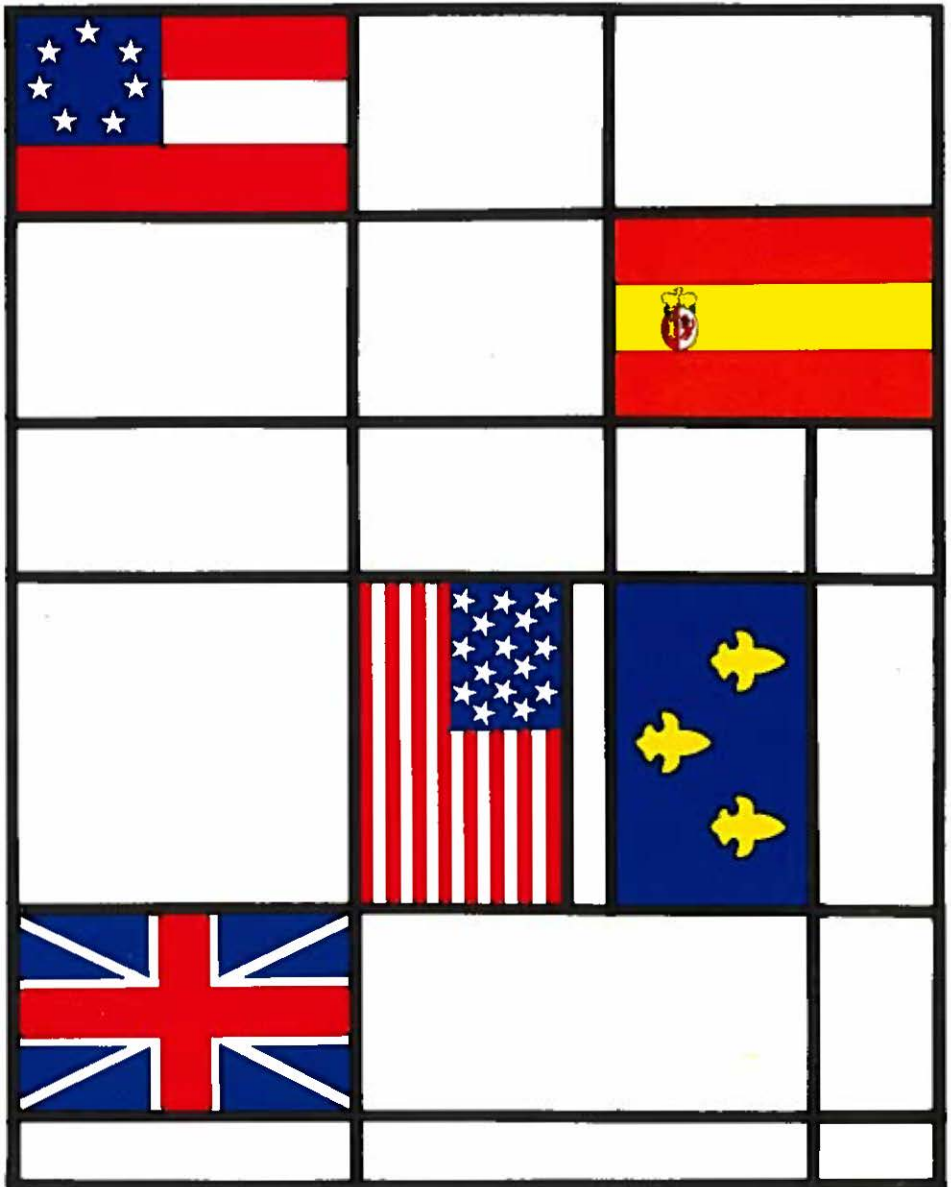


# **G/C** Gulf Coast **H/R** Historical Review

Vol. 7

No. 1



# **G|C Gulf Coast H|R Historical Review**

Vol. 7

Fall 1991

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## From the Editors. . . .

History, we are told, is the story of what has happened in the past. Usually it emphasizes great achievements and the people who are thought responsible for them. Politicians making speeches often rely on such hackneyed phrases as "history teaches" or "the lesson of history is." Then they have history teach whatever they wish it to. Thus, history is often cast as an edifying, ennobling, and thoroughly useful intellectual pursuit. Above all it is the record of what was . . . or so we like to think.

As the song goes "It ain't necessarily so . . . ." In this issue of the *Gulf Coast Historical Review* we have an article on a nineteenth century sea monster in Louisiana . . . but there are no sea monsters. An examination of the canal era in early nineteenth century Florida found that no canals were built. An article on Presidential Reconstruction in Mobile concludes there really was none. Only the account of growing up during the Civil War in Alabama's port city describes a process that occurred more or less as it was meant to. But even in this story there is a sense of unreality, for the society being described unraveled as the war continued. In another article the considerable achievements of the M. A. Patout sugar plantation in late nineteenth century Louisiana were shown to be due to the tenacious leadership of Mary Ann, a woman executive in an era where women seldom played such a role. Finally in a special essay, our book review editor, Dr. Jim McSwain, undertakes to place four regional travel narratives in the broader context of such accounts written since ancient times. In the end he concludes that a man's most important journey lies within his own mind and that alone makes physical travel meaningful and comprehensible.

An issue devoted to things that were not, could not, or need not have been? No, it is an issue that reminds us that there is a lot to be learned even when things go awry or do not go at all, and that history teaches us not to be too sure of ourselves and our values. We may also be reminded not to take ourselves too seriously. The articles are all interesting and coupled with a large number of excellent book reviews promise a fine issue. In the end "From the Archives" describes a very real place, the University of South Alabama Archives, where, among other things, most of the illustrations for this journal were made.

We hope you enjoy this issue and our excursion into a world of sea monsters, imaginary canals, reconstructions that failed, and other ironies of a history that evades simplistic definition while retaining its fascination for us.

*The Gulf Coast Historical Review* takes pleasure in recording the following:

Certificate of Commendation presented to the *Gulf Coast Historical Review* for providing a scholarly forum for the research and dissemination of the history of the Gulf Coast region, presented by the Mobile Historic Development Commission, December, 1990.

The Florida Historical Society announces the publication of *Journeys for the Junior Historian* in September, 1991. It is a magazine dedicated to educating youths in grades K-6 about Florida's rich heritage.

*Journeys for the Junior Historian* is edited by Professor Lucy Fuchs of Saint Leo College. Professor Fuchs, a well-known author of mystery stories for children, stressed the objectives of the new magazine in a recent interview. "The magazine will emphasize learning history, developing reading skills, and intellectual exploration through the combination of fun activities, such as games, and factual materials." Fuchs went on to describe the first issue as "being a sound academic journal, but one that is full of fun. It concentrates on pre-Columbus Native Americans, dinosaurs, what life was like as a Florida child in 1740, and Florida cowboys."

*Journeys for the Junior Historian* is available by subscription from the Florida Historical Society. The cost is only \$5.00, and youthful subscribers will receive three issues of the magazine, a wallet-sized membership card, and an ornate certificate of membership. Subscriptions can be mailed to the Society at P.O. Box 29017, Tampa, FL 33687-0197.

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*Manatee*

Harper's New Monthly Magazine 42 (March 1871).  
Special Collections  
University of West Florida Library

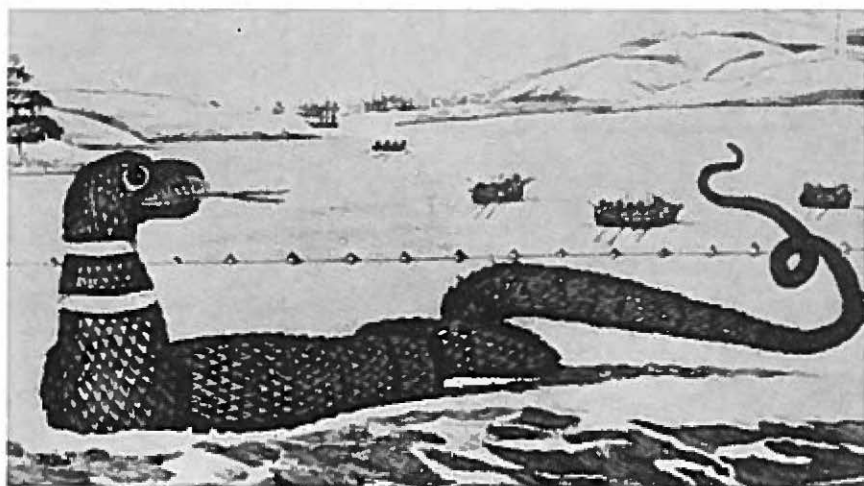
## Close Encounter With a Creature “of the Finny Tribe”: Louisiana’s Sea Monster Sighting of 1856

Carl A. Brasseaux and H. Dickson Hoese

America’s fascination with tales of the bizarre and the unknown is by no means a new phenomenon. Throughout the antebellum period, sea serpent tales generated the same degree of interest in American newspaper readers that UFO, Sasquatch, and Yeti stories presently command. And popular interest in sea serpents has endured, largely because of periodic sightings and international fascination with the search for the Loch Ness monster. In recent years, several documentaries, books, and popular articles have chronicled the search for “Nessie” and other less newsworthy, but equally mysterious, sea creatures reported throughout the world. The June 1991 issue of the *National Fisherman*, for example, features one such article on late twentieth-century American sea-monster sightings.<sup>1</sup>

Widespread American interest in sea serpent sightings is generally believed to have begun in August 1817, when approximately three hundred reputable residents of coastal Massachusetts villages claimed to have seen a dark brown, smooth-skinned creature which moved by means of vertical undulations of its sixty foot long, serpentine body.<sup>2</sup> Many additional sightings of the “Gloucester Sea Serpent,” as it quickly came to be known, were made near Gloucester during the next two years, and additional reports were made in New England and in Maritime Canada as late as 1840.<sup>3</sup>

While the Gloucester sea serpent became a virtual cause célèbre of American science and provided material for transatlantic debate, reports of strange sea creatures began to surface in other maritime regions. The first were in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea and later in the South Atlantic from the early 1830s through the 1850s.<sup>4</sup>



*Gloucester Sea Serpent, 1817*

*Reprinted from Heuvelmans,  
In the Wake of the Sea Serpents*

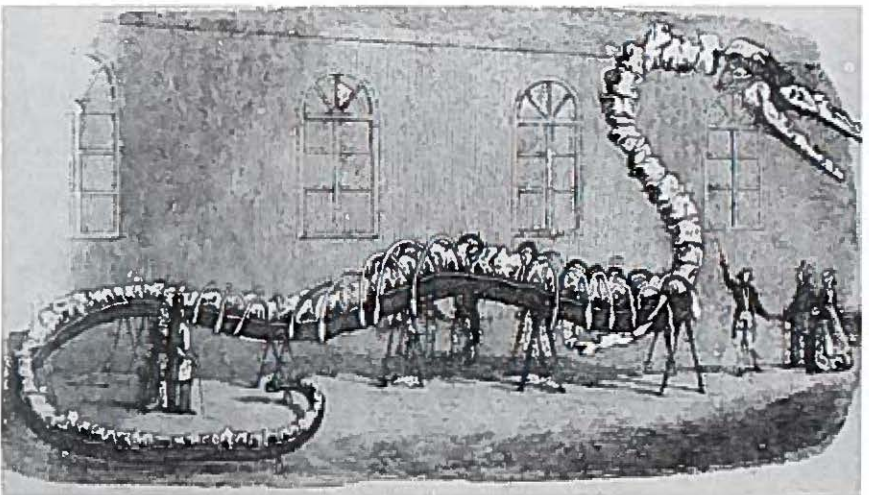


A remarkable variety of animals were described in antebellum sea serpent tales. Most of these creatures are readily identifiable as giant squid, basking sharks, oarfish, manatees, manta rays, mobulas, whale sharks, and other well-known marine fauna, but, as with contemporary UFO stories, a sufficient number of unexplainable reports surfaced to keep alive popular interest in, and popular controversy over, sea serpent stories. <sup>5</sup>

Popular skepticism was initially aroused by the first major American inquiry into sightings of the mysterious sea creatures. Ignoring all but one of the numerous eyewitness accounts of the 1817 Massachusetts sea serpent sightings, collected by its hand-picked representatives, the Linnean Society of New England identified the creature as an enormous black snake, basing its conclusions on a tall tale spun by person known to be of dubious reliability. <sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, the Linnean Society's findings were soon dismissed as completely unfounded by leading European zoologists. Therefore the society, and its attempt to identify the creature in quixotical fashion, became the subject of ridicule on both sides of the Atlantic.

The gullibility of the Linnean Society, the inability of curiosity seekers to capture or kill a young specimen of the sea serpent, the monster's reputed ability to repel bullets, and the almost incessant public feuding of naturalists and ichthyologists over the probable identity of the frequently sighted beast quickly disillusioned the man on the street. According to one scholar the public "preferred to disbelieve the whole thing." <sup>7</sup> Popular apathy, however, in no way impeded either the ongoing scientific debate over the possible existence and identity of the sea serpent or the journalistic coverage of the debate and the recurring sightings. All continued unabated.

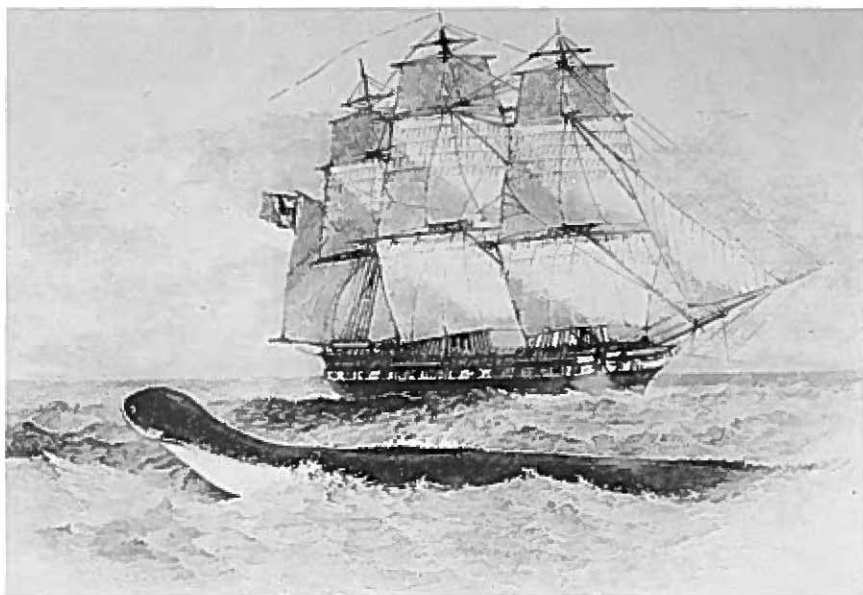
Intensifying the smoldering controversy surrounding the sea monster sightings were numerous hoaxes perpetrated by individuals inside and outside the American scientific community. In New York in 1845, Dr. Albert Carl Koch displayed



*Dr. Koch's Hydragos sillimanii, 1845*

*Reprinted from Bernard Heuvelmans, In the Wake of the Sea Serpents (New York, 1968)*

for public viewing what he claimed to be a carefully reconstructed, fully intact skeleton of a sea serpent. The 114 foot long, serpentine skeleton possessed front flippers, a long erect neck, a large head with long jaws and fierce-looking teeth, and the characteristic vertical undulations of the spine. The skeleton, shown to thousands of New York and London curiosity seekers at a cost of twenty-five cents per head, was demonstrated, upon examination by reputable zoologists, to be a cunning hoax. It consisted of bones from various species, including the fossilized remains of a prehistoric whale. <sup>8</sup>



*HMS Daedalus and its sea serpent*

*Reprinted from R. T. Gould,  
The Case for the Sea Serpents (London, 1930)*

The hoax elicited a storm of criticism from the scientific community and the sea serpent phenomenon consequently fell into a state of scholarly and popular disrepute. Then in 1848, several officers and sailors aboard the HMS *Daedalus* reported—to the detriment of their military careers—a sea serpent sighting in the south Atlantic. <sup>9</sup> The report of the *Daedalus* officers temporarily stemmed the rising tide of scholarly and popular skepticism and reignited the long-standing controversy. Concomitantly, public interest, fueled by the controversy and uninterrupted sightings, rose over the course of the following decade. <sup>10</sup>

It was at this juncture that Louisiana experienced its first recorded sea monster sighting, reported in the news article set out below:

A HUGE FISH. Mr. Martial Ogeron gives us the following description of a monster of the finny tribe lately killed by him off the mouth of the Lafourche in the breakers: Length of the body from point of nose to the tail, 14 feet; length of tail, 6 feet; extreme width on the back, 20 feet; thickness

from top of back to bottom of belly, 7 feet; width of mouth 3 feet 6 inches, with horns on either side, 3 feet long; cavity of brain, 9 by 16 inches.

This huge monster, when killed, was lying with his mouth open catching small fish, on which it is supposed to subsist. It was shot through the head at the distance of about five paces, and immediately sunk to the bottom. It was then fastened to, and towed in to shore, where it was dissected for the purpose of being converted to oil; but a storm arising, the captor was forced to abandon the project and fly for safety. Its liver was the size of a rice cask. The exterior of this fish was covered with a skin resembling more that of an elephant than anything else to which we can compare it.

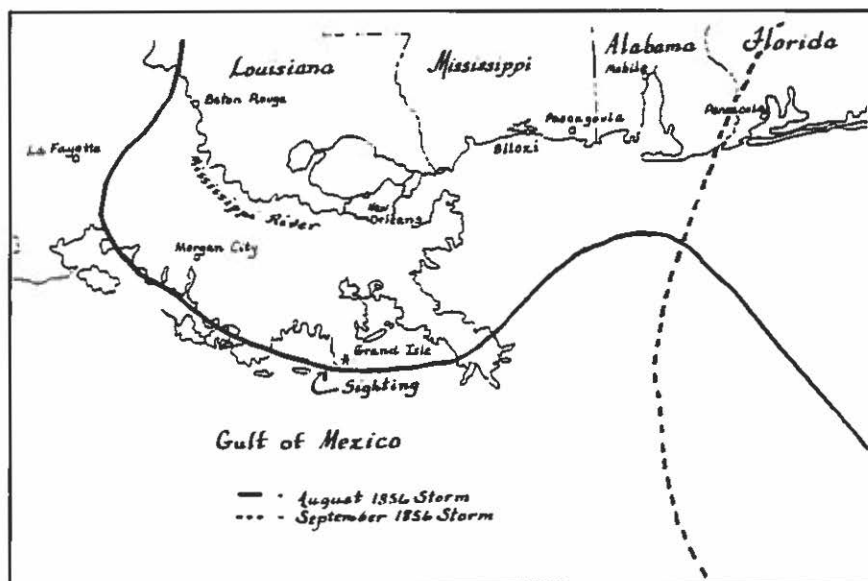
Mr. Ogeron is a seafaring man, and says he has never before seen a fish of this description in our waters. What kind of a fish is it, and where did it come from? Let us hear from you, naturalists! [From the *Thibodaux Minerva*]

We have not a doubt but this is the veritable devil fish, so common on the shores of our southern Atlantic States, and noted for his devilish [*sic*] pranks with boats' anchors, etc. There is a book somewhere entitled, we believe, "Devil Fishing on the Coast of the Carolinas." If you can find it, Miss Minerva, you may be thoroughly enlightened. [Ed. *Ceres*] <sup>11</sup>

There is circumstantial evidence that the sighting described above resulted, at least in part, from two major hurricanes in eastern Gulf of Mexico during the late summer and fall of 1856. The first and most famous of these storms was the so-called Last Island storm of August 9-10, 1856. <sup>12</sup> It apparently formed in the extreme southeastern Gulf of Mexico sometime between July 31 and August 8 and subsequently moved steadily toward the northwest. <sup>13</sup> The storm veered due west and gained speed as it approached the Alabama coastline on Saturday, August 9. Striking a glancing blow at Mobile, the hurricane moved directly toward the mouth of the Mississippi River, then turned westward, following the Louisiana coastline as far as Franklin, before turning north toward Vermilionville. <sup>14</sup> After ravaging south-central Louisiana, it turned to the northeast causing considerable damage at Bayou Sara, then veered northward and struck Natchez, Mississippi, and New Carthage, Louisiana. <sup>15</sup>

The storm, characterized by eyewitnesses along the Louisiana coast as the most powerful hurricane in living memory, caused extensive property damage throughout the lower Mississippi Valley. <sup>16</sup> Nowhere was the storm's fury felt more forcefully than at the Last Island resort off the coast of Terrebonne Parish. There during the afternoon of August 9, northerly gales inundated the resort with water from Lake Pelto, a coastal estuary north of the barrier island. <sup>17</sup> Then, following a reversal of wind direction marking the storm's westerly passage, the island was submerged beneath a massive tidal surge. That surge carried many of the approximately 140 human victims at least six miles inland. <sup>18</sup> The storm's wind and waves continued to pound the island well into the following day.

