with Rose de Fleur also kept his memory green; thirty-five years after the hanging, one woman remembered that "many a beautiful garland was woven for the mound where Boyington was buried."[99] That grave was located near the northwest corner of the old cemetery. According to legend, Boyington had predicted that an oak tree would grow to vindicate him. Residents watched with fascination as an acorn sprouted on the spot.[100]

In the meantime, even though he was dead, Boyington could not stay out of court. At its June 1837 term the Supreme Court considered the case of Zachariah Middleton, who, like Boyington, had sought to quash an indictment by challenging the qualifications of a grand juror. Middleton and his attorney, a rising young man named Elisha Wolsey Peck, faced an entirely different court headed by future Governor Henry W. Collier. Collier and the Court wasted no time in overturning the Boyington precedent, stating that "the forms which the law has prescribed, as preparatory to its punishment, should be observed"–and describing the injustices which would follow from a contrary policy. Grand jurors, in short, must be properly qualified.[101]

The Middleton case must have struck a nerve in at least one prominent lawyer. Benjamin F. Porter was the Supreme Court's official reporter, and a man well versed in the vicissitudes and inconsistencies of law. A supporter of many of the humanitarian reforms of the day, he was by the mid-1830s working with like-minded politicians to enact the penitentiary system of confinement (and thus to eliminate the harsh punishments prescribed by common law). In an 1836 address at the University of Alabama, he opposed the death penalty as a violation of natural law and Christian principles on the grounds that hangings did not deter crime. Porter had for years been law partner to Boyington prosecutor James Dellet, and it is certain that

the Mobile case stayed on his mind. In a piece composed to influence an 1846 legislative debate, Porter described Boyington's execution, telling how his face, "lately beaming with intelligence and youth," had become "a mirror of the dreadful storm of wild passions raging within." "Oh God of nature!" cried Porter, "was it ever designed by thee, that the peace of society should be built up on such ruin as this?"[102]

In the summer of 1847 came a development which should have been as sensational as any in the case. On August 23, the Albany (New York) *Evening Journal* published a brief account titled "The Wrong Man Hung," naming Boyington as a young printer who had been executed "a few years since in Alabama" for "having murdered a companion with whom he was traveling." The paper stated that "the landlord in whose house the murder was committed" had recently confessed to the crime on his death-bed. The story was reprinted in at least one Alabama paper, the Huntsville *Democrat*. But there is little evidence of its effect on discussion of the case in Mobile.[103]

Is the 1847 revelation credible? It contains errors (chiefly those of the passages quoted), but these are only what might be expected of a reporter hearing a second-hand account of a twelve year-old case.[104] If the story is true and the "landlord" mentioned was in fact Captain George, then a great light dawns–and it is possible to explain not only George's conduct, but also to suggest the source of many rumors which circulated about Boyington. On the other hand, though it seems unlikely that anyone would have invented it, the *Evening Journal* story cannot be considered conclusive. It is really little more than an editorial paragraph, unsigned and unsupported by the statements of witnesses. It shows that the Boyington case was of more than local interest; but it does not prove his innocence.

Though Mobilians continued to talk about Boyington, those hungry for new revelations would have to wait more than thirty years. In August 1879, J.J. Delchamps wrote to the Mobile *Register* claiming to know of an eye-witness to Frost's murder. On the evening of the killing, as he put it, he had been talking with his friend James T. Shelton. One of the Shelton family slaves, a child named Patsey, came running up with a tale of seeing a tall man and a short man fighting under a tree in the graveyard. The tall man, Patsey said, "fell down all bloody." The two boys did not investigate–fights were common in the graveyard–yet the next day, Frost's body was found near the spot she had named. According to Delchamps, Shelton's father suppressed Patsey's information, knowing that slaves could not testify against white men. All the same, Patsey had always insisted

"that the man she saw hung was the short man she had seen striking at the tall man."[105]

If Delchamps's version of Patsey's story is true, then Boyington was guilty. Yet here too there are difficulties. The first is the problem of suppressing anything in a relatively small town. Delchamps says that Patsey's story was never "made public or known to many"–but one would expect such a juicy story to have circulated among white and black Mobilians, and to have formed part of the folklore of the case. Why, in any case, keep it secret? Second, why did the boys fail to investigate the story? Delchamps was thirteen in 1834 and Shelton a few years older; Patsey told them of a gory fight and neither of them "thought much of it." Is that typical boy-behavior? Third, there is Patsey's description of Boyington as a "short man." Boyington, though shorter than Frost, was five feet nine inches tall; it would be interesting to know Captain George's height and build. The Delchamps account, like the deathbed confession of 1847, may provide a key to the case, or it may be of interest only as a folktale.[106]

At intervals since 1879, local historians have summoned Boyington's ghost back to the printed page. Erwin Craighead's *From Mobile's Past* (1913) contained a judicious account of the case, viewed in part through the lens of the Reverend Mr. Hamilton.[107] In 1949, Francois Ludgere Diard published *The Tree: Being the Strange Case of Charles R.S. Boyington*, a strange work which reports (and accepts, with righteous anger) nearly every bad thing ever said about Boyington. However, Diard also reprinted long excerpts from Hamilton's notes and works and from interviews conducted with elderly Mobilians. He took the trouble to print a number of Boyington's poems, and he likewise transcribed a number of love letters purporting to be those of Boyington and Rose de Fleur. His account of the legal proceedings is sketchy and incoherent; the official records may have been lost before he began writing.[108] In recent years, Alabama storyteller Kathyrn Windham has heightened awareness of the case with her dramatic tale of "The Boyington Oak."[109]

The innocent man trapped in a web of circumstantial evidence is a favorite device of fiction-writers. At the end of the story the reader expects to know the identity of the guilty party. Usually the protagonist has been rescued by means of some startling revelation. Boyington's story provides no such tidy ending. The killing of Nathaniel Frost took place at a time when Mobilians were profoundly uneasy about the influx of "outsiders" into their society. Boyington

drew suspicion upon himself; and his particular blend of Byronic mystery, bad reputation, and staunch denial only strengthened the impression that he was a hypocritical villain, the truest and most dangerous of outsiders.

Yet for all that they menaced him with mobs, denounced him as a monster, and strangled him in the midst of a ghoulish crowd, Mobilians never quite made up their minds about Boyington. If a community can be said to bear a psychic scar, the Boyington affair was spectacularly equipped to inflict one. Even the late-coming revelations in the case settled nothing, though they testify to an urge to have the matter resolved. That, however, is precisely what will never happen. The passage of time, the changing perspectives of generations and the loss of trial records have frustrated certainty.

Yet it is certain that Boyington was given procedural justice in the courts. He was given two lawyers, at least one of whom was competent. He was denied bail and chained in his cell; but he was allowed to write and to have frequent visitors. He did not even have to take the initiative in appealing his case; and his appeal was taken seriously. On balance, the Boyington case shows the legal officials of the state doing their work conscientiously, whatever the attitude displayed by newspapers and citizens.

The problem, of course, is that two years later another group of conscientious officials decided differently. Had Boyington appealed a similar case then, his indictment would have been quashed and he might have been retried. Had his case been sent back to the circuit court in 1835, the result might have been the same; yet he might have used new evidence (the Caselle statement?) or relocated favorable witnesses, and so cleared himself. In the most striking fashion, the facts surrounding the Boyington affair reveal both the mutability of law and the importance of not being (physically or legally) in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Notes

This article could not have been written without the assistance and expertise of several librarians and archivists, notably: A. J. Wright, Clinical Librarian, Department of Anesthesiology, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine; Jeanine Connelly, formerly of the University Archives of the University of South Alabama; George Schroeter, former Local History and Geneology Services Manager, Mobile Public Library; Norwood Kerr of the Alabama State Department of Archives and History; Marie Lamoureux of the American Antiquarian Society; and Hugh Terry of the Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama.

[1]The records of the Mobile circuit court are held by the University Archives of the University of South Alabama. Searches by staff members have failed to discover the trial records of the Boyington case.

[2]See Charles R .S. Boyington, *A Statement of the Trial of Charles R .S. Boyington, Who Was Indicted and Executed for the Murder of Nathaniel Frost, Written by Himself, To Which Is Added a Number of Fugitive Pieces, in Verse, Also Written and Composed by Him* (Mobile: Office of the *Mercantile Advertiser*, 1835), copy held in the Harris Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University; and [William Thomas Hamilton], *The Last Hours of Charles R. S. Boyington, Who Was Executed at Mobile, Alabama, for the Murder of Nathaniel Frost, Perpetrated May 10, 1834* (Mobile: *Commercial Register* Office, 1835), copy in the collections of the American Antiquarian Society. See also A. J. Wright, *Criminal Activity in the Deep South, 1700-1930: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York, 1989), 4, 49-50. For remarks on the difficulty of relying on works such as Boyington's or Hamilton's, see below, especially n. 49.

[3]The term "Flush Times" comes from Joseph Glover Baldwin's classic account, *The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi, A Series of Sketches* (New York, 1854).

[4]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, April 3, 7, 8, 1834.

[5]Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th Century American South* (New York, 1984), 15-17; for a killing punished as manslaughter see *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, November 27, 1834.

[6][Bernard Reynolds], *Sketches from Mobile from 1814 to the Present Time* (Mobile, 1868), 21-23; Harriet Elizabeth Amos, "Social Life in an Antebellum Cotton Port: Mobile, Alabama, 1820-1860" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1976), 14-15, 21-22, 25-26, 27-28; Harriet E. Amos, *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1985), 105-106.

[7]Amos, "Social Life in an Antebellum Cotton Port," 27-28; Paul Wayne Taylor, "Mobile: 1818-1859, As Her Newspapers Pictured Her," (M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1951), 78-80.

[8]Taylor, "Mobile: 1818-1859," 78-81, 82-83; Amos, "Social Life in an Antebellum Cotton Port," 15-16, 150, 168, 188-189; *Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 27, 1834.

[9]Taylor, "Mobile: 1818-1859," 91-93, 95-97; Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 35-36, 42-43. See also Paul M. Pruitt, Jr., "An Antebellum Law Reformer: Passages in the Life of Benjamin F. Porter," *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 11 (Fall 1995): 29-30, 32-33.

[10]See Taylor, "Mobile: 1818-1859," 78.

[11]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, August 1, 4, 6, 1834; Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 32, 49-59.

[12]Quoted passage in Taylor, "Mobile: 1818-1859," 78. See also Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 82-83, 90-91; and Louis P. Masur, *Rites of Execution: Capital Punishment and the Transformation of American Culture, 1776-1865* (New York, 1989), 100-103 and passim.

[13]Taylor, "Mobile: 1818-1859," 83-84, 85-90; see also Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 101-105, 130-33; and Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828* (1965; reprint, Tuscaloosa, AL, 1990), 166-67. For an overview of crime among slaves, see Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1950), 242-65.

[14]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, July 22, 1835; Taylor, "Mobile: 1818-1859," 82-83, 84-86.

[15]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, July 29, August 21, September 4, 1835; Taylor, "Mobile: 1818-1859," 81-82.

[16]Boyington, *Statement*, 4; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 34; *Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 12, 1834; Francois Ludgere Diard, *The Tree: Being the Strange Case of Charles R. S. Boyington* (Mobile, 1949), 2, 55-57.

[17]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 12, 1834; *Mobile Mercantile Advertiser*, May 12, 1834, in Mobile Public Library Clippings File; Boyington, *Statement*, 4; Diard, *Tree*, 2.

[18]Boyington, *Statement*, 4.

[19]Amos, *Cotton City*, 46-47, 148-51; Diard, *Tree*, 55.

[20]Boyington, *Statement*, 30; see also Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 32.

[21]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 14, 1834 (speaking of Nathaniel Frost).

[22]Diard, *Tree*, 68-69, 84-103.

[23]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 12, 1834; Boyington, *Statement*, 4; see Diard, *Tree*, 91-92, for another set of Boyington's clothes.

[24]Boyington, *Statement*, 32-35. His poems are collected generally in ibid., 32-40, with approximate dates of publication. See Diard, *Tree*, 63-83 for more poems and for a discussion of Boyington's "literary genius."

[25]Boyington, *Statement*, 4, 5, 24-25; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 7; Diard, *Tree*, 2, 7.

[26]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 12, 14, 1834. For a sunnier account of Frost's character see *Mobile Mercantile Advertiser*, May 12, 1834, Mobile Public Library Clippings File.

[27]Boyington, *Statement*, 4-5; see Diard, *Tree*, 1-4, 103; and Erwin Craighead, *From Mobile's Past: Sketches of Memorable People and Events* (Mobile, 1925), 32-33.

[28]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 12, 1834; *Mobile Mercantile Advertiser*, May 12, 1834, Mobile Public Library Clippings File; Diard, *Tree*, 3-4, 7.

[29]Boyington, *Statement*, 5, 19; see also Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 32.

[30]Boyington, *Statement*, 4-6. Boyington also wrote that he had shown Williamson letters to his creditors. Diard, *Tree*, 3, locates the George's boarding house.

[31]Boyington, *Statement*, 7. Boyington provides more detailed accounts of these movements and conversations.

[32]Boyington, *Statement*, 7-8. For conflicting testimony as to how many times Boyington visited Smith's stable, see ibid., 6-7, and below. For a plain version of Boyington's movements that day, see Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 5-6.

[33]Diard, *Tree*, 4-5, 7. For what purports to be a begging letter from Boyington to Frost, see ibid., 103.

[34]Boyington, *Statement*, [3]; Diard, *Tree*, 1-4; *Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 12, 1834. Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 6, says that Frost was "found lying among the bushes on the piece of ground skirting the Grave Yard to the west...." See also *Mobile Mercantile Advertiser*, May 12, 1834, Mobile Public Library Clippings File.

[35]Johnson Jones Hooper, *Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs, Late of the Tallapoosa Volunteers; Together with "Taking the Census" and Other Alabama Sketches* (1845; reprint, Tuscaloosa, AL, 1993), 12.

[36]For an overview of Southwestern humor, see Thomas Daniel Young, Floyd C. Watkins, and Richard Croom Beatty, *The Literature of the South*, rev. ed. (Glenview,

IL, 1968), 97-100, and for selections, ibid., 352-423. For a classic case of literary rogues as hypocrites, consider Mark Twain's King and Duke in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; see Mark Twain, *Mississippi Writings* (New York, 1982), 742-838. For a philosophical slant on the subject of deceit and villainy, see Herman Melville, *The Confidence Man: His Masquerade*, ed. Hershel Parker (New York, 1971), passim.

[37]See Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama*, 247-48, 249-50, for Alabama reactions to rebellious slaves. See James L. Penick, Jr., *The Great Western Land Pirate: John A. Murrell in Legend and History* (Columbia, MO, 1981), 3, 9-31, and passim, for evidence of a broad-based insurrection scare which took place in the greater Mississippi Valley in the spring and summer of 1835. John A. Murrell, the focus of these events, was a thief and counterfeiter who was convicted of slave-stealing in Tennessee in 1834. However, his chief accuser wrote a sensational book which described Murrell as a vicious killer and bitter-hearted anarchist, the leader of an interstate conspiracy whose plan was to incite the slaves to revolt. The book had a profound impact, and numerous slaves and alleged criminals were whipped, hung, or otherwise murdered during the ensuing hysteria. Mobilians contented themselves with the vigilante action against gamblers and swindlers noted above. It is worth noting that Murrell supposedly traveled in disguise as a clergyman; if so he was the consumate frontier hypocrite.

[38]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 12, 13, 15, 1834; Boyington, *Statement*, 11-14; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 6-8; Diard, *Tree*, 6-7.

[39]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 16, 1834; Boyington, *Statement*, 20-21; *Mobile Mercantile Advertiser*, May 19, 1834, Clippings File, Mobile Public Library. Diard, *Tree*, 7, states incorrectly that Boyington was returned on May 16.

[40]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 17, 1834; *Mobile Mercantile Advertiser*, May 17, 19, 1834, Clippings File, Mobile Public Library. For Boyington's references to his attorneys see Boyington, *Statement*, 16, 26-27. Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 35, says that Boyington "neglected to retain counsel for his defense, till [*sic*] almost the very day his trial was to commence...." This essay assumes that Hamilton was misinformed, or misinterpreted Boyington's inability to pay his lawyers.

[41]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, November 22, 1834. For the appellate roles of Olcott and Breedin see *Boyington versus The State*, in Benjamin F. Porter, *Reports of Cases in Law and Equity Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of Alabama* (Tuscaloosa, 1836), 2: 100-120. Hereinafter the case will be cited as *Boyington v. State*, and the reporter volume as 2 Porter, with appropriate page numbers and date; other legal citations will be handled analogously. For biographical information see William Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama for Thirty Years, with an Appendix* (Atlanta, 1872), 296; Mrs. John H. Mallon, comp., *Mobile Directory 1837 and 1839* (Mobile, n.d.), 3, 10; and E. T. Wood, *Mobile Directory and Register for 1844* (Mobile, 1844), 50. Note that Mrs. Mallon's compilation contains separate paginations for 1837 and 1839; all cites above and below refer to the 1837 work. It is interesting that Erwin was an 1828 graduate of the prestigious Litchfield Law School, Litchfield, Connecticut; see Samuel Fisher, *Litchfield Law School, 1774-1833* (New Haven, 1946), 49.

[42]*Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 17, 1834.

[43]Boyington, *Statement*, 9-10. George stated that Boyington had suggested the blackberry outing, while his son William Henry George would at some point testify that Frost spoke first. Such contradictions are difficult to deal with in the *Statement*, since Boyington handled his case topically, not always bothering to state whether testimony was given at the preliminary hearing or at his trial in circuit court. The bias involved in reconstructing criminal proceedings from a defendant's memoir is obvious. Yet the outline of the case does emerge from Boyington's *Statement*; and since he had access to records kindly provided by Breedin (see ibid., 27), he is able to quote long passages of verbatim testimony.

[44]Boyington, *Statement*, 12-14. Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 7, discusses the watch incident as though it had been presented in evidence at Boyington's formal trial; yet see Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 33, for an indication that the "point was not made against him at the trial...." If the latter is true, then the watch testimony must have been given at the preliminary hearing.

[45]Boyington, *Statement*, 18-21. At either the hearing or the trial, Mrs. George would testify that Frost had possessed also a red-covered pocket map such as Boyington had taken upriver; ibid., 20.

[46]Boyington, *Statement*, 15.

[47]Boyington, *Statement*, 15, 16-18. See Hamilton, *Last Hours*, for a sympathetic interpretation of Boyington's dealings with Taylor.

[48]Boyington, *Statement*, 4-5, 20, 24-25; see also Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 7, and Diard, *Tree*, 6-7.

[49]Boyington, *Statement*, 21; *Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, May 17, 1834; *Mobile Mercantile Advertiser*, May 17, 19, 1834, Clippings File, Mobile Public Library. It is clear from the *Mercantile Advertiser* articles that capital felons must have been granted bail in previous Mobile cases.

[50]Boyington, *Statement*, 21, 26-27, 35-39; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 6; Diard, *Tree*, 69-74.

[51]Boyington, *Statement*, 25-26. The types of stories told about Boyington can be deduced from a reading of Penick's *Great Western Land Pirate*, cited above. Diard, *Tree*, 55-57, lists a series of crimes charged against Boyington which include horse-stealing and piracy, supposedly committed all along the Atlantic seaboard. According to Diard, Boyington "confessed" some of these crimes to his spiritual adviser, the Reverend William Hamilton.

[52]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, November 22, 1834.

[53]Boyington, *Statement*, 25-26.

[54]Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 14, and see ibid., 33-42 for a long denunciation of Boyington's manner and pretenses. For further literary evidence that antebellum Americans brooded upon the appearance-versus-reality problem, consider such Edgar Allan Poe stories as "The Black Cat" and "The Cask of Amontillado." See Edgar Allan Poe, *Poetry and Tales* (New York, 1984), 597-606 and 848-54, respectively.

[55]The mechanics of grand jury operation were to play an important role in this trial. For more on grand jury practice, see below. Also see *The State of Alabama v. Middleton*, 5 Porter 493-95 (1837), which describes, among other operations, how the law required county and judicial officials to place the names of prospective jurors into a box prior to drawing particular names. See also Records of the Supreme Court of the State of Alabama, January Term 1835, 138-39 (hereinafter cited as Supreme Court Records), in the Alabama State Department of Archives and History (hereinafter cited as ADAH). Like the trial records, the original record of grand jury proceedings in the Boyington case has been lost.

[56]Apparently the grand jury had sixteen members; see Supreme Court Records, 139, ADAH, and Mallon, *Mobile Directory 1837 and 1839*, 8, 16, 32, 33. For commentary on the makeup of grand juries see Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 112-13; see also David J. Bodenhamer, *Fair Trial: Rights of the Accused in American History* (New York, 1992), 59-61.

[57]*Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 112, 120 (1835); and Supreme Court Records, 140, ADAH. For more information about grand jury practice, see below.

[58]See Boyington, *Statement*, [3] (for a copy of the indictment), 26; see also Supreme Court Records, 140-41, ADAH. Hamilton, *Last Hours*, describes Boyington's "feeling and able counsel."

[59]Supreme Court Records, 141, 142-44, ADAH; *Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 100, 114, 120 (1835). On the propriety of a defendant making such pleas himself see *State v. Middleton*, 5 Porter 485, 497 (1837). For Chapman as trial judge see *Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot*, November 22, 1834; for information on Chapman, see Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* 3: 318.

[60]Supreme Court Records, 142-44, ADAH. For discussion of the legality of Boyington's pleas, see *Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 100, 112-16, 120-22 (1835). Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 6, says that the trial began on November 16.

[61]See Supreme Court Records, 144, for a list of the petit jurors; see also *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, November 22, 1834. For rather scanty information on several jurors see Mallon, *Mobile Directory 1837 and 1839*, 1, 20, 28, 32. See also Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 112-13; Lawrence M. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment in American History* (New York, 1993), 243, 246-49; and Bodenhamer, *Fair Trial*, 61. Since several petit juries were assembled at a time, the likelihood is that they were more workaday bodies than grand juries.

[62]Boyington, *Statement*, 10-11, 26. It seems likely that the younger George testified at the trial, since Boyington notes that he gave information about "his father's proceedings"–presumably about Captain George's campaign against Boyington.

[63]Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 33.

[64]Boyington, *Statement*, 7-9. Some eye-witnesses to Boyington's movements may have given information only at the preliminary hearing. It does seem likely, though, that the impressive array of testimony cited by Boyington was the product of more police-work than could have been done in the few days before the preliminary hearing. The timing of Moore's testimony is also uncertain. It may be worth noting that Boyington refuted Moore's testimony by saying, somewhat unconvincingly, that he would not have leaned on Frost's arm because Frost was sickly–and that Frost would not have leaned on his arm because of the difference in their heights.

[65]Boyington, *Statement*, 6-7. In a footnote, Boyington claims that Smith had come around to agreeing with his three-visit version. See also Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 6.

[66]Boyington, *Statement*, 28. On the law of confessions made under duress, see Joseph Chitty, *A Practical Treatise on the Criminal Law* (Philadelphia, 1819) 1: 464-65.

[67]Boyington, *Statement*, 15-16.

[68]See Masur, *Rites of Execution*, 38-39, for the tendency of juries to hang outsiders. For another version of Boyington's quote, and confirmation of its negative effect on Mobilians see Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 35.

[69]Boyington, *Statement*, 25.

[70]Boyington, *Statement*, 29, makes just such points.

[71]See Pruitt, "An Antebellum Law Reformer," 32, for such an example. As for Boyington, he was seen returning to the boarding house, where he might have changed clothes. It seems that no one raised this point at any time. See Boyington, *Statement*, 8; Diard, *Tree*, 4, comments upon Boyington's nervous manner on that occasion.

[72]Boyington, *Statement*, 24-25, 26-27. Nor, apparently, was there any thought that Boyington might testify; defendants simply did not testify under oath prior to the 1860's. See Friedman, *Cime and Punishment in American History*, 245.

[73]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, November 22, 1834; Boyington, *Statement*, 22.

[74]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, November 29, 1834; Supreme Court Records, 144-45, ADAH; Diard, *Tree*, 10; Boyington, *Statement*, 22.

[75]Supreme Court Records, 145, ADAH; *Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 100, 120-21 (1835). Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 8, says that his counsel moved the appeal.

[76]Boyington, *Statement*, 22, 27, 29, 35-40; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 35-36; Diard, *Tree*, 10, 12, 84-103.

[77]Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 8-22, passim.; see especially ibid., 14, in which Hamilton describes what he imagines Boyington's guilty murderous actions to have been. Diard, *Tree*, 14-29 and passim.; Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 32-35; see Boyington, *Statement*, 30.

[78]Boyington, *Statement*, 4, 22-23, 29-31.

[79]Boyington, *Statement*, 21-25, 30.

[80]See Diard, *Tree*, 31 n. 1, for the possibility that Boyington was considering an appeal to the Governor; see ibid., 33, for the possibility that Boyington wrote the *Statement* specifically to read at his own hanging. A search of Governors' Records (Pardon, Parole, and Clemency file, 1831-1835), ADAH, has failed to turn up an appeal for executive clemency. See James Penick, "James Copeland and Sheriff Pitts: A Gulf Coast Legend," *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 2 (Spring 1987): 5-32 for another celebrated Mobile case involving pre-hanging statements.

[81]Boyington, *Statement*, 11.

[82]Chitty, *Practical Treatise on the Criminal Law* 1: 532-541, sets forth a number of ways in which new trials can be granted or judgments "arrested" in criminal trials, chiefly by superior courts.

[83]Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* 2: 815; see also Malcolm C. McMillan, *Constitutional Development in Alabama, 1798-1901: A Study in Politics, the Negro, and Sectionalism* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1955), 47-51.

[84]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, January 14, 1835; Willis Brewer, *Alabama: Her History, Resources, War Record, and Public Men From 1540 to 1872* (1872; reprint, Tuscaloosa, AL, 1964), 214-15, 394; Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* 3: 816-17 and (for Harry I. Thornton, the third member of the Court) 4: 1669-670. Records of the Boyington case were filed with the clerk of the Court on January 9, 1835; see Supreme Court Records, 138, ADAH.

[85]Supreme Court Records, 145, ADAH; *Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 100, 103, 104-110, 111-15, 116-17, 119-20, 126-27 (1835).

[86]*Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 103, 111-12, 115 (quoted passage), 118-19 (1835).

[87]*Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 120-36 (1835) (quoted passsage on 126). For Thornton's concurring opinion see ibid., 136-39.

[88]*Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 140-43 (1835).

[89]*Boyington v. State*, 2 Porter 136 (1835).

[90]Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 22-24, 26-27, 43; Diard, *Tree*, 25-31; Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 34-35.

[91]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, February 21, 1835; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 27; Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 36; Diard, *Tree*, 31-33. For similar pomp,

this time devoted to the funeral procession of a prominent citizen, see *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, February 6, 1835.

[92]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, February 21, 1835; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 27; Diard, *Tree*, 32.

[93]Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 27; Diard, *Tree*, 33 n. 10, 33-34; Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 37; *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, February 21, 1835; see also n. 96, above. Note that accounts of the order of events and of what Boyington said vary somewhat.

[94]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, February 21, 1835; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 27-32; Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 37; Diard, *Tree*, 34-39, 53-54. This account is based primarily on that of Hamilton, an eye-witness. Diard's account is certainly the most legendary. For further details see Charles Spear, *Essays on the Punishment of Death*, 10th ed. (Boston, 1845), 43-44; Spear quotes the *Mobile Commercial Advertiser* [*sic*].

[95]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, February 21, 1835; Spear, *Essays on the Punishment of Death*, 44; Diard, *Tree*, 53-54, 57, 60-62; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 24, 32-34, 35-41.

[96]See Masur, *Rites of Execution*, passim but especially 25-49, 103-110. Masur argues that changing sensibilities and theories of punishment led many states to adopt private executions by the 1840s.

[97]*Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*, February 21, 1834; Spear, *Essays on the Punishment of Death*, 43-44; Hamilton, *Last Hours*, 29-30; Diard, *Tree*, 36-38.

[98]Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 36; see ibid., 33, for the statement "that to this good day there are persons who are his believers and defenders...."

[99]See Diard, *Tree*, 33 n. 10, 60, for contradictory evidence of the *Statement*'s availability in the twentieth century; for the quoted passages see ibid., 43-45 (quoting an interview in Fanny Hearin's 1871 "Recollections of Mobile"), 77.

[100]Diard, *Tree*, 35, 39. For a modern example of interest in the Boyington "oak tree" legend, see George Schroeter, "The Church Street Graveyard" (n.d.), flier published by the Mobile Public Library.

[101]*State v. Middleton*, 5 Porter 484-88, 490-92, 494 (1837). The Middleton report cites one possible result of Boyington's execution-namely, an 1836 law which did away with the choice of grand jurors by lot and gave officials direct responsibility for choosing twenty-four suitable persons. See *Acts Passed at the Annual Session of the General Assembly of the State of Alabama, Begun and Held in the Town of Tuscaloosa, on the Third Monday in November, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-Five* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1836), 31. See also n. 64, above. For information on Collier and court personnel see Garrett, *Reminiscences*, 718-19. It may be worth noting that Collier agreed with Olcott's Boyington argument concerning the existence of a Common Law precedent. As for the Middleton decision, it lasted as the Common Law of Alabama for fifteen years, during which time its effect was controversial. Looking back, one Supreme Court justice argued that defendants had used it to make "mere technical, and, sometimes, captious objections, which delayed criminal prosecutions..."; see *Boulo v. State*, 51 Alabama Reports 18 (1874). By 1852, the legislature adopted a rule which, in effect, overturned Middleton and reinstated the Boyington decision; see *Boulo v. State*, 51 Alabama Reports 19 (1874), citing Code of 1852, Sec. 3591. Thus Saffold, Chapman, and Breedin were triumphant in the end. In fact, their views survive in the present-day *Code of Alabama 1975* (Charlottesville, VA, 1982), 12A (Sec. 15-15-40).

[102]Pruitt, "An Antebellum Law Reformer," 31-32, 41-44; Benjamin F. Porter, *Address Delivered Before the Philomathic Society of the University of Alabama, on the Occasion of Its Fourth Anniversary* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1836), passim; and Benjamin F.

Porter, *Argument of Benjamin F. Porter, in Support of a Bill, Introduced By Him, in the House of Representatives of Alabama, to Abrogate the Punishment of Death* (Tuscaloosa AL, , 1846), 10-11. For contemporary developments and reform movements see Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 34-72; and Masur, *Rites of Execution*, passim, but see especially 71-92, 117-59.

[103]*Albany* (New York) *Evening Journal*, August 23, 1847; *Huntsville Democrat*, September 8, 1847. Rumors of Boyington's innocence were circulating, in fact, as early as 1844. Spear, *Essays on the Punishment of Death*, 44, contains a footnote stating: "It was subsequently ascertained that Boyington was innocent!" It is impossible to speculate upon the origin of such statements, but they did percolate into Mobile folklore; see Neil Letson, "He Promised an Oak Tree's Growth Would Prove Innocence," undated clipping in Mobile Public Library Clippings File.

[104]One assumes that the reporter was not with the "landlord" when he died. Note that the deathbed confession story may have taken many semi-mythical forms. Negley K. Teeters and Jack H. Hedblom, in *Hang By the Neck: The Legal Use of Scaffold and Noose, Gibbet, Stake, and Firing Squad from Colonial Times to the Present* (Springfield, IL, 1967), 313, tell of a case "allegedly from Louisiana," in which "someone named Boynton [*sic*] was hanged.... A tavern-owner, a few months later, believing himself to be on the point of death, confessed to the crime for which he had purposely contrived to fasten on the victim." There follows a discussion of the Boyington case drawn largely from Diard.

[105]Typescript of J. J. D. to *Mobile Register*, August 9, 1879, Landmark Hall Clippings File, Mobile Public Library (hereinafter cited as Delchamps to *Mobile Register*, August 9, 1879); Diard, *Tree*, 57-59.

[106]Delchamps to *Mobile Register*, August 9, 1879. Loyalty to Mobile may have motivated Delchamps, who wrote that the Frost murder was of a type "most abhorrent to the Southern mind, indeed I cannot remember a single instance that one to the manor born was ever guilty of it." Boyington and other such criminals "were all foreign to Mobile soil and feelings."

[107]Craighead, *From Mobile's Past*, 32-37.

[108]Diard, *Tree*, 14-41, 53-55 (for Hamilton material), 41-53 (for interviews conducted by Mrs. Fanny Hearin), 63-84 (for Boyington as a literary figure), and 84-104 (for love letters). Ibid., 84, tells how Diard had gained access to the love letters before they were thrown down a dry well and covered up. Such claims tend to dampen Diard's credibility, as does his frequent presentation of information derived from personal conversations with long-dead Mobilians.

[109]Kathryn Tucker Windham, *Jeffrey's Latest Thirteen: More Alabama Ghosts* (Tuscaloosa, 1987), 21-32.

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Sawn Timber and Straw Hats: The Development of the Lumber Industry in Escambia County, Alabama 1880-1910

James R. Brennan

Its defects, more than anything, have come to characterize the lumber industry in the South. Among these one may include the northern control of business, the migratory and rapacious patterns of lumber harvest, and the failure of southern industries to add value to its timber through manufacture. Gavin Wright has argued that "in most areas, lumbering made no lasting contribution to local development."[1] Yet the industry's size was enormous, employing twice as many southerners in 1910 as the next largest industry, cotton manufacture.[2] In few places was lumber's dominance as clear as in Escambia County, Alabama. Yet unlike much of the "colonial" development that has characterized the New South, the lumber industry of Escambia County developed largely with indigenous rather than northern capital and reinvested its profits locally. The county was blessed with tremendous natural advantages, and the region's lumber industrialists seized upon them. The Escambian lumber industry represents a small triumph of the New South, especially in relation to the general development of the southern lumber industry.

Despite the economic achievements of Escambian industrialists, the workers of the county's lumber industry shared only partially in its success. The difficulties that these laborers faced mirrored those throughout the lumber industry: poor housing, isolation, low wages, infrequent wage payments, payment in scrip, and hazardous working conditions. Labor relations in the county can best be described as paternalistic. Like much of the nation's lumber industry, Escambia County's industrialists vigorously discouraged labor organization and the formalization of industrial relations. Laborers did benefit, however, from the size and stability of the region's industry, which provided steady employment for thousands. Yet with little tradition of labor organization and few employment alternatives, the county's workforce was at an overwhelming disadvantage in relation to its powerful lumber industrialists.

The period following Reconstruction witnessed a great expansion of the lumber industry throughout the South. In 1876 the repeal of the Southern Homestead Act of 1866 allowed northern capital to purchase large amounts of federal public lands. National lumber companies realized that the rapid depletion of forests in the Great

Logging camp. The Estate of Ed Leigh McMillan, TheMcMillan Trust, Brewton.

Lakes area meant that timber must be sought in other regions of the country. The South's vast virgin forests, cheap land and labor offered an ideal alternative. Northerners speculated heavily in much of the South's public acreage between the act's repeal and its diluted return in 1888. Yet in Alabama only a portion, about twenty percent, ended in northern hands.[3]

Many residents of Escambia County resented this second northern conquest. In 1883 the *Escambia Banner* reported that "[w]e learn from many sources that capitalists are coming to this section during the winter to enter all the available lands."[4] The local newspaper offered a vaguely Jeffersonian remedy for this encroachment. It warned that "from present indications there will be no government lands unoccupied in a few years anywhere in the timberbelt, and those who purpose [*sic*] to avail themselves of the privileges extended to the poor man by the government had best take advantage of the present opportunity." Homesteads, which had been protected by the federal government before 1877, were seemingly being gobbled up by northern economic interests. By tapping the land reserves formerly allotted to southerners for small-scale agriculture, these outsiders threatened the economic independence of the would-be yeoman farmer.

In actuality northern capital established only one major industry in Escambia County from 1877 to 1888. The R.G. Peters Lumber Company, based in Manistee, Michigan, purchased the Alabama Lumber Company in 1885 and went on to purchase 5,673 acres of federal lands in southern Alabama.[5] By 1891 the company employed 286 workers, owned 36,000 acres of land, and had invested in another saw mill and several dry kiln machines.[6] By 1893 it employed over six hundred laborers. Their plant near the county seat of Brewton was valued at $500,000, but when it burned down in 1896 it was not rebuilt.[7] The little northern capital that did penetrate Escambia County failed to live up to the rapacious or speculative reputation of northern investors.

The growth of the lumber industry was met with ambivalence by the people of Escambia County. On the one hand, many held that the region must not allow lumbering to dominate the area in order to insure the county's economic self-sufficiency. The basis of economic subsistence lay in agriculture, but in 1880 Escambia County's 8,458 acres of land under cultivation represented about one percent of the county's entire acreage, the lowest in Alabama in terms of both percentage and gross land. The county produced mainly indian corn, oats, and potatoes. Escambia County's agricultural production amounted to a mere $67,379, or about a thousandth of the

state's total. One hundred miles north in the black belt, Dallas County boasted 442,029 acres under cultivation and produced $2,468,988 worth of goods. Even in a "hill" county like Jackson, residents used 381,082 acres for agriculture to produce $893,279 in farming wealth.[8] The paucity of agricultural production in Escambia County, which by 1880 fell well short of feeding the population of 4,106, concerned many who were interested in the county's economic health.[9]

Many residents of the county believed that the lumber industry had retarded the region's economic development. One native remarked that "hitherto we have been content to spend all those pent up energies of our nature upon the uncertain and exciting speculations of timber, while our lands are lying idle, uncultivated, and uncared for."[10] A spectator writing for the "from the backwoods" column of the *Brewton Banner* argued that the only hindrance to a bucolic paradise in Escambia County lay in its inhabitants' inclination to get timber. If the residents could only throw off this impediment, then "[t]he vine and fig tree will flourish and spread from hill top to valley in all this community."[11] As late as 1888, the *Brewton Banner* encouraged the immigration of farmers from the North and West, arguing that "[t]heir presence would inspire thrift, system, economy, and energy and our land would soon 'blossom as the rose.'"[12]

The strong opinions against the nascent lumber industry revealed a distrust of commerce felt by many in the 1880s. Even within the agricultural sector, some Escambians emphasized production for sustenance rather than for the market. Fearing the instability of market forces, the *Brewton Banner* urged Escambians to plant more "hog and hominy" crops and less cotton. The paper explained that "[t]he first means peace and plenty at home, the latter, peace and plenty abroad."[13] In 1883 a yellow fever epidemic visited the county seat of Brewton, killing one in ten. Ironically, so many died that the production of wooden caskets could not meet demand.[14] The cause, some believed, lay in the population's embrace of the market economy. "The lesson of self dependence is a hard one to teach," a local paper confirmed in explaining the disaster.[15] Many Escambians interpreted their present troubles as punishment for literally failing to live off the land.

But others in the county welcomed the budding market economy. Just as capitalists, the lumber industry, and market production were perceived as sources of iniquity to some, other Escambians rallied around that very cause, warmly welcoming industrialists and

emphasizing the region's material advantages. R. L. McConnell, editor of the *Brewton Banner*, viewed the progress of the lumber industry as a boon to the region. The untapped resources of Escambia County had to be utilized, and "foreign capital now waiting an opportunity for such investment will do for us what is needed in the premises."[16] Instead of being used for subsistence agriculture, McConnell argued that Escambia's land could be "manipulated more advantageously into saleable commodities where labor is cheap."[17] Even the avatar of capitalism, the northern industrialist, often received praise. During a visit of R. G. Peters to Brewton, the *Escambia and Baldwin Times* noted that "[i]t is pleasant and encouraging to note the presence of gentlemen representing so much capital in our midst."[18]

Despite the anti-commercial sentiments of some residents, the lumber industry had emerged as both the dominating institution and the primary source of wealth of the county by 1890. As late as 1880, more trees were cut in Alabama to clear land for farming than for manufacture by the lumber industry.[19] Although the soil of Escambia County was relatively poor for agriculture, it was ideal for coniferous trees.[20] The Escambian forests were populated mainly by long-leaf pines, known as either American Pitch or Georgia pine, the heaviest and hardest of all conifers in the South. Demand greatly increased around 1880, the same time that the northern lumber industry was exhausting the white pines of New England and the Great Lakes. Long-leaf pine was the most popular wood for construction, both at home and abroad, throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century and into the first decade of the twentieth. With several hundred thousand acres of these trees still untouched by the 1880s, Escambian lumbermen exploited their county's chief natural resource.

In 1880 there were eleven lumber establishments operating at a capitalization of $37,000 in Escambia County.[21] By 1890 that number had increased to twenty-nine firms operating at $1,194,302, a capital increase of 3,228 percent.[22] Market demand from outside the county, more than anything, precipitated this massive leap. Local lumbermen in the county needed to add little value to their product to make a comfortable living. Land was cheap, and smaller outfits could fell trees on public lands with little fear of prosecution. Blacksher Brothers, a large lumber company in the county, often bartered for land. For forty acres of virgin pine, usually owned by poor homesteaders, the firm would tender three sacks of corn, three sides of bacon, a ten pound caddy of tobacco, one barrel of flour, and forty pounds of coffee. This barter was equivalent to paying

seventy cents an acre.[23] The common price that land brought in the 1880s was somewhat higher, hovering around $1.25 an acre.[24] Land was purchased in lots of forty acres, and adjacent parcels were preferred to facilitate the transportation of felled timber.

After labor, transportation was the chief cost of production in the lumber industry. Escambia County was blessed with a large network of creeks and rivers to transport lumber by water. Timber would be squared in the forest, transported by oxen to the rivers, and strung together into rafts by workmen. The rafts, often navigated by the same laborers, would drift downstream on the Escambia River to the bustling lumber markets of Pensacola. The only costs involved were those of livestock and wage-earners. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad cut across Escambia County and afforded another means of transportation to Pensacola, Mobile, and some northern markets.[25] Thus Escambia County benefitted from a superb transportation system that facilitated the timber industry's speedy development.

In the 1880s Escambian lumber industrialists built the local economy by increasing production of basic timber. The lumber markets of Pensacola and Mobile were mainly for hewn and sawed timber, products which required only the services of the standard saw mill. Local emphasis was placed upon increasing the quantity of lumber production rather than adding value, as was done in North Carolina's furniture industry for example.[26] Escambian lumbermen would reinvest most profits into increasing the scale of their operations. Mill modernization involved applying technologies that had existed for some years in the North to the county's industries. The Alabama Lumber Company, then hailed as the most advanced mill in Escambia County, bought two large boilers and a seventy-five horse power engine in January of 1884 for its mill modernization.[27] Both of these technologies had been standard in the Great Lakes industry since the late 1860s.

As the size of Escambian mills grew, transportation became a more challenging problem. Earlier mills had often been constructed adjacent to one of the many streams flowing towards Pensacola, using oxen to transport the felled timber.[28] As deforestation led lumbermen further inland, increased distances rendered this system impractical. Escambian industrialists came upon a crude but effective solution to this problem–ditches. Deterred by railroad construction costs, lumbermen created an intricate system of tiny canals to extend each mill's penetration into the forests. Although water transportation was extremely cheap, it was also vulnerable to heavy rains, drought, and the infamous log-jams. By 1887 the *Brewton Banner* had noted that

"[w]ater transportation has become unreliable for logs or timber, hence mill men are looking to Rail roads as the solution of the great lumber problem."[29]

Escambian lumbermen insured their geographic advantage by securing multiple railroad lines through the region. Escambia County's natural waterways lent a relative amount of independence to the lumber industry, but railroads had achieved a growing significance by the late 1880s. Led by C. L. Sowell, local lumbermen protested Clause Four of the Interstate Commerce Bill in 1887, a clause that regulated train schedules, for fear that it would lead to an increase in freight rates.[30] The *Brewton Banner* complained that "to advance traffic rates would be a blow at our lumber mills, that none of them could withstand."[31] Aware of their complete dependence on the Pensacola markets, lumbermen looked northward, asking rhetorically "to give us a competing line of Railroads to the interior of our great country."[32] They did not take the growth of such an infrastructure for granted. In 1890 they helped to persuade the Mobile and Girard Railway to lay tracks through Brewton, extending northern market possibilities for Escambian lumber.[33]

The market forces that had enabled Escambia County to grow so rapidly in the 1880s would decisively retard its development in the following decade. By 1893 Escambia County had enjoyed an economic boom uninterrupted since the late 1870s. In January of that year, the price of sawn timber was 12 1/2 cents per cubic foot at a very lively Pensacola market.[34] But by May that price had fallen to ten cents per cubic foot.[35] The depression that was beginning to grip the nation had reached the southern Alabama lumber industry. Demand dropped drastically at the same time that production capabilities had reached their zenith. Success in the industry had been predicated on expanding those capabilities, and the local lumberman's experience offered him little guidance for operating in a depressed market.

They saw only one possible response to the situation–a complete shutdown. Most mills lay dormant over the entire summer and fall of 1893. The *Standard Gauge* quipped that "[i]t is such hard times that even the mosquitos are getting tired pushing their bills."[36] The newspaper urged mill hands to seek employment in the farming sections north of Escambia County, where they might gather crops for two or three months. The Peters Lumber Company, the largest in Escambia County, waited until September to lay off six hundred men, paying them off in currency and company scrip.[37] A glutted Pensacola timber market had been the county's lifeline, but by the

summer of 1893 prices had fallen below the cost of production. With laborers out of work, merchants who had extended credit to those customers found themselves in dire straits as well. The *Brewton Leader* reported that "many day laborers (mostly negroes) are loafing, and it is feared that starvation and hunger will force them to steal as a last resort."[38] Rhetorically asking itself how long the lull would continue, the newspaper answered, "[n]ot until the timber market abroad brightens, at least."

The Pensacola markets finally revived in late 1893. Sowell, Foshee & Company resumed production on December 7, the Alco mill on the first of January, and the Peters Lumber Company on January 16, 1894.[39] Not one of Escambia's major lumber enterprises had gone out of business. The immediate reaction of some industrialists was simply to resume full production. Others were more reflective. The *Standard Gauge*, Brewton's conservative newspaper, inveighed against the local lumbermen: "some men are making a pile of money by cutting the wages of their employees, and at the same time are posing as philanthropists because they do not shut down their business entirely."[40] Worries over the county's economic dependence on lumber discussed in the 1880s returned to the public dialogue. Unlike the earlier debate, however, few clamored for a yeomanry based on agricultural subsistence. Despite the depression of 1893, the concept of a market economy had been embraced.

Yet many Escambians yearned for the diversification of their practically one-dimensional economy. Vegetable production became the new industrial hope, incessantly promoted by all of the county's newspapers. Aware of the limitations of the lumber industry and also of the region's natural assets, an idea emerged among Escambians to set aside land for vegetables and to erect a canning factory in Brewton. The *Brewton Leader* boasted that "[o]ur soil, climate and shipping facilities are all equal if not better than many points that are now successfully conducting the business."[41] Led by James McMillan, head of the Vegetable Growers Association, canning enthusiasts clamored for Escambians to raise vegetables for northern markets.[42] In May 1893 the Association had secured five hundred acres for cultivation, up from two hundred in 1889.[43] Capital was lacking, however, as efforts to attract northern money had failed.

By 1893 various investors had pooled enough money to construct a canning factory in Brewton, about a mile from the Louisville and Nashville depot. Charles David Rogers was named manager, and the factory canned tomatoes grown where the T.R. Miller Company

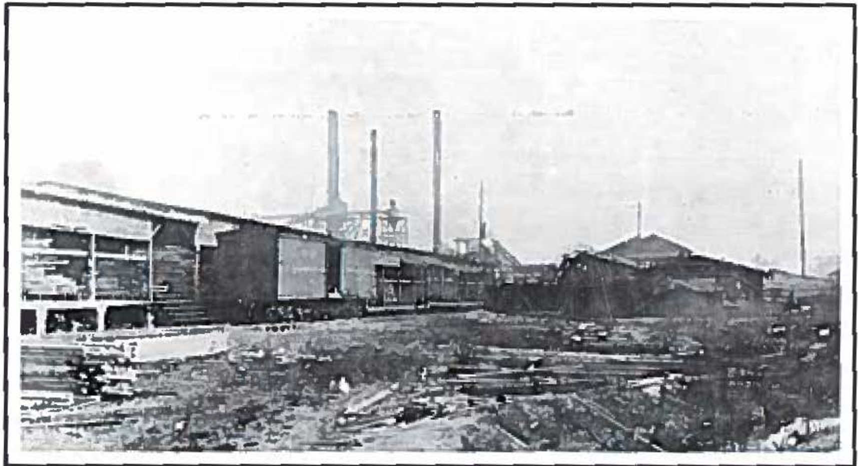
presently stands. Despite local enthusiasm, no one stepped forward to lead the Association, either in raising further capital or seeking out markets.[44] Finally, a few lumbermen raised additional money and christened the existing business the Brewton Canning Company, opening officially on July 22, 1895. The company paid fifty cents a day to workers and operated from six in the morning to six at night. The enterprise shut down in 1896, unable to find a market for its products.[45]

Escambians discussed other possibilities for economic diversity. "Nothing would benefit our town so much as a factory," a local newspaper argued.[46] The *Standard Gauge* asked northern capitalists to seize upon the opportunities in Brewton, observing that "it is evident that a cotton factory, a furniture factory and other wood-working factories would pay well here."[47] Other ideas were discussed, such as factories for the production of brooms, spokes and handles, baskets, and ice. Furniture and wooden wares seemed especially obvious industries for Escambia County, given its resources, yet no one came forward with the needed funding and leadership. Lumbermen were asked to step forth and invest by newspapermen who resented their behavior during the 1893 depression. The *Standard Gauge* requested that "our millmen who have made their 'piles' quit worrying with the pine logs and invest some of their earnings in a cotton factory at Brewton."[48] The *Pine Belt News* best summarized the dilemma, asserting that "Brewton must not expect outside capital to flow this way until our own people show faith in the town by investing their surplus money in various enterprises."[49] Despite such pleas, local capital remained in the lumber industry.

Local lumbermen did faintly answer this call by making a few attempts to diversify Escambia's economy. The Tobacco Growers Association was formed in late 1907 by lumber magnates J. Sowell, W. Y. Lovelace, S. S. Foshee, and M. Linkley. In 1908 the company experimented with two acres near Brewton and produced $1,800 in profit. By the next year it had employed one hundred people. The company had forty acres under cultivation in 1910, and in 1911 won first prize at the state fair.[50] But the town was flooded in 1913, destroying much of the downtown and finishing the tobacco industry. In 1904 W. Y. Jernigan, C. L. Sowell, Jr., J. J. Robbins, J. E. Finlay, and A. M. McGowin, Jr., all scions of local lumber barons, pooled their money to construct a $50,000 gin and oil mill for the processing of cotton.[51] As with the tobacco industry, nothing is heard from the cotton mill following the 1913 flood. Thus, appeals for Escambia County's economic diversification went largely

unfulfilled. The county's wealth grew as it had through the 1880s, through the continued expansion of the lumber industry.

After the depression of 1893, the more far-sighted industrialists of Escambia County sought to diversify the products made within the lumber industry. Sawn and hewn timber had proven to be extremely vulnerable to market forces. T. R. Miller, who had taken over the Cedar Creek Mill in 1899 with two other investors, understood this problem. Miller had grown up on a farm and entered the lumber trade at age nineteen. He had fought for the South in the Civil War and returned to southern Alabama to start a farm and work part-time in timber. His farm failed, and in 1872 he entered the lumber business full-time. He built a number of sawmills throughout Escambia County, and personally owned twenty-eight thousand acres in Escambia and Baldwin Counties at the time of his death in 1914.[52]



Cedar Creek Mill, 1907. The Estate of Ed Leigh McMillan, TheMcMillan Trust, Brewton.

T. R. Miller initially earned his wealth by amassing land and sawmills. Upon taking over the Cedar Creek Mill Company, however, he improved upon the standard practices of local lumbermen. He directed an effort to make a sash, door, and blind plant within the Cedar Creek Mill Company in 1903. In 1910 he opened a veneer plant in Brewton, one of the first in Alabama. With the company name changed to T. R. Miller Mill Company, the firm had made $19,289 in profits from veneer alone in 1913. In that same year, it became the first mill to practice a form of conservation in the state of Alabama by replanting cut-over timberland. The company also

established a wire-bound box factory in 1914, only the second in the nation.[53] This product proved sturdier than nailed crates and became very popular in commercial shipping. These innovations extended the company's market beyond the lumber yards of Pensacola. The T. R. Miller wire-bound box became internationally famous, and the lumber industry of Escambia County had finally carved a niche in both national and international markets.[54] When T. R. Miller died on May 20, 1914, he had bequeathed a more diversified economic identity to a county previously known only for its raw timber.

Although the lumber industry dominated the economy of Escambia County in 1910, the agricultural sector had quietly expanded as well. In 1880 8,458 acres of Escambia county were under cultivation, about 1.3 percent of the county's total land. By 1910 that total had increased to 127,034 acres, amounting to nearly 21 percent of the county's acreage. Cereal production had increased from 43,315 bushels in 1880 to 179,479 bushels in 1910. Although this was a significant increase over thirty years, Escambia County still held only a fraction of the state's total output. Escambian crop production in 1910 amounted to $1,650,606, or 0.5 percent of the state's total production, while Escambia County occupied 1.9 percent of the state's total land. The agricultural share of 21 percent of the county's land fell far short of the state average of 63 percent.[55] Agriculture had indeed grown, but lumber still produced the greatest wealth and employed the most people.

The lumber industry of Escambia County was an indisputable success in one primary sense–gross size and capital accumulation. In 1900 Escambia County's manufacturing capital, of which over 90 percent was in lumber, amounted to $1,151,692, or 1.63 percent of the state's total.[56] This compares favorably to its population percentage, which at 11,097 was only 0.61 percent of the state's total.[57] Furthermore, the manufacturing capital of Escambia County dwarfed neighboring counties, with 221 percent more than Covington County, 276 percent more than Monroe County, and 508 percent more than Conecuh County, though the county had a population smaller than any of these three neighbors.[58] Capital remained in the county, for every one of the lumber companies was locally-owned in 1900. By 1905 the *Standard Gauge* could boast that Brewton "is rated by the United States Census Bureau as the second wealthiest town in America, proportionately to its population."[59] The vast majority of this wealth had been derived from the lumber industry of Escambia County, which by 1900 accounted for almost 9 percent of Alabama's entire lumber capital.[60]

Escambia County had become home to the lumber worker instead of the yeoman farmer. The county's population had increased from 5,696 in 1880 to 18,889 in 1910, a growth of 332 percent. Opportunities in the lumber industry absorbed most of these rising numbers. In 1880 full time farmers outnumbered full time lumbermen by three to one. By 1910 the lumbermen outnumbered the farmers by over two to one. The ratio of laborers not specifically tied to one industry to full time lumbermen decreased more drastically, from four to one in 1880 to one to four by 1910. In 1880 the majority of these laborers probably worked in agriculture, and could drift from the farm to the forest and saw mill and back. Ultimately, most of these laborers came to work full time in the lumber industry, which employed approximately one-half of Escambia County's male workforce by 1910.[61]

The experience of lumber workers in Escambia County mirrored the more general history of labor in the lumber industry, especially in the South. The region's unskilled labor force produced mainly unfinished products in a low-wage, low-value-added economy. Even by 1910 the South still remained a raw material economy, with "the attendant penalties of low wages, lack of opportunity, and poverty."[62] Timber work was especially difficult, consisting of long hours, taxing physical exertion, unsteady rates of employment, and the most hazardous working conditions of any industry. The lumber industry, however, provided an alternative to the often more grim life of agricultural work. Unlike much of the South, Escambia County's lumber industry usually afforded its workers the availability of constant work through its immense size and stability.

The southern labor force within the lumber industry had generally consisted of both whites and blacks who, if not drawn from an agricultural background, had been strongly influenced by it. From 1880 to 1910, the southern lumber workforce increased elevenfold from 27,690 to 304,093, over half of whom were black.[63] Workers jumped at the opportunity to earn cash and escape the sharecropper's dilemma of credit dependence and overproduction. The South's non-industrial background provided a supply of unskilled and undisciplined workers who often worked part time, shifting between agriculture and lumber. Timber work attracted those who labored for the notoriously low wages of southern agriculture, yet these wages also suppressed lumber earnings by producing low expectations and increasing demand for timber jobs relative to supply, thus forcing down wages.[64]

Industrial relations in the lumber industry of the South (as well as the rest of the nation) can be characterized as paternalistic. This

term evokes a whole set of social relations as well as attitudes towards those relations, but for our purpose in Escambia County it can best be understood more narrowly, as the struggle of workers to formalize economic relations between labor and capital, and the industrialists' struggle to maintain the existing informality of economic relations.[65] Lumber industrialists scorned government legislation and loathed organized labor, both of which demanded the formalization of economic relations. Above all, they refused to recognize the formal bargaining rights of the individual worker. Instead, all negotiations were informal and controlled by the employer. Industrial relations were a matter of private management, not public disputation.[66]

Cedar Creek shop force, 1904. The Estate of Ed Leigh McMillan, TheMcMillan Trust, Brewton.

As the lumber industry developed, a hierarchy of skills and wages emerged within the labor force. The foreman and sawyer stood at the head of the labor echelon, receiving the best money and holding responsibility for managing the saw mill. In January 1897 the W. T. Smith Lumber Company in Chapman paid the foreman two dollars a day, the sawyer $1.50, and unskilled hands eighty cents. Technical duties such as boiler operator and train engineer required skilled workers who were paid higher wages on average. A train engineer earned two dollars a day at W. T. Smith.[67] There was a

relative wage parity among the unskilled laborers, regardless of whether they sawed lumber in the mills, felled timber in the forests, or navigated rafts to market. Whites occupied a vast majority of the skilled jobs, with most blacks relegated to unskilled work.[68]

Men had worked for wages in the Escambian lumber industry since the 1840s. Workers were employed in small timber operations in felling trees and in navigating rafts. Many lumbermen worked individually, operating their own "peckerwood" mills with a bare minimum of extra help. Employment opportunities expanded as mills grew throughout the 1860s and 1870s, but only in the 1880s did large-scale mills with more than twenty workers emerge. By 1891 the largest firms of Escambia County employed the following workforce:

Firm	Employees
The Peters Lumber Company	286
The Blacksher-Miller Company	150
The Harold Brothers Mill Company	104
The Mills and Harrison Lumber Company	75
The McCoy and Brooks Lumber Company	62
The Escambia Lumber Company	60
The Lovelace Brothers Lumber Company	40
The C. Y. Mayo Mill Company	37
The Parker and Lovelace Mill Company	32
The Frierson Mill Company	27
The Cedar Creek Mill Company	23
The Franklin Mill Company	14

This listing, taken from a series by the *Standard Gauge* newspaper on the Escambian lumber industry, is not exhaustive.[69] It is, however, indicative of the large number of men working in the county's lumber mills by 1891.