The destructive effects of wind and surf were not confined to the Last Island area. Indeed the storm's fury was felt no less intensely at the nearby mouth of Bayou Lafourche, where Martial Ogeron's mysterious sea creature would later be found. <sup>19</sup>



*Louisiana storm tracks and sea serpent sighting*

*Map by Jerry Dixon*

Coastal Louisiana had hardly begun to recover from the Last Island storm when a second major hurricane of nearly equal destructive power approached the Gulf Coast. This storm, known as the "Southeastern States Hurricane of 1856," formed east of Cuba sometime before August 27. The storm entered the Gulf of Mexico via the Florida Straits on the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth, inflicting considerable wind damage on Key West and southeastern Cuba. It appears to have meandered throughout the eastern Gulf on the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth before making landfall at Panama City, Florida on the thirtieth. On the twenty-ninth, the storm was sufficiently close to the Pelican State to damage numerous sea-going vessels along the southeastern Louisiana coast. The heavy seas it generated, like the tidal action sustained by its more famous predecessor, inevitably had an impact upon the Louisiana coastline.<sup>20</sup>

Hurricanes such as the powerful 1856 storms have a marked effect on the waters lying in their course. While there is no proof that the animal was hurricane-transported, the fact that local fishermen were unfamiliar with it suggests that it was. Though normally occurring in offshore waters, Manta rays have been reported near the mouth of the Mississippi River.<sup>21</sup> They are more often seen close to shore in southern Texas and Florida where clear, warm oceanic-type waters sometimes are present near the coastline. Though few accounts exist demonstrating such phenomena in Louisiana, horizontal advective movements are a common feature of hurricanes.<sup>22</sup> A group of rare clymene porpoises, normally inhabiting oceanic waters, were stranded near Point au Fer after Hurricane Juan in 1985.<sup>23</sup> Considerable movement of fishes, including introduction of unusual varieties, were noted after storms in Florida and Texas.<sup>24</sup> The storm's

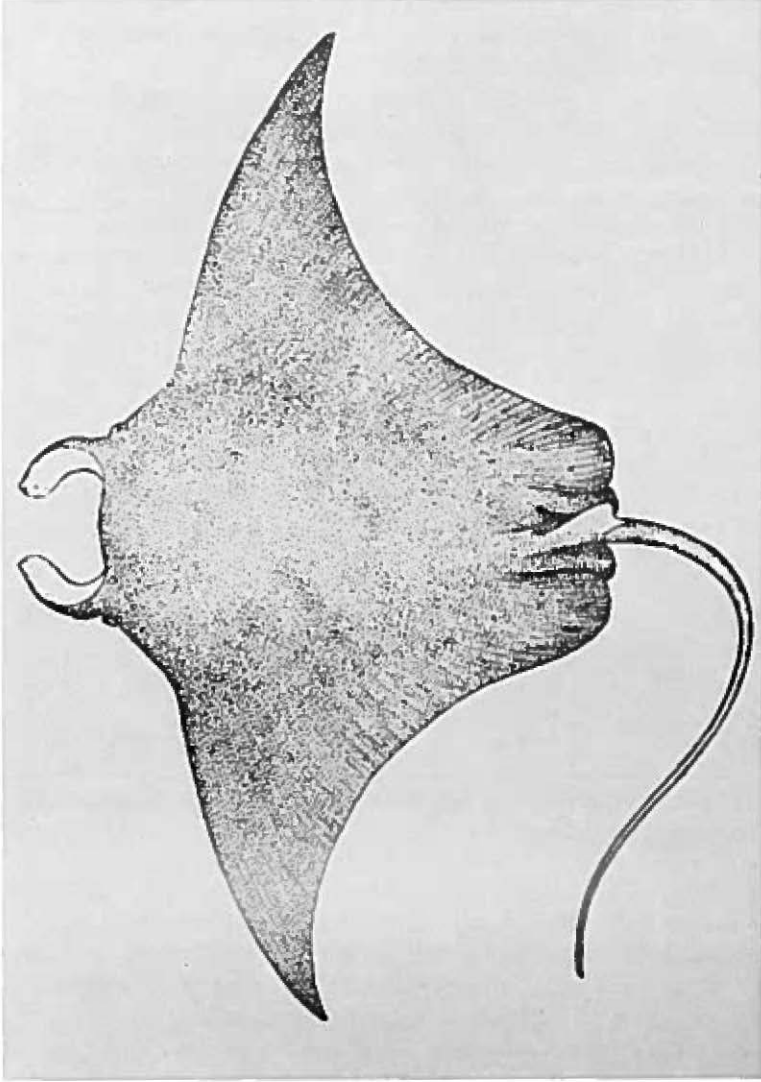
track to the south and west of the delta would have put that area in its northeast quadrant where winds would have been easterly, easily explaining movements from off the river to Lafourche, a distance of about forty miles. While water temperatures of the area would be depressed, they would still be around seventy degrees.<sup>25</sup> There was undoubtedly a similar movement of water and fauna during the Last Island Hurricane. Any of these storm-induced changes could have contributed directly to the presence of the sea creature identified in the *Minerva* article.

It is hardly surprising that the encounter with a sea monster was reported by both the *Thibodaux Minerva* and the Houma *Ceres*, newspapers that had traditionally exhibited the most interest in maritime affairs among Louisiana's rural antebellum weeklies. Though the editors, bitter political and economic rivals competing for the region's tiny potential readership, differed personally in many respects, they shared a common interest in natural history and natural science, as is seen perhaps most clearly in the caustic postscript added by the *Ceres*'s editor.<sup>26</sup>

The *Ceres*'s editor's powers of deduction were indeed formidable, for only two creatures in the animal kingdom could conceivably fit the detailed description furnished by the *Thibodaux Minerva*, one of them being the "devil fish," or giant devil ray (*Manta birostris*) as it is more correctly known. While sharing the distinctive deltoid shape and tail of all other Atlantic rays, the giant devil ray, which attains a maximum breadth of over twenty-one feet between pectoral fin (i.e., wing) tips, has one distinctive feature—twin cephalic fins resembling "horns."<sup>27</sup> Located on opposite ends of the creature's mouth, directly in front of the ray's side-mounted eyes, the small cephalic fins aid the fish in steering and also push food into the ray's mouth, automatically retracting toward that orifice whenever coming into contact with any object. Once retracted, the fin remains taut until the object is consumed. It is in this manner, as suggested by the editor of the *Ceres*, that giant devil rays occasionally become entangled in anchor chains.

Giant devil rays may inhabit shoal waters within a few miles of the mainland, but in the northern Gulf of Mexico, they generally occur offshore in clear, more tropical waters away from the muddy discharge of the Mississippi River. While these creatures may be found at various depths, they frequently surface to bask and to feed, "by swimming open-mouthed through whatever schools of small fishes or planktonic crustacea they may meet." While visible along the surface, these rays are usually unaggressive toward humans and have reportedly been so "unwary that it is easy to approach one closely in a small boat."<sup>28</sup> They are sometimes hunted in tropical regions for their livers, which, as in the case of the creature in the *Minerva* article, are boiled into oil, and their skin, which is used as a primitive abrasive.

While many of the giant devil ray's features resemble those of the creature killed by Martial Ogeron, some important characteristics, such as the elephantine skin, do not. The skin of a giant devil ray is covered with small tubercles and has a texture more reminiscent of sandpaper than of elephant skin. However,



*Manta Ray or Sea Devil*

*Louisiana Department of Conservation,  
Fishes and Fishing in Louisiana,  
Bulletin 23 (New Orleans, 1933)*

it is unlikely that anyone who saw the sea creature had ever seen an elephant and thus would hardly have known what an elephant's hide was like. Also, while it is possible that the 1856 storm caused a temporary incursion of so-called "blue [clear] water" from the deep regions of the Gulf large rays were rarely seen so close to the coast. By November the 1856 storm surge had long since passed and other lingering effects of the August storm had drastically abated. It is thus by no means certain that the necessary "blue water" conditions existed near the mouth of Bayou Lafourche three months later.<sup>29</sup>

The identity of the creature killed by Ogeron consequently remains uncertain. It probably was a giant devil ray, but the elephant skin and thick body suggests the possibility of a West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), more commonly known as the sea cow. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, individual manatees have migrated periodically from their natural habitat in South Florida to coastal Louisiana.<sup>30</sup> Like the beast killed in the breakers near the mouth of Bayou Lafourche, they are covered with a thick, wrinkled skin resembling that of elephants. Table 1 shows the quantitative features mentioned in the article compared to that of study specimens of manta rays and manatees.<sup>31</sup>

Table 1  
Comparison of Stated Measurements  
of Lafourche Sea Monster and Study Specimens  
(Numbers are in percentage of maximum breadth)

|                       | Sea Monster | Manta Rays | Manatees      |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Length                | 70          | 45         | 390 (A) Mouth |
| Breadth               | 18          | 15         | 50 (B)        |
| Tail length           | 30          | 38         | 99            |
| Thickness             | 35          | 15-27      | —             |
| Cephalic fins (horns) | 15          | 15         | 100 (B)       |

(A) This would be approximately cut in half if the width included the appendages.

(B) Estimates based on drawings.

While the body of the Lafourche monster is too long for its breadth and too thick in comparison with a manta ray, the other measurements are consistent for known lengths. Since a storm intruded preventing retrieval of the specimen, the measurements would have been estimates made during trying conditions. Thickness, often variable, might have been the most difficult parameter to determine. The length appears half again too long for a ray but would be even more extreme for a manatee. The elephant skin, a better description for a manatee, while a poor choice, still might describe the manta. Manta do feed on fishes as noted for the monster, while manatees are well established vegetarians.

In the unlikely event that the animal killed by Martial Ogeron was indeed a manatee, then this would constitute the first documented sighting of a sea cow in Louisiana. G. H. Lowery, Jr., author of the most comprehensive listing of Louisiana manatee sightings presently available indicates that the first known

encounter occurred in January 1929, when a sea cow was captured in Calcasieu Lake. Another manatee was spotted in Sabine Lake in 1941. Several other manatees were sighted in southern Louisiana during the 1970s; in the Mississippi River at Norco, April 8, 1975; in the swamps near Morgan City, July 10, 1976; and in the Gulf of Mexico, 12 miles west of Breton Island, July 4, 1979.<sup>32</sup>

Most, if not all, of these migrating herbivores died in Louisiana's coastal waters, victims of the Pelican State's winters which are sufficiently cold to kill the aquatic flora that sustain them. Too weak to return to Florida, these gentle creatures slowly die of "anorexia and probable cold stress."<sup>33</sup> Such seems to have been the fate of the 1856 sea monster. The dying creature could also have been injured by the 1856 hurricane's massive tidal surge, and festering wounds exposing the portions of the skull could possibly account for the "horns" mentioned in Ogeron's description of the animal. Such an injury could conceivably have prevented a manatee from returning to the protected waters of the bayou.

Such physical aberrations as "horns," however, are more characteristic of the features of the devilfish, or giant ray, as are the dimensions of the back and spine. But not all of the giant ray's physical features match those provided in Ogeron's account; some characteristics, such as the depth and skin texture of the creature more closely match those of the manatee. Positive identification of the creature is therefore impossible. Unfortunately for historians and naturalists, the true identity of Louisiana's first sea monster may never be known.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Bernard Heuvelmans, *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*, trans. Rupert Hart-Davis (New York, 1968); John Grissim, "There's Something Out There!" *National Fisherman* (June 1991): 81-84.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 170-73, 176-78; New Orleans *Louisiana Gazette*, August 23, September 1, 1823. For a recent account of the controversy over the Gloucester Sea Serpent and its general acceptance by the American scientific community, see Clendon Michael Brown, "A Natural History of the Gloucester Sea Serpent: Knowledge, Power, and the Culture of Science in Antebellum America," *American Quarterly* 42 (September 1990): 402-36.

<sup>4</sup> Heuvelmans, *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*, 178-79.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-79, 180-81.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 149-54.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 172-74.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>9</sup> R. T. Gould, *The Case for the Sea-Serpent* (London, 1930), 94-128.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 133-40; Tim Dinsdale, *The Leviathans* (London, 1966), 68-71.



<sup>11</sup> The editor was apparently referring to Elliott's widely cited *Carolina Sports*, published in 1846, which deals extensively with rays in the Carolinas. Unfortunately, the issue of the *Thibodaux Minerva* containing the original version of this article is no longer extant. The version cited here was reprinted from the *Minerva* by the Houma *Ceres* on November 22, 1856.

<sup>12</sup> For the best accounts of the Last Island storm, see David M. Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes, 1492-1870* (Boston, 1963), 165-71; Walter Prichard, ed., "The Last Island Disaster of August 10, 1856: Personal Narrative of His Experiences by One of the Survivors," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 20 (1937): 690-737; *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 76 (April 1888): 733-67; James M. Sothorn, *Last Island* (Houma, LA, 1980); Edward Rowe Snow, *Great Gales and Dire Disasters* (New York, 1952), 221-29; Lafcadio Hearn, *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* (New York, 1889).

<sup>13</sup> This assertion is based on weather reports made by captains arriving at New Orleans in August 1856. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 8-12, 1856. See particularly the reports regarding Captain Sigsbee of the *Brilliant* and the tardiness of mail packets from Philadelphia in *ibid.*, August 10-12, 1856.

<sup>14</sup> *Daily Picayune*, August 17, 1856.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, August 14, 1856.

<sup>16</sup> The storm destroyed the 1856 sugar crop in south Louisiana. *Ibid.*, August 14, 17, 1856.

<sup>17</sup> For an historical account of the development of the Last Island resort, see Sothorn, *Last Island*, 12-33, 38.

<sup>18</sup> The body count varied tremendously in contemporary accounts. After assessing the primary source accounts, historian David Ludlum determined that the 1856 storm claimed 140 victims at Last Island. Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 169. Sothorn, on the other hand, speculates that 200 to 300 persons perished in the storm. Sothorn, *Last Island*, 50.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, an account of the destruction at nearby Grand Terre Island in the *Daily Picayune*, August 19, 1856.

<sup>20</sup> Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes*, 171-73; *Daily Picayune*, September 3-10, 1856.

<sup>21</sup> Bigelow and Schroeder, *Sawfishes, Guitarfishes, Skates, and Rays*, 509.

<sup>22</sup> T. Ichiye, "Circulation Changes Caused by Hurricanes," in *Contributions on the Physical Oceanography of the Gulf of Mexico*, ed. L. R. A. Capurro, Texas A & M Oceanographic Studies Series, no. 2 (College Station, TX, 1972).

<sup>23</sup> H. D. Hoese, et al., "An Exceptionally Large Porpoise Stranding from Hurricane Juan on the Central Louisiana Coast," *Proceedings of the Louisiana Academy of Sciences* 49 (1986): 60; S. A. Harris, "Beached," *Louisiana Conservationist* 38 (March/April 1986): 18-27.

<sup>24</sup> C. M. Breder, "Effects of a Hurricane on the Small Fishes of a Shallow Bay," *Copeia* (1962): 459-62; C. Hubbs, "Effects of a Hurricane on the Fish Fauna of a Coastal Pool and Drainage Ditch," *Texas Journal of Science* 14 (1962): 289-96.

<sup>25</sup> P. C. Etter and J. D. Cochrane, "Water Temperature on the Texas-Louisiana Shelf," *Marine Advisory Bulletin* (Commerce, TX, 1975).

<sup>26</sup> For example, of the shared interest, see *Thibodaux Minerva*, September 9, 1854; May 3, 1856.

<sup>27</sup> Henry B. Bigelow and William C. Schroeder, *Memoir [of the] Sears Foundation for Marine Research*, no. 1, *Fishes of the Western North Atlantic*, pt. 2, *Sawfishes, Guitarfishes, Skates, and Rays* (New Haven, 1953), 509.

<sup>28</sup> Small mullets are known to be part of the giant devil ray's diet. *Ibid.*, 509.

<sup>29</sup> F. True, "The Sirenians or Sea Cows," in *The Fishery Industry of the U. S.*, sec. 1, *Natural History of Useful Aquatic Animals* (s.l., n.d.), pt. 1, 114-35; James A. Powell and Galen B. Rathbun, "Distribution and Abundance of Manatees Along the Northern Coast of the Gulf of Mexico," *Northeast Gulf Science* 7 (1984): 1-28.

<sup>30</sup> Bigelow and Schroeder, *Sawfishes, Guitarfishes, Skates, and Rays*, 509.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, D. P. Quiring and C. F. Harlan, "On the Anatomy of the Manatee," *The Manatee Journal of Mammalogy* 34 (1953): 192-203.

<sup>32</sup> Powell and Rathbun, "Distribution and Abundance of Manatees," 6, 7.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

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## No Compromise: The End of Presidential Reconstruction in Mobile, Alabama, January-May, 1867

Joseph E. Brent



*Robert H. Slough*

*Museum of the  
City of Mobile*

In early April 1865, Abraham Lincoln was still president of the United States and the Confederacy was all but defeated. As that spring brought an end to the hopes for a southern nation it also brought that defeat home to Alabama's port city. Ironically, Mobile's final day as a member of the southern Confederacy, April 12, 1865, was a breezy, sunlit one. Mayor Robert H. Slough was no doubt distracted as he bounced uncomfortably down the Bay Shell Road in the wagon that carried him to the Union lines. Around noon the mayor reached the old race course where the federal army was assembled. There, on the outskirts of town, he surrendered the port city. The army allowed Slough and his administration to remain as the civil authorities. This arrange-

ment, the Union commander reasoned, would better relations with the local inhabitants. It also was the easiest course to take. The city would operate under these terms for the next two years. <sup>1</sup>

During that time Mobile would play an important part in an era that has drawn the attention of southern historians ever since. The historiography of Reconstruction has evolved considerably during this century and interpretations have been modified accordingly. Mobile's experience during the first two years of Reconstruction serves as a case study to examine the prevailing theories of Presidential Reconstruction as it was fairly typical of cities of similar size. Surrendering so late in the war it was not a part of the wartime experimentation, but part of the overall postwar process.

The historiography of Reconstruction began under the direction of William Dunning of Columbia University in the early part of this century. The Dunning School viewed Reconstruction on moral grounds, a classic study of good versus evil. In the Dunning scenario vindictive Radical Republicans punished the South by stripping the southern conservatives of their power and status and building a Republican regime using the freedmen as pawns. Arguing that the South should

have been restored quickly to the Union under the leadership of conservative white Southerners, the Dunning School held sway for decades. It was finally challenged in the 1950s and 1960s by Kenneth Stampp, John Hope Franklin, and C. Van Woodward. The Revisionists, as these and other scholars came to be known, drew a much more complex portrait of the postwar South, although they, too, generally focused upon the Radical Reconstruction era. Thus they looked at the period which began after the passage of the First Congressional Reconstruction Act in March 1867, and ended with the Compromise of 1877 which marked a final end to the federal government's active involvement in the political process of the southern states.