Despite the severity of the 1893 depression, labor remained unorganized throughout Escambia County. In March 1889, an advertisement was placed in the *Standard Gauge* calling for labor organization. It stated that "A Knights of Labor Assembly will shortly be organized in Brewton. Those wishing to become members (both white and black) can obtain full information from Mr. J. H. Pittman, Jeweler, Brewton, Alabama."[70] It was a curious time for such an announcement, for 1889 was the second year of numerical decline for the Knights in Alabama.[71] More peculiar was the role of J. H. Pittman, who was never mentioned again in connection with labor. The impulse behind the organization's efforts in Escambia County in 1889 are not known, and only silence followed.

The reappearance of the Knights of Labor in 1899 at first seems even more peculiar, for the organization had been moribund in Alabama (as well as nationally) for over ten years. On closer investigation, however, the organization's resurgence becomes more understandable. The market rate for sawn timber had stabilized after the 1893 depression between eleven and twelve cents per cubic foot. As late as 1897, the Pensacola market was quoting only ten and a half cents.[72] In 1899 the price began to rise, and by mid-September it had reached fifteen and a half cents, a price unheard of in over ten years.[73] The price rise can be attributed in part to Cecil Rhodes, who that year had ordered five hundred million cubic feet of southern yellow pine for the construction of his ill-fated Cape to Cairo railroad.[74] Rhodes had contracted twenty mills in Louisiana and Texas for two full years, creating an immediate shortage in the southern timber market. By December 14, 1899, the Pensacola market was offering the celestial price of nineteen cents per cubic foot for sawn pine.[75]

Escambia County could not keep up with market demands, and local mills began to work around the clock for the first time. This was attributable not only to the industry's technological backwardness, but also to a shortage of available labor. By 1900, the *Pine Belt News* could report that "two saw mills running night and day--everybody busy--no loafers on the streets--prosperity has certainly struck Brewton a broadside blow."[76] By mid-April, the price had stabilized at sixteen and a half cents per cubic foot, and labor was still reported to be scarce.[77] The population of Escambia County, like much of the South, had always grown fast enough to meet the labor market's demands. For the first time, the county experienced a severe worker shortage, which in turn should, theoretically, have caused wages to rise substantially.

In 1899 Arthur McConnell, a lumber worker from Pensacola, had begun to coax fellow laborers in the region into the Knights of Labor organization. By mid-August he had succeeded in establishing locals in Escambia County, where, according to the *Standard Gauge*, he had "organized six associations of mill and raftsmen within the last two months, the combined membership amounting to nearly one thousand."[78] McConnell had directed this colossal spread of unionism himself, visiting each mill in person. In October the Knights of Labor had local assemblies in nearly all of the districts of Escambia County: Mason, Boykin, Brewton, Canoe, Atmore, Pollard, Kirkland, Hammac, Flomaton, and Harold.[79] Brewton, a town of twenty-five hundred people, claimed over six hundred members in the Knights of Labor local 2022 by November 1899.[80]

The Knights of Labor in the South was an "ineffectual shell of its former self" following its 1886 Assembly at Richmond.[81] In Alabama, the organization had experienced a rapid decline since 1888, and in 1890 further submerged its identity by joining in a political union with the Farmers' Alliance. Yet throughout the South a few inspired leaders continued to organize and maintain scattered assemblies until its official demise in 1917. The Pensacola area organization led by Arthur McConnell represents a dramatic example of this. Throughout the 1880s, the organization was formally integrated by race at the district and regional levels, but segregated at the local assembly level.[82] This formal integration did not at all mean that whites accepted or interacted with blacks on equal terms, but merely that whites and blacks held official positions within the same formal organization. The 1899 organization of McConnell continued this tradition.[83]

In addition to McConnell's energy, the Knights of Labor succeeded because the lumber industrialists were slow to increase wages during the price boom, failing to even keep up with inflation. The resulting inequities were obvious to the editor of the organization's local newspaper published in Brewton, the *Laborer's Banner*:

> Timber export has advanced from eight to fifteen cents per cubic foot. Lumber for the interior trade sells for full $3.00 per thousand feet more during the past year. The laborer's wage has been raised ten or fifteen per cent only, while the supplies of necessity have exceeded thirty per cent; his dollar then is depreciated in comparison, thereby making him work for actually less than he did one year ago. Who can justly blame him for organizing for self

> protection; are working men all fools, and have no claims in common with their kind? Have not their wives and children the rights to desire and enjoy the fruits of prosperity? . . . The merchandise check and the company store are things of the past despite the wail of anguish heard over their obsequies; it will take brains and money to do business on hereafter, for the laborer is looking out for himself.[84]

In early September 1899 the Knights of Labor went on strike throughout various mills in Escambia County. The Cedar Creek Mill company had not initially recognized the Knights of Labor, and hired "scabs" at lower wages for some positions.[85] This incident precipitated the formation of Brewton's local 2022, which in turn forced the mill to shut down for a lack of hands. T. R. Miller, proprietor of the mill, finally accepted the union demands, which included a 25 percent wage increase and an end to the store's scrip system in exchange for weekly cash payments.[86] When the Cedar Creek mill promoted a non-union worker to foreman of the planers later in November, the Knights struck again, forcing the mill to shut down.[87] The union struck at the Finlay Lumber Company in Pollard in late December in response to a wage decrease. On January 15, 1900, Arthur McConnell negotiated an agreement which stipulated four items for the Knights of Labor lumber workers in Pollard.[88] Wages were to be raised 10 percent from the rate paid on December 1, 1899; union members were always to have preference of work over non-union members; incompetents could be fired, but had to be replaced by a union worker; and wages were to be paid in cash on the tenth day of each month. Later in April, all mill hands in Brewton received a 15 percent wage increase.[89]

The year 1900 marked the zenith of organized labor in Escambia County. McConnell returned in June from the National Labor Convention in Washington having been appointed the District Master Workman of the newly formed District Number 15.[90] This district was responsible for all Knights of Labor lumber associations below the Virginia state line, and could boast of a membership over ten thousand. Local 2022 of Brewton hosted a Knights of Labor picnic for all of the regional assemblies on July 19. Thousands attended, and over fifteen hundred Knights marched through town, "emphasizing the strength and power of this great mutual protective organization."[91] J. H. Henley, affiliated with the Knights, successfully ran for state representative for the district covering Escambia County in August.[92] The *Pine Belt News* noted that the "wage for skilled labor is better

than it has been for a quarter of a century. It has got to the point that the laboring man can get something for his work and can also get his money."[93] A weekly newspaper, the *Laborer's Banner*, was founded in early 1900, dedicated to the cause of the Knights of Labor. The greatest triumph of the Knights, however, was its complete domination of the local labor market. The *Laborer's Banner* could boast that "[i]t can hardly be said now that there are any 'scabs' among the laboring class of Brewton."[94]

The events of 1901 would prove more difficult for the organization. Timber prices had steadily decreased at the Pensacola market as demand leveled off and available lumber increased. Another strike had broken out at the Cedar Creek Mill in September of that year, and the union reached an agreement that fell far short of the previous year's successes. The Knights of Labor were given preference in employment, but the local assembly could not interfere with their men, nor could they order a strike. In return the company agreed not to cut the workers' wages.[95] George C. Harold, proprietor of the Harold Mill Company, simply closed his mill after its two hundred workers struck that summer. Harold sold the mill to a Wisconsin operator and it was never reopened.[96] At the Blacksher-Miller Lumber company, workers went on strike in late July to protest a 10 percent cut in wages. The *Pine Belt News*, which had previously been supportive, changed its tone towards the Knights. Editor W. D. Sowell wrote that "[t]he low price of timber and the enormous supply on the market justified the millmen to ask their operatives to accept the small cut until prices ranged higher."[97] The strike, according to Sowell, was a needless economic disaster inflicted upon the people of Brewton.

Factions emerged among the Knights as they deliberated Blacksher-Miller's offer to return to work at a 10 percent wage reduction. Many wanted to accept the offer and return to work, but they were shouted down by others. Despite protests, the vote to strike passed almost unanimously. Strikers argued that to accept the reduction would invite other mills to cut their wages. The Blacksher-Miller mill lay idle for three weeks. The company's president, E. M. Loveless, eventually agreed not to cut wages, and workers returned on August 14, 1901.[98] Unfortunately, the Knights had struck in nearby London, and the supply of logs for the Blacksher-Miller company was cut off for several more weeks. On August 22, the planing mill at the company burned down, and with it 500,000 cubic feet of dressed lumber estimated to be worth twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars. Although there was no incriminating evidence, the

Pine Belt News observed that "[i]t is the opinion of many that the fire was of incendiary origins."[99]

The price of timber had dropped as early as May 1900 to the more accustomed level of thirteen cents per cubic foot.[100] After another brief rise, it had again stabilized at thirteen cents by October of 1901. E. M. Loveless had offered to show the 2022 assembly the Blacksher-Miller financial statements to prove that he could no longer afford paying $1.10 a day for an unskilled workman, but would do so again if the market turned upwards.[101] The union leaders agreed with his reasoning, but the union had voted to strike nonetheless. Unlike their employers, the Escambian Knights of Labor were slow to realize the impact of the market decrease for both lumber and labor within the industry. With the Pensacola market well-supplied, intensive production was no longer necessary and the labor market now favored the industrialists rather than the workers. Thus, the power of Escambian labor waned.

The decrease in timber prices coincided with Arthur McConnell's professional troubles. In early November of 1901, he had been invited to Manistee in Monroe County, Alabama, to organize the local mill. The mill owner and his followers appeared with guns and demanded that McConnell leave immediately.[102] McConnell believed that the invitation was a setup, and had he not been accompanied by five associates, he would have surely been killed. Suffering from nerves and exhaustion, McConnell retired from his position as District Master Workman in January 1902, and an election was held in Flomaton to elect a new leader.[103] The election, held in early February, was an unmitigated disaster. According to the Knights of Labor's constitution, the Worthy Foreman was to succeed the District Master, and the Worthy Foreman of District 15 had been black. The *Pine Belt News* scorned that "[i]t is quite distasteful to the many white Knights of Labor in this vicinity to have a negro as District Master Workman. But, nonetheless and not withstanding, such is the case."[104] The black foreman, J. H. Harrison, was not even mentioned by name.

Unlike its spectacular rise, there are no simple explanations for the Knights of Labor's demise in Escambia County. Part of it was certainly due to the fall of timber prices and the increase in productive capabilities by 1901. Race also played an important role, for the election of a black foreman to District Master Workman was unwelcomed by many Escambian whites. The ruse of formal integration at the district level unravelled when it was finally tested, unleashing racial tensions hitherto submerged by unprecedented

The Laborer's Banner

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prosperity in the industry. Furthermore, the Knights of Labor was exceptionally weak as a national organization by 1901 and could provide little aid for the Pensacola district. Financial support from within was also wanting, as the *Laborer's Banner* consistently implored members of the Knights to pay their late dues. Lacking sustained support from within and without, the organization crumbled.

After January 1902, the Knights of Labor of Escambia County was hardly mentioned again in the *Standard Gauge*, and never in the *Pine Belt News*. The *Laborer's Banner* published its last issue on May 17, 1902, and was then absorbed by the *Standard Gauge*.[105] An advertisement for the Knights of Labor Cash Store in Flomaton was first placed in the *Standard Gauge* on January 3, 1902. It last ran on July 18, 1902. The Knights of Labor had disappeared, albeit more slowly than it had first appeared. The labor market had returned to an equilibrium after a short period of stress. The only leader to emerge had come from outside of Escambia County, and he had retired. The area's brief experience with organized labor had passed without establishing any roots. The lumber industrialists would reestablish old-style paternalistic control.

By March 1902 the Escambian mills were again running on double shifts and cutting record amounts of timber. T. R. Miller, proprietor of the Cedar Creek Mill Company, proposed to his workers that if they could cut seven thousand pieces of sawn timber during the month of April, then each one of them would receive a free straw hat.[106] At the end of the month, a company-record 7,460 pieces had been cut. The *Pine Belt News* reported that "on last Saturday each employee of the liberal firm came to town and received a nice hat. Such acts as these on the part of the employer are appreciated by the men, and if all the mill firms should adopt such a policy, strikes and labor troubles would be unknown."[107] Strikes and labor troubles would be less and less common following the collapse of the Knights of Labor. Record amounts of timber would be cut for straw hats.

Labor suffered as well as shared in the successes of Escambia County's lumber industry. Workers enjoyed the stable employment that a large-scale industry could provide, a stability rarely enjoyed by other southern lumbermen. Job security came at a price, however. Efforts to organize had been consistently resisted throughout the period from 1880 to 1910. As late as 1972, the T. R. Miller Lumber Company announced that it "has never been unionized and has the welfare of its employees always in mind."[108] The company had in fact been unionized, but it was an exception that proved the

rule. Escambian labor had struggled against the paternalism of low wages, irregular payments, and unsafe working conditions with only fleeting success.

The development of Escambia County's lumber industry stands as an alternative to the colonial style of development that has characterized the New South. The county avoided many of the travails common to the southern lumber experience: exploitive northern investment, migratory methods of harvesting, and the decimation of area lands. It was, instead, a success built on scale and stability. From 1880 to 1910, the county's lumber companies grew from small, backwood businesses to a large-scale industry that employed thousands of workers. Local industrialists such as T. R. Miller attained tremendous wealth and reinvested it within the community. The slogan of the company, "There will always be the T. R. Miller Mill Company," reveals an optimism cultivated through self-made success.[109] Capital and jobs remained in Escambia County, for the superabundance of forests and its superb transportation system gave local companies every incentive to stay. Although developed mostly with indigenous capital, Escambia County still reflected one aspect of the southern economy's colonial status–its dependence on a single commodity. Fortunately for its people, there was enough of that commodity to fuel the growth of an entire region.

Notes

I would like to thank Robert J. Norrell, Robert E. McFarland, Bruce Mactavish, and Melton McLaurin for their comments and advice during the research and writing of this article.

[1]Gavin Wright, *Old South/New South* (New York, 1986), 162.

[2] Ibid. In 1910, lumber and timber products employed 304,093 people throughout the South, compared to only 145,589 in cotton manufacturing. The southern labor force in the lumber industry accounted for 43.8 percent of the nation's total in 1910.

[3]Paul Wallace Gates, "Federal Land Policy in the South, 1866-1888," *Journal of Southern History* 4 (August 1940): 308-14. Northerners purchased 121,983 acres of federal public lands in Alabama, only 20.84 percent of the total acreage sold.

[4]*Escambia Banner*, November 24, 1883.

[5]Gates, "Federal Land Policy," 322.

[6]*Standard Gauge*, January 22, 1891.

[7]*The Brewton Leader*, September 5, 1893; *Pine Belt News*, September 10, 1896.

[8]*Report on the Production of Agriculture, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, 104; 142-43.

[9]*Population, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880.*

[10]*The Banner*, August 28, 1884.

[11]*The Brewton Banner*, September 23, 1886.

[12]Ibid., February 15, 1888.

[13]Ibid., November 3, 1887.

[14]Henderson A. Potter, "A Brief History of Escambia County, Alabama," *Escambia County Historical Quarterly* 2 (March 1974): 8, citing the *Escambia Banner*, November 24, 1883.

[15]*The Banner*, October 6, 1883.

[16]*The Brewton Banner*, November 3, 1887.

[17]*The Banner*, February 28, 1884.

[18]*The Escambia and Baldwin Times*, January 18, 1888.

[19]Rupert Vance, *Human Geography of the South* (Chapel Hill, 1935), 123.

[20]Eugene Allen Smith, *Economic Botany of Alabama* (Montgomery, 1913), 113-16.

[21]*Report of the Manufactures of the United States, Tenth Census, 1880*, 88.

[22]*Report on Manufacturing Industries of the United States, Eleventh Census, 1890*, 338.

[23]Richard Walter Massey, Jr., "A History of the Lumber Industry in Alabama and West Florida, 1880-1914" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1960), 48.

[24]Ibid., citing Bureau of Corporations, *The Lumber Industry* (Washington, 1913), 189-90.

[25]Annie C. Waters, *History of Escambia County, Alabama* (Huntsville, 1983), 386.

[26]Wright, *Old South/New South*, 162.

[27]*The Banner*, January 17 and 24, 1884.

[28]Massey, "A History of the Lumber Industry," 72-78.

[29]*The Brewton Banner*, June 23, 1887.

[30]Ibid., April 28, 1887.

[31]Ibid., May 12, 1887.

[32]Ibid., June 23, 1887.

[33]Robert Leslie Scribner, "A Short History of Brewton, Alabama" (Masters thesis, University of Alabama, 1935), 121-22.

[34]*Standard Gauge*, May 4, 1893.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., May 4, 1893.

[37]Ibid., September 17, 1893.

[38]*The Brewton Leader*, September 5, 1894.

[39]Ibid., December 12, 1893 and January 16, 1894.

[40]*Standard Gauge*, January 18, 1894.

[41]*The Brewton Leader*, June 21, 1892.

[42]*Standard Gauge*, June 30, 1892.

[43]*The Brewton Leader*, May 9, 1893; *Standard Gauge*, May 23, 1889.

[44]Rita Jane Boykin, "Brewton's Canning Factory," *Escambia County Historical Quarterly* 18 (September 1990): 1.

[45]Scribner, "A Short History of Brewton," 122-23.

[46]*Standard Gauge*, February 13, 1890.

[47]Ibid., March 8, 1894.

[48]Ibid., October 26, 1899.

[49]*Pine Belt News*, September 7, 1899.

[50]Annie Waters, "The Tobacco Industry in Escambia County," *Escambia County Historical Review* 5 (December 1977): 22-24.

[51]Scribner, "A Short History of Brewton," 154.

[52]Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (Chicago, 1921), 4 volumes.

[53]The McMillan Papers, located at the McMillan Trust in Brewton, Alabama.

[54]Potter, "A Brief History of Escambia County," 18-19.

[55]*Report on the Production of Agriculture, Tenth Census, 1880.*

[56]*Report of the Manufactures of the United States, Twelfth Census, 1900*, 8.

[57]*Population, Twelfth Census, 1900, clxiv.*

[58]*Report of the Manufactures of the United States, Twelfth Census, 1900*, 8.

[59]*Standard Gauge*, September 28, 1905.

[60] *Report of the Manufactures of the United States, Twelfth Census, 1900*, 5, 8.

[61] *Population, Thirteenth Census, 1910; Federal Manuscript Census of Population: Alabama* for 1880 and 1910. Since there is no breakdown of occupations by county for either 1880 or 1910 in the population census, I have relied upon the approach taken by Steven Hahn in *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeomen Farmers and the Transformation of Georgia's Upper Piedmont* (New York, 1983). In this book, Hahn uses a systematic sampling, with the household as the basic unit of analysis. By counting every fourth household, a survey of four hundred households will yield an occupational approximation with a four percent margin for error (291). Hahn has gleaned this method from Herman J. Loether and Donald C. McTavish, *Inferential Statistics for Sociologists: An Introduction* (Boston, 1974), 42-60; and Hubert M. Blalock, *Social Statistics*, (New York, 1972), 509-27.

[62] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, 1967), 311.

[63] Jensen, Vernon H., *Lumber and Labor* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1945), 76-77.

[64] Wright, *Old South/New South*, 160.

[65] For an excellent discussion of the limited usefulness of and manifold difficulties with the concept of paternalism, see E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York, 1993), 16-24.

[66] Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 77-78.

[67] Massey, "A History of the Lumber Industry," 129-30.

[68] Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 77.

[69] *Heritage '76: A Historical Review of Escambia County and its Communities* (*Atmore Advance* and *Brewton Standard*, Historical Edition, 1976), citing the *Standard Gauge*, January 1891 to April 1891.

[70] *Standard Gauge*, March 22, 1889.

[71] John H. Abernathy, Jr., "The Knights of Labor in Alabama" (Masters thesis, University of Alabama, 1960), 77.

[72] *Pine Belt News*, January 28, 1897.

[73] Ibid., October 12, 1899.

[74] Ibid., September 14, 1899.

[75] Ibid., December 14, 1899.

[76] Ibid., April 12, 1900.

[77] Ibid., April 28, 1900.

[78] *Standard Gauge*, August 3, 1899.

[79] *Pine Belt News*, October 26, 1899.

[80] *Standard Gauge*, November 23, 1899.

[81] Melton McLaurin, *The Knights of Labor in the South* (Westport, 1978), 169.

[82] Ibid., 173, 180-81.

[83] *Laborer's Banner*, July 21, 1900.

[84] Ibid., March 31, 1900. Excerpted from the column "Your Co-Worker, Currycombe," the penname of the paper's editor, R. L. McConnell.

[85] *Pine Belt News*, September 2, 1899.

[86] *Laborer's Banner*, September 1, 1900.

[87] *Pine Belt News*, November 30, 1899.

[88] Ibid., January 25, 1900.

[89] *Standard Gauge*, May 31, 1900; *Laborer's Banner*, April 28, 1900.

[90] *Standard Gauge*, June 28, 1900, December 21, 1899.

[91] *Pine Belt News*, July 19, 1900.

[92] Ibid., August 6, 1900.

[93] Ibid., February 16, 1900.

[94] *Laborer's Banner*, February 16, 1901.

[95] *Pine Belt News*, October 3, 1901.

[96] Massey, "A History of the Lumber Industry," 127, citing a letter from Mr. Ed Leigh McMillan to Richard W. Massey, June 17, 1958.

[97] *Pine Belt News*, August 1, 1901.

[98] Ibid., August 1, 1901; *Laborer's Banner*, July 27 and August 3, 1901.

[99] *Pine Belt News*, August 15 and 22, 1901.

[100] Ibid., May 31, 1900.

[101] *Laborer's Banner*, July 27 and August 3, 1901.

[102] *Pine Belt News*, November 7, 1901.

[103] Ibid., January 9, 1902.

[104] Ibid., February 6, 1902.

[105] Ibid., May 15, 1902.

[106] Ibid., May 1, 1902.

[107] Ibid., May 8, 1902.

[108]T. R. Miller leaflet published by the company in 1972 commemorating its centennial anniversary. The McMillan papers, Brewton, Alabama.

[109]The McMillan papers.

James R. Brennan is a graduate student at Northwestern University.

T.R. Miller, 1910. The Estate of Ed Leigh McMillan, The McMillan Trust, Brewton.

Troost Parker and Helen Moreland Hall, 1908. Museum of the City of Mobile.

Mardi Gras in Mobile; Excerpts from the 1908 Diary of a Young Visitor, Senta Jonas

On the afternoon of February 26, 1908, Senta Jonas and her family left Pennsylvania Station in New York City for a trip to Mobile to visit relatives. They arrived at their destination early on the morning of February 28 and stayed in the port city until March 17, when they returned to their home, again by train, arriving in New York on March 19. During the trip the sixteen-year-old Senta kept a diary, from which the following excerpts are taken. The diary was made available to the *Gulf Coast Historical Review* for this purpose by her distant cousin, Dr. Sam Eichold, who has reproduced the complete text for members of the family.

The diary is a very bright and readable account of Senta's first visit to Mobile, and while it focuses on family activities and personalities, it also describes several notable local features and landmarks. However, its most complete account is of the city's 1908 Carnival, or Mardi Gras. Those portions of the diary not connected with the Mardi Gras have been ommitted. The excerpt follows the original with regard to punctuation and capitalization.

Despite her relatives' feelings that the season had not been as successful or impressive as earlier ones, *The Mobile Item* praised the event. It asserted that the crowds were larger and better behaved than in previous years, the parades "far more elaborate," while "the night displays fairly took away the people's breath."

In fact the *Item* noted that the season was so successful that it "set at rest any doubt that has existed as to this being the last year of Mardi Gras." In 1908 there were four parades, and Senta Jonas saw them all as well as the decorations, night time illuminations, and other carnival activities. King Felix (Troost Parker) arrived in Mobile from the Isle of Joy on March 2. He and his Queen (Helen Moreland Hall) presided over festivities that day and the next. Senta saw his arrival parade at midday.

That evening the "Monday Evening Maskers" (MEM) held their parade with the theme, "A Feast of Flowers." Senta watched it from the balcony of the St. Andrews Hotel on Royal Street while her parents dressed for a reception at the Fidelia Club afterwards. Both parade and reception, which featured a one-act play "A Summer Day," were quite successful judging by Senta's description of the former and the *Item*'s account of the latter on March 3.

The next day brought the Knights of Revelry (KOR) parade at 2 P.M. with the theme "Once Upon a Time" and then in the evening two parades: first the Infant Mystics (IM) whose theme was "The Martyrs" and finally the Order of Myths (OOM) with "Love on the Planet Mars." These night parades, which marked the culmination of Mardi Gras must have been quite a sight and a fitting end to the carnival.

The four parading societies were all founded after the Civil War. They paraded in founding date sequence with the OOMs (begun in 1867) last, proceeded by the IMs (1869) and the KORs (1874). The MEMs were a recent addition dating only from 1891. In 1909 when the IMs decided to change their parade night to Monday from Shrove Tuesday the MEMs paraded with them. However, the MEMs did not parade again and held their last ball in 1910.

In 1908 a slightly older and far less traditional society, the Comic Cowboys did not parade. Founded in 1884, this irreverent group would not hold a parade from 1908-12. Since several of Senta's Mobile relatives were connected to the Comic Cowboys, its not parading for the first time since 1884 may have been the reason they were disappointed in the season. It was surprising that the organization did not parade, since 1908 was its twenty-fifth anniversary.

Although decorations were put up several days before the arrival of King Felix, it is still noteworthy that Mobile's carnival season at the turn of the century only lasted two days, and most of the activity occurred on Mardi Gras Day itself. However, to judge by the remarkable account which follows, the season's brevity was more than made up for by the intensity of the celebration.

Senta Jones liked Mobile, which she felt was more a town or village than a city, and found Mardi Gras fun and fascinating. Thanks to a web of family and friends in Mobile, she felt quite comfortable in the city despite having been born and raised in New York City. Her assessment of life in Mobile nearly a century ago is quite remarkable–especially coming from the pen of a sixteen-year-old. [Editor]

February 28 [Mobile]
Mobile impressed me as being very countrified. It was warm, and the trees and lawns were green. Many flowers were in bloom,–chiefly violets. Government street, I found very beautiful. Pennants of purple and yellow,–the Mardi-Gras colors, were floating from every other building. Dauphin St.,–the principal business thoroughfare, struck me

as being rather like Atlantic City, particularly after dark, when it was lit up. [...]

March 1
We found Government Street gaily decorated with electric lights, strung on wires from one house to another. In the center of one square, an immense crown, bejewelled, with colored lights, was suspended, and from it to the four corners of the place, floated purple and yellow streamers. Dauphin Street also was in gala day attire. Bienville Square was one great mass of lights and people. Triumphal arches had been erected everywhere for the procession of the next day, when King Felix III was expected. Search lights gleamed from every building. We looked, listened, and enjoyed, and then retired. [...]

March 2
We went back with Augusta to her dwelling, and stayed until dinner time, when we returned to aunt Ida's. Just as we arrived at dessert, Irma pricked up her ears, so to speak, and declared that she heard a drum. In a moment the whole family, as with one movement, had left the table, and tore madly down towards Government Street. Elkan, who had arrived but that morning, ran with the rest of us. A band came by first, then a few corps of soldiers and sailors, a company of cadets from some military school or other, then another band, the King's escort of knights, and finally, in an immense chariot, his majesty himself. Everyone cheered, and then the crowd dispersed and we went home to eat our neglected tart. [...]

At half past five we returned to our home–aunt Ida's,–rather, and ate supper, after which we went to the hotel, for mama and papa were going to a ball and play at the Fidelia Club, and wanted to dress. Aunt Betty and uncle Henry dropped in, and we sat talking for a while, waiting for Hugo, because aunt Carrie and family were going to be out till late, and didn't want him to be alone in the house, so mama had arranged to have him spend the night with us. He didn't come, and we grew impatient. The floral procession began, and we viewed it from our balcony. Hugo arrived just as the second float appeared, and told us he had stopped at the Club House. The first float carried a giant peacock surrounded by dancing clowns who threw gaily colored confetti into the crowds lining the side walk. Next came the Marechal Niel rose, surrounded by her buds, and courted by three great butterflies with gold wings. Following this,

came a float representing a pond, with a cataract tumbling into it. Two storks stood in the water, among many waterlilies. The next float showed a high bank, fairly covered with blue violets over which two butterflies hovered. The night blooming cereus formed the subject of the float which came into view after the violets had passed up the street. A gaffer lying in the shadow of the arch formed by two plants. Poppies, attracting a swarm of bees, were prettily represented by the next float. Easter lilies surrounded by humming birds, and then chrysanthemums among which mechanical lizards crept, ended the procession. [...]

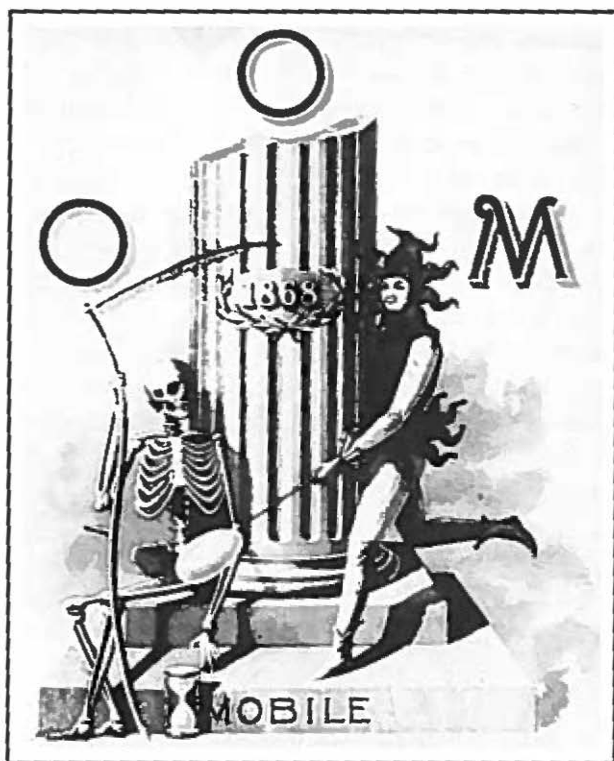
At twelve minutes past two, Eva, who had been acting as a scout, announced the coming of the parade for which we had looked so anxiously since luncheon. We ran down to Government street in a body. First came a band, second, the king's chariot with his majesty seated in dignity and state, within, third, a float showing the time when birds were more powerful than men,–six or seven tremendous swans, and one of two gaudily attired knights. I didn't understand what it was all about. Next came an immense blue-green whale, in whose open mouth Jonah sat, evidently enjoying it as much as any spectator. Fifth, showed a high rock on the ocean front, before which Columbus and his followers sailed in an antiquated vessel. Behind the bluff, breaking out of a gigantic egg shell, was Uncle Sam. This was followed by a float bearing three swans offering a large, heavy, jewelled crown to three individuals,–"When any one could be king" was the subject. The sixth float was the subject. The sixth float showed Romeo and Juliet in the "balcony scene." The heroine was a man in feminine apparel. The next was a grotto in which a dozen of dwarfs sported. Alice Hanaw, who stood beside me, told me in confidence that it was a pretty scene, but she couldn't understand where the "grotto" came in. "They have imaginitis, if they can see it," she said. The last float represented wood nymphs at a banquet. We went back to aunt Ida's and at about half past three, Eva & I visited Gladys. We played five games of croquet, of which I won four. At half past five, we returned to aunt Ida's escorted by cousin Hattie and pretty little Gladys. We ate supper, and after we walked slowly down to Royal Street with uncle Adolph. The merry-making was at the zenith. On every hand crowds of expectant people, masked and unmasked, were busy making as much noise as possible. Men vied with each other in deafening those few who had no share in the mad frolic. Never before had I seen anything so suggestive of a howling wilderness. We walked back up Government street. Already, every window, and every stairway was black with people who were

University of South Alabama Archives.

patiently awaiting the two principal parades, the first of which was to begin promptly at half past eight. We found the family including Hortense and Justin (who were permitted to stay up,–it being a red-letter day) at the corner of Government and Jackson Streets, and scarcely had we joined the folks when a blare of trumpets announced the coming of the Infant Mystics Parade. The emblem float bore a huge cat perched atop a chimney and waving her tail frantically. Next came a float picturing the temple of Diana at Ephesus. This was succeeded by another, showing Eudorous, a youth, standing before an altar, while above him floated four angels, announcing the fact that he was destined to be one of the Christian martyrs. The third scene showed the hero at the court of Constantine, and in the fourth, he was pictured standing before his tent on a battlefield. Following this, came a float representing his marriage with Cymodoe, and in the sixth scene, the newly wedded couple appeared in white garments, in an arena, while a monstrous tiger crouched beside them, read[y] to spring. The seventh, and last "act" of this tragedy portrayed the lovers in heaven, where, surrounded by angels, they received the palm of victory. The procession wound slowly through the streets. We waited a short time and then the display of the Order of Myths,–commonly known as the "Double O.M.," began. The emblem float was very pretty. It was a broken column,–illustrating the text "In the midst of life we are in death," Folly–personified by a jester in full costume,–chased a lank skeleton representing Death,–around this shaft, and ever again dealt him a blow, though he did not succeed in catching him. The floats illustrated the story of "Love on the Planet Mars." In the first scene, Honus, a mythical prince of the Land of Lore, appeared in a tremendously large airship, in which he was travelling toward Mars, where lived his lady love, Princess Lenus. The aeroplane was excellent,–a mass of brilliant color, with parts of it in motion as in a real machine of like character. The next float showed Lenus standing beside a fountain in her father's garden, and was succeeded by another showing her in her palace, reclining on a divan beside the king. The fourth act showed another prince, Eluses, who, being fabulously wealthy, pours out before the awed princess a few quarts of pearls as large as ostrich eggs, saying that she is more precious than all of them. In the fifth scene, Lenus lies in her crescent shaped bed, dreaming of Honus. In the sixth, a fairy appears to the prince of the Land of Lore, and tells him that his suit is hopeless for Lenus loves Eluses. He turns back to his home in despair and the final tableau shows the lovers happily united. A band followed the last float, and, bidding our relatives a good night, we

went home, and to bed. As the clock struck midnight, the illuminations all over the city, which had flashed in honor of Mardi Gras, were extinguished, and the reign of Felix III, Emperor of Joy, and King of the Carnival, was over.

My relatives had all assured me that never before had the holiday been so faultily celebrated, and having built too many hopes, I was rather disappointed. I had expected more enthusiasm on the part of the citizens, more noise, more glitter, more glamour. But on the whole, it was very nice. [...]



OOM Emblem on a ball invitation. Local History and Genealogy Division, Mobile Public Library.

March 21
All in all, Mobile is a delightful place. It was very warm there during the latter part of our visit, but in the main, I found it most agreeable. The relatives were very hard to straighten out, but, as I devoted all my energies to the task, and have a naturally good constitution I lived through it, and even managed to call most of

them by name correctly. Mobile itself, though of fair size, is hardly what one might call a *city, town* expresses it far more perfectly. Almost every street is tree lined. The place is countrified in every sense of the word. Mind? *not country*, but *countrified.*

The houses are large, and there is always a goodly garden-space between them. Flowers appear on every hand. Barton Academy,–one of the chief schools, is a beautiful building,–very roomy–white in color, and stately in appearance. The McGill Institute is also a fine edifice, but it looks somewhat cramped. In Mobile, the teachers are called by their first names. This is a queer state of affairs from the standpoint of [a] New York school girl. Down south, Miss Kitty Blank, is addressed by her pupils as Miss Kitty! By the same rule my Miss Kahn would be known as Miss Arabella! Picture the children calling Miss Church, Miss Eloise! Well,–enough of that. There is at least one beautiful building in Mobile, that is the Court House, which is really very imposing. The statue of Raphael Semmes, stands in the square opposite. He is known as Admiral Semmes in the south. Dauphin Street is like the main street of any large village. I did not see half a dozen ten-story buildings in all Mobile. Every fourth structure is, or contains, a "moving picture" show. At night, when the street is lit up, and the music from these places of amusement rings on the ear, it reminds one vividly of a popular sea side resort. There is none of that bustle,–that air of importance,–which is common to large cities, in Mobile. At every corner, groups of men stand talking, smoking, and lounging. Everything is painfully quiet,–listless,–sluggish. There are car lines, and telephones, and electric lights, of course, but steam radiators are not in common use. Stoves, and *real* grate-fires are substituted. When hot water is wanted, it is heated for use, in an apparatus which hangs right over the bath tub. [...]

I will say one thing concerning Mobile,–relatives and all,–that may express my feelings better than more useless description; there, let it end.

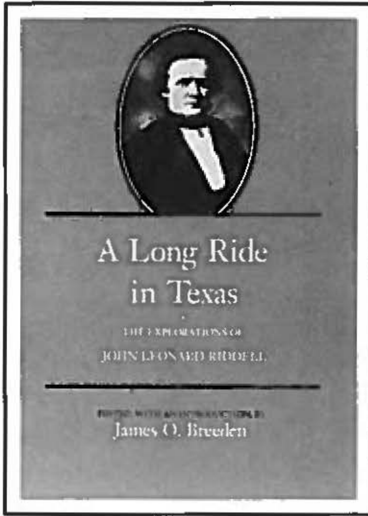
I would like to go again,–*soon.*

Finis.

[She did return to visit the city frequently over the next half century. Editor]

Book Reviews

James O. Breedon, ed. *A Long Ride in Texas: The Explorations of John Leonard Riddell.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994, pp. 115. $24.50. ISBN 0-89096-582-X



This slim volume on central and east Texas by a noted scientist of the nineteenth century contains three parts, each interesting in its own way. The editor's introduction is an enlightening biographical sketch of Riddell. The two month-long diary account of Riddell's visit to Texas in 1839 makes up the second part. The third, very short section, is a geological description of coastal east Texas made on a second trip that year.

Born in 1807 to a poor Massachusetts family, John Leonard Riddell grew to become an ambitious man. His interest in science paved the way to fulfilling a determined need to make a name for himself. This did not prove difficult. His publications quickly advanced his reputation to the international level. In the 1830s, Riddell published several articles and catalogues of Ohio and Louisiana Gulf Coast area plants. Although his interest shifted to other sciences, he kept his connections with prestigious botanists throughout the country.

Riddell's further contributions to scientific knowledge added to his reputation as a scientist. He unsuccessfully tried to get geological state surveys established in Ohio and Louisiana. Riddell's interest in physics led to his invention of a binocular microscope. With his work on space travel and gravitation, he participated in public debates on new theories. The prevalence of epidemics in the Louisiana Gulf Coast region provided him with opportunities to contribute to medical science and to its professionalization. Using the public fame he had established earlier, Riddell spoke widely on his ideas that germs caused disease, and also on preventive medicine. He also took part in the formation of various scientific and medical societies in the South.

Riddell's other major ambition was to achieve financial success. But in this, he was less fortunate. His continuing need for funds, first to help his widowed mother and then for his own family, forced the scientist to teach, to lecture publicly, and to collect plant specimens for other botanists–jobs he particularly disliked. In 1836, after receiving a degree from the Medical School of Ohio, he accepted the chair of chemistry at the University of Louisiana (now Tulane). Between 1839 and 1848, he worked as a melter and refiner for the U.S. Mint. He traveled to Texas in the 1830s to locate a reputed lost silver mine. None of these efforts brought him significant material rewards.

The diary entries proved informative and entertaining. Although often brief, Riddell's comments provide realistic snapshots of Texas life soon after its break from Mexico. The reader gets to feel the constant fear of life on the frontier: "Travellers...had often been chased by and made narrow escape from the well mounted savages [Native Americans]"; "Between the Salado and town is a dangerous pass on account of the Indians"; and "The daring Comanches then were and now are known to be prowling in the neighborhood." At the same time, the prevailing contempt for Native Americans is clear when Riddell relates without comment that, "The soldiers and Texans universally gave Indians the name John." Despite evidence of the limitations of even a scientific mind, Riddell's remarks are noteworthy.

Riddell's social commentaries on the Texas frontier as an outsider have their positive side. His obvious pleasure at the sight of San Antonio amidst the emptiness of central Texas in 1839 is clearly evident in the diary. His casual remark on the Alamo, "We at length arrived within the dilapidated wall of the mission..." seems refreshing when one considers subsequent Texan mythologizing of that structure. His description of Enchanted Rock, although somewhat scientific, reminds us of our mortality in the face of earth's treasures.

The final section is interesting for a different reason. Riddell's descriptions reveal more of the period in general than of the geology of the area. These notations indicate the extensive scientific knowledge of that time, something that one generally does not associate with the 1800s. For example, after a layman's account of eastern Texas along the Gulf Coast, Riddell concludes that its geology tells us the land "recently emerged from the dominion of the sea." Similarly, the reader will understand clearly the era's interest in science as a source for economic progress from Riddell's narrative. Riddell sums each geological commentary with the possible profitable

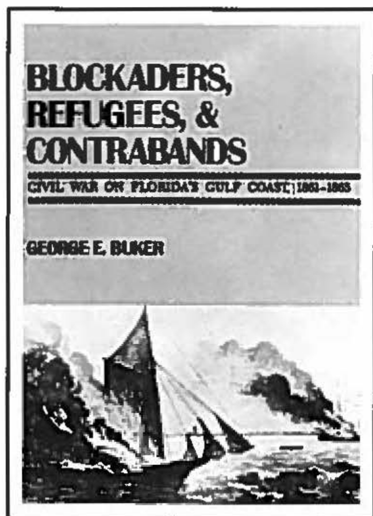
results of that site. At times his economic diagnosis seems forced, as in the case of the Trinity River banks which he claims had salt deposits for future factory production. One must remember that his was a scientific mind.

Overall, the volume is worth having in every Texas library. The editing was well done. Footnotes are as informative as was the introduction. An index is included.

Irene Ledesma University of Texas-Pan American

George F. Buker. *Blockaders, Refugees, & Contrabands: Civil War on Florida's Gulf Coast, 1861-1865.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, c. 1993, *ix*, pp. 235. ISBN 0-8173-0682-X

George Buker's monograph proves it is still possible to discover new things and tell new stories about that most chronicled of American historical episodes, the Civil War.



A retired naval officer, Buker has directed most of his attention to the Civil War on the sea. In the process of examining little used naval archives that relate to the relatively minor affairs of the Florida Gulf Coast blockading squadron, Buker has turned up data that has much more general use for a larger audience than naval historians.

During the Civil War, Florida's West Coast from Key West to Pensacola was one of the most desolate sections of American coast. With no significant ports or cities and extremely low population density, the region offered few opportunities for blockade runners or naval heroics. Naval officers of this command grieved over the absence of opportunity to make their careers and military mark, but they made occasion enough to extend the war aims of the Federal government. These efforts, in turn, introduce both the larger and the peculiar circumstances of the conflict on its peripheries as well as the changing aspects of the war.

The records of the blockading squadron reveal that after 1863, for example, the desperate demand for salt in the Confederacy, and in 1864 the old raiding parties against salt works changed to a strategic function. The same held for interdicting the cattle drives intended to sustain Dixie's soldiers after the fall of Vicksburg cut off Texas beef. If lacking all the romance and heroism of the battlefield, such campaigns proved critically important in squashing secession.

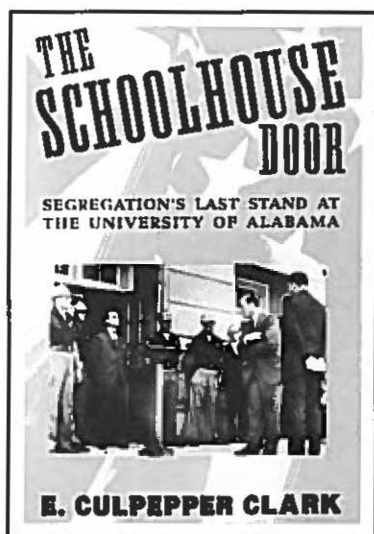
The most interesting parts of Buker's study, however, relate less to the navy and the Federals than to Southerners and Floridians, especially dissenters. As the only Federal presence in this part of the world, the West Coast Squadron became the magnet for Unionists and the disaffected, both black and white. A critical half of the book is given over to the records of these men and their families. Buker traces the increasing alienation of backwoods Floridians, in particular, as the war wore on. He argues that the estrangement was not only a function of social and class differences but was also a corollary of Confederate policy in Richmond. The increasing hardships of the war pushed locals toward the protection and plenty of the blockaders. The book also illustrates the disintegration of local government, an important element in its own right in Confederate history. Buker traces how this disintegration, in turn, gave rise to informal bands of armed men–vigilantes or outlaws depending on one's perspective–and how these bands became integrated into the formal war effort, as in the Second Florida Cavalry of white dissidents, the Second Infantry Regiment, USCT of blacks.

Although written without any style or literary grace, Buker's book adds considerably to our understanding of the war. While it particularly enriches Florida history, any Southern or Civil War historian could read it with great profit.

Darden Asbury Pyron Florida International University

E. Culpepper Clark. *The Schoolhouse Door: Segregation's Last Stand at the University of Alabama.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, *xxiv*, pp. 294. $25.00. ISBN 0-19-507417-3

Harry J. Knopke, Robert J. Norrell, and Ronald W. Rogers, eds. *Opening Doors: Perspectives on Race Relations in Contemporary America.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991, *xviii*, pp. 225. $19.95. ISBN 0-8173-0497-5



The author and editors of these two books faced a formidable challenge in approaching their tasks. E. Culpepper Clark set out to tell the story of two confrontations in the 1950s and 1960s resulting in Gov. George C. Wallace's notorious "schoolhouse door" stand of defiance in 1963. This stance ended with his capitulation and the desegregation of the state of Alabama itself. In their edited work, Harry J. Knopke, Robert J. Norrell, and Ronald W. Rogers present essays of varied length and quality on the sociocultural implications of Wallace's stand against integration presented during a University of Alabama symposium marking this historic event's twenty-fifth anniversary. While Clark's work is a conventional, narrative history, Knopke, Norrell, and Roger's work is a collection of papers designed to shed light on both the issue of schoolhouse integration at the University of Alabama and on the nature of contemporary race relations. Thus, the two books are quite different in their methodology. They are notably different in their successes as well.

The Schoolhouse Door accurately reflects the skills of its author. It is a captivating story of bravery (black would-be students), ineptitude (University of Alabama's president Oliver Carmichael), reactionaries (Alabama's Board of Trustees) and braggadocio mixed with large doses of political aspiration (Gov. George C. Wallace). At first the casual reader may think this story is a series of accounts of the major players in the events that led to the desegregation of Alabama in 1963. However, on closer examination, the reader will

understand that the scenario is not so much one of personalities and ideologies as it is one of social revolution. So for the long fight to desegregate, Alabama encompassed no less than a backward and racist foe trying to stave off the inevitable: the forced desegregation of its state's flagship institution. The beginning of that arduous process in the 1950s and early 1960s still carries political and social implications for the state of Alabama and the South, especially regarding the nature of prejudice and the various strategies for overcoming it.

Clark weaves his narrative around personalities. Autherine Lucy's failed attempt to integrate the University of Alabama in 1955-56 marked the beginning of the black students' determined, and often virtuoso, efforts to crack the wall of segregation in Tuscaloosa. The story then moves on, sometimes not as swiftly and smoothly as it might, to Carmichael's racist stonewalling and the Board of Trustees's efforts to repulse the inevitable. Finally, the drama ends with George Wallace's aborted stand in the schoolhouse door and the eventual, but disruptive, admission of Vivian Malone and James Hood to the University of Alabama in 1963.

An illuminating sidebar to the story is Wallace's celebrated feud with the Kennedy Administration, a confrontation that so poignantly reflected Clark's theme of the old segregationist mentality meeting the new integrationist pragmatism. As Wallace looked back on what might have been, the Kennedys (President Kennedy and his Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy) looked forward to what was prophesied by the courts and by the demands of a decade of heightened social upheaval. In the end, the reader becomes aware that the color line in Alabama was doomed, just as it was doomed throughout the nation.

In portraying these events and themes, Clark plies his trade well. Here and there, he shows himself a little insensitive to sociological perspectives and to modern trends in scholarship (Clark is Professor of Speech and Executive Assistant to the President of the University of Alabama). Yet, these are subtle imperfections. On the whole, his work is readable, sprightly, and profound. Indeed, Professor Clark proves himself a master of his craft.

Readable, sprightly, and profound, *Opening Doors* is not. Its focus, as the title implies, is less on the historical circumstances of the 1963 schoolhouse stand than on the contemporary sociocultural strategies to overcome racial prejudice. The attempt to provide an overview and assessment of contemporary race relations is reflected by papers commissioned for a symposium marking the twenty-fifth year of Alabama's forced integration. The editors purport to include

"historical context, current psychosocial-cultural assessments of prejudice and discrimination, and strategies for change." In fact, only the second two subjects shine through in the book. Basically, the historical perspective appears in E. Culpepper Clark's article, which is a synthesis of his own book on the subject of Alabama's desegregation ordeal.

The editors of *Opening Doors* (all administrators and professors at the University of Alabama) did yeomen's labor in bringing together national scholars of varied disciplines and methodologies in the book (Leon F. Litwack, Fannie Allen Neal, E. Culpepper Clark, Dan T. Carter, Mortimer Ostow, Walter G. Stephan, John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, Rhoda E. Johnson, Thomas F. Pittigrew, and James Jones). Yet, that very effort has resulted in the work's major deficiency–it is a series of disjointed and esoteric studies that lack unifying empirical foundation. Each article, in its own fashion, attempts to explain the cause and effect of prejudice and discrimination or the background and "progress" that has been made since Wallace's shameful act in 1963. However, the transition from article to article is too abrupt to allow for some type of overriding (or underlying) conceptual framework. In short, despite the editors' mission, this eclectic set of essays contains no overarching theme.

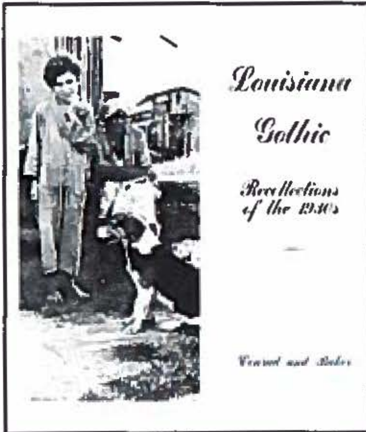
Perhaps, the methodology underlying *Opening Doors* foreordained this problem. Not infrequently, anthologies growing from symposiums lack conceptual threads. Certainly, most published symposiums make claims to the contrary. However, the collections usually reflect more of the presenters' expertise and latest research efforts than a collective quest for unity of purpose and theme. In short, *Opening Doors* is a welcome attempted overview of the nature of contemporary racism, but its disconnectedness diminishes its contribution.

Despite any deficiencies in methodology or form, the challenge of assessing the issue of integration and the question of emerging patterns of racism and strategies for attacking them are presented in rich details in these two works. Readers will come away with a

strong sense of personal sacrifice given to desegregate the University of Alabama and of tensions and divisions characterizing American society since that event some three decades ago. One lesson that appears in these works is the determination by foes of segregation and racism to challenge and to reconstruct American society into new models of egalitarianism. Those who reflect upon these issues will find these books useful, though of unequal quality.

Irvin D. Solomon University of South Florida, Fort Myers

Glenn R. Conrad and Vaughan B. Baker. *Louisiana Gothic: Recollections of the 1930s.* Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana-Center for Louisiana Studies, 1984, pp. 150. $27.50. ISBN 0-940984-19-9



Most students of the local environments and sub-cultures of Louisiana already know the books of photographs by Turner Browne (*Louisiana Cajuns/Cajuns de la Louisiana* [Louisiana State University Press, 1977]), Philip Gould (*Les Cadiens d'Asteur/Today's Cajuns* [Acadiana Press, 1980]), or Debbie Fleming Caffery (*Carry Me Home* [Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990]). The collection gathered under the supervision of Conrad and Baker, two of the foremost students of Louisiana's cultural and historical development, deals with all the areas of the state of Louisiana during the 1930s.

The Great Depression wreaked havoc in all the states of the United States. But, in Louisiana, even before the depression, the remedies brought by the New Deal had been needed for a long time. The introductory essays, the first by Paul Conkin, the second by Betty Field, make this perfectly clear. Conkin was one of the earliest researchers to make use of the photographs taken by the artists commissioned by the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration (FSA). He focuses on the historical development of the Great Depression, its several downturns and its slow recovery owing to the efforts of Roosevelt and the Congress.

The photographers selected by the FSA first produced images underlining the suffering and dignity of the people (these snapshots were often carefully staged or posed) and progressively turned to a more realistic documentation of the hardships endured by all kinds of Americans. In her essay, Field focuses on the Depression in Louisiana. The state had been allegedly spared by the depression because it was already one of the poorest and also because it was essentially rural. The economic hardships were nevertheless felt all over the state, and many endured prolonged suffering. The 1932 arrival of Huey Long on the political scene and his election to the U.S. Senate in 1934 brought mixed blessings to the state. His progressive opposition to Roosevelt effectively stopped New Deal benefits from reaching Louisiana until after his assassination in 1935. The impact of the New Deal in Louisiana was deep and varied: it helped cities (streets, sewers, etc.), the countryside (electricity, flood control, and so forth), education, and unemployed workers. But the economic upturn would not be complete until the war effort triggered a recovery.

Most of the snapshots, grouped by geographical areas, were taken by Russell Lee and Marion Post Walcott during the 1930s and the early 1940s. The images of New Orleans offer a clearly urban environment: street scenes, shoeshine stand and street tailor (both black men). Some, like "Bringing in Scabs," suggest uneasiness and the use of black workers against unionized workers. The section on the River Parishes below New Orleans focuses on Delacroix Island and Plaquemines Parish. Here fishermen and fur trappers and their occupational and recreational activities form the core of the images. The section devoted to the River Parishes above New Orleans centers around Donaldsonville and New Roads and appears to have been visited around All Saints Day because of several pictures taken in cemeteries suggesting the tidying up of the tombstones at that time of year. The Lafourche Country features snapshots taken in and around Raceland and Bayou Lafourche. These pictures present more recreational activities than the others: from players at a slot machine, to dancers at a roadhouse, to copious eating at a crab boil. They also suggest hard work on plantations or in the fields by black men and women. The Teche Country snapshots come primarily from New Iberia and Jeanrette. They suggest the influence of the Cajuns (Evangeline Museum, advertising for frogs) and a small-town atmosphere (business, movie display). The Southwest Prairies section includes pictures taken in Crowley, Scott, and Abbeville: fair, fais-do-do, rice threshing, and scenes from the Crowley Rice Festival. The

section devoted to the Florida Parishes focuses on the life of the local sharecroppers and migrant strawberry pickers around Ponchatoula. The Red River Country and the Northeast are represented primarily by Natchitoches and its vicinity (plantations, street scenes).

The hundred and twenty full-page black-and-white snapshots gathered here are varied and offer diverse representations of the several areas of the state and their inhabitants. In some pictures there are only buildings, parts of buildings, landscapes, or cars and boats. However, most of the pictures do include individuals. The street scenes, unless they focus on one or a small group of persons, underline the segregation which governed public life at that time: there are no blacks near the whites on the sidewalks, nor are there any black customers in any of the businesses where whites are seen. The only black persons photographed are often seen at work, going to or returning from church, and only in one or two cases are they seen relaxing on the front porch of their house. To be sure, this is not surprising to anyone who has even a cursory knowledge of the history and social customs of the 1930s in Louisiana and in the South.

This work is notable owing to the diversity and the extent of its coverage, and because it allows for an easy viewing of snapshots stored in out-of-the-way repositories. In addition, the fact that the snapshots come from a variety of photographers helps insure a variety of approaches. This book may be seen both as a central contribution to the documentation of the social and cultural histories of the state of Louisiana in the 1930s as well as an inspiration for studies as varied as de Caro's analysis of snapshots presenting Louisiana's folk traditions (Folklife in Louisiana Photography, Louisiana State University Press, 1990) or Forkner's detailed study of Theodore Fonville Vinans (Cajun, Paris: Marval, 1991) who also took pictures during the 1930s.

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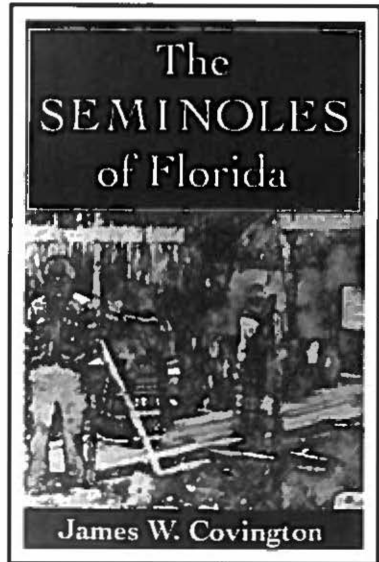
James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993, pp. 389. Cloth, $49.95. ISBN 0-8130-1196-5 / Paper, $18.95. ISBN 0-8130-1204-X



In recent years, significant contributions to our knowledge of the history and culture of the Seminole Indians of Florida have been made by scholars such as Harry A. Kersey, Jr., Brent Richards Weisman, J. Leitch Wright, Jr., and Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. What has been missing is an academic survey of Seminole history which can integrate much of this recent scholarly work. Now historian James W. Covington, whose own articles and books have contributed much to the knowledge of Seminole history, offers such a volume examining the whole of the Florida people's history.

Covington begins the story of the migration to Florida from ancestral Creek lands in Georgia and Alabama by scattered bands and villages, beginning about 1740 and extending up to the larger movement of discontented Creek Red Sticks after the Creek War of 1813-14. The migrants moved into lands made empty by the almost complete disappearance of the original natives due to disease and slave raids in the colonial period.

He devotes considerable attention to the three Seminole Wars of the early to mid-nineteenth century. Covington does not back off from showing the deception used by whites to help win this war which became one of our costliest wars in history. Indeed, many of the Seminoles who were captured and shipped to Oklahoma were seized under deceptive pretenses, even while under flags of truce, as was the case for leaders such as Osceola and Micanopy. Although Seminole persistence, the unfamiliarity of white troops, and the semi-tropical Florida environment made the war a difficult one for the American forces, eventually white manpower advantages and the harsh conditions of a protracted war overwhelmed the Seminoles. All but a few bands were shipped to Oklahoma.