More recently historians have turned their attention to Andrew Johnson and his Reconstruction policies. From this scholarship two theories have emerged. The earliest of these interpretations was presented by Eric McKittrick. He suggests that Southerners were overwhelmed with a ". . . widespread sense of shock, amounting virtually to apathy. . . ." The defeated, resigned states would have done whatever Johnson demanded and a real Reconstruction could have been concluded quickly and easily. Instead, the president suggested, hoped, and trusted in God but gave no decisive leadership.<sup>2</sup>

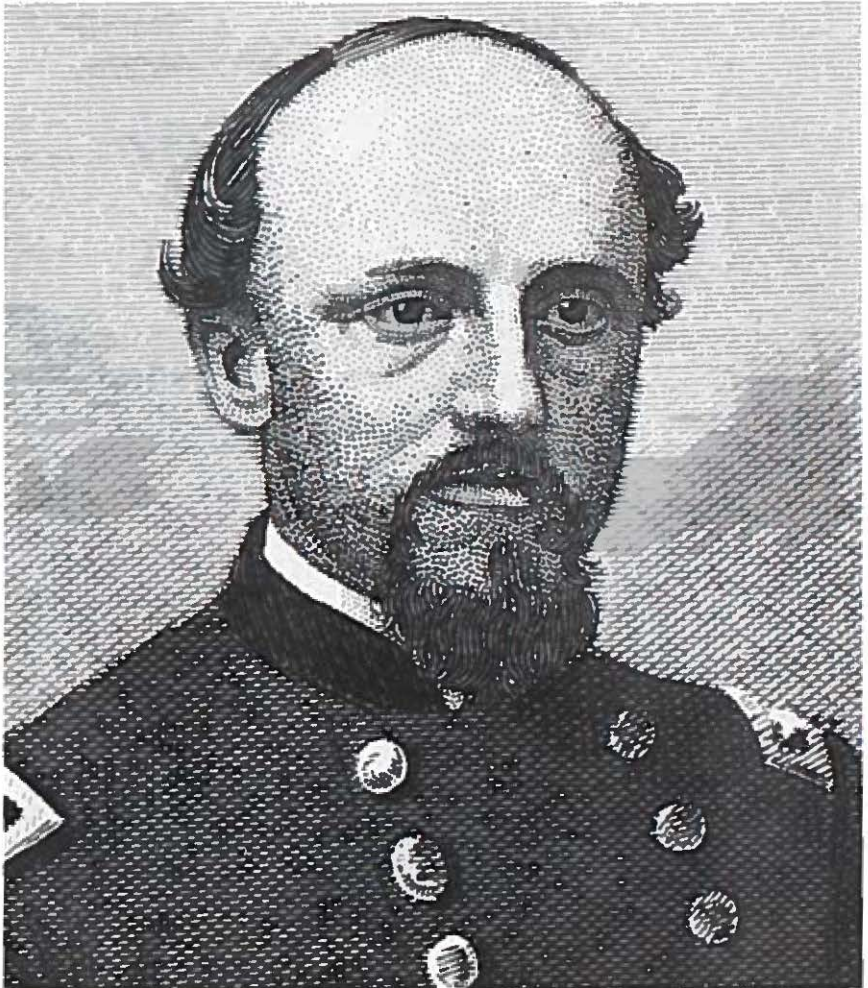
Michael Perman dismisses McKittrick's whole "shock of defeat" theory claiming that any sort of moderate Reconstruction policy was doomed to failure because of the opposition of the former Confederates who still held positions of influence in the South. As long as the conservatives held the economic power they could control the region; they were at no time malleable and never were in a mood to compromise. They wanted reunion, but only on their terms. A moderate policy, even one including limited suffrage requirements, could not have changed the situation.<sup>3</sup>

In the most important work on Reconstruction in over a decade, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877*, Eric Foner leans toward the McKittrick thesis. He sees Johnson as a man who was caught up in his own prejudices, and once it became clear to the South that he favored a "white man's government" even a token gesture to the Radical Republicans was out of the question. Following the president's lead, conservative Southerners refused to compromise and their position led to Congressional Reconstruction and Johnson's impeachment. Foner points out that: "Lincoln . . . would have never allowed his own position to be compromised by the shortcomings of the South."<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately Abraham Lincoln was not around to direct Reconstruction.

If much of the historiographic controversy turns on the question of the attitudes of white Southerners in the years immediately after Appomattox, a closer examination of one city's experience may help us understand those attitudes better. Indeed the views of Mobilians became evident as early as July 1865 when Mayor Slough, serving as justice of the Mayor's Court, dismissed a case rather than hear the testimony of a black man. The majority of the city's whites probably agreed with the mayor, but the decision was not well received by the federal authorities. It was particularly annoying to Brigadier General Wager T. Swayne,

who immediately issued an order that specifically stated that black testimony would be heard in all civilian courts. <sup>5</sup>

General Swayne was the assistant commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands for Alabama. He was a native of Ohio with an excellent war record. At the Battle of Corinth he was promoted for gallantry. During the Atlanta campaign he was given a colonelcy and a brigade command. Swayne lost a leg in the winter of 1865 at Beaufort, South Carolina defending a bridge that the Confederates were trying desperately to destroy. By March 1865 his service to the Union won him a general's star. Wager Swayne's war record, his moral convictions, and his friendship with General O. O. Howard helped the general obtain the post of assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama. <sup>6</sup>



*Wager T. Swayne*

*Whitelaw Reid,  
Ohio in the War (New York, 1868)*



Jones M. Withers

*Museum of the  
City of Mobile*



Albert Griffin *Riley County Historical  
Society, Manhattan, Kansas*

Swayne took his assignment seriously and he acted swiftly and decisively on the issue of black testimony. The assistant commissioner's order that testimony would be heard brought an equally rapid response from Mayor Slough who resigned rather than bow to the ruling. Within two weeks of the mayor's resignation Slough was replaced as chief magistrate by John Forsyth. In keeping with the general policy of *laissez faire* already established by the military, the new mayor would only fill the remainder of Slough's term. On December 1, 1865, Jones M. Withers, a former Confederate general was elected mayor. That winter a weekly Republican newspaper, the *Nationalist*, began publication in Mobile. The newspaper was edited by a friend of the freedmen, Albert Griffin. But nothing had really changed. The testimony of the freedmen was heard, but not listened to, and former slaves often found themselves on chain gangs filling in the old entrenchments as a result of their courtroom experiences.<sup>7</sup>

This situation was not improved with the enactment of the new city charter in February 1866. Old vagrancy laws remained intact, with the maximum sentence raised from four to six months. The city vigorously enforced its vagrancy laws, statutes originally intended to keep undesirables out of the city. What they actually did was to oblige the former slaves to perform uncompensated work on the city streets. The city's black population grew in the postwar period as former slaves exercised their new freedom and came down river to the port city. They were seeking opportunity, jobs, and a better way of life. What they found was poverty, chain gangs, and laws designed to coerce them to work. The *Nationalist* denounced the laws as unfair while the city's dailies applauded them. The *Mobile Times* and the *Advertiser and Register* gleefully reported the plight of the freedmen, varying only in the degree of their scorn for the former slaves. An

Alabamian in Baldwin County offered this observation on the condition of Mobile's black population "The Freedmen's Bureau are having much trouble regulating the negro. I do not know what is to become of the poor creatures, some are so worthless that they would rather starve than work, some will hire and do tolerable well, others go to house keeping sicken and die. . . ." There was very little sympathy on the part of the white population in Mobile for the plight of the freedmen. <sup>8</sup>

By 1867 much had changed, Andrew Johnson had lost control of Congress and that august body was on the verge of altering the rules of the game radically. In the face of this, John Forsyth's *Advertiser and Register*, greeted the new year by blasting the congressional Republicans: "Do we wish that Radical rule and policy shall be permanently established in this government? Say they will take away our governments and territorialize us—let them if they choose and dare." <sup>9</sup>

Southerners refused to take the easy way out. Like Andrew Johnson they opposed the Fourteenth Amendment. Every southern state, except Tennessee, rejected it. The populace of the South, after two years of conservative Reconstruction policy, simply was not ready to accept the constitutional changes being proposed in 1867. The *Mobile Tribune* of January 14, 1867 underscored the position Southerners were taking: "We shall not submit to the humiliation which, happily for us, they have agreed to allow us to accept or reject." <sup>10</sup>

## The Mobile Daily Tribune.

## The Nationalist.

*University of South Alabama Archives*

The dilemma of the *Nationalist* in 1867 shed light on Mobilians' attitude toward the Republican party and its spokesmen. The newspaper had not found fertile ground in Mobile; its existence was threatened not by physical violence but by economic coercion. The paper even went so far as to lower its subscription rates in order to reach a wider audience. Unfortunately, the real problem was not circulation, but rather a lack of advertisers. People who bought space in the weekly were socially ostracized and their businesses boycotted. <sup>11</sup>

Yet the political situation for the conservatives in Mobile was becoming desperate. It was only a matter of time before those motivated by the local spirit of defiance collided with the occupation forces. The inevitable confrontation took place on the first day of March 1867. The catalyst was a funeral, not an uncommon occurrence in the port city, but this particular requiem would not go unnoticed.

The deceased was William Smith, who had been a fireman in Mobile and a captain in the Confederate Army. In the Confederate service he had commanded a company in the 24th Alabama Regiment; he was killed while performing that duty during the Battle of Stones River. Originally his remains had been buried in Tennessee but his family and friends had the body disinterred and brought back to Mobile for burial in Church Street Cemetery. Members of the Mobile Fire Department Association were among the participants in the funeral procession honoring Smith. Everything proceeded smoothly until the parade attempted to pass down Government Street where the federal garrison was housed. At this point Colonel O. L. Shepherd, the post commander, ordered the memorial train to find another route.<sup>12</sup>

Several days later Colonel Shepherd explained why he had forced the funeral parade to turn around. The federal officer felt that the march was much too lavish to be anything other than a military funeral. He believed that to allow the procession to pass the barracks would be an insult to troops stationed there and to the flag. The post commandant also took offence at the wording of a newspaper article reporting that Captain Smith had died for his country. The colonel questioned that notion and wished to know for what "country" the captain had died.<sup>13</sup>

The local press was incensed. According to the *Advertiser and Register* there were no trappings or fanfare that would have led Colonel Shepherd to believe that it was a military funeral. The paper did, however, concede that the Mobile Fire Association (known for quasi-military funerals) was involved. In a response to Colonel Shepherd's printed account, editor John Forsyth explained that he thought that the post commandant's letter was inflammatory, but that it would have been unwise not to print it. Yet, he blasted the officer for what he had done and challenged him to "take off the gloves." Shepherd in turn threatened to post a guard at 12 Royal Street, the newspaper's office.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps Shepherd and Forsyth overreacted. It was after all only a funeral to reinter a fallen soldier. It is likely that the hostility of the citizenry toward the federal government coupled with their reverence for the Confederacy caused the colonel to take offence, which, in turn, prompted the response from the newspaper. Regardless, the incident demonstrates the highly charged atmosphere that existed in Mobile in that spring of 1867.

Coincidentally, the funeral took place one day before the passage of the First Reconstruction Act. The congressional action forced the leading conservatives in Mobile to realize that the time had come to befriend the freedmen, or at least secure their vote. The Congressional Reconstruction Acts and the disfranchisement clause of the Fourteenth Amendment meant that delegates to the new constitutional convention specified in the Reconstruction acts would be chosen mostly by freedmen and white Republicans. The Democrats understood that if any of their delegates were to be elected they would have to have the freedmen's vote. Suddenly the editorial stance of the conservative press took on a whole new tack.<sup>15</sup>



Forsyth's *Advertiser and Register* urged its readers to appeal to the blacks as Southerners. The Democratic press urged white Mobilians to be patient, "this is no time to seek to alienate the black race of the South in feeling from the white." The sudden change in the editorial policy and the attempts to lure blacks into the Democratic fold was a direct result of the change in the Reconstruction policy begun by Congress. The *Advertiser and Register* held that the freedmen were being harangued by "certain white men" and it was these men who had turned the blacks against their true friends. In part this was true. The Republican party in Mobile was controlled by white radicals who stepped in to befriend the freedmen in the city. It was also the vagrancy acts, the chain gangs, and other coercive practices of the city government that had driven a wedge between black and white Mobilians.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the overtly conciliatory efforts on the part of the *Advertiser and Register*, blacks joined forces with the Republicans. On March 4, 1867, a mixed racial group met and organized a Union League in Mobile. Within two weeks black membership in the league numbered some twenty-five hundred, (nearly one-fourth of the total black population). The Union League was designed to be a political party "which shall . . . provide for security and protection of . . . political rights and privileges." This, the earliest and most militant incarnation of the league, was led by two white lawyers, George F. Harrington and William W. D. Turner. Harrington would later serve as mayor and Turner as chief of police.<sup>17</sup>

Problems quickly arose for the freedmen who joined the Union League. White employers began to discharge employees who attended meetings. In addition the three daily newspapers in the city refused to print the league's resolutions, only the *Nationalist* ran the notices. There were other problems as well. Albert Griffin, editor of the *Nationalist* and one of the league's early organizers, complained to General Swayne that they had trouble even securing a room for meetings.<sup>18</sup>

By April confrontations between blacks and whites were becoming more serious and numerous. Violence erupted when black sawyers were urged to strike for higher wages. The reports of the clashes are contradictory but several facts are clear. The scene of the initial incident took place at a sawmill owned by John Jewett and the man pressing for the strike was a mulatto named Wylie Brown. In one report Jewett had Brown arrested for "disorderly conduct and interfering with matters that did not concern him." This report hints that a city official was somehow involved in the arrest. The *Nationalist* account holds that Jewett assaulted Brown, had him tied, tossed upon a wagon, and transported to the guard house. Mayor Withers found the whole episode so outrageous that he freed the black man once he arrived at the jail.<sup>19</sup>

In another labor-related clash, a strike at the docks, the *Nationalist* and the *Advertiser and Register* reported similar details. The papers differ on the motives of those striking. The workers at the docks went on strike and demanded that their wages be raised from twenty-five to fifty cents an hour. The Republican weekly reported the workers struck in order to obtain a decent wage. Due to

an over abundance of laborers there was not enough work to go around, the longshoremen reasoned that if the wage was doubled they could make due with part time work. The *Advertiser and Register* charged that the strike was the work of "bad white men," Harrington and Turner. These men, as the paper put it, were ". . . exciting feuds and perhaps open hostility between the races with a view to their own political and official advancement." <sup>20</sup>

By mid-April Mobile's streetcar companies began to eject ex-slaves or deny them seats on the cars. This segregation, which had not been the case when the blacks were slaves, caused violence in Mobile on Sunday, April 14, 1867. It was the custom for the streetcars to wait outside of the Government Street Presbyterian Church to take the members of the congregation home after worship services. Prior to the end of church service Roderick B. Thomas, a black man, boarded one of the cars, deposited the required fare, and took a seat. The driver told Thomas that he could not ride in the car but he could be accommodated in another one. The black man complied and found a place in the next car. However, once aboard, the driver informed Thomas his orders were to unhitch the horses if any blacks attempted to ride. Thomas insisted that he had a right to ride in the car. Ignoring the freedman's appeal, the driver carried out his instructions. Thomas sat in the disabled conveyance for an hour. Finally, the black man abandoned his seat and walked to the south side of the street where a crowd of freedmen had gathered. Then, as if on cue, whites from the north side of the street rushed to fill the seats in the car; whereupon the driver hurriedly hitched the team and the car began to pull away from the church. Determined to ride the car Thomas dashed across the street and attempted to retake his seat, this act resulted in a violent skirmish. As the black man attempted to board the car he was repulsed by the people in it. One man threatened to blow Thomas's brains out if he did not get off. Another, Thomas Torrance, pushed him from the car. Once expelled from the streetcar Thomas was attacked by a group of whites that had been watching the scene. His attackers in turn were set upon by a group of freedmen who came to Thomas's rescue. The blacks managed to free their friend but were chased off by the white mob. The confrontation ended when the streetcar was out of range. The immediate result of the melee was the arrest of three black men, including Roderick Thomas, and one white man, Thomas Torrance. <sup>21</sup>

Major George Tracy of the Freedmen's Bureau blamed city officials for mishandling the situation. In his report the major points out there were two aldermen, the mayor, and several policemen present who should have kept the peace. In Tracy's opinion the local authorities were more concerned with arresting blacks than in keeping the peace. Major Tracy did give the mayor credit for arresting Torrance, whom he described as the ringleader of the disturbance. <sup>22</sup>

Tracy suggested the freedmen's civil rights would be better served if they took their grievances to court; he in no way approved of public disturbances. The Freedmen's Bureau officials in Montgomery agreed with the major's recommendation. In fact, Wager Swayne urged Tracy to try to induce the street car companies to compromise on the segregation issue. Swayne counseled Tracy

to remind the companies that they could be compelled to desegregate. Albert Griffin agreed totally with the Freedmen's Bureau officials writing: "it was the duty of the colored people to insist quietly upon their rights, opposition was to be expected at first, but it would soon cease." This turned out to be rather wishful thinking.<sup>23</sup>

The incident was just the beginning of the racial problems which plagued the city in April 1867. On April 16 Wager Swayne issued General Order Number Three. The first part of the order revoked the indenture of minors who had been sentenced to labor on plantations. The second was a reminder that the state legislature had repealed the vagrancy laws on February 15. The order also made the use of chain gangs illegal. The directive made it abundantly clear that any further attempts to enforce those revoked statutes would result in military action.<sup>24</sup>

By late April the situation in the city was becoming chaotic. Passage of the Congressional Reconstruction acts, the street car disturbances, and General Order Number Three were heightening tensions in the city. Conservatives tried to form a coalition with the blacks in a last-ditch effort to maintain control. A meeting, with a few blacks in attendance, adopted the following paternalistic resolution: "We are their [freedmen's] friends, both from gratitude for their fidelity in the past . . . and because our interests in the future are inseparably connected." Mayor Withers seemed to grasp the situation when he suggested that Mobilians ". . . must manfully look the situation in the face." Perhaps if the conservatives in the city had looked realistically at the political situation they would have honored their resolution and seriously attempted a partnership with the freedmen. Unfortunately they chose otherwise. The meeting and the resolution were instead a thinly-veiled attempt to retain power in the face of the Reconstruction legislation that was coming out of Washington.<sup>25</sup>

The *Advertiser and Register* hailed the meeting as a great success that proved southern blacks and whites could take care of themselves and work together. The new coalition should "spit in scorn and contempt upon all intermeddler [sic] who seek their own vile advancement by trafficking in bad blood between [blacks and whites]." The *Nationalist* saw the meeting in a different light. The weekly warned its readers to beware those who organized the meeting, for they would try to lead them to believe that the forthcoming Republican meeting was simply a forum conceived by outsiders solely for political gain, at the expense of the freedmen.<sup>26</sup>

The *Nationalist* scoffed at the claims of the conservative gathering as reported in the daily papers. Those papers recorded that some two thousand people attended the meeting. The Republican weekly noted that only about ten percent were black. The story suggested that the freedmen present were there only as a result of coercion on the part of their employers. The *Nationalist* implied that those blacks who were not coerced had come simply out of curiosity, adding "only those remarks which squinted at disloyalty were applauded with any spirit." Albert Griffin concluded that the meeting was indeed a success, but not for the conservatives.<sup>27</sup>

In a letter to Governor Robert Patton Griffin expressed his sentiments regarding the efforts of the conservatives in Mobile: "It is . . . simply nonsense to try to bring over the rebel masses and leaders to a really loyal platform." Griffin, a Northerner by education and sentiment, grew up in Georgia. His family had lived there until they were forced to move because of their anti-slavery views. So the editor, who found the whole notion of a former Confederate and a freedmen coalition ludicrous, spoke not only from his experience in Mobile, but from a lifetime in the South. In a letter sent to the governor, another Alabama Republican agreed with Griffin: "I have no faith in them [the conservatives] and they would, if they obtained power, turn the cold shoulder to . . . the same parties whom they are now courting." This is essentially what they did.<sup>28</sup>