The second half of the book is largely institutional in focus, though Covington does a good job in showing the effect of

increasing contacts with whites, and especially in showing the diversity of the Seminoles. This diversity ultimately resulted in several separate reservations and a complicated organizational structure, a situation that frustrated whites who wanted to deal with "The Seminoles."

Efforts to create a reservation and to place the Seminoles on it are traced, as are programs to educate the Seminoles. Both of these were greeted with considerable ambivalence or outright resistance by most Seminoles, who preferred to avoid contact with whites. However, New Deal programs, World War II, the land claims case, and expanding economic activities (bingo, cigarette shops, hotels, tourist camps) increased contacts with the expanding Florida population. While economic conditions improved to a degree, with this contact came the increased problems of alcoholism, poor health, and cultural disruption. The rise of Christianity among the Seminoles after World War II also increased some internal tensions and led to "the emergence of a new type of leadership and loss of power by the medicine men." Each of these changes came with its own advantages and difficulties and are examined closely by the author.

Covington closes with a cautious, but relatively optimistic, note about the future of the over fifteen hundred Seminoles and Miccosukees in Florida today. He notes, though, that the young of the tribes "may have to choose between remaining on the reservation in a more spartan Seminole environment or leaving the reservation for a better chance at the luxuries enjoyed by some white Americans."

More attention could have been paid to tracing out internal changes within the Seminole communities during the first century in Florida. How did the migration to Florida, the adjustment to a new environment and economy, and the disruption of the Seminole wars affect such internal factors as gender roles and relations, clan structure, spiritual beliefs, and relations between the Seminoles and the blacks among them? While some information and hints are offered to such questions, more thorough attention could have shed more light on issues of clear importance to the Seminole experience.

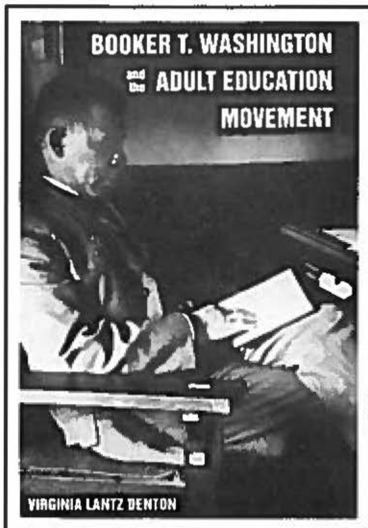
On the issue of gender I must question his assertion that "rather severe restrictions were imposed on the Creek women" in the colonial period. This assertion seems to be based primarily on the existence of menstrual huts and separation of women during childbirth. To start from such an assumption can be misleading for understanding the changes experienced by Seminole women (given the importance of accurately presenting the often-ignored story of Indian women). Recent anthropological and historical work on Indian women of the Southeast

and elsewhere has shown that women had significant economic power, along with some influence over diplomacy and warfare. This holds especially for tribes like the Creeks and Seminoles whose all-important clan structure was matrilineal. Even the practice of menstrual huts has been seen by some scholars as more a sign of respect for the spiritual and generative power of women than a restriction.

Overall Covington has produced a valuable book which is well written and researched, with helpful maps and photographs. There are a few typographical errors, and one confusing bit of dating has President Monroe recommending either the removal of or a reservation for the Seminoles in 1824, while the resulting Treaty of Moultrie Creek was signed in 1823. This work should be useful to anyone seeking an introduction to the history of the Florida Seminoles or to anyone interested in the overall history of Florida and the Gulf Coast.

Richard Durschlag Duke University

Virginia Lantz Denton. *Booker T. Washington and the Adult Education Movement.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992, *xiv*, pp. 278. $34.95. ISBN 0-8130-1182-5



Booker T. Washington was a complex and contradictory historical figure whose educational and political philosophies have excited controversy among both his contemporaries and historians. Washington rose to prominence after his controversial "Atlanta compromise" address in 1895. To fully understand the subtleties and long-term implications of Washington's thought, one must be familiar with the fundamental social changes taking place in America in this period. Washington can not, and must not, be isolated from the momentous times in which he lived and worked. Yet, this is precisely the problem one

encounters when those not trained in historical research methods endeavor to write history. Virginia Lantz Denton's *Booker T. Washington and the Adult Education Movement* is no exception to this rule.

Denton celebrates Washington and Tuskeegee Institute with flowery prose, constructing a rigid conceptual framework that quickly proves unworkable. Washington is depicted as a "facilitator of progressive and positive change through the process of adult education," who would "bridge the gap between blacks and whites, between South and North, and between 'equal' and 'unequal' in such significant areas as educational opportunities and funding, the ownership of land and agriculture, problems of housing and family relationships, the justice system and its laws, and the gaping distance between the dreaming and the American dream itself." While it cannot be denied that Washington was a leader in the rural life of African Americans, devoting much of his time and effort as well as the facilities of Tuskeegee Institute to helping the blacks on small farms, one should not exaggerate his record so far as social and political change is concerned.

Denton is on solid ground when she describes the programs initiated by Washington which resulted in short-term economic and material gains for rural black farmers at Tuskeegee Institute. The introduction of the annual Negro Conference in 1892 marked the beginning of agricultural extension work and was one of the most significant projects established for black farmers at Tuskeegee Institute. According to Tuskeegee archival records these conferences resulted in an increase in the number and value of black-owned farms, as well as the establishment of a branch Agricultural Experiment Station to direct and advance the interest in scientific agricultural methods. Other innovative programs included an Agricultural Short Course, the Farmer's Institute, Farmer's County Fairs, and the establishment of agriculturally based newspapers. These programs reached isolated rural farmers who could not come to Tuskeegee through the institution of a traveling agricultural school. By the early 1900s the "Jessup Wagon" reached over two thousand isolated farmers per month in Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia, improving the conditions of the masses and giving lessons in self-help that would enable the rural agricultural people to take the initiative for their own economic advancement and physical well-being. Since nearly 85 percent of blacks in the Gulf states were engaged in agriculture, mastering new methods of production and

disseminating that knowledge to others was of paramount importance for survival.

The principal weaknesses of this study are in the interpretation of Washington's actions and in historical methodology. While on the surface Tuskeegee Institute appears to be an almost perfect example of black self-help, one must remember that Tuskeegee was built on the ideas of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a white Northerner and general who led black troops during the Civil War, and the monies of northern white philanthropists. One must keep in mind that these benefactors were products of the racial attitudes of their times. Blacks were not meant to be elevated to the highest levels of skill, but rather to become "first-rate mechanical laborers" in specific areas of economic activity. Women were included in the industrial education program only to the extent that they would be trained to mold family behavior and character traits which were beneficial to an effective and efficient labor force.

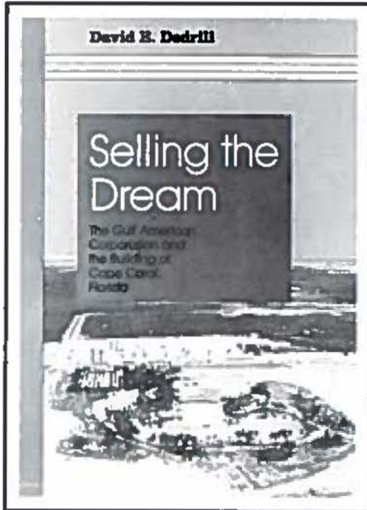
Washington's primary goal was to build support for himself, his school, and his cause. He became the intermediary for all donations and almost the sole arbitrator of the distribution of funds. Contributions were channeled through Tuskeegee, and its officials were often sent to smaller schools to correct "problems" in administrative policies. Washington dominated philanthropic monies, and smaller industrial schools were forced to conform to his philosophy and policies to survive, or be left to struggle as best they could on their own. Accommodationism, black acquiescence and obedience to the status quo, comprised the basis of industrial education philosophy as practiced by Washington.

Denton claims to offer *Booker T. Washington and the Adult Education Movement* "not as an erudite historian but as a kindred spirit in education, teaching in public secondary schools." It should be read with this caveat resolutely in mind. While Denton adds specific detail to our understanding of Tuskeegee's adult education program, she dismisses any evidence that contradicts her vision of Washington as an unblemished hero, including the thoughtful criticisms leveled by his contemporaries. Denton had clearly allowed her thesis to shape her research methods and selection of primary sources. Using judiciously chosen primary documents, she does not question, nor does she verify any fact, assumption, or judgment presented in her sources, even though many of her conclusions have been proven to be untenable. Denton clearly lacks a basic understanding of the complexity of both inter- and intraracial relations

at the turn of the twentieth century, and her study suffers from the absence of historical contextualization.

Joyce Hanson University of Connecticut

David E. Dodrill, *Selling the Dream: The Gulf American Corporation and the Building of Cape Coral, Florida.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993, pp. 328. Cloth, $39.95. ISBN 0-8173-0597-1



Florida is a state born of dreams and ballyhoo, of slogans and pitchmen who could, in one day, convince timid snowbirds that paradise was really for sale, with only a small deposit down. *Selling the Dream* chronicles the lives and business dealing of two of Florida's greatest salesmen, Leonard and Jack Rosen. In the 1960s, their Gulf American Corporation led the way in Florida land sales and development, until its methods came into question, and the Rosens' grand dreams became nightmares.

The Rosens got their start as carnival hucksters, developing an early flair for salesmanship that marked their careers. After making a small fortune in television sales of cosmetics, the brothers became interested in land marketing. Believing that what worked for hair cream would work for homesites, the brothers began the Gulf American Corporation with a large tract of land called Redfish Point, just south of Ft. Myers. Though at first in the game for quick profits, the brothers soon became enamored with the idea of building a city. Lot sales were made in the name of a future town, Cape Coral, which would rise full grown from the Florida pine barrens.

For almost a decade, the Rosens were extremely successful in marketing Cape Coral and other Florida land developments. Assertive and clever, they used enticements such as free meals and vacations to draw potential customers to their sites, then subjected them to various forms of the hard sell. The Gulf American Corporation reached a peak of $143,862,400 in sales in 1966, but problems were

already undermining its phenomenal success. Angry residents of Cape Coral challenged Gulf American's handling of funds for public improvements, while other investors claimed that the lots they had purchased had been illegally swapped for less desirable tracts. Customer complaints, compounded with legal and environmental squabbles, drove the company under, and in 1969 the Rosen brothers were forced to sell to the GAC Corporation. The new owners failed to learn from the Rosens' mistakes, and GAC land operation likewise went bankrupt. Dodrill concludes that the Gulf American Corporation exerted an influence that went beyond sales and controversies, since it was one of the land companies most responsible for bringing people into Florida, fueling the amazing population growth of the late twentieth century.

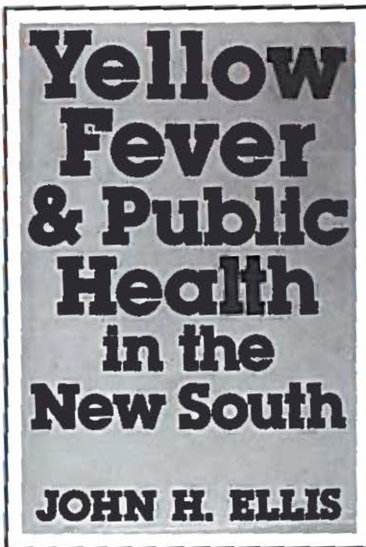
Thus, one might expect a revealing look into one of Florida's most disreputable companies, but Dodrill argues that while the Rosens may have been primarily concerned with making money, they also had legitimate dreams for the future of the state. He places much of the blame for the Rosens' failure on lack of knowledge and uncontrollable associates, particularly salespeople who made extravagant claims. In Dodrill's view, Gulf American simply grew too large for the brothers to control, despite their combined intelligence and charisma.

Dodrill's prose is brisk and straightforward, but despite his fine research, it is hard to imagine this book having mass appeal. The book's most interesting chapters describe the techniques used by Gulf American salespeople, some of which, though absurd, are similar to contemporary [present day] sales methods. While Dodrill makes important points about the effect land development companies have on the populating of Florida, his insights are lost in the tedious details of business transactions and legal wrangling surrounding Gulf American's demise. However, his weighty use of evidence does provide a balanced picture of the Rosens and their dealings, and occasional anecdotes help bring the insanity of the land business to life. The work includes a large number of personal interviews and demonstrates the wealth of sources available for recent history. While the book is not a page turner, it is an accurate, fair, and impressive study of two men, one company, and a dream shared by thousands.

Tracy Jean Revels Wofford College

John H. Ellis. *Yellow Fever & Public Health in the New South.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992, pp. 233. $28.00. ISBN 0-8131-1781-X

Margaret Humphreys. *Yellow Fever and the South.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992, pp. 226. $45.00. ISBN 0-8135-1820-2



From the time it was first encountered by western doctors through its virtual elimination from North America, yellow fever was never a major cause of death in this country. True, the 1793 Philadelphia epidemic was devastating, as were the New Orleans yellow fever of 1853 and dozens of other outbreaks that struck the South both before and after the Civil War. But these local and regional incidents were sporadic. Viewed across the entire nineteenth century, yellow fever in the United States was an insignificant killer when compared to persistent endemic diseases such as tuberculosis, infant diarrhea, or diphtheria. Why, then, did the term "yellow fever" generate such an intense fear?

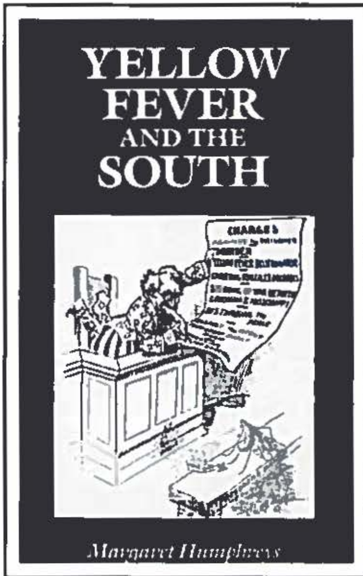
Yellow fever, like cholera (the other characteristic epidemic disease of the nineteenth century), was so fearsome because it was exotic, its symptoms were repulsive, and it killed a high proportion of the people it struck. Cholera came to the United States as part of a series of worldwide pandemics, and was imported from Europe mainly into the North, while importation of yellow fever from the tropics was a potential threat each summer–especially to the coastal South and to towns along the Mississippi River. Historians of medicine often cast cholera as a key precipitating factor in the development of public health authority in Britain and the northern United States. The two books under review here both suggest that yellow fever played that role for the American South.

The appearance of these books within a few months of each other is accidental. Both are delayed expansions of doctoral theses, and each author cites the other's dissertation, apparently unaware that

the other's book was soon to appear. Ellis's book is the more targeted. It concentrates on the 1880s and the policies of the "Redeemer" governments that came to power in the wake of Reconstruction, committed to building a "New South" based on industry and commerce, and ultimately committed as well to policies of white supremacy and segregation. Ellis further narrows his scope by making little attempt to cover the entire region. Instead, his book is a comparative study of public health development in the South's three largest nineteenth-century cities: New Orleans, Memphis, and Atlanta. Since yellow fever never constituted a serious problem in the Georgia capital, it should be clear that the disease itself is not Ellis's main concern–yellow fever is important to his book only insofar as reactions to it directly influenced public health policy.

Ellis sets the stage for his discussion of the three New South cities with two introductory chapters–one a succinct recapitulation, based on secondary sources, of the development of public health in Britain and the northern United States, and the second a discussion of the relationship between health, politics, and commerce in the antebellum South. This is a book of political history more than history of medicine, and Ellis thoughtfully analyzes how public health policy, economic interests, and political exigencies influenced each other. On occasion, though, he lets his interest in political processes lead him away from the theme of his book–as in his tangential discussion of the rise and fall of Atlanta's prohibitionist municipal government.

Ellis's concern for politics makes him sensitive to the race and class issues associated with yellow fever. In antebellum New Orleans, yellow fever was known as the "strangers' disease," and a hierarchy of susceptibility was understood by local residents–with blacks largely immune to the disease, native whites somewhat more susceptible, and recent immigrants most at jeopardy. Humphreys acknowledges that her book pays little attention to African-Americans because they suffered less from yellow fever, and she devotes only a few pages near its end to the early twentieth-century notion that blacks could be healthy carriers of the disease. Ellis, on the other hand, weaves in more discussion of the role of blacks in epidemics, and the effect of their apparent immunity on whites' perception of them. Ellis also draws out the class bias inherent in the phrase "strangers' disease," since most of the "strangers" who got sick were working-class immigrants. When European immigration to New Orleans declined after the Civil War, there were fewer "strangers" to get yellow fever, and the native white population came to regard the disease differently.



Yellow fever itself plays more of a role in the Humphreys book. Much more strongly than Ellis, she asserts that changing responses to this disease were the foundation of public health policy in the South, and that public health development in the region was therefore distinctive. Humphreys traces the history of yellow fever in North America from the eighteenth century beyond the discovery of the mosquito vector to the eradication campaigns of the early twentieth century, while Ellis makes no mention of any scientific developments and only discusses particular epidemics as they had an impact on his target cities. Humphreys also devotes more attention to the symptomatology of the disease and the ecology of its vector. The value of her book is enhanced by having the scientific story contained within the historical narrative. Humphreys is weaker than Ellis, however, in separating the strains of the debates over public health policy. The greater breadth of her book–in time, in place, and in attention to medical history–only partially compensates for this flaw.

Medical historians generally discuss the great epidemic diseases of the nineteenth century in relation to the effect of those diseases on commerce. Viewed this way, the public health response to cholera or yellow fever is seen as a political act based on economic factors, rather than a series of decisions informed by medical knowledge. In fact, historians who use this approach see the medical debates of the time–such as whether yellow fever was contagious and therefore imported from tropical ports, or whether it arose locally as a result of poor sanitation–as directly reflecting the class or group interests of the antagonists in those debates. Ellis and Humphreys both appropriately tell their stories utilizing this explanatory schema, but each has his or her particular success when approaching different series of events. To illustrate this, we can consider two episodes dealt with in each of these books.

At the time of the disastrous Mississippi Valley yellow fever epidemic of 1878, there existed no federal agency officially concerned with issues of public health. Because different ports set different

standards for quarantine, commercial activity depended on the relative laxity of state or local policies. For decades, health authorities and business groups in major ports had attempted to develop national standards that would theoretically protect the health of the citizenry while maintaining equity in restrictions on commerce. The 1878 epidemic presented the opportunity to move toward the creation of a federal agency which would enforce uniform maritime quarantine regulations while also encouraging local sanitary reform. Throughout the country, a three-way debate developed among those concerned with quarantine: some favored giving more power to the Marine Hospital Service (a federal agency empowered specifically to provide medical care for merchant sailors), some favored the creation of a national board of health, and some favored leaving quarantine powers in the hands of state and local governments.

As things turned out, Congress created the National Board of Health in the spring of 1879, but its authorization lapsed after four years, and the Marine Hospital Service gradually took on more of the function of a national health department (eventually becoming the U.S. Public Health Service). The debate over the National Board of Health and the Marine Hospital Service was heated and very complex. Many Northerners, oddly enough, tended to be more interested in states' rights than in quarantine matters; while southern business and medical groups were divided on which of the national proposals to support. Both Ellis and Humphreys confront this major debate–arguably the single most important impact yellow fever had on domestic policy–and Ellis comes out ahead, reflecting the greater sensitivity to political issues that characterizes his book.

On the other hand, Humphreys's discussion of technical reforms in the administration of Louisiana maritime quarantine is far more satisfying than that of Ellis. In 1885 the Louisiana State Board of Health opened a new quarantine station equipped with state-of-the-art disinfection apparatus. This new facility was based on the assumption that the "germ" of yellow fever (which had not yet been isolated, and which would only in the 1920s be identified as a sub-microscopic virus) lived on board ships and could be killed by fumigation or application of chemicals and steam. Following this theory, thorough disinfection of ships obviated the need for extended periods of isolation of the ship, its cargo, and passengers or crew who were not already sick. Disruption of commerce would be minimized while public confidence would be maintained in the non-infectious cargo passing through the port of New Orleans.

The new quarantine station was largely successful in terms of both commerce and disease prevention–the latter despite the fact that disinfection was motivated by a view of yellow fever that we now know to be incorrect. While Ellis gives short shrift to this significant episode in Gulf Coast public health history, Humphreys explains it clearly. This permits her better to discuss the fate of the Louisiana station after the discovery of the mosquito vector and the development of a federal quarantine system. Thus, after carefully explaining the reasons for the success of the yellow fever eradication methods developed by U.S. Army doctors in Cuba, Humphreys is also able to demonstrate why some southern doctors could reasonably hesitate to accept fully the mosquito vector theory and its policy implications.

Both of these are good books, useful for understanding the development of public health authority in the American South and in the federal government. Because of differences in emphasis and scope they hardly duplicate each other. Where Ellis and Humphreys do discuss the same historical episode, they tend to offer differing interpretations. For these reasons, *Yellow Fever and the South* and *Yellow Fever & Public Health in the New South* may be viewed as complementary, and are both worth reading. Any library with a serious collection on southern history should certainly acquire both, as should any historian interested in medicine in the South.

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Augusta Jane Evans. *Beulah.* Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, ed. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992, pp. 420. Cloth, $45.00. ISBN 0-8071-1749-8 / Paper, $16.95. ISBN 0-8071-1750-1

Augusta Jane Evans. *Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice.* Drew Gilpin Faust, ed. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992, pp. 415. Cloth, $45.00. ISBN 0-8071-1661-0 / Paper, $16.95. ISBN 0-88071-1662-9

Two handsome reprints of novels by Augusta Jane Evans (1835-1909) from LSU Press give the modern reader an opportunity to become acquainted with this popular Southern writer, who articulated great questions of the nineteenth century within the framework of romantic fiction. In *Beulah* (1859) and *Macaria; or Altars of Sacrifice* (1864), Evans explores issues related to politics, religion, and society

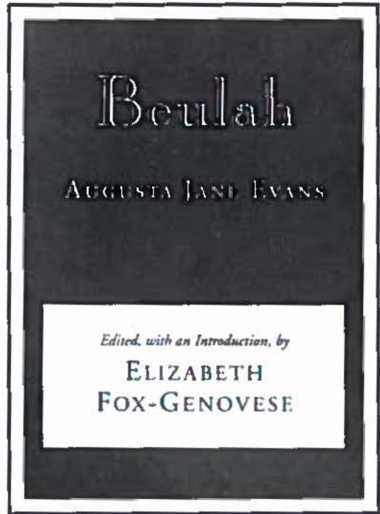
through the eyes of intelligent, strong young female protagonists. The author, who wrote her first novel at the age of fifteen, surely is reflected in these two books in her characters who set goals for themselves dependent upon their own integrity and hard work.

A fervent defender of the Southern cause, Evans is perhaps even more an outspoken advocate for women's rights to intellectual parity. Her own personal struggle with religious skepticism led Evans to a firmer commitment to faith and a vow to help others escape what she considered the fallibility of human reason. Evans felt literature should provide moral instruction and structured her novels with this in mind.

In every way, Augusta Jane Evans was a daughter of the South. Her parents were both from distinguished South Carolina families. The first of eight children, she was born in Columbus, Georgia, on May 8, 1835. Her father, an affluent merchant and planter, suffered bankruptcy in the 1839 depression and moved the family to San Antonio, Texas in 1845. *Inez, A Tale of the Alamo* (her first novel, but not published until 1855), a story of reversed fortunes, migration, and life in Texas, was written by the teenage author and presented to her father at Christmas, 1850, after the family had left Texas and settled in Mobile, Alabama in 1849.

Educated at home by her Methodist mother, Evans was brought up to believe in God and in herself. Her novels reveal not only knowledge of the Bible and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but also a wide range of classical and contemporary works. Her readings in theology and philosophy created troublesome doubts for her for a time. She incorporates these questionings of faith in several of her novels, always concluding with a reaffirmation of Christian Protestant orthodoxy.

Augusta Jane Evans achieved fame and wealth with her first major novel, *Beulah*, in 1859. The book had extensive sales, making Evans almost immediately the South's leading woman of letters. The protagonist is a devout young woman, an orphan, who is determined to think for herself at the risk of alienating those she loves and others in society. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese states that in *Beulah*, "Evans...boldly and unapologetically locates the principal moral and intellectual struggles of her day in the mind of a woman." Despite this innovation, the book became a best-seller and generally was widely praised by the critics. One New York editor, James Reed Spaulding, was so impressed by *Beulah* that he came to call upon the author and fell in love with her. They became engaged to be married, but differences over the question of secession caused Evans to end the relationship in 1860.

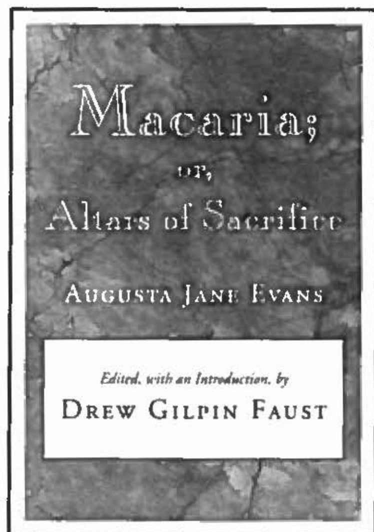


In the novel, Beulah Benton is a conventional sentimental heroine–motherless, poor and deserving, faced with the disdain or indifference of society who might be more impressed with her if at least she were pretty. Her skills at child tending and nursing are recognized but poorly recompensed. The dour doctor, Dr. Guy Hartwell, who is attracted to her and becomes her guardian, carries a secret sorrow which distorts his personality into one of irascibility. He believes his only interest in Beulah is that of compassion. She and the doctor are both intense, intellectual, and exceedingly proud. Their clashes of will over many issues, but chiefly her ambition to control her own life, lead Beulah to leave his house and his protection and to become a teacher and writer. After a six year separation during which Dr. Hartwell has traveled abroad to China and India, the two meet again. She has prayed all these years that Hartwell will lose his disbelief in anything spiritual. No change is discernible. She also has earnestly prayed for his return from wherever he is. In a rather sudden capitulation, Beulah tells Hartwell she will give up "the tyrant Ambition." She says, "Well, if I am to have a tyrant, I believe I prefer belonging to you." Later, more softly, she says, "Because you are my all." A long passage at the end of the novel indicates that Beulah has not given over the life of the mind, but whatever she does will be driven by faith and love and not ambition.

Augusta Jane Evans went to Montgomery to celebrate Alabama's vote on secession, and throughout the war supported the Confederacy in myriad ways. She wrote unsigned newspaper articles to encourage enlistment and civilian activities; she helped to establish a soldiers' hospital in Mobile; she nursed the wounded; she wrote letters to influence military and public policy; and she did numerous "womanly" things such as sewing. Following the war, she worked to have monuments erected to the Lost Cause.

Her wartime novel, *Macaria* (1864), was a best-seller in the South. After being pirated and reprinted in New York, the book was banned for his troops by a Yankee general. The novel is dedicated to the Army of the Southern Confederacy by the author, who says

of herself, "although debarred from the dangers and deathless glory of the 'tented field,' would fain offer a woman's inadequate tribute to the noble patriotism and sublime self-abnegation of her dear and devoted countrymen."



Macaria, says Drew Gilpin Faust, "stands at the point of...two cultural imperatives–the needs of an embattled new nation and the agenda of the literary woman." Evans, as a highly successful writer and an avid Confederate, the editor states, "embraced the opportunities for both service and sacrifice that the war offered." This war was different, Faust says, "Often designated as the first 'modern,' or total war because of the involvement of entire populations, the Civil War required an unprecedented level of female participation." The changed social and cultural realities, such as the empowerment of women, are reflected in *Macaria* in the lives of Irene Huntingdon and Electra Grey as well as in other women characters. Faust points out that civilian support services, military nursing, munitions manufacturing, teaching, slave management, government office posts, and even agriculture became acceptable women's work during war time. The title of the novel comes from the mythical Macaria who saved Athens from invasion by giving herself as a sacrifice on the altar of the gods. Evans pictures women of the South as willing martyrs to the cause of the Confederacy.

Two of the Confederate heroines in wartime service, Irene Huntingdon and Electra Grey serve as foils to each other. Irene is rational and intellectual and "ambitious of martyrdom." Courted by Hugh, a cousin her father wishes her to marry, Irene actually loves Russell Aubrey. Her father threatens to disinherit her, and she is faced with going against his will while also being unable to declare her love to Aubrey until the time he marches off to battle and to death. Like Irene, Electra Grey is also motherless. Electra is artistic, but also demonstrates bravery as she carries dispatches through the northern blockade. The obstacles that Irene and Electra face in seeking personal happiness are many, but both are convinced that a loveless marriage is worse than remaining spinsters. Faust notes,

"Both women speak of themselves in the language of bourgeois individualism, stressing their rights of self-ownership and self-determination." The need to be useful is stated by Irene and Electra. They view the fashionable life as meaningless. But the aesthetic life is valued, and painting is seen as divine service in the school for women artists in the book.