The *Advertiser and Register* wasted little time in ridiculing the Republican meeting which took place on April 17 or 18. The Democratic paper reported that following the gathering a number of the participants discharged their firearms. In a piece of sarcastic prose Forsyth's sheet declared the city's policemen had the duty of protecting the public from those in attendance. Pressing its point, the paper demanded a stricter enforcement of the city's firearm law. "If the city authorities are unable to suppress such disturbances, we appeal to the military to do so."<sup>29</sup>

There was not complete agreement on what occurred following the Republican meeting. C. A. R. Dimon offered a different version in a letter to Governor Patton. Dimon maintained the reports of the papers were exaggerated, especially the *Times*. "I did not see any such exhibition as the *Times* records. All the colored men were quiet and peaceable. And the only shots discharged were by one or two drunken men." The *Nationalist* also reported that only one or two imprudent men fired off pistols. The paper, however, could not blame the freedmen for being armed, as there had been threats to disrupt the meeting. Griffin offered a word of caution, ". . . let us all be careful how we act, and be sure that we keep the law on our side."<sup>30</sup>

There was no abatement in the hostile spirit in Mobile. Conservative whites believed they knew what was best for the blacks. The trouble brewing in the city was a direct result of the Congressional Reconstruction acts that would mean a loss of influence for conservative whites. The Southerners feared that blacks and Republicans would fill the void. As the *Advertiser and Register* said: "The colored man cannot do without the [Southern] white, and he is a fool, and unfit for freedom if he allows any thieving scoundrel to come between him and his best friends."<sup>31</sup>

By May the situation had deteriorated further. On May 2, the Mobile *Times* printed an article which it headed: "Another Diabolical Outrage, The Workings of Equality Teachings, A Whole Family Made Victims." The article was an account of the robbery, rape, and beating of a white family that lived just outside of Mobile. Responsibility for the outrages were put squarely on the shoulders of those who "preach doctrines of social equality to the most ignorant classes, and boast openly that they do it . . . with the knowledge and approval of the military government." The *Advertiser and Register* further warned that a "fearful

vengeance will rest [upon those who had] the responsibility for the drop of blood that flows from their teachings." The *Tribune* chimed in declaring that never had freedmen organized on such a scale for the purpose of violence. J. R. Eggleston's daily declared that the only explanation for the wanton destruction was the "hell-born ideas so industriously disseminated among [the freedmen]." <sup>32</sup>

The *Nationalist* asked, if the Democratic papers were threatening the black people with murder. The dailies, admonished the Republican weekly, appeared to have "the direct intention of inciting some one to murder the handful of imported incendiaries who have been teaching the colored people to reason for themselves." In a letter to General Swayne, Union League president J. R. Eastburn wrote that shameless attempts were being made to promote lynching, not to punish the people who committed the crimes, "but against those who it is insidiously argued have taught colored people to do these things by so-called preaching of equality." Eastburn was worried by the veiled call for violence by the Democratic press, he felt that it would take very little to set off a "whirlwind of destruction." Literally as a footnote on Eastburn's letter, league secretary Fred Bromberg added "The editorials from the *Register* and the *Tribune* will show that there is to be a general adoption of the *Times* tactics—threat of bloodshed." <sup>33</sup>

On May 14, 1867, a major riot shook Mobile, resulting in severe repercussions for the city. Congressman William D. "Pig-Iron" Kelley of Pennsylvania addressed a crowd of some four thousand people, most of whom were black, at the corner of Royal and Government streets. Kelley's appearance in Mobile was but one stop on a multi-city tour that had brought the congressman to the deep South. Republicans in the city had been anticipating his arrival for sometime. The affair was to be at night and it would be a lavish occasion. The speaker's stand was crowded with over one hundred people, in addition the 15th United States Infantry band was on hand to provide musical entertainment. The flickering of the torches and the gas lights provided a surreal theatrical atmosphere on that hot May evening. <sup>34</sup>

Congressman Kelley began his remarks by denying that he was a member of any faction (in this case the Radical Republicans), but rather a representative of the United States. Slavery, Kelley asserted, was the cornerstone of the Confederacy, he continued quoting Alexander Stephens, who acknowledged that slavery was not only the backbone of the Confederacy, but that the black people knew that the war was being fought to keep them in bondage. The Pennsylvania congressman reminded his listeners that it would have been impossible for him to have made this speech in the city before the war. The disruption of freedom of speech as well as freedom of the press which occurred in the South prior to the war were, Kelley declared, major contributing factors in bringing on the conflict. As long as these freedoms were upheld, he told the crowd, there would never be another civil war. <sup>35</sup>

At this point some of the whites in the crowd began to heckle Kelley with shouts of: "Take him down, put him down, rotten egg him. . . ." The congressman then became rattled and shouted "Fellow citizens, I wish it understood that I have the 15th United States Infantry at my back." Kelley implied that if the

troops in Mobile were not enough to protect him, the United States Army could be summoned.<sup>36</sup>

[From the Mobile Times, 15th.]

## THE RIOT LAST NIGHT.

GREAT EXCITEMENT AND ALARM.

Three Men Killed and a  
Number Wounded.

ATTACK ON THE CITY POLICE.

Arrest of a Well Known Citizen  
of Mobile.

HE IS RELEASED ON \$5000 BAIL.

Details are sketchy, but just before things got completely out of hand, Chief of Police Stephen Charpentier attempted to arrest the ringleader of the hecklers, David Files. Some reports indicate that either a horse or a horse with a wagon were set loose into the crowd causing the initial panic. Colonel O. L. Shepherd's official report indicates that there was an interval of four or five seconds after the first shots while the "crowd attempted to break away from the scene," after which more shots were fired. The duration of the firing and the ensuing melee are unclear, estimates vary from ten minutes to an hour. Sniper fire was

Boston Post, May 22, 1867

Museum of the  
City of Mobile

reported coming from buildings surrounding the speaker's stand, including John Forsyth's house. However, a report in the *Nationalist* makes it clear that John Forsyth was not at home at the time of the riot. But the paper acknowledged that five witnesses swore oaths before Major Tracy that shots did come from the Forsyth's house. On the night of May 14, four men, one of them the editor's son, a nurse, and an infant were inside the house. The end result of the riot was two men killed: Tabril Olsen, a white man, and Samuel Britton, a black man, and at least ten people wounded.<sup>37</sup>

Assessment of the cause of the riot depends upon the source one reads. The *Advertiser and Register* blamed the trouble on Kelley's speech and the freedman who came to the meeting armed. Northern papers were divided on specifics but generally blamed the Democratic press in Mobile. The *Nationalist* shared this opinion "It would not have happened had not the daily papers been filled of late with such villainous attacks upon all who differ upon political matters." The New Orleans *Tribune* agreed. According to its report, "the riot was produced

by the inflammatory articles of the press, especially the *Mobile Times*." Interestingly the *New York Times* held both the Mobile press and Kelley responsible.<sup>38</sup>

The blame was officially placed elsewhere. General Swayne's report of May 28 denounced the city authorities. He found the police guilty of being timid and inefficient, at the very least. The general felt that both freedom of speech and public order had been breached. Swayne assigned responsibility for the disturbance to "an element which is active in the spirit of rebellion." He also complained that only one arrest was made the night of the riot. Swayne ordered Colonel Shepherd to "assume the maintenance of public order." The general commanded his subordinate in Mobile to place guards at the headquarters of the fire companies, outside assemblies were prohibited, and the entire police force was suspended. A *New Orleans Tribune* article reported that a signal from the Neptune Fire Company the night of the riot precipitated the general volley fired at the speakers stand. This and earlier incidents with the fire companies, including the funeral of Captain Smith, no doubt prompted the military action against



*General John Pope*

*University of South Alabama Archives*

the firemen. Finally Swayne “. . . respectfully recommend[ed] that the control of municipal affairs be transferred to persons well known for their continuous loyalty to the United States.”<sup>39</sup>

General John Pope, the commander of the Third Military District, blamed the mayor for not being on the scene with sufficient police, and for either sympathizing with the instigators or for incompetence. Pope wrote: “It certainly is not to be attributed to the zeal or conduct of these functionaries that the riot did not assume formidable proportions.” Pope ordered both the mayor and chief of police removed from office. At the suggestion of General Swayne he had the aldermen and the common council dismissed as well.<sup>40</sup>

Pope issued General Order Number 25 earlier to clear up any doubt as to his beliefs regarding the responsibility for the riot. “The late disgraceful riots at Mobile [were] due mainly to the want of efficiency or of inclination on the part of the mayor and the chief of police to perform their obvious duty.” Section II of the order establishes that the final responsibility for public order and security of property rests with the military. If local governments proved unable to guarantee public safety then the military would supersede the civil authorities. This is precisely what happened in Mobile.<sup>41</sup>

On May 22, 1867, Mayor Withers wrote General Swayne protesting Pope’s order removing him as mayor: “I submit to the argument of the bayonet, and vacate the office. I do most earnestly but most respectfully enter my solemn protest.” Despite the protest, the following day Withers and Chief of Police Charpentier were removed from office. The *Advertiser and Register* filed a brief report: “Mayor Withers retired after the service of the order by Colonel Shepherd, and Mr. [Gustavus] Horton assumed the office.”<sup>42</sup>

Rejoicing in the action taken by the military, the *Nationalist* explained: “The removal of disloyal city officials, and the appointment in their stead of loyal men, is the first serious blow struck at disloyalty in our midst.” The editor of the Republican weekly believed that Gustavus Horton had qualities that would bring real change to Mobile. “He is more than loyal; he is a Republican—*believes* in equal rights for all men.”<sup>43</sup>

The elation expressed by the *Nationalist* was not a universal sentiment in the city. In a glumly worded protest, John Forsyth’s paper moaned: “The deposition of the duly elected mayor of Mobile and the substitution of another is an act of clear military usurpation, unauthorized by any constitution or law.” The *Mobile Times* blasted the action of the military. In a long tirade the paper called the move hasty and warned the federal authorities of the judgement of history. “They cannot forget that the day is not far distant when a return to legality will lay open their conduct to the calm but severe scrutiny of history.”<sup>44</sup>

Henry St. Paul, the editor of the *Mobile Times*, had no idea how accurate his statement was. Indeed, he proved to be a prophet. St. Paul would have basked in the glow of the pronouncements of the Dunning school; while the scrutiny of the Revisionist historians would have no doubt brought forth another blast from the editor damning them and their conclusions.





*Gustavus Horton*

*Museum of the City of Mobile*

The verdict of history aside, one fact is certain, the control of Mobile by conservative white Democrats, which had endured throughout Presidential Reconstruction ended, at least temporarily, with the appointment of Gustavus Horton as mayor. This drastic action on the part of the military represented a reversal of earlier policies regarding Mobile's city government. The reinstatement or continuation of the old local governments, along with the course followed by Andrew Johnson assured Southerners that Reconstruction would not mean revolution. After the defeat of the Confederacy many people in the South believed that the conquerors were going to radically change their way of life. Many seemed willing or resigned to accept whatever directives came from the federal government. But Johnson's restoration policy changed all of that. Southerners quickly understood that despite the president's statements about punishing traitors, he had no intention of doing so on a large scale.

Consequently, there is no evidence of any "shock of defeat" among Mobile's ruling elite. On the contrary the city's Unionists complained that power was being returned to those who had caused the war. The so-called Union newspaper in Mobile (the *Mobile News*) advocated rapid restoration of civil authority to former Confederate officials. It also proclaimed that a true Union man need not be completely clean of Confederate ties. In general Mobilians appeared to define a Unionist as a reluctant secessionist or even a Confederate who had had a change of heart. The true Unionists in the city, on the other hand, were being denied federal patronage while all of the appointments were going to ex-rebels.<sup>45</sup>

Mobilians demonstrated their attitude in defeat through their action regarding the loyalty oaths. Very few people were interested in taking the oaths in the spring of 1865, but when it was made clear that taking them was a prerequisite for voting or receiving a pardon, people rushed to do so. Clearly there was no newly-found love for, or loyalty to the United States on the part of Mobilians. Rather it was a purely practical reaction to a change in status.

By the summer of 1865 it became apparent that the struggle over Reconstruction was to be a political party battle. Most white Mobilians openly sided with the Democrats. They had very little inclination to aid the freedmen. Black suffrage, which would have to be forced on Southerners, was never even considered by those in power in Mobile. A mayor resigned rather than accept black testimony in local courts. Most leaders in Mobile could not accept the idea of black equality. People were aware of Wager Swayne's order that black testimony should be heard, but neither judges nor juries gave it any real consideration.

By late 1866 the city's residents had become hostile to the federal government, and by 1867 they embraced violence. However, this was a change not in kind, but of degree. They had opposed the Republicans prior to the Civil War and continued to do so in the late 1860s. By December 1866 the white citizens had become frustrated with Reconstruction and had begun to vent that frustration on black Mobilians.

# MOBILE TIMES EXTRA.

MONDAY NIGHT, JUNE 4, 1867.

## MUNICIPAL REMOVALS.

Six Members of the Common Council  
and Eighteen Members of the  
Aldermen Displaced.

## MEETING OF THE TWO BOARDS

Alderman Brooks moved that the Board adjourn.

Aldermen Overall thought that the Board had better wait.

President Price said that a motion to adjourn was always in order and put the question.

The motion was declared lost.

Aldermen O'Connell said that he had understood that this was to be a convention.

President Price said that he had no such understanding.

The evolution of the *Mobile News/Times* is a microcosm of the metamorphosis of the attitudes in the city. In the uncertain days of July 1865, the *Mobile News* attempted to rally conservatives, both old Whigs and Democrats, against the old political powers in the state, i.e., the Breckinridge Democrats who led the secession convention. As the months passed, and the president's policy unfolded, the *News* became more reactionary in its views. By 1866 the *Mobile News*, renamed the *Times*, was accusing the Republicans of trampling the federal constitution. In 1867 this newspaper, which had served as the voice of moderation in 1865, was denounced by the city's Republican press as being the most inflammatory paper in Mobile. The views of newspapers do not always reflect those of the city's people, but by 1867 all three of Mobile's daily papers had switched to the same editorial line. Only the *Nationalist* offered an opposing view. The Republican weekly, the handful of white Republicans, and of course the freedmen stood with Congress and its new Reconstruction policy against the old economic and political elite of Mobile.

If in fact, as Foner and McKittrick suggest, Mobilians were willing to accept whatever Washington demanded of them in 1865, this attitude disappeared rapidly as the president's restoration policy was unveiled. Johnson's suggestions and prayers were not answered as Alabama and the other southern states complied with the requirements spelled out by the president. In fact, far from seeking to placate Congress and the northern public, southern states enacted Black Codes at their 1865 constitutional conventions. The representatives and senators they selected and sent to Washington, many of whom were former Confederates, were unacceptable to the national legislature. The rejection of these solons by the Republican-controlled Congress only served to harden southern resistance to compromise.

By spring of 1867 Mobilians had become openly hostile to the occupying forces. Violence bloomed with the March Reconstruction acts, a congressional action which reinforced southern fears of "Negro rule." This in turn precipitated the violence of the "Pig-Iron" Kelley riot. In response the military removed city officials from power and appointed Republicans in their place. By then, given the irreconcilable attitudes of most white Mobilians, the moderate Reconstruction policy of the Johnson administration was doomed to failure.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1880-1901), ser. 1, vol. 49, 144, 348-49, 644-45, 732-33; Robert Pickett Buchanan, "The Military Campaign for Mobile, 1864-1865" (M.A. thesis, Auburn University, 1963), 241-42 and Willie F. Horton to his sister (unidentified), April 12, 1865, typescript of letter in the Caldwell Delaney Collection, Mobile.

<sup>2</sup> Eric McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (Chicago, 1960), 8-9, 182.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Perman, *Reunion Without Compromise: The South and Reconstruction 1865-1868* (Cambridge, 1973), 8-12.

<sup>4</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877* (New York, 1988), 189-92.

<sup>5</sup> General Order Number Seven, Montgomery, AL, August 4, 1865; Wager Swayne to Lewis Parsons, August 11, 1865 and Swayne's Weekly Report, August 21, 1865, Assistant Commissioner's Records, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Alabama, Record Group 809 (microfilm), hereafter cited as BRFAL, National Archives and Records Center, East Point, GA.

<sup>6</sup> Grenville Mellen Dodge, *Sketch of the Military Career of Major General Wager Swayne* (New York, 1903), 5-8, 12-18.

<sup>7</sup> Aldermen's Minutes, December 1, 1865 and Lewis Parsons to Andrew Johnson, December 4, 1865, Johnson Papers, series 1, reel 40, Library of Congress microfilm.

<sup>8</sup> C. M. France to Charles B. France, February 18, 1866, Charles B. France Papers, Missouri Historical Society; *Advertiser and Register*, September 6, 18, 22, 23, 1866; *Nationalist*, December 27, 1866; see also Harriet E. Amos, *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile* (Tuscaloosa, 1985), 169-70, Amos illustrates that Mobile had an aversion to vagrants and beggars prior to emancipation; Reuben A. Lewis, *The Charter and the Code of Ordinances of the City of Mobile* (Mobile, 1866), 16-17 and Foner, *Reconstruction*, 199-204, Foner notes that vagrancy statutes and laws designed to coerce the former slaves to work were widespread throughout the South.

<sup>9</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, January 1, 1867.

<sup>10</sup> *Mobile Tribune* quoted in the *New York Times*, January 14, 1867. For a more detailed look at the Fourteenth Amendment see Joseph B. James, *The Ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment* (Macon, GA, 1984), 125-28, 130-31.

<sup>11</sup> *Nationalist*, January 17, 1867.

<sup>12</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, March 1, 1867.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, March 1, 5, 1867.

<sup>15</sup> James McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1973), 572 and *Advertiser and Register* March 13, 15, 1867; See also John Kent Folmar, "Reaction to Reconstruction: John Forsyth and the *Mobile Advertiser and Register*, 1865-1867," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 37 (1975): 259. Folmar also notes a change in editorial policy in March 1867.

<sup>16</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, March 13, 15, 1867.

<sup>17</sup> *Nationalist*, March 7, 1867 and Michael William Fitzgerald, "The Union League Movement in Alabama and Mississippi: Politics and Agricultural Change in the Deep South during Reconstruction" (Ph.D. diss., U.C.L.A., 1986), 234-36.

<sup>18</sup> Albert Griffin to Wager Swayne, April 22, 1867, Wager Swayne Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH).

<sup>19</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, April 2, 1867; *Mobile Times*, April 3, 1867; and *Nationalist*, April 4, 1867.

<sup>20</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, April 2, 1867; *Nationalist*, April 4, 1867; and Foner, *Reconstruction*, 281. Foner notes that longshoremen struck in Savannah, Charleston, Richmond, and New Orleans as well.