Macaria ends with a celebration of single blessedness (the word *macaria* means blessed in Greek). The potential for service and achievement is greater for those who are unwedded, Evans writes. In fact, a woman who lives alone is "braver, and nobler, and better" than one who consents to a loveless marriage. From the time of *Inez, A Tale of the Alamo*, Evans had stressed the idea of women's identities and independence, along with Southern values and religious themes, which are all to be found in *Macaria*. Evans also had persistently stated that women should be involved in public leadership (although she was opposed to universal suffrage) and should receive salaries commensurate to the work they did. But some readers and reviewers objected to *Macaria* at first. It was too radical. The ordinary lives and love stories they expected to find in a novel were subverted by attitudes with which they did not agree. Irene seemed, to some, to be a dangerous example of women's independence. Faust details the angry response to *Macaria* by readers who felt Evans had created an androgynous heroine. The editor cites many examples of critical comments and provides good background information on this situation.

After the war, Evans hoped to write the definitive history of the South in the War Between the States, not just a woman's story, but she gave it up in deference to Alexander Stephens (former vice-president of the Confederacy) who also planned to write such a history. In 1867, Evans published *St. Elmo*, one of the most popular novels of the nineteenth century, again on a Christian theme and with an orphan as protagonist. The novel moves back to a conventional ending of wedded bliss, as the culmination of the struggle of Edna Earle to save the rake St. Elmo by the healing power of Christian love. With this novel, Faust says, "The war, *Macaria*, and single-blessedness were over."

The author's own single-blessedness ended in the following year (1868) when she married Lorenzo Madison Wilson, a wealthy banker and railway owner. Evans was thirty-three years old when she and the sixty year old widower were wed, and his youngest daughter was still living at home. Their home was Ashland, Wilson's estate, and they were very much a part of the community. Evans continued to

publish; *Vashti* (1869), *Infelice* (1875), *At the Mercy of Tiberius* (1887), *A Speckled Bird* (1902), and *Devota* (1907). She died March 9, 1909.

Beulah and *Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice* are both sentimental novels of the nineteenth century, which in itself tells the reader to expect an abundance of pathos and tears. Indeed, both works are marked by a considerable number of descriptions of writhing lips, swooning and trembling maidens, and men with blood leaving their lips in emotional moments. Evans goes beyond this sort of cliché presentation. She is concerned with the inner lives of her characters, and the psychological insights in the books are often quite sound. Her characters are at times original–but real–in their ability to irritate. She is unexpectedly erudite (maybe excessively so), but she also is in touch with her own world and makes it more available to us.

The reprints of these novels by Augusta Jane Evans include a note on the author by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese in *Beulah* and by Drew Gilpin Faust in *Macaria*. In addition each editor has written a detailed, well-researched introduction which adds immeasurably to the reader's enjoyment. Not only scholars in Southern literature and history, but also general readers, should find these works of interest.

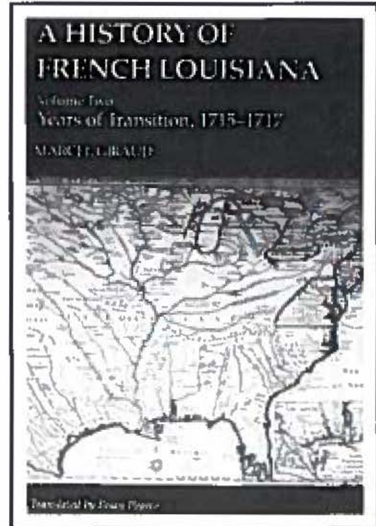
Dorothy Brown Loyola University

Marcel Giraud. *A History of French Louisiana*, Vol. 2. *Years of Transition, 1715-1717*. Translated by Brian Pearce. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993, *xiv*, pp. 213. $30.00. ISBN 0-8071-0058-7

Originally published in 1958 as *Histoire de la Louisiane française, Tome Second: Années de transition* (1715-1717) this work is part of French historian Marcel Giraud's five volume study produced during a half-century of active scholarship chronicling French colonial Louisiana. The appearance of a new translated edition marks completion of the third volume from this series recently reissued nonsequentially by Louisiana State University Press. Already two decades in the making since Joseph C. Lambert began the process by translating Vol. 1, *The Reign of Louis XIV, 1698-1715* (1974), the English language editions of Giraud's works have greatly aided scholars of Louisiana history. Despite an unfortunate lag in publication time, the Giraud project now appears on a faster pace as this most recent work represents the second volume of the series

translated by Brian Pearce, who had previously produced Vol. 5, *The Company of the Indies, 1723-1731* (1991).

In 1715 the French colony of Louisiana was a struggling enterprise consisting of a few hundred soldiers and settlers concentrated at Mobile and Dauphin Island. During the garrison phase, the coastal Louisiana colony maintained tenuous connections with better established interior French settlements in the Great Lakes region and Canada through a string of intermittent trading outposts formed along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. By 1717, few physical changes in the colony's appearance could characterize "years of transition," but reorganization is apparent through investigating the fundamental colonial policy initiatives implemented by the French government during the early eighteenth century. Giraud's study is, therefore, an insightful analysis of the outlook, expectations, and subsequent changes in French colonial policy toward Louisiana, "a colony...on the eve of innovations," implemented in the early stages of the *Ancien Régime*.



The death of Louis XIV in 1715 marks the end of an era in European history as the continent's longest-reigning monarch, the ruler who perfected the art of royal absolutism, left the governing of France to his five-year-old grandson, Louis XV. The Duke of Orleans, Louis XIV's nephew, assumed the regency despite the former king's wishes that Orleans share the role with his illegitimate son, the Duke of Maine. Orleans reorganized the government creating a structure of seven councils: Commerce, Finance, War, Navy, Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Religion, that functioned somewhat independently in spite of overlapping jurisdictions, but answered to the Regent and the Council of Regency. Under the new administrative design, all matters regarding colonial policy were delegated to the Council of the Navy and influenced by the views of its leading member, the comte de Toulouse, a man noted for "a methodical mind and a concern for well-ordered management."

The Louisiana colony had suffered greatly due to neglect during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), and in an effort

aimed at both resupplying the colony and relieving the crown of a burdensome obligation, an interesting solution had been developed in 1712. The French government had signed a fifteen year lease giving the merchant Antoine Crozat exclusive trading rights in the Louisiana colony. Under the proprietary arrangement, the French government remained obligated to provide soldiers, to maintain forts, and to provide for the security of the colony, while Crozat's responsibilities included all matter of civil government and economic development.

Although such a dual system of authority was difficult to administer even during the reign of Louis XIV, it became a regulatory and logistical nightmare when implemented under the rubric of the Duke of Orleans' seven councils. Crozat, who had a penchant for making a substantial profit in his business dealings, found it almost impossible to make a satisfactory return from his investment in the Louisiana colony under the new administrative structure. In August 1717, the proprietor surrendered his exclusive trading rights to the French government saying that the colony had advanced under his direction and that the colony was ready for a "great establishment." Eventually the French government would turn to the Scottish entrepreneur John Law and his Company of the West to succeed where Crozat had failed.

Giraud's work relies almost entirely upon primary sources for its documentation, and the text is packed with extensive footnotes. The author includes a three page bibliography citing record groups consulted at several sites including: the Archives des Colonies, Archives de la Marine, Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Public Record Office in London. Giraud's study is fluidly written and is filled with detail. Yet, the quality of the writing has not suffered in translation. When the quality of this scholarship is compared to the traditional canon of colonial history offered by Louisiana's nineteenth-century patrician writers such as François-Xavier Martin and Charles Gayarré, or even the later work of Alcée Fortier, Giraud's work sets new standards of excellence. Louisiana State University Press should be commended for its publication of the Giraud translation series and should be encouraged to issue translations of the two remaining volumes. Giraud's series offers an invaluable source to both students and scholars who seek to investigate the era of colonial Louisiana history. It constitutes the most detailed, most accurate, and best written study extant–certainly it is destined to be the standard reference for this period.

Junius P. Rodriguez Eureka College

Philip H. Gosse. *Letters from Alabama, (U.S.) Chiefly Relating to Natural History.* Introduction by Harvey H. Jackson III. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993, pp. 324. $18.95. ISBN 0-8173-0683-3

The British naturalist Philip H. Gosse (1810-1880) was one of many foreign travelers who visited the antebellum South and published his observations. Unlike most, however, he remained long enough to become familiar with the region and its people. His *Letters from Alabama* has retained an enduring appeal and is still meaningful to those who wish to recapture the flavor of a bygone era.

Although little-known in this country, Gosse was one of the leading natural scientists of his times. He is best known as a marine biologist and as the author of over thirty volumes and numerous scientific papers which were published in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society. He was apparently self-taught as a scientist. He recalled that in 1832 he began a decisive devotion to scientific history, which changed the course of his life.

Gosse came south because he had heard that there was a demand for educated people in the region. He secured employment as a schoolmaster at Pleasant Hill, Dallas County, Alabama, as a result of a chance meeting with Judge Reuben Saffold who engaged him, on behalf of several influential planters, to teach their children.

Although pleased by the liberal salary he would receive, he soon discovered that his school was a single-room, log structure, primitively furnished, which stood on a clearing in the woods. His students, "twelve bright ideas," knew little that cultivated society considered worth knowing, but they were well trained in the sights and sounds of the wilderness. They were more skilled with the long rifle than the goose quill.

Surrounded by a flora and fauna that was novel to him, he devoted his time after school to observing, collecting, and sketching

the wonders of his new environment. He was awed by what he perceived as a natural chain of being and decided to record his discoveries in a series of letters. Addressing them to no one in particular, he made no attempt to present a continuous narrative of his woodland rambles. Rather, he chose to give his readers brief and disjointed "peeps through nature's keyhole at her recondite mysteries." His interests encompassed everything in nature, which he scrutinized with the trained eye of the scientist and the sensitivity of an artist. As verified by modern annotations, his identifications of the various species were remarkably accurate. Some of his descriptions were quite poetic: the mocking bird was called the "leader of the American orchestra"; the cry of the ivory-billed woodpecker sounded like the "clang of a trumpet." He was elated to discover the black emperor swallowtail, the largest living butterfly he had ever seen, and to observe the architectural skill of the dirt dauber.

Even though much of Gosse's book is devoted to natural history, he did not neglect to describe the "habits and manners of animals belonging to the genus Homo." Apparently from the outset, he recognized that Southerners and Yankees were breeds apart. Eager to join into the rituals and routines of the natives, he confided his true opinions in his letters. For instance, he could never cultivate a taste for hominy and sour milk; he found houses rough and destitute of comforts compared to English dwellings; and many of the local idioms sounded strange to his ears. Alabamians, he discovered, had a passion for hunting and greatly prized their guns. They were an independent lot, and "every man [was] his own lawmaker and lawbreaker, judge, jury, and executioner."

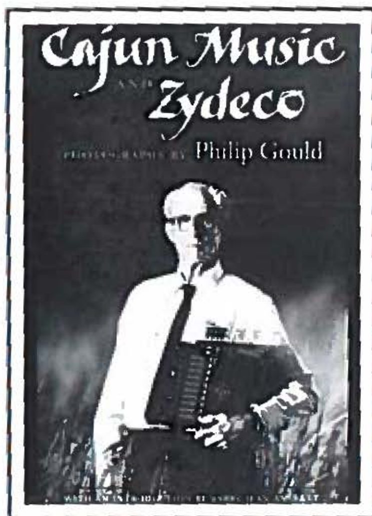
The darkest side of the southerners' character was revealed in their quarrelsome nature and recklessness with human life, which was particularly evident in master-slave relationships. He was appalled by the horrors inflicted on the slaves, especially the floggings that were commonly applied during the cotton-picking season. Prophetically, he predicted that slavery would burst the weight that bound it and would bring a fearful retribution. For Gosse, a graver concern was the fate of the slaves. What would happen if two million slaves, smarting under accumulated wrongs, were suddenly freed? Slavery's end could hardly be other than a terrible convulsion. He decided that in spite of the beauty of the country, lucrative remuneration, and the opportunity to pursue natural history, "I feel slavery alone to be so enormous and evil that I could not live here."

Much has changed in Dallas County, Alabama since Gosse's visit, but much remains the same. Cotton is no longer king, but

agriculture is still the main livelihood. The summers are just as hot, and even though the environment has been altered, most of the plants and animals that he studied are still extant. It is quite probable that the descendants of many of the planters and slaves that Gosse knew still occupy the land. Historians and biologists, especially, should be grateful to the twenty-eight-old naturalist who preserved for posterity that which was commonplace, beautiful, and ugly in antebellum Alabama. By reprinting this old standard, the University of Alabama Press had proved that it knows a true classic when it rediscovers one.

R. Frank Saunders — Georgia Southern University

Philip Gould. *Cajun Music and Zydeco: Photographs.* Introduction by Barry Jean Ancelet. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992, pp. 120. Book, $39.95. ISBN 0-8071-1769-2 / CD Rom, $49.95. ISBN 0-8071-1818-4



There have been several pivotal events in the history of Cajun music and zydeco: the first Cajun and black Creole recordings in the late 1920s, Clifton Chenier's transformation of the *juré* form of music (French shouts backed up by improvised percussive effects) into a full-fledged dance style called zydeco, and Dewey Balfa's appearance at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival (the first time Cajun music was acclaimed by a live heterogeneous audience outside Louisiana).

Philip Gould arrived in New Iberia in 1974 as a twenty-two-year-old photojournalism graduate from San Jose, California. Within two weeks he was assigned to cover the first Tribute to Cajun Music, held at the University of Southwestern Louisiana's Blackham Coliseum in Lafayette on March 26 of that year. This is where Gould met Barry Ancelet, one of the main organizers of the event. The Tribute became the watershed which brought about a renaissance of cultural pride in Cajun music and zydeco in Louisiana.

Barry Ancelet's introduction to *Cajun Music and Zydeco* is a fascinating reminiscence of the first Tribute to Cajun Music and its impact. The remainder of the book consists of over one hundred color photographs in oversized format which, in Gould's own words, strive to "provide readers with a visual sense of Cajun and zydeco's musical energy." Ancelet traces briefly the evolution of Cajun and zydeco as cultural hybrids. He also comments on the government's misguided effort to suppress the French language in the schools, the compromising and 'countrified' period when English lyrics dominated and accordions became passé, the inevitable shame associated with being cajun and, finally, the regenerated pride in the culture as embodied mostly in the music. The author even refers to the fact that Cajun pride has become overly trite due to what he calls a "budding cultural-tourism-based economy."

Ancelet starts out by discussing his own personal odyssey of coming to terms with his culture and becoming a folklorist. Much of the text is devoted to his role in organizing the first Tribute to Cajun Music. Local people customarily went to Cajun and zydeco dance halls but actual concerts of 'chanky-chank' music were non-existent. The event was, therefore, a first of its kind and ended up taking place during a storm. Yet, twelve thousand people showed up. The event turned into a mass rally, and the music became a powerful medium as a listening experience for the first time. The only bad omen was that all of the musicians except one were fifty years old or over.

The Tribute (which has since become known as the Festival de Musique Acadienne) was, nonetheless, the impetus that gave inspiration to a whole new generation. Within a few years the Tribute featured such younger musicians as Zachary Richard, Michael Doucet, and Bruce Daigrepont. These young artists played to a new audience and weren't hesitant to travel out of state and out of country where there was interest. At the 1978 Tribute eight of the twenty-two groups featured were made up of members who were all under thirty. Ancelet ends by tracing the parallel development of Cajun and zydeco and explains how both forms of music are related, yet distinct. He also shows that the continued vitality of the music is assured through various family zydeco bands.

Most of *Cajun Music and Zydeco* consists, of course, of Philip Gould's splendid photographs. Gould is not the first photographer to devote himself to Cajun folkways. Some of the more notable books of Cajun photographs have been by Myron Tassin, Elemore Morgan, Jr. (whose father was also a respected Louisiana photographer), and

Johnnie Allen. Gould, himself, has published two previous collections. Some of the photos in his new collection depict the dignity of Cajun musicians, such as fiddler/fiddle maker Lionel Leleux demonstrating his craftsmanship, and Felix Richard standing in a field with his accordion (the cover photo of the book). Gould also includes photos of musicians in their moments of glory such as the Ardoin Family at Carnegie Hall. Some of the images depict the stages and dance floors of small clubs.

Cajun Music and Zydeco also includes some stunning outdoor scenes such as a large group of people dancing outdoors with a storm on the horizon, Mardi Gras celebrations, and Boozoo Chavis riding in the zydeco trail ride. Even a few shots of signs are quite telling, especially the one of a professional poster announcing a zydeco music festival next to a home-made sign listing "Snapp Bean For Sale." The Cajun music continuum is demonstrated serendipitously when Gould photographed a young boy leaning against the stage entranced by a performance, only to reveal later that he was the young Steve Riley. That photograph is juxtaposed with a more recent photo of another young boy paying similar attention to an adult Steve Riley performing and, finally, a third photo of Riley himself in concert.

There have been other books which give a much more comprehensive overview of Cajun culture (including Ancelet's own Cajun Country). However, Ancelet's introduction offers insight into areas which have never been documented. Furthermore, Ancelet's writing is clear and eloquent. As for Gould's photographs, which make up the bulk of the book, they are marvelous.

Cajun Music and Zydeco comes with a companion CD which is also available separately (Rounder CD 11572). The cover design is one of the book's photos, an eerie ghost-like image of Michael Doucet playing the fiddle against what appears to be a bayou twilight. The CD is a fine sampler of some of the artists featured in the book. There won't be any great discoveries for long-time fans but a good variety of music is offered. The book gives equal attention to Cajun and Creole musicians and, similarly, selections on the CD alternate between Cajun and zydeco in equal measure. There are also ten pages of extensive liner notes on the artists by Ancelet.

Paul-Emile Comeau Saulnierville, Nova Scotia, Canada

Joy J. Jackson. *Where the River Runs Deep: The Story of a Mississippi River Pilot.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993, *xiv,* pp. 273. $29.95. ISBN 0-8071-1797-8

There is a relationship between the South and its streams that deserves more attention than historians have given it. One reason for this general neglect is that at the heart of the subject is a connection between individuals and rivers so personal that it is difficult for outsiders to understand it and for those close to it to bring much objectivity to the process. To tell the whole story, historians would need access to sources that transcend government reports of water flow, barge traffic, gross tonnage, and the cost of river "improvements." To reach these resources, one has to get out of the archives and over to the river. Joy J. Jackson (no relation to this reviewer) has done this, and the result is an entertaining and interesting study of the Mississippi River and some of its people.

Joy Jackson had an advantage not available to most scholars. She is part of a river family, and the story she writes is family history. That observation is usually enough to turn off those "academic" historians who usually think of family history in terms of locally published, amateur accounts of ancestors who lived clean, worked hard, cooked great meals, and raised respectable children. *Where the River Runs Deep,* however, is family history in the broad, professional sense, and the Louisiana State University Press imprint gives it a respectability that should cause an often stuffy profession to take note. This is good history, family or not, and we should have more like it.

Where the River Runs Deep is the story of Oliver Daniel Jackson, the author's father, who lived and worked on or near the Mississippi River for most of his life. He was not the captain of one of those "floating palaces" that plied the river during steamboat days. That era ended in the early 1930s. He was a New Orleans-Baton Rouge pilot, one of a fraternity of rivermen who guided vessels upriver from the Crescent City. From 1939 until his retirement in

1964, he witnessed first hand, and in many cases was part of the changes that occurred on the lower Mississippi.

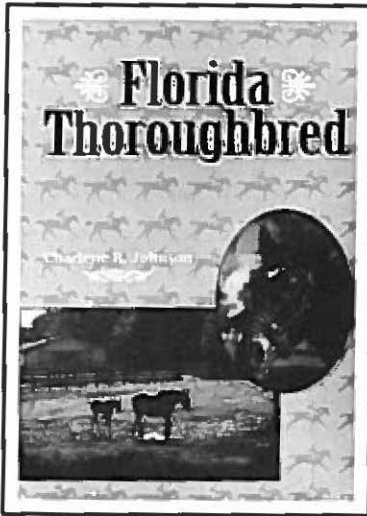
Ms. Jackson's tale begins with life in and around New Orleans before the First World War, when Oliver Jackson grew to young manhood and formed his bond with the Mississippi. It was during this time that he began to learn what it was to be a pilot. After a brief stint as a merchant-seaman, he returned to New Orleans to marry and to settle down–if one could call life on the river settling down. He and his family weathered the Great Depression, while he perfected his skills. Then, as job opportunities came his way, Jackson rose steadily through the ranks of rivermen. This is the heart of the story. And with Oliver Jackson as the guide, readers are introduced to the dangers and delights of life on and near the Mississippi.

Jackson's own accounts and observations, recorded before the Captain died in 1985, enliven the book and give it the personal flavor that is the hallmark of good family history. Careful research in government and company records give Ms. Jackson's work a sound scholarly foundation that makes it valuable to scholars as well as readable. This is a difficult balance to strike, and the author is to be congratulated for accomplishing it.

Where the River Runs Deep is also a book about what happened to life and commerce on the Lower Mississippi River in the last half century–changes which have also occurred, to varying degrees, on other streams. Increased commerce, especially during World War II, meant increased rules and regulations, and this in turn led to more demands on the men who guided the boats. Oliver Jackson's work in organizing the New Orleans-Baton Rouge Steamship Pilots Association is only part of the story, for as the river changed, so did rivermen. This was also the era of rapid industrial growth along the stream, and this growth brought a host of problems with it. All of these topics are covered well by this fine book. The author and her family have every reason to be proud of what she has accomplished.

Harvey H. Jackson III Jacksonville State University

Charlene R. Johnson. *Florida Thoroughbred.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993, *xx*, pp. 367. $39.95. ISBN 0-8130-1198-1



As thoroughly as a race horse owner breeds and trains his thoroughbreds, Charlene R. Johnson, a prize-winning turf writer and editor, has painstakingly researched (in her well-documented book, *Florida Thoroughbred*) the history of horse-racing and the thoroughbred industry in the Sunshine State of Florida.

Not only does Johnson describe the training and feats of the big name animals such as Needles, Carry Back, and Affirmed, but the author also identifies the important fellows in the business, men such as Carl Rose, Dan Chappell, Joseph and Peter Arrell, and Brown Widener. She dutifully traces development of the great tracks such as Hialeah, Tropical Park, and Calder, and tells about some of the squabbles among them over racing dates.

Johnson gets off to a fast track by quoting at the front of the volume this comment by veteran trainer Ben Jones: "Florida's climate is good for man and beast." The Florida State Chamber of Commerce couldn't create a more glowing truism.

Many Floridians realize that thoroughbred breeding is a substantial part of the state's economy. But even old timers may be surprised to learn just how big the business is. Johnson notes that today the thoroughbred industry ranks third in terms of revenue among major businesses (tourism is first, followed by citrus). And yet, when Florida was first suggested as a site for raising the horses, scoffers sniffed that the animals couldn't survive the heat and swampland. "Stick to raising alligators," the skeptics warned.

The secret of success is in the massive limestone deposits running down the spine of the peninsula. John C. Weber, president of the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, observed that "only in Kentucky, Ireland and Florida do such widespread limestone areas exist." The deposits, Weber said, are "the reason for the calcium richness of grass and water that make up Marion County (Ocala is the county seat)," adding, "This ridge provides the essence

of growing healthy bones and cartilage, which make such areas so perfect for growing livestock."

Johnson is a skillful and accomplished historian. She records that Columbus brought twelve mares and two horses to Haiti in 1494 "for the purpose of recreating stock." In 1539 when Hernando DeSoto landed at Tampa Bay, he brought citrus seed, 1,000 men and 225 horses of royal blood. Perhaps, it was naturalist William Bartram who discovered the magic potential of Central Florida for raising horses when he described the area north of Ocala as covered with "squadrons of beautiful, fleet Seminole horses on the Great Alachua Savannah." Johnson reports that in 1990, "there were nearly 600 thoroughbred farms in Florida, about 500 of them in Marion County....There are approximately 300,000 horses in Florida....In Marion County alone, the thoroughbred industry is responsible for over 21,000 jobs and a payroll of almost $150,000,000...." And yet, every successful enterprise may have an unwanted and seamy side to it. The big stink in the racing industry comes not from the manure shed by the horses, but from the gambling that thrives around it.

Johnson points out that "in 1911, the Florida Legislature ruled that gambling was a nuisance and passed a law against betting by a vote of 28-0. Governors ignored the gambling problem for years, but on March 9, 1927, the State Supreme Court upheld that gambling was illegal." In 1929, Dan Chappell and friend, Claude Pepper, both members of the Florida House of Representatives, proposed a bill to legalize pari-mutuel wagering and, according to Johnson, faced determined opponents in Cuban lobbyists and Southern Baptists. The bill failed in 1929 but was passed in 1931. Governor Doyle E. Carlton ("most definitely a Baptist") promptly vetoed the measure. At the height of the battle, a clergyman in Daytona Beach delivered a prayer: " 'Tain't right to 'tain't education by using gambling money to educate our children," to which Senator Hayes Lewis of West Florida responded: "The only thing wrong with this gambling bill is that it 'tain't enough!"

The Legislature overrode the Governor's veto by a single switched vote, ignoring Carlton's plea that "it is unsound and unwise from an economic, political or moral standpoint to commit the State to a partnership in legalized gambling in any form." Carlton continued: "If we start with the pari-mutuel, where shall we stop?"

The result has been a massive gaming industry associated with horse racing which some Floridians have viewed as "a temporary expedient permitted by public officers in a spirit of liberality...." Despite the power and beauty of the horses, and the dedication of

trainers and riders, which Johnson has carefully described, gambling has led some observers to conclude that "the racetrack has proven a doubtful if not a dangerous experience."

Hampton Dunn — Tampa, Florida

Harry Knopke. *Silent in the Land.* Photography by Chip Cooper. Introduction and architectural notes by Robert Gamble. Tuscaloosa: CKM Press, 1993, pp. 192. $45.00. ISBN 0-9636713-0-8

Silent in the Land examines Alabama's endangered historic houses from three perspectives; that of a photographer, an English professor, and an architectural historian. This tripartite approach to buildings "as art, as human story, as building history," is appealing. Unfortunately, *Silent in the Land* does not succeed in this approach. It attempts to do too much and, though obviously a labor of love, it has significant shortcomings.

The photographer's perspective dominates the book. *Silent in the Land* is visually stunning. Chip Cooper is an accomplished craftsman whose work has appeared in an earlier volume entitled *Alabama Memories* and regularly in *Alabama Heritage Magazine*. There are over one hundred and fifty color photographs representing sixty historic houses in *Silent in the Land.* Cooper's images include decaying dependencies, abandoned "big houses," gates entwined with flowers as well as architectural details. His use of light is masterful. "Gnarled oak framing house," "back-lit gate," and "cross gable at sunset" are among the most breathtaking photographs in the volume. Cooper tells us the title of this work was inspired as he stood before a house "late one afternoon in the slanting light of winter...*Silent in the Land* came to me all of a sudden, an emotional response to the desolate beauty of the building." That Cooper can make the reader feel him or herself in that cold twilight with him represents considerable artistic power. The

photographs of *Silent in the Land* set a high standard for the other two collaborators.

Architectural historian Robert Gamble sketches the development of Alabama's historic houses in his introduction. He emphasizes the informal, vernacular nature of many Alabama residences, "where appearance was less informed by current fashion than by the inertia of tradition and deep-rooted folk habit, mingled with necessary responses to climate and geography." Gamble sounds an alarm for the fate of these houses which are vanishing from our landscape as economies and lifestyles change. He calls for "conscious, vigorous, and concerted" action to save them. The resolve to do this, he maintains, will be based "not only on an informed understanding, but on a commitment born out of love."

Gamble is an accomplished stylist and his introduction sets an appropriate tone for the volume. His architectural notes at the end of the volume are quite technical, and here *Silent in the Land* suffers from its overly-ambitious approach. While the architectural notes are fine in themselves, combined with the photographs, introduction and essays, they contribute to a loss of focus and fragmentation of effort.

The body of *Silent in the Land* consists of brief essays (accompanied by the photographs) by University of Alabama English professor Harry Knopke. These essays are loosely based on interviews with the current residents of the houses. They are interesting in that they document how these houses have fared in modern times and are introduced to many people whose lives would no doubt be compelling if more fully treated. Again, the book suffers from trying to do too much. In addition, Knopke's writing is nowhere near the literary level required by the photographs. Few coffee table books are distinguished by their text, and sadly neither is *Silent in the Land*.

Silent in the Land is an important effort. Unfortunately, the three contributions do not mesh smoothly. If judged by its photographs, as it probably will be, *Silent in the Land* will foster an appreciation for Alabama's historic houses. The text is forgettable, however, and though the book makes a marvelous first impression, it ultimately disappoints.

John S. Sledge Mobile Historic Development Commission

Ann Patton Malone. *Sweet Chariot: Slave Family and Household Structure in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,1992, *xiv*, pp. 369. $39.95. ISBN 0-8078-2026-1

The organizing principle of Ann Patton Malone's study of the slave family in nineteenth-century Louisiana is also a timely reminder that a great deal remains to be learned about the African-American family. As contemporary news media describes a collapse of family values in inner city neighborhoods–a collapse that is usually attributed in substantial measure to the widespread absence of black men in the rearing of African-American children, Malone reminds us that the family is a human construct that changes in response to specific stresses, challenges, and opportunities. The shape of the family is varied and variable. Nevertheless, its basic values derive from a common human need for security and a struggle for survival. But family (especially the enslaved African-American family) has also been the subject of intense moral debates involving sexuality, marriage, childbearing, and gender roles. A great strength of Malone's work is her ability to confront these moral issues as they have influenced historical assessments of the African-American family at the same time that she develops an analysis of family that is free of them.