- <sup>21</sup> George H. Tracy to Wager Swayne, April 15, 1867, and affidavits of George Crawford, Margaret Mitchell, Norfolk Rudsen, Lucien Lewis, and Roderick Thomas, BRFAL; Tracy to Swayne April 17, 19, 1867, BRFAL. The report by Tracy often contradicts the affidavits of the freedmen.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> *Nationalist*, April 25, 1867.
- <sup>24</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, April 19, 1867.
- <sup>25</sup> *New York Times*, April 26, 1867.
- <sup>26</sup> *Nationalist*, April 18, 1867.
- <sup>27</sup> *Nationalist*, April 25, 1867.
- <sup>28</sup> Albert Griffin to Robert Patton, April 11, 1867 and C. A. R. Dimon to Robert Patton, April 18, 1867, Governor Robert Patton Papers, ADAH.
- <sup>29</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, April 19, 1867.
- <sup>30</sup> Dimon to Patton, April 18, 1867, Patton Papers, ADAH and *Nationalist*, April 25, 1867.
- <sup>31</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, May 7, 1867.
- <sup>32</sup> *Mobile Times*, May 2, 1867, *Advertiser and Register*, May 5, 1867, and *Mobile Tribune*, May 5, 1867, a newspaper clipping attached with a letter from J. R. Eastburn to Wager Swayne, May 6, 1867, BRFAL.
- <sup>33</sup> *Nationalist*, May 9, 1867 and J. R. Eastburn to Wager Swayne, May 6, 1867, this includes an addendum by Fred Bromberg, BRFAL.
- <sup>34</sup> *Anti-Slavery Standard*, June 22, 1867 and Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, "The 'Pig-Iron' Kelley Riot in Mobile, May 14, 1867," *Alabama Review* 20 (1970): 45-55.
- <sup>35</sup> *Salem Observer*, Salem, MA, May 18, 1867.
- <sup>36</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, May 15, 1867 and *Nationalist*, May 16, 1867.
- <sup>37</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, May 23 and 26, 1867; *New Orleans Tribune*, May 19, 1867; Official Report of Colonel Shepherd, reprinted in the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, June 22, 1867; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 16, 1867; *Nationalist*, May 16, 1867 and *New York Times*, May 16, 1867.
- <sup>38</sup> *Nationalist*, May 16, 1867; *New York Times*, May 16, 1867 and *New Orleans Tribune*, May 19, 1867.
- <sup>39</sup> Official Report of Wager Swayne, reprinted in the *New York Tribune*, May 28, 1867; James F. Sefton, *The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1867* (Baton Rouge, 1967), 125-27 and *New Orleans Tribune*, May 19, 1867.
- <sup>40</sup> General Pope's Official Report, reprinted in the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, June 22, 1867 and Special Order Number 34, from Headquarters, Third Military District, Atlanta, May 31, 1867, in a bound volume of documents compiled by William Letford, "A Chronology of Reconstruction in Alabama," ADAH (hereafter cited as Letford).
- <sup>41</sup> General Order Number 25, May 29, 1867, in Letford, ADAH.
- <sup>42</sup> *New York Tribune*, May 28, 1867 and *Advertiser and Register*, May 23, 1867.

<sup>43</sup> *Nationalist*, May 30, 1867.

<sup>44</sup> *Advertiser and Register*, May 24, 1867 and *Mobile Times*, May 30, 1867.

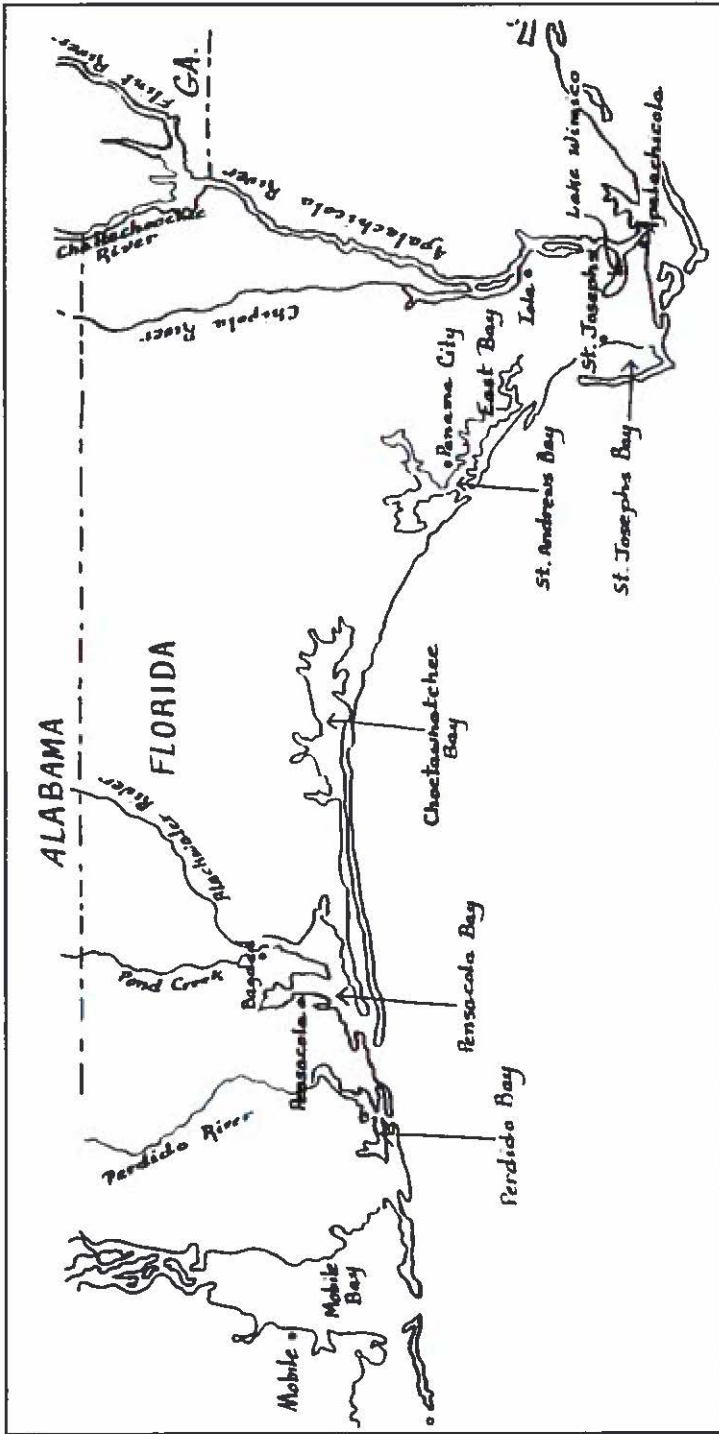
<sup>45</sup> Harriet E. Amos, "Trials of a Unionist: Gustavus Horton, Military Mayor of Mobile During Reconstruction," *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 138.

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*Reconstruction-era violence in Mobile:  
U.S. District Attorney L. V. Martin shooting  
Republican Judge Richard Busteed on December 28, 1867*

*Mrs. Carter C. Smith Collection*



West Florida

Map by Jerry Dixon

## The Canal Era in West Florida: 1821-1845

Joe Knetsch

The possibilities of cheap, safe, and efficient water transportation excited many Americans in the 1820s, especially in Florida. Few states or territories were as fortunate in their adaptability for canal development. With the examples of the Duke of Bridgewater's and New York's Erie canals in front of them, the enthusiasm of many Floridians was boundless. Canals were the topic of the day and Floridians were determined to be involved.

Discussion of canal routes in the territory began immediately upon Florida's acquisition by the United States in 1821. A Pensacola newspaper, *The Floridian*, presented the issue of a canal connection between the Mississippi River and Pensacola, through "Bayou Manchac," Lake Ponchartrain, Mobile Bay, etc., in its edition of December 17, 1821. The editor claimed to have been skeptical at first but was convinced by the arguments of a writer called, "A Friend," who granted that the inland schooner trade with New Orleans through a chain of lakes and bayous could be in the interest of Pensacola but insisted that

... the source upon which Pensacola immediately depends for its subsequent aggrandizement, is by the means of a contemplated canal, by which the waters, with the overwhelming trade of the Mississippi, are intended to be conducted into the bay of Pensacola. By men of experience and intelligence, who are well acquainted with the situation of the country and the nature of the obstacles, this communication is thought to be not only practicable, but may be effected with comparative ease and small expense.

Such an attractive possibility whetted the appetites of Floridians eager for development and profit and their visions were soon to expand further.

West Florida, with Pensacola at the hub, began to see itself as the center of a vast network of canals connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Mississippi River and beyond. To keep its readership informed about the national interest in canals, *The Floridian* printed the entire "Report of the Committee on Roads and Canals in the House of Representatives, January 2, 1822." Of particular importance to the people of West Florida was the report's emphasis on two points: the "great line of canals, from the harbor of Boston to the south, along the Atlantic sea-coast" and "Communications between the Tennessee and Savannah, and between the Tennessee, Alabama, and Tumblebee, rivers."<sup>1</sup> The former was notable because of its possible relation to the cross-Florida canal dreams and the latter because it threatened the idea of Pensacola attracting the trade of the Mississippi River. Successful completion of any southern east-west connection threatened to deny Pensacola the chance to become the center of trade between both sides of the nation.

To keep the focus of Congress and the nation on the main object, territorial Delegate Joseph M. White wrote to the Secretary of War and had the letter read into the record. In this letter White advocated not only the construction of a cross-Florida canal but the extension of canals between the Mississippi River



and West Florida. According to White, "The most distant sections of our country may then interchange their products without the hazard of foreign aggression." He went on to note that the trade of all sections would be enhanced by construction of canals connecting the Mississippi Valley with the water passages to be built along what is today's western Intracoastal Canal. The government, he argued, would find safety and protection from aggression during time of war by the construction of these canals. White also stated that the sending of the mails, commerce, communication, and trade in general would be greatly enhanced by the unity of transportation offered by these projects. Even more important, sectional differences would melt away with the facilitation of communication brought about by the construction of his proposed "chain of gold."

White did not ignore the impetus given to his goal by the independence of Mexico and other American republics. These, he argued, would be opened to our trade and a shorter, more direct route through Florida would benefit all. As he noted: "Thus, not only the Western States, who trade directly through the Gulf around the peninsula, to the Atlantic, are interested in the Florida canal; but, make it a ship channel, or thorough-cut, and the whole Eastern section of our seacoast and country, by a shorter navigation, a safer and better, through Florida to the Gulf, and through Nicaragua to the Pacific will find an outlet for their commerce." <sup>2</sup> This dream of Delegate White was shared by many of his fellow Floridians.

A few days after White read his letter into the record, the territorial legislative council sent a memorial to Congress. Expanding the delegate's ideas one step further the council argued that the "magnificent policy" of internal improvements adopted by Congress relating to the cross-Florida canal could be expanded to include the concept of "a Western continuation" of the same to the bay of Mobile. By removing the obstacles to navigation in Bayou Manchac, a waterway to the Mississippi River via Lake Ponchartrain, would be wide and deep enough to enable steamboats to trade along the route continuously. From the information available to the council, it would not have taken the excavation of but twelve miles of canals to accomplish this mission. <sup>3</sup> To prove that their interest was sincere, on December 7, 1825, the legislative council appointed James Gadsden, William H. Simmons, and Edward R. Gibson commissioners to examine the expediency of opening a canal route across Florida. In Gadsden and Simmons, at least, the council appointed two of the most informed men in the territory. However, they were to serve without compensation. <sup>4</sup>

Congress soon took up the suggestion by the legislative council and authorized a survey of the possible canal routes across Florida. The survey was to be conducted under the supervision of Brig. Simon Bernard of the Board of Internal Improvements. Bernard's credentials for this undertaking are impressive. He served the emperor Napoleon as an engineer until the former's exile to Elba. He came to the United States sometime thereafter and found employment with the government in 1816. His most notable duties included the construction of Fort Monroe, Virginia, the work on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal and the Delaware breakwater. His service ended in 1831 when he returned to France. He later



*General James Gadsden*

*Florida State Archives*

served King Louis Philippe, as Minister of War, until his death in 1839. Such was the man chosen by the United States to head the survey of this important canal project. <sup>5</sup>

Bernard's survey teams took to the field in 1826 and finished their work the following year. Cooperating with teams under the supervision of Major P. H. Perrault of the Topographical Engineers, Bernard received almost all available information on Florida and its topography. In late 1827 he verbally reported to the president and stated that the canal to cross the isthmus of Florida was impracticable because of the lack of water at any of the proposed summit points and the shallowness of the bays on the west coast. But, his findings were not reported to the Congress until early 1829. <sup>6</sup>

In the meantime, the "Report of the Canal Commissioners" was released and printed in the *Pensacola Gazette* of May 16, 1828. The report cited earlier requests for surveys and noted the advantages to be gained by construction of the canal across Florida. The commissioners pointed out that,

... the annual loss sustained on this inhospitable shore is variously stated, though it is presumable that no accurate estimate can be formed. Seven hundred thousand, and even one million, of dollars has been asserted with some authority; it is sufficient however to know, that the damage sustained is very considerable at this day . . . .



*Special Collections, University of West Florida*

In addition to the loss by wrecks, the loss by piracy and other means appears in this report. One of the other means was the "exorbitant toll exacted at the canal Carondelet" which would be avoided if the inland canal system were extended through the chain of lakes from the Mississippi River to the bay of Pensacola. In terms reflecting those of Delegate White, the canal commissioners believed that the work proposed was of national character and "... will open a safe and convenient channel of communication between the extremities—it will increase the facilities of commerce and the means of general security, and in constituting Florida the centre link in the chain of the Union, it will serve to identify her interests more strongly with the American confederation, and bind faster the ties of its members." In a sanguinary note, the commissioners hoped, "... that should the report of the United State's Engineers be as favorable as has been anticipated, the practicable recommendations of that body will be carried into effect by the National treasury, as a canal of National magnitude." When Bernard's report reached the public, hopes dimmed, but did not die. <sup>7</sup>

Bernard's report said that the cross-Florida canal was not feasible. However, he did encourage the people of West Florida by carefully surveying the often proposed inland navigation. His remarks about Pensacola were especially favorable.

Though the bar, at the entrance of the bay, does not afford more than 21 feet of water at low tide, and 23 at common high tide, yet Pensacola is the best naval station on the coast under consideration. Facility of defence and conveniency for naval establishments, it combines the advantages of being situate near the estuary of the Alabama and Tombeckbee rivers, and at a short distance from the outlets of the Mississippi, and of being susceptible (as it will be shown hereafter) of being connected, by an inland steam-boat navigation, with the Mississippi, at New Orleans. <sup>8</sup>

Such praise from the great engineer helped to keep interest in the canal idea alive.

As Bernard prepared his report, the governor and legislative council passed an act to incorporate the Chipola Canal Company. The Chipola Canal Company had powerful backing from territorial politicians and land owners. Its membership included Benjamin Chaires, Peter Gautier, Senator John Clark, Jacob Robinson, and William Hort. The object of the company was to construct a canal between the waters of the Chipola River and the Bay of St. Andrew. It was given two years to begin the work and any abandonment for a period of twelve months would automatically dissolve the corporation. Its most unusual feature was the method allowed to raise revenue for construction; a lottery for an additional amount of \$50,000. <sup>9</sup> Congress was skeptical of the canal company's intentions. It had the enabling legislation include language that stated the route should be surveyed by a "competent Engineer" and that the plan and general line would have to conform to the contemplated inland seaboard system. It also required that the tolls or revenue "instead of being left, as by their present Charter, to their own discretion, shall be regulated by an amendment thereof, securing the future interests of the People of the Territory of Florida, and of the United States against the improper exercise of such authority." <sup>10</sup> Mistrust and the failure to raise the hoped for funding ended the project with nothing more than a partial survey to show for this early local effort.

While 1830 brought an estimate for yet another survey of a cross-Florida canal route, it saw little direct action. But, 1831 the legislative council requested that the President spend monies already appropriated for surveys in the territory. President Jackson, as could be expected, was in no hurry to do so. Undaunted, the legislative council resolved:

Whereas, there have been annually appropriated, since 1824, by the Congress of the United States, thirty thousand dollars for surveys of roads and canals, none of which, it is believed has never been expended in the territory of Florida; and the only surveys ever made, have not been by the direction of the President, . . . , but under special laws of the United States . . . Be it therefore resolved, That the president be, and he is hereby requested, to cause to be specially surveyed, and an estimate of the cost presented,

of canals to connect Mobile and Pensacola bays, and thence, pursuing a northern line along the Gulf of Mexico, between Choctacohatchie bay and river, and the west arm of St. Andrew's bay, and, from the east side of St. Andrew's to Chipola river, and on to the Appalachicola, with a view of opening a channel of internal communication, for the conveyance of the products of the Mississippi, to the various points on the northern coast of the said gulf of Mexico. . . . <sup>11</sup>

This action appears to have been successful as the survey contemplated by the legislative council was ordered by James Kearney, Lieutenant Colonel of the Topographical Engineers, on December 27, 1832. <sup>12</sup>

## DOCUMENTS

*Relating to the bill of the Senate, No. 1, "Supplementary to the act authorizing the Territory of Florida to open Canals between Chipola river and St. Andrew's bay, and from Matanzas to Halifax river, in said Territory," approved March 2d, 1832.*

DECEMBER 11, 1832.

Referred to the Committee on Roads and Canals, and ordered to be printed.

The papers in the within schedule refer to the contemplated inland navigation from the Mississippi to Mobile and Pensacola bays, and from St. Andrew's bay to the Appalachicola river. They are intended to explain the proposed improvement of the Manahoe, beginning at the Mississippi river and terminating in the lakes east of New Orleans. 2. The object of the steamboat canal, directed to be surveyed by an act of Congress of the last session, which is now being executed between Mobile and Pensacola bays. 3. To furnish data upon which it is expected that Congress will make a liberal allowance to aid in the construction of a canal between St. Andrew's bay and Appalachicola, upon the great line of communication from the Mississippi to the Atlantic, surveyed under a special act of Congress, and ascertained to be practicable by experimental surveys, subsequently made, under the same authority.

*U.S. Congress, Senate, 22d Cong.,  
2d sess., S. Doc. 7 (Serial 230)*

*Special Collections  
University of West Florida Library*

The following year brought the incorporation of the Chipola and St. Andrew's Canal Company. Again, Joseph White argued the territory's case before Congress. He stated that the constant delays in providing for the surveys of the steamboat canals connecting Mobile, Pensacola, and St. Andrew's Bay had caused some "embarrassments" to the citizens of the territory. He then pushed for a speedy execution of the canal route from Apalachicola to St. Andrew's, "another link in the same projected internal communication." The last Congress, he reminded his colleagues, had approved the incorporation of a company to accomplish the

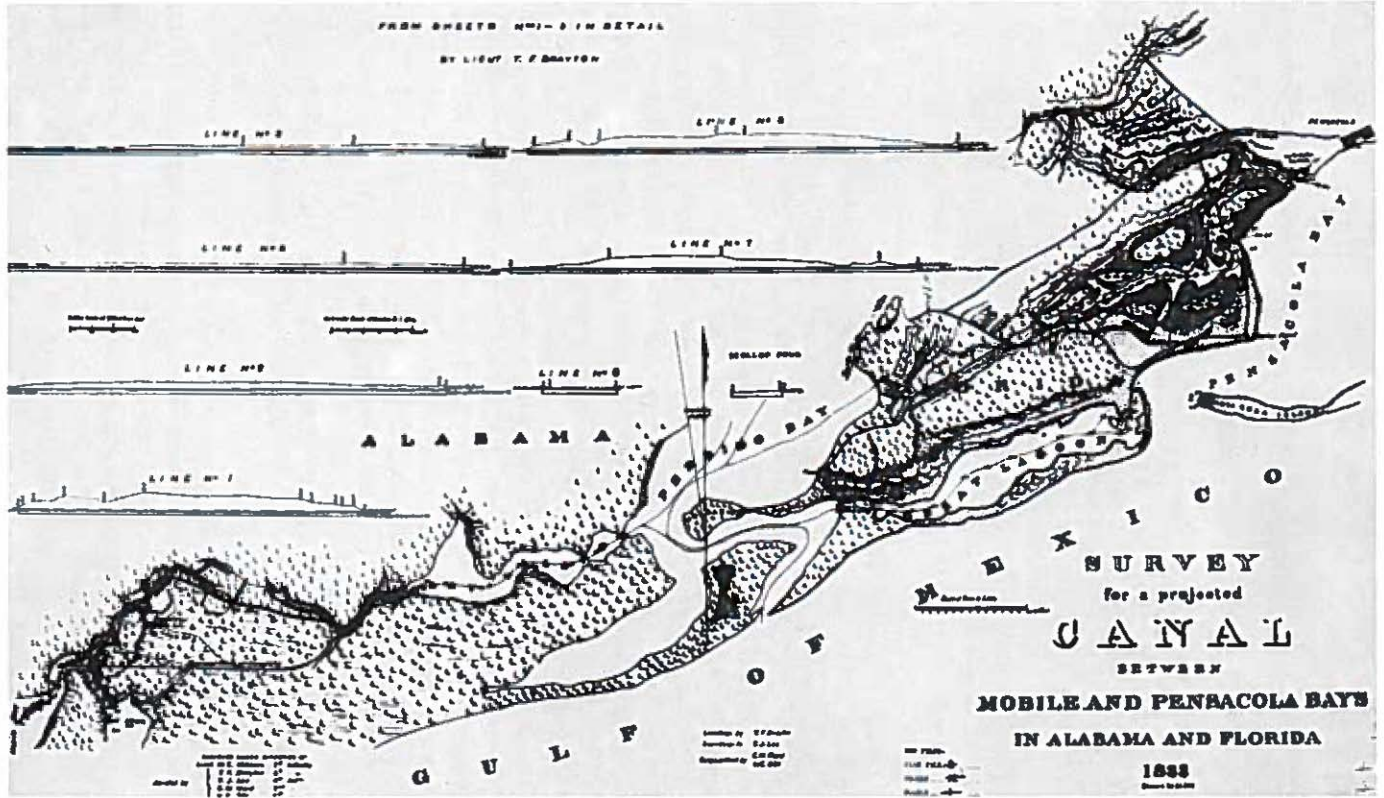
task. The company inaugurated by this incorporation wanted to obtain a grant of land or possible stock subscription from the Congress.<sup>13</sup> It failed to get all that it wanted for the entire incorporation was "revived" in 1835.<sup>14</sup>

Not everyone in the territory of Florida agreed with its delegate to Congress. In the *Pensacola Gazette* for January 2, 1833, Delegate White once more sang the old refrain concerning the canal between Mobile and Pensacola. The reply, however, chimed in a discordant note, ". . . we are extremely doubtful whether the benefits arising from the completion of the work would be sufficient to compensate for the expense and trouble of effecting it." Furthermore, White's questioner wondered about the direct competition with New Orleans and the fate of businesses in the cities on either end of the canal.