The history of the family is part of a history of long duration: significant changes in family structure occur very slowly over long periods of time. The family functions as a conservative social force, shielding its members from forces over which they have little or no control. Malone finds that the basic structure of the Louisiana slave family changed very little in the first half of the nineteenth century. Most slaves at all times lived in "simple" nuclear families with children and two parents. What changed over time as the African-American population grew in the early nineteenth century and as slave society matured, was the relative number of "solitaires" (families composed of a single individual), "truncated" or single-parent nuclear families, and "complex" or multiple family groups. In the entire period of Malone's

study, from 1810 to 1864, three-fourths of her sample lived in simple families. Over eighteen percent were solitaires during this period but only six percent lived in multiple families. At the same time, Malone reports that "slightly fewer than half of the sampled Louisiana slaves of all ages in the period 1810-1864 were members of two-parent nuclear families, as parents or children."

This finding carries Malone to the center of an historiographical debate that has been directly influenced by the moral concerns associated with family life. Malone notes that historians in the past two decades, eager to correct the earlier view that "normal" family life had been denied slaves, over-emphasized the presence of two-parent nuclear families by focusing on the simple nuclear family to the exclusion of other family forms, especially the solitaires. When all family structures are included the percentage of two-parent nuclear families drops.

The significance of the female-headed, single-parent, nuclear family is unavoidable in Malone's study. But Malone's evidence does not serve to revive the now discredited notion of a matriarchal slave family. Although female-headed, single-parent, nuclear families were common in the early part of the nineteenth century (approaching or even exceeding the number of two-parent households) they steadily declined, as a region that had recently been brought into agricultural production, matured. At the same time, Malone discounts the idea that any significant number of husbands and fathers worked on neighboring plantations. On plantations where such relationships were explicitly forbidden, the number of female-headed, single-parent families occurred with the same regularity as they did on plantations without such a rule. Indeed, Malone concludes that it was the prominence of female-headed, single-parent families that gave rise to the myth of matriarchy. Observers had remembered the presence "on most plantations of a large number of independent, strong, self-sufficient-appearing women who had headed their own households. Some of them did so for their entire adult lives, apparently by choice." With other recent studies, Malone finds far less choice in these matters on smaller farms than on larger plantations. Small slaveholders (with fewer than twenty slaves) had proportionally larger numbers of female-headed, single-parent families and more male solitaires. Along with the notion of slave family matriarchy, the idea that slave family life was more stable on smaller agricultural units than on larger ones, fades from view as careful examinations of enslaved populations, like Malone's, appear.

Malone argues effectively for an analytical language appropriate to the subject of the African-American family, a language independent of the moral issues that have so long clouded the subject. Such a language should stress development over time, Malone argues, and recognize that a variety of social and economic events intervened (the removal through sale, rent, or western settlement of enslaved males represents a dramatic example) to alter the two-parent, nuclear family and to increase the number of female-headed, single-parent families and male solitaires. As frontier regions matured, the female-headed, single-parent family receded, as did the number of solitaires. But both forms of family organization, together with the multiple family, remained significant features of African-American family life. Malone concludes that a tendency to overemphasize the number of slaves in two-parent families obscures the strength of the slave community. The real strength of the slave community was its multiplicity of forms, its tolerance for variety of families and households, its adaptability, and its acceptance of all types of families and households as functional and contributing.

Louis S. Gerteis University of Missouri, St. Louis

William R. Mitchell, Jr. *Classic New Orleans*. Photographs by James R. Lockhart. New Orleans and Savannah: Martin-St. Martin Publishing Co., distributed by the University of Georgia Press, 1993, pp. 240. $50.00. ISBN 0-8203-1576-1

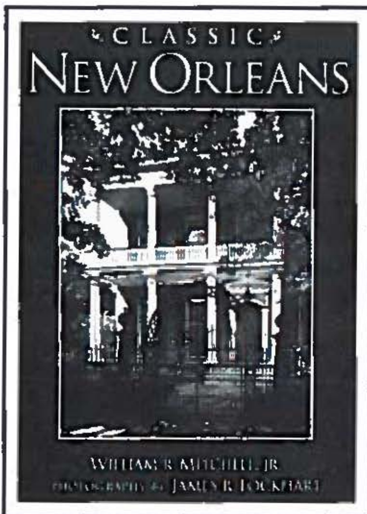
With the addition of the word "residences" to the title, the contents of this book might be better conveyed. A sub-title, if it had one, could be "An Appreciation" or "An Enticement," for its stated purpose is "to portray the essence of New Orleans and proclaim the paramount importance of its preservation." Its epilogue calls it a book "for the true aficionado-resident and for a visitor-tourist who might be persuaded to join in the fun fray of the magic eccentricities" of New Orleans.

The main feature of the book is the group of 219 new color photographs of seventy-one homes. The photos of the exteriors are somewhat documentary in style without losing warmth. The interior shots depict some architectural detail, such as ceiling medallions, staircases, fireplace mantels, and the like, but seldom in close up. For it seems that the intent of the interior photos was to present the ambiance of the rooms and the lifestyles possible in these homes.

Thus, many interior photos will appeal more to the interior decorator–amateur or professional–than to students of architecture, although the latter would concede that many architects have created furniture for homes designed by them.

There is no doubt that this body of color plates achieves one goal of the book: to gain the attention of anyone contemplating the ownership or restoration of a home in New Orleans.

The choice of residences photographed for the book is a reasonable mixture of the expected and the surprising. Among the more famous are the Beauregard-Keyes House, Hermann-Grima, Lower Pontalba, Gallier, Longue Vue, Strachan, Thierry and Pitot. They are almost de rigueur in a book of this type.



The architectural period extends from 1805 to 1939, with heavy emphasis on the Greek Revival. Some other styles represented are the West Indies, Gothic, Italianate, Romanesque, and modern interpretations of earlier styles. Each house receives its own descriptive text, covering its past, its designer, if known, and its present usage. It is a strong plus for *Classic New Orleans* that those comments are not written in a gushy, Chamber of Commerce, hard-sell style, but instead in an easy, informative way.

The ambitious claim to "reflect on the history of the city" is not well met by a six page history of New Orleans of which fifty percent is occupied with photos. Reflection becomes glance.

Similarly, the descriptions of neighborhoods are a bit meager. Thirteen neighborhoods are covered in twenty-five pages of text, much of which is given over to photos, albeit in color. One could characterize these neighborhood descriptions as serviceable.

One of the most interesting features of the book is a "New Orleans Timeline," compiled by John Magill, a curator at the Historic New Orleans Collection. A forty page framework of major events in New Orleans political, cultural, and architectural history, it is profusely illustrated with engravings, maps, and photos (mostly in color) from 1682 to 1993. No other such timeline on New Orleans in previous publications comes to mind, so Magill is to be

commended for his hard work and unimpeachable selection of illustrations.

It is through this timeline and the verbal descriptions of the houses noted above that the intent of the book to "reflect on the history of the city" is a least obliquely met.

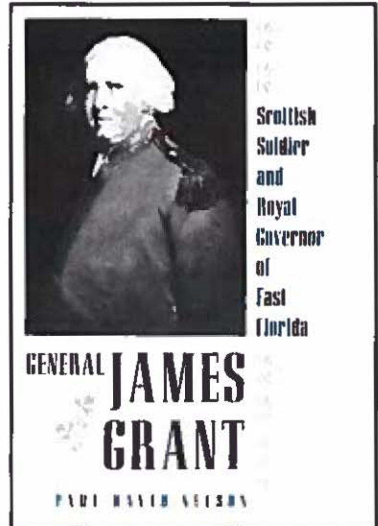
Will the working historian benefit from *Classic New Orleans*? The sources cited in the foreword by the authors are of the highest order: the files of the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, Tulane University Architecture School and libraries, and the application forms of those houses placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The books in the series on New Orleans architecture by the Friends of the Cabildo were consulted as well. The texts accompanying the photos of the houses are therefore based on the bedrock of the architectural history of New Orleans. Unfortunately, there are no footnotes to reveal the exact sources, nor is there an index, which is a handicap to the historian and many casual but informed readers. The book contains a total of only five minuscule floor plans. None are of the forty-nine homes in the main body of the book.

The production values of the book are of a high order. It is sewn-bound, almost a lost art in this age of glued spines. Heavy, enamel paper ensures the reproduction in vivid color of the photography. This also explains the relatively high price. A couple of oddities creep in: the introduction and preface are numbered in italics, but the main text begins its pagination with the next number following the italics (not a standard practice). The neighborhood description of the St. Charles Ave. District is listed in the table of contents, but there are no comments, the only district so omitted.

Classic New Orleans will not supplant the Friends of the Cabildo series. Its role seems to be a supplement to that valuable body of work. And it is in truly gorgeous color. The preface cites a quotation attributed to Gertrude Stein. Commenting on a California suburb, Stein said, "There is no there, there." *Classic New Orleans* demonstrates that New Orleans is no faceless place.

Arthur Scully New Orleans, Louisiana

Paul David Nelson, *General James Grant: Scottish Soldier and Royal Governor of East Florida.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993, pp. 207. $29.95. ISBN 0-8103-1175-2



James Grant (1703-1806) was a Scottish younger son who became a general in the eighteenth-century British army and the first governor of the colony of East Florida. Paul Nelson's carefully balanced biography of this imperial soldier discloses that he also fought at Fontenoy, served under Forbes at Fort Duquesne (where he was captured by the French), led troops in South Carolina against the Cherokees, was under siege with Gage at Boston, fought on Long Island with Howe, again at Brandywine, and, transferred to the West Indies, directed the conquest of St. Lucia. From 1763 to 1771 he held the governorship of peninsular Florida and maintained a profitable indigo plantation near St. Augustine. For many years he sat in the House of Commons, a dependable Scot who faithfully supported the ministry (and on one memorable occasion spoke vehemently in behalf of the military suppression of rebellious Americans). Throughout his long career, Grant was the quintessential Scot, happiest when surveying the beauties of the castle and estate he greatly improved in the heart of Speyside whisky country, or sitting as host at fine dinner parties in London. A competent soldier, politically useful, he fulfilled his ambition "to have a good house...a good Cook, good Dinner, good Claret and good everything."

The tale is worth telling as an example of the stories of men whose ordinary devotion to duty (and good fortune in surviving fire and pestilence) made the eighteenth-century British Empire great. The tale is nicely illustrative, and it is backed by the extensive collection of Grant's papers housed at Ballindalloch Castle. To these Paul Nelson has added the fruits of extensive research in Britain and America. The scope of his efforts is impressive. Little more need be said of James Grant from a biographical point of view, though Nelson's text runs to only 159 pages. A scholarly reader will, however, wish that Nelson had availed himself of the opportunity to

place Grant more firmly in his milieu. This is Grant's view of Grant, and while his flaws and foibles are admitted, they are not presented in sharp historical perspective.

Nelson's treatment of the governorship of East Florida will particularly interest readers of this journal, for the peninsula has a long coast on the Gulf of Mexico, and on it lies incomparable Tampa Bay, but it was from West Florida that the Gulf Coast was charted. Was Governor Grant simply unaware, comfortably ensconced as he was at St. Augustine? The governor's distaste for William DeBrahm may be understood, but a refusal to convene a provincial assembly for his "practically unpopulated" colony was of some significance, just as the terrors of the bar at St. Augustine were more important than the land schemes of any number of British gentlemen. And if Grant was the successful, well-liked figure he and Nelson portray, who were those local figures he grandly feted–"rich and well-placed persons," members of his Council, perhaps–who made it possible? According to Nelson, "balls, assemblies, and concerts" took the place of politics at St. Augustine–at least in Grant's letters home. Certainly James Grant was a less rambunctious character than Governor George Johnstone of West Florida, but Nelson might have done well to look at the situation in the other new Florida when evaluating Grant's governorship, rather than looking at older colonies to the north.

Grant's service during the American Revolution was modest. He enjoyed the helpful friendship of Howe and Cornwallis. In command in New Jersey when Washington crossed the Delaware, he belatedly warned Rall at Trenton–with fatal results. He commanded the baggage train as the British withdrew from Philadelphia and refused to support Clinton at Monmouth. Happily it made little difference to the outcome of the battle. In the West Indies he refused to disperse his forces to other threatened islands, but it was rather navies than armies that determined the course of events.

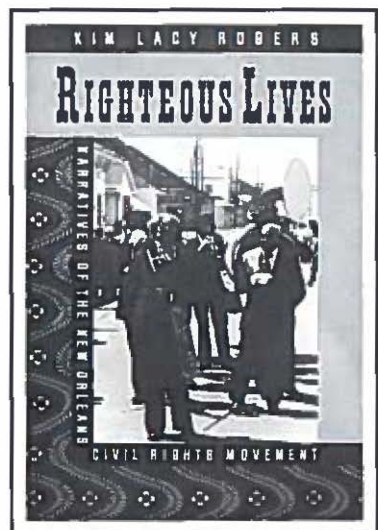
Something more might have been said about Grant in Scotland, at Westminster, and of the Scottish infiltration of British politics. All four of the new colonial governors in 1763 were Scots, but the role of the Earl of Bute in their appointments is not mentioned. It could hardly have been immaterial. James Macpherson (of Ossian fame–though that's not mentioned) is said to be the family poet. He was also an unhappy Floridian and absentee official. And in voting against the abolition of slavery, Grant certainly did not "defy" Pitt, who left members free to follow their inclinations. Grant rather followed the clear lead of his true master, Henry Dundas.

Nelson's biography of James Grant will be bracketed with Robin Fabel's study of George Johnstone. Both Scots had wide-ranging careers, sat as MPs, and each governed his Florida in his own very personal manner. Specialists will find comparison of the books interesting and will envy Nelson the rich trove of papers at Ballindalloch even as they weigh his addition to the literature of colonial Florida and imperial Britain.

Robert R. Rea Auburn University

Kim Lacy Rogers. *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1993, *xxii*, pp. 254. Cloth, $35.00. ISBN 0-8147-7431-8

In *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement*, Kim Lacy Rogers offers "a collective biography of explicitly political lives" by telling the stories of black and white civil rights activists who labored in New Orleans during the 1950s and 1960s. Rogers underscores that this book is neither a comprehensive community study, nor the definitive treatment of race relations in New Orleans. Nonetheless, it is an excellent history of the civil rights movement in this unique southern city, and will be welcomed by a wide assortment of historians and other scholars.



The author's assumption in this study is that the civil rights movement and southern race relations are not uniform, but vary over time from place to place. From this standpoint, Rogers tackles the thorny issues of race and ethnicity in New Orleans. To her credit, she clearly masters the complexities and subtleties of race-related matters in this "highly cultured, European- and Latin-influenced city in the Deep South." Throughout the text, Rogers skillfully demonstrates how "the historic complexity of race relations promoted different perceptions of African-American liberation and possibility

than existed elsewhere in the South." This approach enables her to relate effectively and to analyze the fierce struggle by little-known heroes for racial justice.

Rogers makes good use of oral history. She concentrates on twenty-five representative black and white activists over three generations in order to examine the history of the black freedom struggle in New Orleans. Furthermore, Rogers shows little timidity in utilizing psychological and sociological categories of analysis, drawing especially on the work of Karl Mannheim. In this way, historical figures come alive on the page. Owing to the author's sharp, lively prose, the reader can almost feel her subjects' passionate, personal commitment to racial equity and social justice.

Rogers astutely examines the dynamics of the civil rights movement in this southern community. She carefully points out how black leadership changed in the fifties as accomodationists yielded to so-called racial diplomats, many of whom were black Creoles and "urbane, college-educated professionals." And in turn, they were challenged by "race men," who as black ministers and the most effective mass leaders in the city, impatiently demanded full citizenship rights. And finally, militant black youth of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the NAACP Youth Council stepped front-and-center in "the direct-action protests in 1960."

Organization is one of the strong points of this book as Rogers vividly describes three generations of civil rights leaders/activists in New Orleans. The education-minded "Integration Generation" (born between 1897 and 1924) understandably "place great emphasis on *knowing* the racial Other, or of becoming known by him" and were by and large racial negotiators and diplomats in dealings with white elites. Further, "when educational methods and diplomacy failed," they "responded with lawsuits, and by organizing boycotts–a low risk, but dignified refusal to participate in demeaning rituals of discrimination." The "Political Generation" (born between 1925 and 1935) shaped by World War II and the postwar world, placed its faith in electoral politics and legal action to bring about racial progress. However, in retrospect, this generation of activists are "sadly aware that the economic situation of the black poor in New Orleans had worsened since 1970." The "Protest Generation" (born between 1935 and 1945) largely consisted of young people drawn to direct-action protest who had grown up in the postwar era of boycotts and rising black militancy. Typical of this group were college-educated youth from black working-class families, who participated in organizations such as CORE and the NAACP. Angry about racial injustice, "they

conducted dangerous, often frightening protests both inside New Orleans and 'in the field' beyond, in Mississippi, Louisiana, and in other southern states."

Within this generational framework, Rogers chooses her subjects well. Moreover, she writes from a sensitive and sympathetic viewpoint whether dealing with integrationists or budding nationalists. Occasionally, her generational time frames are strained, but they never appear artificial or contrived. Viewing the civil rights movement through extensive use of oral histories (collected, in this instance, over many years) and competent psychological commentary adds a new dimension to our understanding of this historical phenomenon.

If this book has any faults, it is that the author failed to explore adequately the long-range impact of nationalist influence from the twenties and thirties, or that she compared the New Orleans' civil rights experience with other southern cities. Further, a more analytic and less descriptive treatment of white segregationists violence, drawing on recent new suggestive studies in this area by such scholars as W. Fitzhugh Brundage, would have been helpful. But these objections aside, Rogers's book has many positive features.

Righteous Lives breaks new ground and reveals fresh insights about race relations in the South generally and New Orleans in particular, and it adequately assesses the meaning of the civil rights experience for one unique segment of southern society.

Walter T. Howard Bloomsburg University

William Warren Rogers, Robert David Ward, Leah Rawls Atkins, and Wayne Flynt. *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994, *xxvii*, pp. 768. Cloth, $49.95. ISBN 0-8173-0712-5 / Paper, $29.95. ISBN 0-8173-0714-1

It must be a tremendously difficult task to write a comprehensive state history that includes everything from literature to politics to architecture, yet these four Southern historians have written such a history and done an outstanding job. Leah Rawls Atkins and Wayne Flynt from Auburn University, William Warren Rogers from Florida State, and Robert David Ward from Georgia Southern, have composed a finely crafted and well-written book that examines the state of Alabama from exploration to its present trials and tribulations.

Perhaps the most appealing aspect of *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* is that the authors avoid the temptation of spinning yarn after yarn about colorful characters–a flaw found in too many state and local histories. The book eschews extraneous anecdotes while seeking to answer more pertinent questions about the state's past. Specifically, the authors try to uncover significant links between Alabama's past and present. By the 1980s, Alabama remained one of the poorest states in the Union. Many of its counties lacked adequate medical facilities or aid programs for the poor, and Alabama's "infant mortality rate led the nation during the mid-1980s before improving slightly at the end of the decade." Alabama continues to have problems with poverty and education, and as the authors point out, "one-third of its babies are born into poverty, one-fifth of its population uninsured, and one-eighth of its people functionally illiterate." These present-day economic and social problems compel the authors to ask the fitting question, "Does the state's past explain its present?"

William Warren Rogers
Robert David Ward
Leah Rawls Atkins
Wayne Flynt
ALABAMA
The History
OF A
Deep South
State

The central characters in this book are an interest group that dominated Alabama politics, culture, and society for most of its history. The authors explain that "power groups seek to control government in order to shape a culture that protects their interests and recognizes their superior position." The cotton planter aristocracy of the fertile Alabama Black Belt used numerous forms of social and political control to dominate thoroughly the state and to shape a culture that protected their interests. The larger question is, what did those decades of control mean for the state of Alabama? More to the point–were these planters responsible for Alabama's current lags in most economic categories? The authors' answer to this question is an unqualified "yes." Alabama is still paying for years of policies that benefitted this one small group.

Cotton and slavery dominated the antebellum Alabama economy. Capital was invested in slaves while commercial and industrial development was stifled. The Civil War changed the Alabama economy by "adding industry and the entrepreneur to the social mix."

While most Alabamians appeared willing to accept the Confederate defeat, they were unwilling to embrace the "social judgements" resulting from the war. Reconstruction tried to alter Alabama's social norms, and it appeared that long-term changes could have taken place. Those opportunities were squandered, and Reconstruction proved to be so timid that few lasting changes occurred. The biggest oversight concerned the plight of the freed blacks who remained in the "status of less-than independent wage earners" which "perpetuated economic control in a planter class."

The Republican party of the Reconstruction era did effect some changes, but by 1876 the planters, also known as Bourbon Democrats, had regained power (the term "Bourbon" derived from the French royal house that was restored in 1815 after Napoleon's defeat). White rule was indeed restored as the Democrats overturned Reconstruction measures, solidifying their position in society, and ensuring that no reform, especially that which included racial equality, would challenge their power.

The Democratic party advanced an agenda which favored the planter class. The planters sought low taxes, laws to safeguard property, cuts in state expenditures, no spending for internal improvements, and a cheap and disciplined labor force. The state passed legislation supporting these policies. The Democrats successfully depicted Republicans and other reform groups as advocates of racial equality and race mixing. When poor whites and small farmers were given the choice of voting for black equality or for the planter agenda, they opted for the white dominated planter program every time. The people of Alabama paid a high price for this allegiance to the planter class as public education was ignored, and taxes were kept so low that public services were discontinued. The authors insist that "three decades of Bourbon rule...penalized Alabamians into the next century."

During the last quarter of the nineteenth-century Alabama experienced an industrial boom. Nonagricultural jobs produced a new class "with their own interests to push and protect." Again, it could have been a time for change, but that did not take place. This time, the planters were able to form a coalition with the commercial classes to suppress any attempts at reform. The Bourbons tolerated the commercial and industrial interests as long as that support did not lead to black progress. The Bourbons used their vast array of political tools to keep control and power. They controlled the political nominating process at all levels, and election fraud was widespread. Political campaigns were waged on racial issues, and dissidents were

portrayed as "wild radicals" if they raised class or racial issues. The planter-commercial coalition allowed the Bourbons to remain in control.

There were, in spite of the planters, lively reform movements at the turn of the century. Populists, dissident Democrats, Grangers, and other reformers tried to exploit the poverty faced by small white and black farmers in Alabama. The Populist Party made some gains by 1896, but this potential multi-racial alliance was seen as extremely dangerous by the planters. The Bourbons were able to convene a constitutional convention in 1901 where they repressed blacks and other reform voices even further. Their goal was to gut the Fifteenth Amendment in Alabama and to make politics white-only. The convention passed a "complicated set of residence, literacy, property, taxation, and other requirements disfranchising almost all black voters. In time, poor whites fell victim to the same regulations."

Alabama experienced some waves of liberalism, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. A New Deal coalition tried to extend Federal programs into the state, and it appeared as though there would be real changes on the political horizon. However, by the late 1950s race again became a problem as liberalism had "taken on a racial meaning in Alabama politics that made it unacceptable to most white voters." As Northern reformers equated liberalism with racial equality, Southern liberal coalitions unraveled.

There is little to criticize in *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*, yet one area remains clouded. The authors are clear in making the connection between planter policies and modern Alabama economic woes. Policies that resisted internal improvements, education, and social services in order to maintain planter dominance, surely left a troublesome legacy. The authors unequivocally pronounce that the planters were an "entrenched minority [which] kept itself in power through extralegal and therefore criminal means." While the authors discuss various reform efforts in Alabama, they are not always clear about the breadth or strength of those sentiments. One must at least introduce the possibility that most of the people in Alabama knowingly approved of Bourbon domination even at the expense of a more progressive social agenda. These policies may have been unwise, shortsighted, and even detrimental to certain groups, but it remains a reasonable assumption that the planters advanced an agenda that, however flawed, was accepted by the majority of Alabama voters.

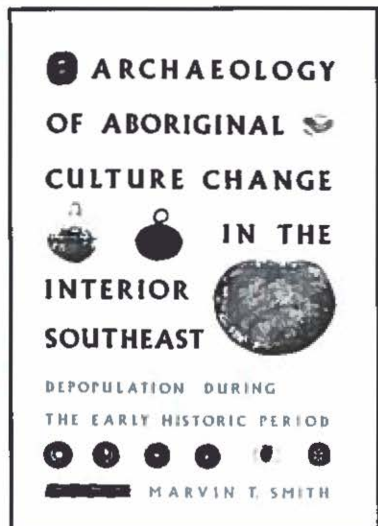
This minor criticism should in no way detract from the significance of the book. *Alabama: The History of a Deep South*

State is a wonderful study of a diverse state, rich in history and tradition. I recommend this book for historians in any field of study. The economic, geographic, social, cultural, and racial contrasts in Alabama make its history relevant to the past, present, and the future. Rogers, Ward, Atkins, and Flynt have demonstrated the importance of Alabama to the history of the South and also to the history of the United States.

David E. Woodard University of Minnesota

Marvin T. Smith. *Archaeology of Aboriginal Culture Change in the Interior Southeast: Depopulation During the Early Historic Period.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida / The Florida State Museum, 1987, *xiii*, pp. 185. Cloth, $29.95. ISBN 0-8130-0846-8 / Paper, 1992 ed., $16.95. ISBN 0-8130-1158-2

Marvin T. Smith's monograph is an elegant synthesis of cultural change as seen in the regional archaeological and ethnohistorical records in the interior Southeast (that portion of the southeastern United States north or west of the fall line region and east of the Mississippi River Valley) during the Early Historic Period (1525-1670). In particular, Smith's focus is on the indirect effects of European epidemic diseases on the aboriginal chiefdoms of portions of the interior Southeast, most notably the Coosa, Ocute, Tascalusa, and Talisi. He also explores the processes whereby these chiefdoms declined, disintegrated, amalgamated, or became extinct.



Smith builds upon the arguments of Dobyns and Ramenofsky to propose a model of demographic collapse in the interior Southeast that included "massive depopulation, population movement, social and political reorganization, and loss of many elements of culture."[1] To measure these results of European contact in situations where historic documentation is not available, Smith notes that "it is necessary to establish chronologies based on stylistic changes in categories of archaeologically recovered materials." He utilizes European-

introduced trade goods (glass beads, iron axes and knives, brass ornaments, firearms, and brass bells) to define four periods (A, 1525-1565; B, 1565-1600; C, 1600-1630; and D, 1630-1670) spanning the Early Historic Period. His method of dating and chronology construction has proven to be of considerable utility in measuring rates of culture change among interior Southeast chiefdoms.[2] Nevertheless, this type of periodization does not work well outside of the interior Southeast–as in the Caddoan area of Northeast Texas, Northwest Louisiana, Southwest Arkansas, and Southeast Oklahoma–because European trade goods are uniformly scarce and regionally variable before 1700.[3]

Smith then examines specific archaeological parameters of the contact record–frequency of mass and multiple burials, site size, number of sites, and population movements–for concrete evidence of depopulation. Not surprisingly, the evidence is equivocal, given the character of the known archaeological data base, as mass and multiple burials may also occur in prehistoric contexts, and direct skeletal evidence for European epidemic diseases will rarely be preserved. Smith, however, concludes that multiple burials were more common between 1525-1565 and 1600-1630. The evidence of changes in site size and number of sites show the strongest trends for decreases related to depopulation factors from 1565-1600, and then after 1630. Many sites were apparently abandoned, and new sites were being settled during these periods. Moreover, these sites were no longer compact, palisaded villages but instead were more dispersed, linear villages.

Some evidence for population movements is apparent from the Early Historic Period, especially in the Coosa River drainage, and Smith attempts to correlate this with specific epidemic disease outbreaks documented in Florida by Dobyns.[4] There has been considerable controversy over the documentation quality of the lists compiled by Dobyns, as well as their pandemic character. These types of correlations need considerably more archaeological and bioarcheological confirmation to establish the timing of population movements with disease-caused depopulation and the biological consequences of Native American-European interaction in the interior Southeast. Other factors in addition to disease may also have caused population movements, of course, so any correlations between epidemics and population movements are not definitive.

Smith provides more clearcut archaeological evidence on depopulation and systemic aboriginal change in interior Southeast chiefdoms by examining archaeological correlates for ranked societies

originally proposed by Peebles and Kus in a study of the Moundville chiefdom: discontinuation of public works (mounds and palisades), simplification of settlement hierarchies, changes in status systems as seen in grave goods inclusions, and the disappearance of organized, part-time craft specialization.[5] Data from the study area suggests that no new mounds (used for political, religious, and mortuary functions) were begun after 1600, and the construction of palisades around villages ceased after 1630. Similarly, elaborate site hierarchies disappear by about 1600, and burials after 1610 seem to lack inclusions of sociotechnic items and symbols of authority, such as stone spatulate axes and native copper artifacts, but contain instead increased numbers of European items as grave goods. Similarly, the sociotechnic items made by Native American craft specialists (such as the native copper pendants and embossed ornaments, stone spatulate axes, and Citico-style rattlesnake gorgets) disappeared from use by 1630 at the latest.