The year 1835 saw the peak of canal interest in West Florida. The revived Chipola and St. Andrew's Bay Company was soon rivaled by the incorporation of the Lake Wimico and St. Joseph's Canal Company. Led by dissident residents of Apalachicola now residing in the new town of St. Joseph's, this company was willing to construct a canal to draw off business from Apalachicola. As incorporated, the company's capital stock was limited to \$250,000 with the privilege of increasing the amount to \$500,000.<sup>15</sup> The major problem for this project was the depth of Lake Wimico. As reported in the *Pensacola Gazette* for January 16, 1836: "But there is another, and if well founded and insuperable obstacle to the success of the scheme on its present plan: it is, that lake Wimico is gradually but steadily filling up . . . even so recently as eight or ten years ago, a schooner called the Pizarra commanded by capt. Shannon, and drawing eight feet water, sailed up and down the lake and on both sides of the middle ground. . . ." The lake's "filling up" caused the company to amend its charter the next year and be henceforth called the Lake Wimico and St. Joseph's Canal and Rail Road Company.<sup>16</sup>

The governor and legislative council also passed an act to incorporate the Pensacola and Perdido Rail Road and Canal Company under the leadership of William Chace, Walter Gregory, John Cameron, Robert Mitchell, Jasper Strong, and Hanson Kelly. This company was also capitalized at \$250,000 but did not have the privilege to double that figure.<sup>17</sup> In the following year, it was "authorized to construct a canal from the waters of Pensacola Bay to Perdido, and to extend the same upon either of the routes surveyed in pursuance of the fourth section of the act of Congress of the fourth of July, eighteen hundred and thirty-two." That act had authorized "the survey of canal routes" in the territory.<sup>18</sup> This vague reference simply meant that the company could extend its operations eastward to Choctawhatchee and St. Andrew's bays.<sup>19</sup>

The other West Florida canal authorized in 1835 was the more limited Pond Creek and Black Water River Canal Company. As historian Brian Rucker recently demonstrated, this canal was to provide a limited transportation system for the newly developed cotton mills at Arcadia. Capitalized at only \$10,000, this canal was to connect the waters of Pond Creek with the Black Water River. Some construction may have taken place on this project, but, the severe panic of 1837



1833 Canal Survey

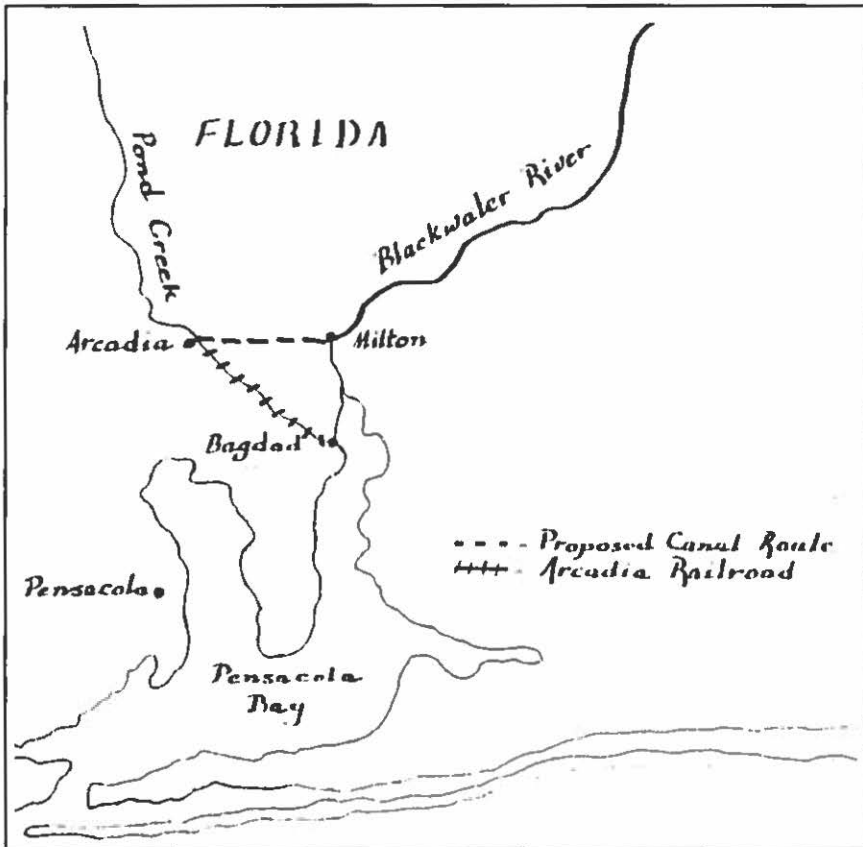
*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,  
Mobile District, Technical Library*

“probably retarded” its development. By 1838, this canal project also gave way to a projected railroad, the Arcadia Railroad Company.<sup>20</sup>

The era of canals was rapidly drawing to a close. As early as June 13, 1835, the *Pensacola Gazette* in writing an early requiem for West Florida’s canals, conceded that canals were a great improvement upon pre-existing ways of transporting heavy and bulky articles. They were not adequate, however,

to satisfy the specific wants of the times. The progress upon Canals was too slow; for he who had provided pathways for Steam Boats had also established laws which forbade their running upon canals. Four or five miles an hour was the utmost that could be accomplished. To the era of canals, has succeeded, therefore, the age of Rail Roads.

One must applaud the perspicacity of the *Gazette’s* writer.



*Proposed routes of the Pond Creek and Black Water River Canal Company*

*Map by Dr. Brian Rucker  
adapted by Jerry Dixon*



Still other projects were proposed in the following decade. In 1841, "An Act to incorporate the Iola and St. Joseph Canal and Rail Road Company" was passed by the legislative council. The initial capitalization could not exceed \$100,000 and it was superintended by Joseph Chaires, Thomas Peter Chaires, William Craig, William Wyatt, and R. J. Moses. Again, the company opted to attempt the construction of a railroad.<sup>21</sup> And, finally, a canal or railroad was authorized to be constructed by one George Terrill connecting Grand Lagoon and Perdido Bay. As this was to be a totally private venture, no capitalization figures were required to be put into law.<sup>22</sup>

None of the canal projects discussed ever reached completion in the Territorial Period. This is because Florida did not have the basic economic resources to accomplish the tasks. In the capital-starved territory, raising the initial capital outlay for the construction of canals proved impossible. Florida, as an economic unit, did not possess the resources necessary to sustain projects such as canals or railroads that required high initial outlays. The fixed costs of canals precluded sporadic investment by any sector, and, in Florida's case, no sector maintained continuous interest or investment. Over the long term, the investors of Florida and elsewhere could not see any viability to canal investment.

Florida also lacked a usable labor force. Canals, as simple as they appear, are complex engineering tasks. Knowledge of lock construction, soils, hydrology, and more are needed to safely construct a canal. Florida's labor force did not possess the requisite skills and knowledge to accomplish the tasks at hand. It was also very small. As canal construction is relatively labor intensive, a larger labor force was needed. Many factors kept the size of the labor force down during the period of peak interest, the most important of which may have been the Seminole War.

One of the main drawbacks to canal development in West Florida was the limited use to which the canals were to be put. Almost all of the investors appear to have been more concerned with their main occupation, farming. None



*Iola and St. Joseph Canal route*

of the canal projects in West Florida were to be owned and constructed by "professional" canal operators or men whose primary interest involved transportation. Therefore, the total concept of canal costs and operation expenses was lost on the primary investors. Canals were long term investments which require long term financial commitments. Canals limited to peak shipping time for the cotton crop were not economically viable enterprises. They ignored the return trip, the need to use the resource in periods when cotton was not the primary cargo and the fact that an idle resource was a wasted resource on the frontier, or elsewhere. Very little of the discussion of the canals to be built in West Florida showed an understanding of these basic concerns.

For West Floridians the canal age seemed a true economic blessing because it would help eliminate the domination of New Orleans over their trading lives. When reporting the advantages of the internal line of canals to its readership, *The Floridian* of December 17, 1821, was quick to point out, "The extreme unhealthiness of New Orleans, the numerous bars across the mouth of the river and the difficulty in ascending the river combined with the numerous advantages peculiar to Pensacola give it a decided ascendancy, in point of locality, over any port belonging to the southern states." The rivalry with New Orleans was the major reason for the many reports concerning the cross-Florida canal and the development of the inland navigation system. The development of these canal systems would have strengthened the position of Florida in relation to its trade competition with New Orleans and especially would have facilitated tapping the growing commerce of the west.

Florida was not alone in this quest to tie into the trade of the west. Carter Goodrich, in his *Government Promotion of American Canals and Railroads: 1800-1890*, has ably documented the schemes of other states to attempt to get a share of the new market that seemed destined to be monopolized by New York and New Orleans. Goodrich clearly showed that this potential monopoly of the trade of the West was the motivating force behind many of the attempts to construct canals and railroads to waterways connecting with the Mississippi River valley from such states as Virginia and South Carolina. In this attempt to circumvent a monopolistic situation, actual or potential, Florida fit comfortably into the national picture.

But West Florida faced another problem which the older settlements on the eastern seaboard did not, the deficiency in population. As noted above, this condition lessened the skill package available for use in construction of canals or railroads. It was a severe handicap also because the size of a potential market was small. This made costly construction ventures unattractive. High initial and long-run maintenance costs coupled with the low variable costs associated with canal construction provided little incentive for rapid investment in frontier areas. The population was small and there appeared little potential for growth in the short term. Thus, West Florida did not demonstrate to investors the potential for growth that was needed to raise the necessary capital. Again, a major reason for this situation was the Second Seminole War.

On the financial side, territorial Florida had become well known for its defaulting on bonds and its many banking failures, as well as for lost personal fortunes and defrauded foreign investors. However, the impact on long-term capital investments still needs much more investigation. Canal construction, as a prime example of long-term capital investment, probably suffered because of the uncertain and doubtful practices of territorial banking. It is unclear what relationship existed between canal investors, or potential investors, and territorial banking authorities.

Finally, there is the question of the role of government in the decline of the canal movement in West Florida. Florida's territorial government was an avid promoter of canals. But the leadership of territorial Florida did not have a workable criterion for the selection of canal projects. It appeared to have responded to local pressures or assumed needs without setting down on paper the priorities of the territory. West Florida provides a case in point. Why should the territorial authorities sponsor three distinct canal projects with the sole end of avoiding the shallow passes of Apalachicola Bay? Local rivalries aside, it made little economic sense for a government to ask for support of the Chipola Canal Company, the St. Andrew's and Chipola Canal Company, and the Lake Wimico and St. Joseph Canal Company. The inability to reach a workable compromise for the construction of one economically viable canal could only give the federal authorities an uneasy feeling as to what the true needs of the territory were. As the territorial government was not in a position to give fiscal aid to the construction of the proposed canals, it could only hope for the good will and understanding of the national government. Receiving mixed and contentious signals from Tallahassee, the reluctance of the federal authorities to support canal building in Florida is easily understood.<sup>23</sup>

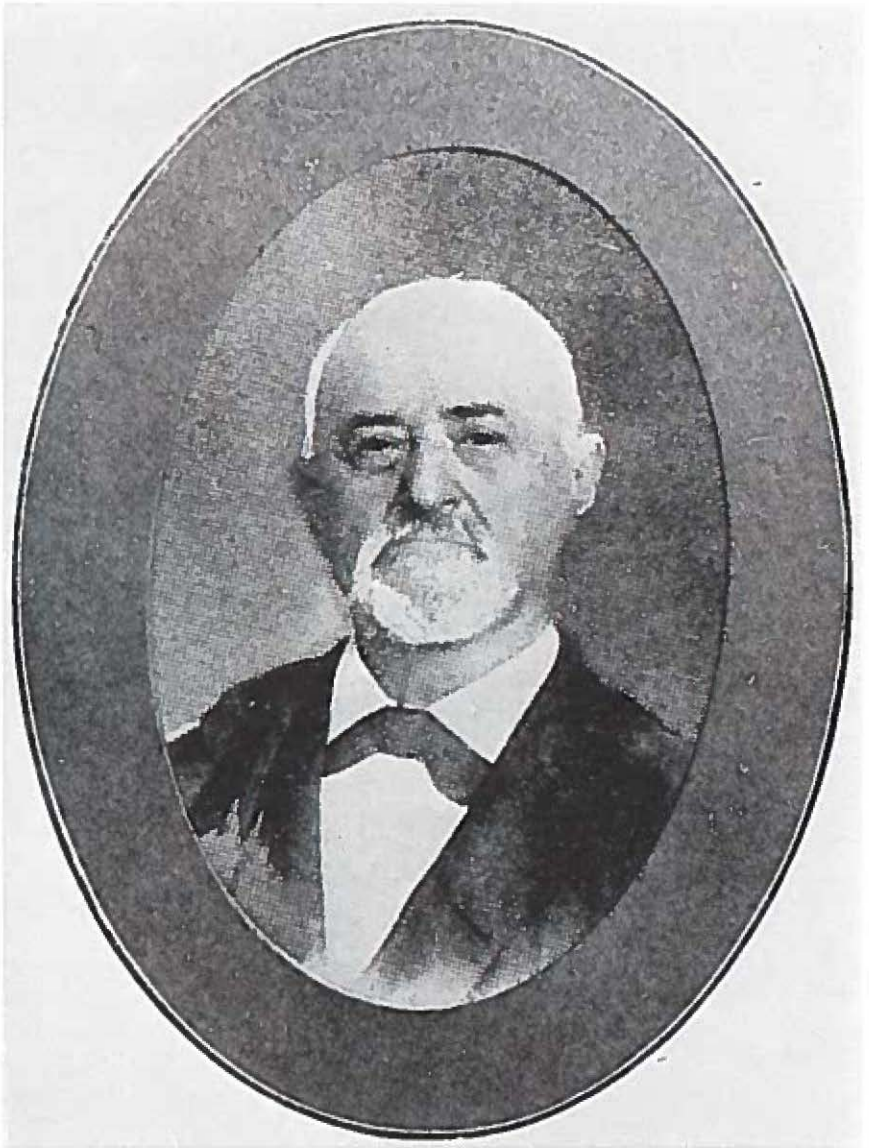
There were many advantages provided to the territory of Florida by the canal era. Though not one canal was completed for use, the canal surveys conducted by the United States government provided much needed information about the condition of the newly acquired land. The geological, hydrological, biological, and other forms of data gathered from these surveys assisted settlers and military men in many ways. The continued interest in the cross-Florida canal kept the territory in the minds of many. The potential of Florida was beginning to take shape in the minds of the public. The information provided by the canal surveys and propaganda promoting the many new schemes continued to incite interest in this frontier land.

The dreams of the early canal promoters lived on into future generations. Today, the inland water navigation system envisioned by West Florida's pioneer settlers is a reality. The cross-Florida canal remained a vital part of the state's history for one hundred and forty years until its demise for ecological reasons. To say that the canal era was not important to Florida is to misjudge the history of the state's development. The 1821-35 canal projects were the precursors to the later canals and railroads which sought to make the peninsula a livable and accessible place in which to settle. They also gave early evidence of the Sunshine State's tendency toward boosterism and its penchant for development, whatever the cost.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *The Floridian*, March 4, 1822. Spelling and capitalization in quotations in this article have not been modernized.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, 19th Cong., 2d sess. S. Doc. 21, 9-11.
- <sup>3</sup> Clarence Edward Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States: The Territory of Florida, 1825-1827* (Washington, 1934-1975), 23: 378.
- <sup>4</sup> *Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida*, 4th sess., 1825, 63.
- <sup>5</sup> Department of Natural Resources file, "Trustees Correspondence 1930-1938, drawer." "Ship Canal Authority," folder, nos. 1950-1955.
- <sup>6</sup> *Territorial Papers*, 23: 855.
- <sup>7</sup> "Report of the Canal Commissioners," typescript of May 16, 1828 report in the *Pensacola Gazette*, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, 20th Cong., 2d sess., S. Doc. 102, 19.
- <sup>9</sup> Venila Lovina Shores, "Canal Projects of Territorial Florida," *Tallahassee Historical Society Annual* 2(1935): 13-15.
- <sup>10</sup> *Territorial Papers*, 23: 1051-52.
- <sup>11</sup> *Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida*, 9th sess., 1831, 93-94.
- <sup>12</sup> *Territorial Papers*, 24: 771-72.
- <sup>13</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, 22d Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 136.
- <sup>14</sup> *Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida*, 13th sess., 1835, typescript, 88-93, Florida State Archives.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 281-82.
- <sup>16</sup> *Acts of the Governor and Legislative Council, of the Territory of Florida*, 14th sess., 1836, 8-10.
- <sup>17</sup> *Acts of the Legislative Council*, 1835, 62-69.
- <sup>18</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, 24th Cong., 2d sess., S. Doc. 42.
- <sup>19</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 23rd Cong., 2d sess., Executive Doc. 8.
- <sup>20</sup> Brian Rucker, "Arcadia and Bagdad: Industrial Parks of Antebellum Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 67 (October 1988): 147-65.
- <sup>21</sup> *Acts of Resolutions of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida*, 19th sess., 1841, 54-60.
- <sup>22</sup> *Acts and Resolution of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida*, 21st sess., 1843, 23-24.
- <sup>23</sup> Harvey H. Segal, and Carter Goodrich, "American Development Policy: The Case of Internal Improvements," in *American Economic History: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. S. Coben and F. G. Hill (Philadelphia, 1966).

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*Joseph Bloch*

*Michael Kennedy Catholic Culture in Alabama  
(New York, 1931)*

## Edward Bloch's Memoirs: The Early Years

Samuel Eichold

[We wish to thank Dr. Sam Eichold for bringing the following to our attention and writing an introduction and afterword. We are also indebted to Mr. Edward Bloch and Barbara Bloch Benjamin for allowing us to reprint this portion of Edward Bloch's memoirs to which they retain the copyright. We reprint the document without significant revision, for none seems necessary.—EDITOR]

In 1810 the French Emperor Napoleon released a twenty-one-year-old soldier, Abraham Bloch, from further military service. The document describing his discharge from the Army states that, "he was afforded permanent dispensation from duty due to a weak constitution, an incurable eye disease and for a fee of 50 francs." Once freed of military obligations he married and had many children. One of these, Joseph Bloch, was an outspoken political activist as well as a very accomplished musician. In 1848 during an era of political unrest in Europe, the Burgomeister of Niederluststadt notified Abraham Bloch that his son Joseph faced imminent arrest. His only hope was to leave the country immediately. He obtained a forged passport and took a ship for New Orleans where he was to work for a wine merchant.

The first port where Joseph could go ashore after leaving France was Mobile. In exploring the city he saw a young woman in the town square. It was love at first sight and he returned to the ship, retrieved his possessions, and went ashore for good. In time he located the young woman and eventually they were married. Instead of selling wine in New Orleans he established himself as a musician in Mobile. It was said that he played every instrument, except the harp, expertly. As an accomplished music teacher he was honored with a position as Professor of Music at the Jesuit College in Spring Hill. His exemplary career extended over half a century. He had many children and it was his son Edward who related the following memories, probably for his niece Blanche, many years later when he was an old man living in New York. Edward Bloch died in 1933.

### EDWARD BLOCH'S MEMOIRS

I was born in the memorable political year 1852 on the 27th day of February in a small cottage on South Conception Street, which had once been occupied by the Bank of Mobile.

My earliest recollections were of a kind, easy-going, good-natured Father who had a hard struggle in life between supplying music for dances, conducting a band for parades, and giving music lessons for about one tenth of the present rates. In those days there was a great fad for guitar playing which was taken up by every young lady with social aspirations. He was a master of the instrument and always played for us when we were small children, but after the death, within ten days (in 1863) of each other of my eldest sister Amelia, aged 13 and

my two little brothers, Julius and Charlie, Aged 7 and 4, he never took up the guitar again, though he had always loved it and composed many pieces for it.

My brother Julius was known in the circle of our friends as little Mozart, because of his remarkable talent. We had all had great hopes for his future. From the age of 5 he had played the easier Mozart Sonatas, always by heart—and since it never occurred to him that everyone did not understand music, he always handed the volume of sonatas to anyone who asked to hear him play so that the listener could follow his performance with more interest. Years later I heard that someone visiting the old Jewish cemetery in Mobile and seeing those three small graves so close together had said “Here is as great a tragedy as one can well imagine”. It is true, and my Father never recovered from it, though there were six other children. My Mother had her hands full taking care of him and all of us. She managed, for his sake, to smile, even when her heart was breaking. She was the great living force in all our lives.

My Father was born in a little village called Wachenheim near Bingen on the Rhine. He was apprenticed early in life to a wine dealer, but being descended from a long line of musicians he was dissatisfied with business. At the age of twenty-two, he became involved in the revolutionary movement of 1848, and to escape arrest fled to America. He was accompanied by his eldest sister Jeannette, who could not bear to be parted from him. He landed in Mobile on his way to New Orleans, which was at that time the center of the American wine trade, and while in Mobile he met Hannah Goldstucker and fell in love with her. They married, and this marriage was shortly followed by the wedding of her brother Abraham Goldstucker and my Father's sister Jeannette. My Mother was blond, very pretty and gay and fond of dancing. My Father found no connections in the wine business in Mobile and began giving music lessons to support himself and his bride. He was far happier at it than he had ever been in business. He was very popular in his new home, and being able now to devote his entire time to music, mastered with an absolutely uncanny ability, almost every known instrument. He had learned the violin from his Father who fiddled at the peasant dances along the Rhine, but in Mobile, in order to make a fourth for a string quartet he learned the cello in six weeks' time, and really played it. His gift for mastering new instruments was illustrated again during my boyhood. He was concert-master at the time of the Mobile theatre orchestra, when a musician called Hernandez visited the city for the purpose of giving a concert. He played violin, flute, piano, and cornet and was considered a remarkable genius and had met everywhere with great success. After his show the manager of the theatre said to him “I have a man in my orchestra who can play every instrument—not only four—you can hear him tomorrow morning if you like.” Mr. Hernandez was skeptical but remained in town until the following morning to be convinced. The manager interrupted the rehearsal to ask my Father to give an exhibition of his talents. He complied, playing a difficult solo on each orchestral instrument in turn, and Mr. Hernandez immediately offered him an engagement as his travelling partner, which my Father was forced to refuse. Though he played

and taught every instrument he concentrated in later years on the flute and came to be known as one of the finest flutists in the country. Once when the New Orleans Opera Company was scheduled to come to Mobile for its annual visit, the Conductor Prevost [Eugène-Prosper Prévost, 1809-72] telegraphed his son, who conducted in Mobile that the promised performance of *William Tell* could not be given because of the illness of the flutist who could not possibly be replaced. The Mobile Prévost answered his father "Bring on your *Tell*. We have a flutist here who can replace anybody." If my Father had been a business man, as all musicians are today, he might have made a fortune and would certainly have been famous, but he refused to travel or concertize and even turned away pupils who were not to his taste. When the guitar fad was at its height and young ladies would come to him to learn "the Spanish Fandango and one or two other pieces" he invariably refused to have anything to do with them, much to my Mother's distress. "I teach music" he would say, "not one or two pieces"—and he always sent away pupils who after one or two lessons seemed lacking in talent. My poor Mother, with six growing children to clothe and feed, argued with him to no avail. He refused to take money that was not "honestly earned." If he could teach a pupil nothing, he had not earned his fee. When in his younger days he conducted a brass band, he contracted for the engagements, arranged and wrote out all the parts—taking no more for himself than he gave the bass drummer. "How can you be such a fool?" my poor Mother used to ask him. "You do most of the work, you ought to keep most of the money." "It's harder to carry the bass drum than to conduct" said my Father.



*Spring Hill College before 1869*

*Mrs. Carter C. Smith Collection*



One of my Father's most valued connections was his association with St. Joseph's Institute at Spring Hill, near Mobile where he taught music for thirty-seven years and where his memory is still revered. He had the unique distinction of being the only non-Catholic ever to receive the Papal blessing which was conferred upon him by Pope Leo XVIII.

It came about in this way: the president of the college, having been received in audience by the Pope was taking his leave when his Holiness asked to have his blessing conveyed to the Fathers at Spring Hill College. The President said "There is one amongst us, not of the Faith who has grown old in service to the College, and who is loved and honored by us all." His Holiness answered "Then convey to him the blessing of one old man to another."

My Father's portrait hangs in the Monastery at Spring Hill. [Unfortunately, we are unable to locate it.—EDITOR] My Father also organized the singing section of the Mobile Turnverein and conducted their rehearsals and festivals for many years—without remuneration. In 1854 they presented him with a gold watch in appreciation of his services. He was also one of the founders (and conducted without remuneration) of the Mobile Music Association.

Two years after he landed in Mobile my Father and his sister Jeanette sent for their parents and their younger sister Caroline. There was always a coldness between my Mother and my grandmother, who was an old Tartar. She never did forgive my Mother for marrying her son before his Mother's arrival on the scene. She was born in Alsace (Babette Levy) and lost two brothers in Napoleon's Russian campaign. My memories of her are not very pleasant—we all used to run when we saw her approaching the house. She never had kindly words for her grandchildren but lectured them severely on their duties to their parents, their appearance and their manners. However, she was probably not nearly so terrifying as she seemed to us—and always ended the lectures with a piece of cake all around. My grandfather, on the other hand was one of the gentlest, sweetest souls I ever knew. For a few years after his arrival in Mobile he played in the orchestra, violin or viola—for an old man he was a pretty good viola player.

To go to Spring Hill my Father started at six in the morning—he went part of the way by horse-car, but there was a long walk at the end. Later I bought him a horse and spring wagon. He was very proud of it, and enjoyed driving out in the early morning, but one evening he told of the horses having taken fright at the dummy engine on the street railway and my Mother refused to allow him to drive again so he had to go back to the car and the walk.

During the Civil War he was bugler with the Alabama State Artillery. He enlisted in the Home Guard though entirely out of sympathy with the Secessionist Movement for having brought with him to this country the highest political ideals he was passionately attached to the idea of a free government which he felt to be embodied in the Union. He was not called into battle however—he was forty-seven years old at the outbreak of the War—and the farthest from home he travelled in the Service was to Halls' Mill—the outer line of city defenses. He was bitterly opposed to the owning of slaves and only just before the war

was to become the unwilling owner of one. He was on his way to the public market one Friday morning to buy some fresh fish when he stopped at the Court house, the steps of which served as a slave market, to greet a friend—a dealer in negroes and horses. The man called his attention to a mother and four children who had been brought down from the country to settle an estate and who were huddled together on the steps, weeping piteously at the prospect of a life-long separation. My Father, kind sympathetic soul that he was, was so overcome that he turned back, went at once to see his various relatives on behalf of the poor mother and before the day was over had arranged to have the entire negro family bought by them, so that they might continue to live near each other. The oldest girl fell to us and she lived with us a year, but died of meningitis at the same time as the three children. Before that time my Mother had always hired slaves to help in the household, my Father always having refused to own another human being.

When I was six years old I was taken to the Barton Academy which I expected to enter in a blaze of glory since I could already read, write and do small sums. What was my disappointment at being sent home again because I was under age! I was not even allowed in the classroom but told to go home and wait until I was seven. Consequently I missed all the thrills of the A-B-ab-Class for when I went back the following year I was entered in the second grade.

In that year my Father was induced to give up music teaching and to into business with a cousin. They opened a music shop and my Father went to New York to buy stock, taking the boat to Montgomery and from there the train.—He brought home some good fiddles and flutes, and also a stock of optical goods, spectacles, microscopes and so on which some one had persuaded him to take on as a side line. Neither my Father nor his partner had the necessary qualifications for successful merchants and the venture was not a financial success. The store became, however, almost at once the established rendezvous for all the local musicians who came there to meet each other, try out their compositions and play over the latest novelties and foreign publications. It lasted through the War, after which my Father went back to teaching.

In the meantime I continued at school while the clouds were gathering for what William Seward called the "irrepressible conflict." I can recall the exciting election campaign of 1860—I was eight years old at that time. The South was solidly banded against Lincoln but divided its favor between Douglas and Breckenridge. After the election of Lincoln, which was followed by the secession of several southern states I can also recall that amid the great rejoicings which followed the secession of Alabama and Virginia, on which occasion every house in the city was illuminated, party feeling ran so high that mobs threatened the occupants of any house that did not present candle-lit front window panes. While our house was illuminated and we children and the neighbors took part in the general rejoicing, my Father remained in a darkened room, alone, with his heart full of grief at the wrecking of the old Government he had grown to love so dearly.

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Farrow and Dennett's Mobile Directory, 1859

Then I remember on a Saturday morning, April 12th, 1861, that the news came of the firing on Fort Sumter and by nightfall the news of the capture of the fort by Beauregard. Again my Father's grief was deep at the thought of brother fighting against brother and the prospect of disruption of the country. He had many friends in the city who felt as he did, but feeling ran so high at the time that no one dared voice such sentiments publicly. On one occasion a clarinet player, a Pole, who was a great admirer of the U.S. Government, was a little careless in expressing his opinions and was immediately threatened with tar and feathers unless he kept his mouth shut. My Father assisted him to leave the city for the North.

I have already referred to the fact of my Mother's living in a constant state of nervous dread of fire. She had but one ardent desire in life—to live in a brick house where she could feel that her eight children were safer than in the frame cottage they had always occupied. This desire was brought to a happy termination in the early spring of 1863 when she was able to buy what was at that time the only available brick house in the city at No. 104 South Dearborn St. All the other brick houses in town were owned by rich people. This one had been built by a Spaniard after whose death, his wife determined to sell it. This old homestead still remains in the possession of the family. My youngest sister was born there in 1866—my Mother's consolation after the tragic death of the other three.

During the Civil War I can recall the many hardships and the innumerable makeshifts we were put to for articles of food which the blockade made it impossible to obtain—coffee for instance. We substituted parched sweet potatoes and peanuts. For tea we used citronella leaves, or orange leaves, the latter had already been in use in cases of yellow fever. Shoes were scarce. I remember in 1865, a few weeks before the surrender I had contracted with the shoemaker for a pair of brogans for which I was to pay \$1500 in Confederate money. As each day brought news of the neared approach of the Federal troops to Mobile the shoemaker advanced his price until finally he refused altogether to let me have them unless I could pay for them in gold or greenbacks. Eventually, after General Canby captured the city I succeeded in obtaining my shoes for the princely sum of one dollar in gold.

I always thrilled in my youth over two incidents of the Civil War. Once, as a barefoot boy I had the opportunity of holding the horse—a beautiful white charger—of General Bragg, and once Jefferson Davis visited Mobile—after the battle of Chickamauga—and I led a class of my schoolmates on a Saturday morning to call on him at the Battle House, and was all puffed out with a little patriotic address, in which I told him that we hoped to grow up to be able to fight for him and our Cause. I remember his answer as he laid his hand on my head “I pray to Heaven, when you brave boys grow up there will be no more Cause for fighting”—and I can still recall his kindly face—I could almost detect tears in his eyes.

Sigmund Schlesinger came to Mobile in 1850 following his brother Jacob who had settled there a year earlier; Jacob, through my Father's help obtained



*Archives of the Springhill Avenue Temple*

arrived in Mobile. The Fidelia Club was also organized in that year—the first Jewish Club in Mobile.

At the age of ten I was sent up with Prof. Schlesinger to a girls seminary in Somerville, Noxubee Co. Mississippi, with the ostensible idea of studying music, especially piano playing. This plan resulted in a failure for the reason that Schlesinger was so much occupied with his pupils of the seminary that he had very little time for me. I never had a chance to practice, I rarely had a lesson—all I did was to play with another little boy, Lillian Smith of Lauderdale Miss., who had been sent there with his sister—his father being away at the War. We two kids became thoroughly spoiled, what with being petted by all the girls and allowed to run wild. We went to classes but the seminary had no primary department and no one made the slightest provision for our instruction. I still remember being sent to a classroom and sitting through an hour of algebra and wondering what it was all about.

Schlesinger had taken the Seminary position because all teachers were exempt from military duty—he was still a German citizen but would probably have been drafted had he remained in Mobile. After being there a year and receiving his salary in the form of a note which was never paid, he returned to Mobile and

pupils in piano and singing. When Sigmund was due to arrive it happened at the time to be very inconvenient for his brother to meet him at the boat at Montgomery, so I was sent to meet him with a photograph in my hand—I was seven years old. Thirty years later Schlesinger still used to tell about the little red headed boy who came up to him and asked “Are you Mr. Schlesinger?” He recognized his name, but could speak no English, so he said “Ja, ja”—and I escorted him home.

We were living then on Conti St. between Franklin and Hamilton. My Father also found pupils for him and he later became one of the leading figures in Mobile’s musical life. That same year Adolph Proskauer who afterward became a distinguished soldier and member of the legislature

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Mobile City Directory, 1865

I of course went with him, having spent a pleasant time and learned nothing of the piano. I can't remember that I ever went back to school—the schools in Mobile at that time were in very bad shape on account of the War—and I was put to work with a jeweller named Poetz. He had in the rear of his place a workshop with a forge where they used to melt gold—the shop was connected with an alley running out on a side street. My friends used to come down the alley and I slipped out to play with them whenever possible. On one occasion I was left to watch a crucible in which was gold—I went out to play and the shifting of the coals overturned the crucible. Poetz was naturally very angry. He reached for a long rattan cane and threatened to use it if anything of the kind ever occurred again. When I related this to my Mother that evening and told her I didn't intend to go back she agreed with me. Her principle was that chastisement of her children was reserved to herself alone. That ended my career as a jeweller.

In 1863 I was ill with meningitis. My sister and two brothers died. I was the only one who recovered. It took me all of that year to get well. In the summer my grandmother took me to Montgomery to visit a friend of my Father's. Even after I was supposed to have recovered I suffered with the most excruciating headaches. They had dosed me continually with quinine—forty grains a day—quinine was scarce and I can't imagine how they ever paid for it. I lost the hearing in my right ear and never regained it. The early spring of 1865 witnessed the close of the Civil War. My health was pretty well restored, and my brother Godfrey and I (he was fourteen months younger than I) both had to go to

| Family Record.                            |   |
|---|---|
| Deaths.                                   |   |
| Abraham Bloch<br>87 years and nine months | August 10 <sup>th</sup> 1870<br>Tahzeit 24 א.<br>אב 21<br>5.77                |
| Isabel Bloch<br>76 years and eight months | November 25 <sup>th</sup> 1875<br>April 1 <sup>st</sup> 1876<br>אב 21<br>1.77 |
| Emilia Bloch                              | March 25 <sup>th</sup> 1863   |
| Charles Bloch                             | March 12 <sup>th</sup> 1863   |
| Julius Bloch                              | March 20 <sup>th</sup> 1863   |
| Clara Bloch                               | Nov. 23 - 1891  |
| Amelia Reichold                           | Sep. 18 - 1893  |
| Minnie Bloch                              | Nov. 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1901   |
| Joseph Bloch<br>77 years.                 | died July 12 <sup>th</sup> 1903<br>born 10 July 1826                          |
| Reannah Bloch                             | died Feb. 18 <sup>th</sup> 1905<br>born April 12 <sup>th</sup> 1823           |
| Geoffrey Bloch                            | died Nov. 16 - 1905   |
| Richard Reichold                          | died April 27 - 1915.   |
| Seigmund Haas                             | died March 16 1922  |
| Jacob S. Simon                            | " Jan 23 - 1925   |

Family death records in the  
Joseph Bloch Family Bible

Archives of the Springhill Avenue Temple

work to help support the family. At the time when Mobile was captured and all our Confederate money became worthless, the only thing we had to start in with was one twenty dollar bill, U.S. currency, known in those days as greenbacks, which came into our possession as a souvenir of the battle of Shiloh, where a United States paymaster's train was captured and a friend of the family, Leopold Straus, gathered up a number of bills which he sent to my Aunt Goldstucker with the request that she distribute them among the family as souvenirs of the battle. The soldiers had been in high glee at capturing the money, some of them had lit cigars with the bills. When my Mother called on my aunt with my brother Godfrey and myself and was shown the letter and the bills, the twenty dollar note attracted my attention and my Aunt gave it to me. I had expected to keep it to play with, but my careful Mother took possession of it and preserved it—she was apparently the only one to whom it had ever occurred that we might some day again use Yankee money. It would have been considered unpatriotic of anyone to have saved U.S. currency in those days.

The Federal troops that came into Mobile received their pay but found the city completely bare of everything, even writing paper and envelopes. The only supplies to be had were held by army sutlers who established a depot at the corner of Royal and Dauphin Sts. With part of this twenty dollar bill I bought a small supply of writing materials and obtained permission from the officers of some of the regiments who seemed to very graciously inclined toward me, due perhaps to my youth, to peddle those supplies to the soldiers in the camp. My brother Godfrey went out with me every morning and we returned home at night—the soldiers gave us our lunch every day—used to make us sit down at the mess table and eat with them—my! We did enjoy those meals! They were the best we had had in many a day.

In one of the regiments we visited I was surprised to hear a sergeant, soon as he saw me, call out "Linky!—here's your brother come all the way from Kalamazoo! Come out and see him." Immediately there slouched forward a tall lanky red haired soldier, who evidently saw the joke and concluded to keep it up. He embraced me most affectionately, invited us to the mess table, gave us a wonderful lunch, steak sandwiches and coffee and beans and dried prunes and apples and splendid bread they baked in camp—and afterwards spent two hours going with us from tent to tent helping us to sell. Until the regiment was ordered to New Orleans we were daily visitors, always received by Linky with the greatest enthusiasm. By that time our original fund had increased almost ten fold and by the time the regiment left we had over a hundred dollars—my Mother had never let me spend all of that original twenty—and the family was in clover.