These data make plain that by 1630 the once-powerful aboriginal chiefdoms of the interior Southeast had experienced considerable cultural change most parsimoniously seen as the consequence of catastrophic population decline. One may quibble about the timing of depopulation in particular areas, as well as the magnitude of population decline. Nevertheless, Smith sees the impact of European-introduced diseases on Native Americans as a vital element in explaining: the character and differential persistence of Native American groups in the Southeast after sustained European contact postdating 1670; the formation of the Creek Confederacy in the late seventeenth-early eighteenth century; and a movement away from the direct historical approach as the means to understand the processes of these great changes which took place among Native Americans between 1525-1670. These changes were neither observed nor documented by Europeans.

For those interested in the archaeology, ethnohistory, and history of Native Americans in the southeastern United States, indeed across North America, following contact with Europeans, Marvin Smith's book is a basic and excellent resource that merits serious scrutiny. One hopes that with the completion of other studies of similar research scope and methodological breadth, our overall understanding of the complex record of dynamic Native American-European contact and interaction in the Southeast will be enhanced.

Notes

[1]Henry F. Dobyns, *Their Numbers Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Knoxville, TN 1983); Ann F. Ramenofsky, *Vectors of Death: The Archaeology of European Contact* (Albuquerque, NM 1987).

[2]Marvin T. Smith, "Chronology of Glass Beads: the Spanish Period in the Southeast, 1513-1670," in "Proceedings of the 1982 Glass Trade Bead Conference," ed. Charles F. Hayes III, *Rochester Museum and Science Center, Research Records* (Rochester, 1983) 16:147-58; Marvin T. Smith and Mary Elizabeth Good, *Early Sixteenth Century Glass Beads in the Spanish Colonial Trade* (Greenwood, MS 1982).

[3]Timothy K. Perttula, *"The Caddo Nation": Archaeological and Ethnohistoric Perspectives* (Austin, TX 1992).

[4]Dobyns, *Their Numbers Become Thinned.*

[5]Christopher Peebles and Susan M. Kus, "Some Archaeological Correlates of Ranked Societies," *American Antiquity* 42 (1977):421-48.

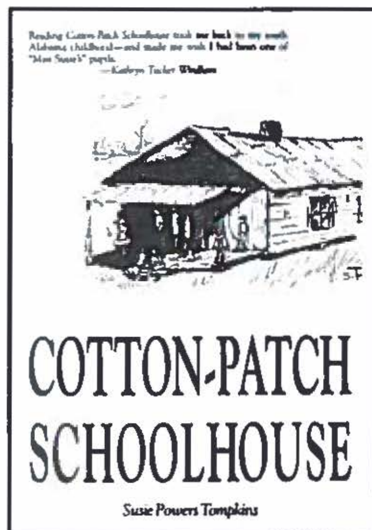
Timothy K. Pertula Texas Historical Commission

Susie Powers Tompkins. *Cotton Patch Schoolhouse.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1992, *vi*, pp. 216. $19.95. ISBN 0-8173-0563-7

Cotton-Patch Schoolhouse is an account of one year in the life of Susie Powers Tompkins who, as an unprepared eighteen-year-old, taught eight children in rural Marengo County, Alabama, in 1926. It is an intriguing book for a number of reasons. It is not only an initiation of Ms. Tompkins's entry into adulthood, when she was forced to rely on her own initiative and creativity to teach in a poorly equipped school, but also a vivid account of rural education in the 1920s.

In the opening chapters the author describes her own childhood, much of which was spent on an Alabama plantation named Egypt, and her education, including a year at Alabama College before her college career was interrupted when her family suffered financial setbacks and she was forced to seek employment to finance the rest of her education. It was at this time that she was offered a one-year contract to teach in the little schoolhouse in the middle of a cotton field.

The remainder of the book is organized, appropriately enough, according to the calendar of the school year. As the young teacher approaches the schoolhouse on the opening day, she thinks of her own teacher, Mrs. O'Neal, who had taught in the one-room schoolhouse where Tompkins had begun her own education. "I well remembered the baseball bat she kept back of her desk, and I hoped I would have no need for such a weapon."



Arriving at the school, she finds the children waiting for her on the porch. "All of the girls...wore homemade gingham dresses, starched, ironed, clean, and plain, but attractive. The two boys were dressed in homemade shirts and long pants. They all gave me the impression that the opening of school was a very important occasion for them."

Tompkins soon learns that the baseball bat won't be necessary, and she concentrates on equipping the little schoolhouse with books, maps, and a globe of the world. "Not that my determination to go back to college had lessened. It was stronger than ever, but now I must think of the eight children and what I could do for them," she wrote.

The subsequent chapters recount the sense of camaraderie that develops between the teacher and her pupils. They adopt a tiny mouse as the school pet and feed it crumbs; they take a nature walk in the fall, and, to the concern and amusement of the children, the teacher falls off a log while crossing a creek. In November, the teacher and pupils have a party and program to which they invite their families, and one of the guests sums up its success: "I think this is more than a party. It is the first time our community has gotten together in a long time. Somehow we have become a part of the school and the school a vital part of our community."

In December this teacher shows the children how to make holly wreaths for their own homes, and when spring arrives the children make their own gift to her. "There was a sudden burst of bloom on the plum, peach, and pear trees, and each morning the children came with armsful to decorate our room."

Although Tompkins recounts many of the adventures shared by teacher and children, the reader sees that there is steady learning going on every day at school. When Tompkins is told that the children must take their county board examinations several weeks earlier that expected, her supervisor, Miss Bunker, encourages her: "Not only have you taught those children a great deal, but you've given them love and an appreciation of their world...remember that making them feel you believe in them will do more good than any bits of knowledge that you might wish to cram them with at the last minute."

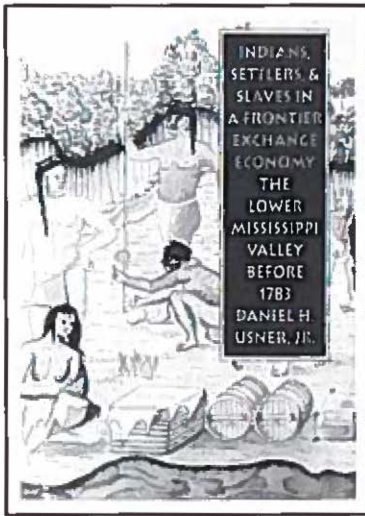
The children pass their exams with flying colors. In the epilogue, Tompkins, looking back some sixty-five years, reflects, "I came to feel that perhaps teaching that year in the little school in the cotton patch was the most worthwhile thing that I had ever done."

The recollections of Tompkins in *Cotton-Patch Schoolhouse* may be touched somewhat with nostalgia, but the reader comes away from the book impressed with the close bond between students and teacher and with the way in which this teacher opened up a new world to her students. One is reminded of Eudora Welty's writing about students and teachers. Although Tompkins is certainly unlike the stern figure of Miss Julia Mortimer in Welty's *Losing Battles*, the similarities of the lasting impression made by schoolteachers on their students is obvious. Tompkins writes vividly and persuasively of a human bond formed from discipline, hard work, inspiration, and love.

Anne E. Rowe Florida State University

Daniel H. Usner, Jr. *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992, *xx*, pp. 294. Cloth, $32.50. ISBN 0-8078-2014-8 / Paper, $12.95. ISBN 0-8078-4358X

The lower Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast during the eighteenth century, Daniel Usner notes in this important new study, have always been outside the mainstream of American history. Southern historians have been fascinated with the antebellum era, while colonialists have approached their subject by way of England and the Atlantic seaboard, treating greater Louisiana as an exotic French and Spanish borderlands peripheral to the main story. *Indians,*



Settlers, and Slaves is an effort to rescue the region from its marginal position, to place the lower Mississippi Valley at center stage in the American historical experience. Usner does this in two ways: by showing how multiculturalism and resistance to capitalist hegemony, two themes that play key roles in contemporary historiography, worked themselves out in the region; and by showing how attention to greater Louisiana puts developments in British America in a new light.

For the most part the project succeeds, largely because Usner develops the notion of a frontier exchange economy, a fluid and informal network of cross-cultural interaction characterized by small-scale production and face-to-face marketing of food and other necessities. The network was created by Indians, European colonists, and African slaves to satisfy the prosaic needs of everyday life, to sell grains, meat, and garden produce in the local market, to exchange handicrafts and peltries for tools, food, or clothing, to hire out as a day laborer for a bit of cash, to buy sundries or a piece of cloth from a peddler, and the like. But in Usner's hands it becomes much more, serving as a device for revealing the dynamics of a multicultural society and as a tool for exploring how ordinary people frustrated the grand schemes of colonial administrators and constructed an alternative to the developing plantation economy, with its rigid racial hierarchies, harsh oppression, and formal market structures. The idea of a frontier exchange economy allows Usner to focus on interactions among Indians, settlers, and slaves, and to stress their cooperation and shared interests rather than their conflicts and differences. Further, it permits him to view the economy from the bottom up and at the local level, an important alternative to early American economic history which has concentrated on the big producers and international trade.

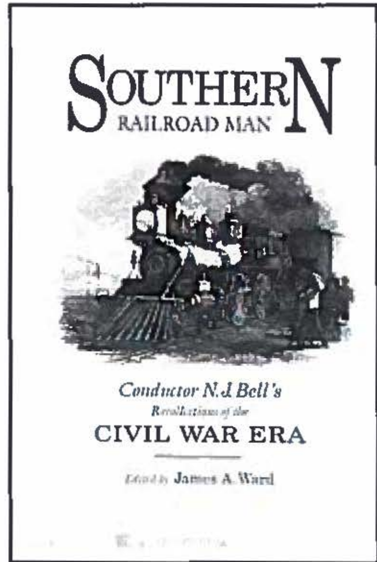
While the idea of a frontier exchange economy serves Usner well, it is at the same time a fuzzy and problematic concept. There seems to be no way of defining its size or identifying its boundaries. How large was it relative to the plantation sector? What was its contribution to the region's total product? What share of the

population participated in it, and how much of their income did they earn from such activities? Nor is the frontier exchange economy as easily disentangled from the plantation economy or the schemes of colonial administrators as Usner suggests. For the most part, he sees the two as separate spheres, as alternative structures often in opposition, particularly as the plantation sector expanded in the late eighteenth century and drove the frontier exchange economy underground, turning it into a strategy for survival for oppressed groups at the margins of colonial society. This is a useful interpretative strategy, permitting Usner to explore the economic aspects of maroonage and social banditry and to show how ordinary people, engaged in prosaic activities, could limit the impact of capitalist expansion on daily life. However, it comes at the cost of obscuring the way that the two sectors grew up together and were implicated in each other, of showing how informal local markets advanced as well as frustrated schemes for colonial development, supplemented as well as undermined plantation agriculture. A case in point is the production and marketing of food crops by slaves. This, no doubt, allowed some escape from plantation discipline, but it also let planters shift the costs of feeding their work force to the workers themselves while giving slaves a stake in the system which perhaps curbed their interest in risking all in open rebellion.

While these questions regarding the central construct of *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves* cannot be dismissed as mere quibbles, neither should they detract from the importance of Usner's accomplishment. He has written a major book that opens up a new, multicutural perspective on early American economic history and pushes the lower Mississippi Valley from the edge toward the center of the field. In addition to the idea of a frontier exchange economy he has introduced a useful concept which, while it will need to be sharpened and clarified, will inform debate in early American history for some time to come. Along the way he has produced a gracefully written, lively, and richly textured book that sets a new standard for scholarship on the Gulf Coast region in the eighteenth century.

Russell R. Menard University of Minnesota

James A. Ward, ed. *Southern Railroad Man: Conductor N. J. Bell's Recollections of the Civil War Era.* Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994, *xxv*, pp. 194. $25.00. ISBN 0-87580-184-6



Nimrod J. Bell died around the turn of the century leaving a memoir of his life as a railroad conductor in the South during the era from 1857 to 1895. Most of the book concerns the period well after the Civil War. Bell had no formal education and apparently had the manuscript privately printed for the benefit of his family and friends. The work moldered in obscurity until James A. Ward and his colleagues at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga rescued the book. Ward's editing is extensive, for Bell left a manuscript bereft of dates or effective organization. Ward puts it into manageable chapters and provides notes to clear up obscure points.

According to the editor, Bell was born in 1830 in South Carolina. His first recorded railroad recollection was the Charleston and Hamburg, some-times called the first railroad in America. Just before the Civil War, Bell took a job as a baggageman on the Western and Atlantic Railroad. He was soon promoted to conductor, which kept him out of the Confederate Army but not out of the way of the extensive troop movements during the Lookout Mountain campaign. By the end of his career, Bell had collected fares on the Western and Atlantic (1846 to 1862 according to Ward's reckonings); the East Tennessee and Georgia (1862 to 1863), Alabama and Chattanooga (1868 to 1871 and again in 1872 to 1876), South and North Railroad of Alabama (1871 to 1872), and the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad (1876 to 1895). Most of his working life was spent on trains running roughly from Knoxville to Meridian, although he does provide some interesting descriptions of Wilmington, North Carolina during the period of southern blockade running. The memoir is replete with stories of the construction, operation, and social mores of railroads operating in the area. Bell writes little on

operations in the deeper South or the Trans-Mississippi area, and offers few comparisons with other railroads of the period.

At this point the academic utility of the book would have ended if it were not for the sharp editing of Ward. Ward not only edits the meandering text, but also adds explanatory footnotes and a twenty-five page introduction placing Bell's musings into historical context. As Ward indicates, "Bell is a better storyteller than he is a historian." So, Ward adds a commentary on railroads in Bell's time and on the background of southern society in the last half of the nineteenth century.

There are strong points to Bell's narrative. The chapters on "Railroads and Employees" and "Passenger Trains and Conductors" hold one's attention. The destruction of his home by Union troops on Sherman's march is heartbreaking. A convict escape story and Bell's claim of nearly being shot while on duty bring to mind tales of the Old West (or, maybe, the 1995 New York Subway System).

Bell's knowledge of the financial structures and backroom deals of the railroad magnates does not appear in this work. He describes John C. Stanton, the baron of the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad, in complimentary detail. He makes no reference to the furor over railroad regulation which culminated in the establishment of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1887. He mentions that passengers routinely expected conductors to pocket fares, suggesting widespread skepticism about fairness of railroad charges.

The book will disappoint the dyed-in-the-wool equipment buff, anxious to know if engine number so-and-so was used in such-and-such service. Bell regards an engine as an engine, and his descriptions even of the pullman car of his day leave something to be desired for those seeking technical details (He did foresee that pullmans would one day use electric lights). Once again, Ward has come to the rescue with some old photographs of equipment and even a passenger train schedule for one of Bell's runs (Schedules are another thing Bell doesn't bother to describe).

What remains of this book for the academic specialist is a splendid example of history (in Ward's phrase) from the "bottom up." It's a workingman's view of working life, and it is pretty depressing. Bell's job (which he clearly enjoys) takes him away from home for days at a time, and he works long hours. It is dangerous. The stated rate of pay is above average (according to Ward), but Bell often has problems collecting from his boss. Yet, he stands up for railroad management even in the face of financial adversity. In one of his passionate moments, Bell writes, "If railroad employees...have any

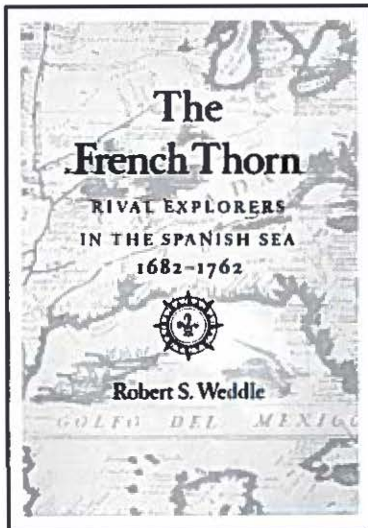
grievances, they will find it to their interest to compromise, if possible to do so, without a strike."

Interestingly, Bell hardly mentions his family in the book, perhaps because they were the intended audience of the original printing. Ward discovers after examining census returns that Bell's wife had borne twelve children, one of whom was disabled and lived with Bell into adulthood. Wife and children stayed behind while Bell was on the road. He thus shared a difficult home life with other Victorian figures such as sea captains and traveling salesmen. As Bell tells it, on the road he would rest in solitude rather than be out with "the boys" from the railroad.

One doubts if this volume will really impart any new information to most of its readers, but reading a single railroadman's view of life after reading so many accounts of the railroads written by bystanders and desk employees makes reading this short volume worthwhile.

John David Healy Little Falls, New Jersey

Robert S. Weddle. *The French Thorn: Rival Explorers in the Spanish Sea 1682-1762*. Texas A&M University Press, 1991, pp. 435. $49.50. ISBN 0-89096-480-7



This volume is the second of a projected trilogy (vol. 1, 1985) which is to cover the history of the Gulf of Mexico from the time it became the "Spanish Sea" to 1803. The great amount of material available and necessary to give a full account of the story led to the limitation of this volume to the reconnaissance and early settlement of the northern shore between 1682 and 1762, with France as Spain's major adversary. The challenge was to the monopoly of the port of Vera Cruz over the traffic in the gulf which extended to Spanish Florida. First came the search for a deep sea harbor on the

coast, followed by forays inland directed toward the Mexican mines.

Geography, natural history, anthropology, archaeology, political history, nautical problems, European conflicts, and economic enterprise are all considered. The passing seasons, currents, waves, winds, rainstorms, and drought are the backdrop. The individuals involved, their physical and mental health and problems of survival, their virtues and failings introduce much new material from the French, Spanish, and Mexican archives.

The story starts with the "hidden river," the Rio Escondido. When the French under the Sieur de La Salle, descended the Mississippi to the gulf, on reaching the coast they might have said, "We are here," but where was here? To determine La Salle's position on the gulf, Weddle considers many arguments based on what the Frenchman could have known from maps, what he measured and identified, being misled by faulty instruments and incorrect readings. On La Salle's second approach from the gulf, the meandering channels of the Mississippi delta failed to confirm the bay and deep water port which he had expected to find. The authoritative account of these ventures revises some errors of long standing. Here, as in later chapters, Weddle makes an analysis of what an explorer could have known, what he believed, what he intended, what he recounted in official depositions, and why and when he failed or succeeded. Misinformation, deliberate or accidental, is also part of the story. Encounters with many Indian tribes, under varied circumstances led to the confusion of names of different provenance given by successive explorers to the same rivers or sites which left a legacy on the map of today. The author's intimate knowledge of the region is impressive.

La Salle's murder by one of his own party did not preclude a legacy of his experiences on the inland track to the Rio Grande from reaching France by various routes. New expeditions were mounted as information was received, for instance, from two of the brothers Tonti, whose extraordinary story is matched by new material on neglected personalities such as Enriquez Barroto. Pirates, buccaneers, pilots, and cosmographers contributed information. Weddle uses his sources for an analysis of the evolution of mapping. A final chapter entitled "The Edge of Enlightenment" adds another dimension to the story: the who and how of map production. There are twenty maps which demonstrate the abysmal ignorance and the fantasies of their makers. Cartography, however, shared with other sciences the improvement of instruments and measurements. Latitudes and longitudes were corrected by new methods and skills.

The book has few moments of respite. Readers' imaginations will be made intimately aware of the travails of the explorers, but that fascination gives way to exhaustion. This was the prevailing state of the men on the ground, of soldiers, missionaries and traders whose itineraries are traced in detail. By the end of part one, a pattern is set for the following chapters. The nature of the areas of all expeditions is reconstructed from the records. Today's knowledge then helps to separate the usual from the unusual conditions met at the time. For example, the roster of participants and their roles in the undertakings are enriched by new information about native guides. They helped to drive forward the reconnaissance of the area from New Spain to Santa Fe and into Eastern Texas. Spanish missions and presidios succeeded or failed as did French settlements, each one a response to policy set in Europe or in New Spain. Involved with European wars and diplomacy, a weak and vacillating Spanish regime was driven to reaction by fear rather than adventure. The colonial interests in Vera Cruz opposed the use of scarce manpower for a new Spanish port. Periods of cautious cooperation when France and Spain were not at war showed Spain regarding France as a buffer to English incursions, as during the family compact.

Spain and France used the different methods to secure the area. Spain wanted to make sure that no deep water port would rival Vera Cruz and to guard the Texas frontier which drew away trade overland to Mexico. The Spaniards mounted large expeditions of soldiers, settlers, and livestock either by oceangoing ships or overland. On their way they founded missions and presidios. The French, approaching via the coast, used canoes built for river traffic, explored the land via the ample network of waterways, anchored their enterprise at New Orleans, and proceeded to found inland towns. Occasional summaries of passages and chapters make up a running commentary and focus the text.

Having been printed on alkaline paper, guaranteed to last three hundred years, this volume is a beacon perpetually shining from the highest summit of current scholarship.

Ursula Lamb University of Arizona

Lynn Willoughby. *Fair to Middlin': The Antebellum Cotton Trade of the Apalachicola / Chattahoochee River Valley.* Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1993, *xiii*, pp. 198. $26.95. ISBN 0-8173-0680-3

As one antebellum publication put it, "Cotton...earns the poor man's bread, and fills the rich man's pocket." *Fair to Middlin'* is about cotton and those poor and rich men who were in the cotton business. The author "determined there was a need for a primer on the mechanics of the antebellum cotton trade that could be understood by the general public" and she has certainly filled that need. Willoughby has explained the cotton trade from one end to the other in a most understandable and interesting way in this well-researched book.

Cotton was king in the antebellum South, and the major river systems were the king's highways. *Fair to Middlin'* focuses on the Apalachicola river system and the Gulf seaport of Apalachicola as typical of the cotton transporting rivers and cotton dominated towns of the period. Apalachicola was, after New Orleans and Mobile, the third largest seaport on the Gulf Coast because of the cotton growing area it served. The river system made up of the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, Flint, and Chipola rivers brought to the town of Apalachicola most of the cotton grown in a large area of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, in the antebellum period before the railroads took over the job. Willoughby knows southern rivers, having lived on and near them, studied their histories, and grown to love them.

The author makes good use of sources to give the reader a sense of place and time from the cotton fields on one end of the cotton trade to the cotton users in New England and Europe and everywhere in between. The personal touch is enhanced especially by her examination of many contemporary family paper collections, business letters, and newspaper articles. The main characters of this story of the cotton trade are the men who made the system work, the

factors, brokers, buyers, warehousemen–the middle men. They were true entrepreneurs, risking their capital to buy cotton for future sale and conversely to buy consumer goods for sale to their cotton growers.

The author covers every aspect of the cotton trade. The reader learns how cotton was graded, bought, pressed, baled, weighed, transported, warehoused, and sold. The many people and occupations involved in making a living from cotton and the money system they used are explained. The town of Apalachicola, its riverfront and adjacent bay, and how ships arrived there from all parts of the world are described. Some of the more adventurous sea voyages are told in the participants' own words. No aspect of the life or work is left out. Concerning the sea leg of the cotton trade, for example, the reader learns what kind of ships carried cotton, what dangers were encountered, how long it took to load and unload cargoes, what routes the ships followed, what cargoes they carried to Apalachicola, and even what the ships' captains and their families did while ashore.

Included in the book's illustrations are two useful maps. One map shows the large cotton growing land area served by the Apalachicola/Chattahoochee river system. Another map shows how railroad development in the 1850s provided increasing competition to the river system. The new railroad lines did not parallel the rivers but instead significantly shortened transportation routes by connecting the cotton fields directly to the east coast ports of Charleston and Savannah.

Six numerical tables illustrate cotton trade statistics. Two show the percentage of cotton exports from Apalachicola to domestic and foreign ports. Another table lists imports, showing the variety and quantity of goods brought into Apalachicola aboard ships which then took on cargoes of cotton for their outbound voyages. Three final tables give numbers of bales of cotton received at Columbus, Apalachicola, and Savannah over the 1840s and 1850s. Several interesting photographs complete the illustrations.

Fair to Middlin', based on Willoughby's doctoral dissertation, is well balanced between description and analysis, and accomplishes the goal of both educating and entertaining the reader. Cotton was graded as being "fair," the highest grade, to "ordinary," the lowest, or any of ten or more grades in between. "Middlin'" was the basic grade in the middle. The grade was determined mostly by the length of the staple and the amount of trash included in the bale. Invoking analogy, *Fair to Middlin'* is a very "fair" book. The book is highly recommended to professionals and non-professionals alike, and

especially to those interested in the cotton trade, the Gulf Coast, the port of Apalachicola during its heyday, and the great river systems of the antebellum South.

Niles Schuh — Panama City, Florida

Edward O. Wilson. *Naturalist*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1994, pp. 380. $24.95. ISBN 1-55963-288-7

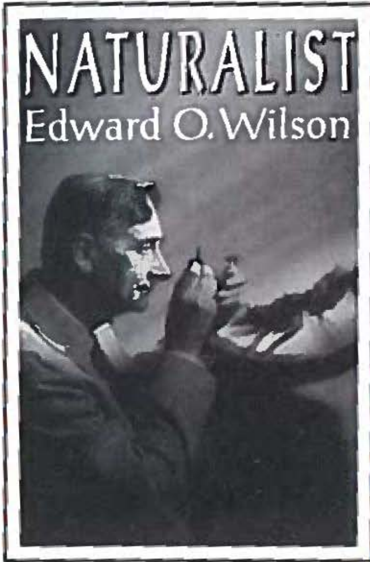
Southern Alabama has produced at least two world class figures: Jimmy Buffett and E. O. Wilson. Most know only of Buffett, but Wilson is my hero.

A professor at Harvard, he has won two Pulitzer prizes, many international and national prizes in biology, and distinguished teaching honors. This chronicle of his emergence from backwoods obscurity, mostly through high intelligence and hard work, is as lovely an evocation of a time, place, and life as we have seen from any American scientist.

He grew up with a love of the natural. "Most children have a bug period and I never grew out of mine." Child of divorced parents, he spent long, charmed hours by himself amid the wilderness beauties (now swiftly shrinking) on the Gulf Coast. "Daybreak in Alabama," the opening half of the book, recounts in loving detail how he came to be, man and scientist:

> The human mind moving in a sea of detail is compelled like a questing animal to orient by a relatively few decisive configurations. There is an optimum number of such signals. Too few, and the person becomes compulsive-obsessive; too many, and he turns schizophrenic. Configurations with the greatest emotional impact are stored first and persist longer....In the process edges are sharpened, content refined, emotional colors nuanced. In this way, for Pensacola on a hot autumn day in 1935 has evolved into a network of vividly remembered small animals.

Still, "I was a normal boy, within reason." He got into the usual schoolyard scraps and discovered that "once started, I never quit, even when losing, until the other boy gave up or an adult mercifully pulled us apart." He took sound beatings and still carries "old lip and brow split scars, like a used-up club fighter." After all, "There is no finer sight on green Earth than a defeated bully." Such battles shaped his career, as well.



His memories of specifics in the background of that time have faded. But the natural history aspects still linger, "because at an early age I resolved to become a naturalist and a scientist...because I was an only child who lived something of a gypsy's existence....Nor was there any educational theory in 1938 to suggest that loneliness in a beautiful environment might be a good if risky way to create a scientist, at least a field biologist."

In a chapter well titled "Alabama Dreaming" Wilson evokes the wonders of a careful eye. Not many, making a list of the beauties of the state, would list "forty species of snakes, one of the richest assemblages in the world....Over a period of a year I managed to capture most of them." He allows that "A swamp filled with snakes may be a nightmare to most, but for me it was a ceaselessly rotating lattice of wonders. I had the same interest in the diversity of snakes that other fifteen-year-old boys seemed automatically to develop in the years and makes of automobiles. And knowing them well, I had no fear."

He then recounts an encounter with a cottonmouth that was "the largest snake I had ever seen in the wild, more than five feet long with a body as thick as my arm and a head the size of my fist, only a bit under the published size record for the species." How he seized, wrestled with, and then barely managed to let go of this monster is gripping reading, and tells us much about him, both then and now.

To go further Wilson tried enlisting in the Army, an approved way to serve, get the GI bill, and go to college. The Army rejected him because his right eye had been pierced by a little pinfish while fishing on Paradise Beach. "Bitterly disappointed by this unfair outcome, I wept. I vowed that although I had failed here, I would go on, make it through college and succeed some other way, work on the side as needed, live in basements or attics if I had to, keep trying for scholarships, accept whatever help my parents could give, but regardless of what happened, let nothing stop me."

From his time at a military academy, Wilson "assumed, despite mounting evidence to the contrary, that hard work and punishingly high standards are demanded of all grown men, that life is tough and unforgiving, that slipups and disgrace are irreparable."

Wilson is the best stylist among our scientists, and this deeply felt memoir abounds as well in self-revelation. He later led the emergence of sociobiology, the study of how our origins influence our behavior and society. For this synthesis of many threads of research he was roundly excoriated by the political left in the groves of academe. He recounts these struggles, and how he came to the theory, almost laconically. "For the brilliant, breakthroughs. For the driven, synthesis." Defending his views took fortitude and much hard work, facets of character shaped long before in southern Alabama. He brought the same qualities to his early work on the loss of biological diversity, sounding the alarm.

In the end, Wilson's courage, determination, and love of nature come through forcefully. This is the best scientific memoir of our time, and a treasure.

Gregory Benford University of California, Irvine