It was then I conceived the very brilliant idea of trying to get to New Orleans which was at that time a flourishing city, having been in possession of the U.S. Government since early in the War. Supplies of all kinds were plentiful, but no one was permitted to leave Mobile to travel to New Orleans (which could then only be reached by boat—the U.S. transport boats) without a permit from the military authorities. I managed to attract the attention and goodwill of the



transport, General Nathaniel P. Banks, who took me on a trip as cabin boy. My Mother allowed me to go because she thought I had a regular job on the boat. I reached New Orleans and visited some of the music dealers who were old friends of my Father's and secured quite a supply of violin strings which were very much in demand in Mobile and which were disposed of at quite a good profit on my return. The profit might have been much larger if my Father's altruistic instincts had not prevailed over my business sense. He sold the strings for almost nothing to the poorer musicians and often gave them away. Needless to say my Mother's ideas coincided with mine—there was a row every time my Father gave my smuggled strings away to some poor devil who could not pay.

About the time things began to brighten up a bit in Mobile, business was gradually resumed, and my brother and I found jobs. The hard time during the War kept us all pretty wide awake for an opportunity to earn a little money and we watched especially for a chance to buy anything we might be able to sell at a profit. Provisions, wearing apparel—everything grew scarcer as the blockade tightened. One day downtown I noticed a pile of ordinary cotton cord in a store. A spool of ordinary cotton sold at that time for a hundred and fifty dollars, Confederate money. "How much is that cord worth?" I asked the storekeeper. "What do you want with that cord?" he wanted to know "Never mind what I want with that cord" I said "What's it worth?" "Five hundred dollars a pound" he said. "Let me have a pound" I said and went down the street to Kirkbride's hardware store. I showed him the cord. "Could you use this?" I asked him. "Where'd you get it?" "Never mind where I got it, do you want it?" "What's it worth?" "Six hundred dollars a pound." "You're crazy boy." "Where can you get it for less? You can't get it for less." "How much of it you got?" "Oh about fifteen pounds." "Alright, I'll take it." I went back to Max's store and got a nigger and a dray. "I want to weigh that cord" I told him. "You got the money to pay for it?" "I'll pay for it later—you know my Mother." Well, he let me have it, and while the nigger was weighing it he said to his brother "I'll bet that red headed kid has done gone and sold that cord." There were seventeen pounds and I took seventeen hundred dollars home to my Mother. She said "That's just in time I need a barrel of flour and they want fifteen hundred dollars for it."

If my Mother had had her way we might all have been rich. She wanted to buy real estate with whatever money she managed to save, but my Father was fearful of the Yankees. "They'll bombard the town" he said "And what will the houses be worth then?" "They can't hurt the lots" she said—she wanted the land, but he would never hear of it.

I well remember the spring morning in April when the news came that the Union forces expected to march into the city. For months previous the Confederate Government had gathered large stores of provisions and arms which were kept in cotton warehouses along Front and Commerce Sts. in the city. Recognizing the situation of many poor, almost starving families, the Confederate General refused to permit these stores to be destroyed by those in authority

who wished to do so, but before evacuating the city, the warehouses were thrown open for the people to take possession. I remember seeing many women, both white and black, marching out of those warehouses with sides of bacon on their heads. The sight was a great one for the small boys, of whom I was one. We wandered about the warehouses, ankle deep in wheat which had been scattered on the floor, but we took home no provisions. We were far more interested in guns and swords which we appropriated, immediately forming ourselves into a juvenile military company and marching down Commerce St., where we were met by an officer on horseback and warned to desist and abstain from further military maneuvers. He told us the Union forces were approaching the city and that we might be mistaken for hostile forces and fired on. I can see myself yet marching along there with a Springfield rifle, almost too heavy for me to carry, a bayonet and an artillery sword strapped to my belt. The officers warning created a panic in our ranks. We made a headlong break for the nearest river wharf, and pitched all the guns into the river. I now recall reading in the columns of the *Mobile Register*, thirty-six years later the story of the finding of these guns and the wonder as to how they happened to come there. Some of us who were left were well able to give an explanation.

## AFTERWORD

This seems a good point to leave these memoirs that cover such a fascinating period in our history. Edward married Lizzy Long nearly two decades after this story ends. They had forty-eight years of happy marriage and four children. After the war his business took him from Mobile to San Antonio, back to Alabama, and then to New York.

Joseph Bloch, Edward's father continued to live in Mobile operating his business and serving as Professor of Music at Spring Hill College. It was in a happy relationship with his two daughters that my contact with this story took origin. Edward's sisters, Emma and Fanny, married Mobilians and were delightful friends. Emma married into the Eichold family and though her husband was my cousin, I called her "Aunt." It was Emma's niece, Barbara Bloch Benjamin who lives in New York, who brought these memoirs to my attention.

Samuel Eichold is Emeritus Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of South Alabama.

## Ma's Place: Mary Ann Patout and the Modernization of Enterprise Plantation, 1883-1907

Michael G. Wade

The American public's historical consciousness abounds with stereotypes of nineteenth-century women. They were domestic creatures. They were matronly guardians of morality, starving seamstresses, and prim and proper schoolmarms. By the turn of the century the more intrepid were becoming secretaries, nurses, and social workers—increasingly acceptable extensions of their domestic roles. Down on the farm, women kept house, raised children, and tended the garden while their men saw to the fields, the livestock, and the family business. Like her city sister, the farm woman's sphere was primarily domestic. Agricultural technology, farm labor, and crop financing were part of the male domain.

These popular stereotypes hold for southern women as well. Arguing that the history of southern women is "enveloped in myth and fantasy," Joanne V. Hawks and Sheila L. Skemp note that images of them are more likely to be drawn from *Gone With the Wind* than from history books.<sup>1</sup> Ann Firor Scott has speculated that slavery was one reason for the image of the southern female as docile and domestic. Women, along with children and slaves, were expected to respect their place in a hierarchical and patriarchal society. Males liked the arrangement: "Like aristocrats, Communists, and bourgeois businessmen, southern men had no trouble finding theoretical support for a way of life that was decidedly to their advantage."<sup>2</sup>

Certainly the Louisiana sugar industry has been regarded as an overwhelmingly male business. The literature on sugar reflects male dominance in both crop and milling operations. Postbellum sugar plantation mistresses almost always appear in supporting roles, either as their husband's helpmates or as widowed caretakers of the family business, marking time until the property is sold or until the male heirs are of age.

However, the records of M. A. Patout and Son, Ltd., an Iberia Parish sugar plantation and mill, clearly indicate that women have played a major role in that company's development. This 160-year-old family business was begun as a grape-growing venture by French immigrant Pierre Simeon Patout. He began to develop a sugar plantation in the 1830s, one that has weathered the vagaries of war, climate, depression, and government policy to become the largest producer of raw sugar in Louisiana.

Following Simeon Patout's death in 1847, his widow, Appoline, directed the growth of the plantation for almost two decades before going into partnership with her sons Hippolyte and Felix. She expanded the fledgling plantation, donated land for a Catholic church near her mill, and, following the Civil War, actively encouraged the growth around her plantation of a community that came to be called Patoutville. She died in 1879 and the sons operated Enterprise Plantation as Patout Brothers until Hippolyte died in 1882. Patout Brothers continued to operate until late 1886, when Hippolyte's widow bought her brother-in-law's interest in the plantation.<sup>3</sup>



*Mary Ann Patout*



*Hippolyte Patout*

Recognizing that survival in the sugar planting and milling business depended upon modernization and economies of scale, Mary Ann Patout determined to make Enterprise one of the central sugar factories that were coming to dominate the cane industry. Even as other antebellum planters were going bankrupt, she directed a daring capital investment program that enabled Enterprise to survive the organizational and technological transition occurring in Louisiana sugar country. Few people today, even in the sugar industry, realize that the corporate name, M. A. Patout, represents a tribute to perhaps the key figure in that company's long history, a woman, Mary Ann Patout.

When she was sixteen, Mary Ann Schwing was married to twenty-two-year-old Hippolyte Patout at her family home in Bayou Boeuf. The marriage marked the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial alliance between two prosperous and growing families of the sugar district. Patout had the means to begin his own plantation and his new wife had the upbringing to complement his efforts. Hippolyte and Mary Ann Patout owned an Iberville Parish plantation which they operated until some time after the Civil War, when they moved to St. Mary Parish to assist Appoline Patout in the rebuilding of her plantation. Following his mother's death in 1879, Hippolyte Patout continued the partnership with his brother, Felix, until his own death at the relatively early age of fifty on April 8, 1882. <sup>4</sup>

Now responsible for ten children, the youngest of whom was only four, Mrs. Patout ran the plantation with her brother-in-law until 1886, when she purchased his interest in Patout Brothers. The terms were \$13,700 in cash payable upon delivery of the property on January 1, 1888. In addition, Mrs. Patout assumed a three hundred dollar debt owed by Patout Brothers to the heirs of Hippolyte Baron Bayard. For that sum Mary Ann Patout acquired all properties of Patout Brothers except for the family graveyard, that year's crop, and Felix's

interest in the cash, notes, and accounts due of the business. The purchase included the 1,190-acre Patout Brothers Plantation complete with all appurtenances and improvements, the 180-acre Rawls tract (prairie land), 275 acres of swamp land contiguous to the home plantation, and the 141-acre Gary tract, also swamp land.<sup>5</sup>

J. Carlyle Sitterson says that the sugar district had recovered by 1880, but notes that the healing was achieved amidst considerable change.<sup>6</sup> New money, northern money, had come into the region after the war. Many antebellum owners were unable to rebuild their plantations. Others who survived beyond Reconstruction suffered from increasingly inadequate scales of operation and outmoded equipment. They were being squeezed out by the relentless trend toward centralization amidst the growing internationalization of the sugar market.<sup>7</sup> For still others, disasters like fire meant the end of the struggle to endure the growing competitiveness of the raw sugar and syrup business.<sup>8</sup> The Patouts had made the transition into the postbellum era, but in many ways they were still caught between old and new when the Patout Brothers became M. A. Patout on New Year's Day, 1887.<sup>9</sup>

Though the entire neighborhood was noted for its careful agricultural practices and its excellent cane, most mills in the area, including the Patout factory, still used the open kettle or open pan processes. The mill at Enterprise was a steam and kettle operation using a three-roller mill to crush the cane. Neighboring Daisy Plantation, operated by Ernest Bayard, also used the steam and kettle process.<sup>10</sup> This technology represented an improvement over the fast-fading horse and kettle operations, but it wasted fuel in an era of declining profits.<sup>11</sup> In addition, while generally sufficient to grind the Patout's cane and that of their neighbors, the mill was not up to rising standards in terms of scale of operation, efficiency of extraction, or quality of final product. The demand for open kettle sugars declined drastically in the 1880s, steadily forcing producers to upgrade their facilities or to rely on central mills in order to have a marketable product.<sup>12</sup>

Mary Ann Patout elected to change. In 1887, she and her plantation manager, her eldest son, Hippolyte, Jr., began an improvement program that eventually included 210 arpents (an arpent is a French unit of land equalling approximately .92 acres) of ditching and the erection or repair of 105 bridges.<sup>13</sup> In order to buy time for the transition to a central mill, she decided to build a pipeline in order to transmit her syrup to Aristide Monnot's Vaufrey Refinery about four and one-half miles from Enterprise. While she would have to pay refining costs, syrup did not require as much processing as plantation sugars.

Mrs. Patout would thus be able to reduce her cost of operation, conserving fuel and avoiding the extra cost of transporting plantation sugar to a central mill for refining. Her syrup strategy was not unique; it had been employed in St. Mary Parish as early as 1879. But most open kettle producers, unable to finance expanded modern plants, opted to sell their cane to central mills.<sup>14</sup>

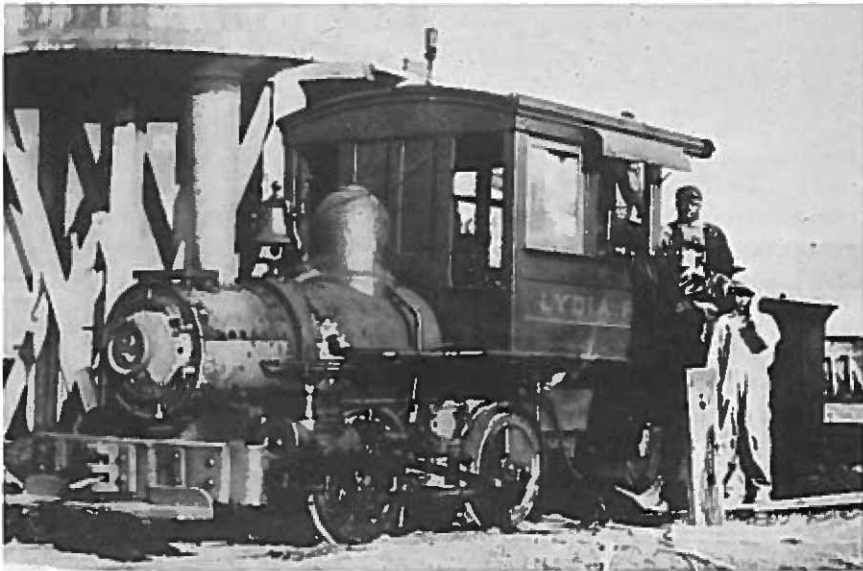
Perhaps the main advantage of the syrup pipeline lay in the time that it saved. Hauling sugar hogsheads to Jeanerette by mule cart was a costly and exceedingly slow proposition. A journalist writing about the Patout's syrup pipeline

contrasted the two methods as follows: "Formerly a driver would leave the mill about 4:00 A.M. with two hogsheads of sugar, drawn by a team of eight mules, destined for Jeanerette. The same driver would return to the mill at midnight, having made a 20-hour journey over the mud roads on the roundtrip to market." <sup>15</sup>

With her marketing difficulty resolved, Mrs. Patout began to expand her mill's grinding capacity in order to attract the cane acreage necessary for the economical operation of a central mill. In 1888, she replaced her three-roller mills with six-roller equipment to increase juice extraction from the cane. To save on fuel costs, she installed new boilers, a bagasse burner (bagasse is cane fiber remaining after juice extraction), and a steam train. <sup>16</sup>

Following the 1888 crop season, she laid 23,000 feet of 2 1/2-inch pipe to convey syrup from her mill to a Bayou Teche landing. From there it would be shipped by barge to the Vaufrey Refinery in Jeanerette. <sup>17</sup> Two seasons later, Enterprise, buying cane from small farmers and benefiting from a large home crop, sent syrup equivalent to almost 1,500,000 pounds of sugar to Monnot. The Patouts almost matched that figure the following year, piping syrup equal to nearly 1.4 million pounds of sugar. <sup>18</sup>

An important factor in Mary Ann Patout's modernization program was the relative community of interest that existed in the Patoutville area. There was a climate of more or less friendly cooperation in a mostly amicable, but competitive, business. Relationships among families varied, of course, but this cohesiveness could mean the loan of needed equipment, labor-sharing, credit, technical support, or help during times of family crisis. <sup>19</sup> A related factor was the rapid growth of population on Isle Piquant prairie. For Mary Ann Patout, these conditions provided a congenial setting for her plans to build a modern central factory system at Enterprise.



*"Lydia" Patout railroad locomotive*

In early 1890 there were rumors that Mrs. Patout would erect her own refinery on Bayou Teche.<sup>20</sup> They were probably stimulated by her use of a third party to purchase a three-arpent tract on the bayou in Hubertville in 1889.<sup>21</sup> At least for the short term, these suppositions proved to be incorrect.<sup>22</sup> Instead, Aristide Monnot expanded the capacity of his Vaufrey Refinery and improved his mills in order to attract more small cane farmers. Although the two cents per pound bounty on domestic vacuum sugars allowed by the McKinley Tariff provided a substantial incentive for expansion, Mary Ann Patout recognized the need to proceed cautiously.

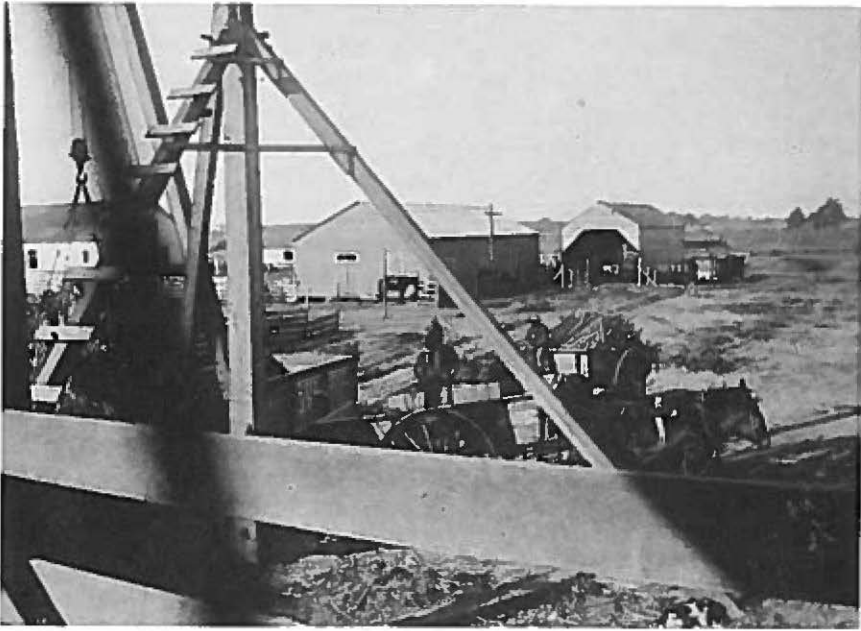
Having reduced the operating costs of her mill, Mrs. Patout next moved to establish a system for moving cane from the fields to the mill more economically. She decided to install a narrow-gauge railway to deliver her cane. Between January 2 and 11, 1893, Mrs. Patout acquired the rights of way necessary for the development of a railroad for Enterprise, bringing to a successful conclusion her negotiations with eighteen landowners on Isle Piquant.<sup>23</sup>

Though the immediate costs of a rail system were great, what Mary Ann Patout gained was a measure of control over scheduling and some independence from the effects of the weather on the harvest. During rainy spells, roads could become impassable for carts while delivery by rail would be slowed, but not stopped.

The Enterprise 36-inch gauge railroad extended as far as ten miles from the sugarhouse and ran for a total of seventeen miles. An additional mile of storage track was kept at the mill. Nothing is known about the first locomotive(s) at Enterprise. The first locomotive for which there is a record was the "Lydia," a Porter full-tender steam locomotive built in 1897 for M. A. Patout. Four years later, the firm bought a full-tender steam Dickson which they named the "Mary Ann."<sup>24</sup> These locomotives pulled four-ton cars out to the cane-loading sites, largely supplanting the need for cart delivery. The system freed mules for other work and significantly reduced labor costs.

The new system must have worked relatively well, because in 1893 the Patout mill processed enough cane to manufacture the equivalent of 3,380,839 pounds of sugar.<sup>25</sup> Their first real indication of the bad weather potential of their new railroad probably came with the very heavy rain on November 26. This downpour flooded fields and filled ditches to such an extent that it required several days for roads to dry enough so that cane could be hauled by cart with any ease. The second half of December was also quite damp and hampered cane carts while locomotives pulling cane trains over well-drained track beds were able to move more freely.

The 1893 crop year must have been a very profitable one for Mary Ann Patout. In addition to the large output by a more cost-efficient operation, the sugar bounty of two cents per pound on vacuum-pan sugars rewarded large producers using advanced equipment. If the market price of Enterprise's sugar merely covered their costs of production, the Patouts would have realized an income of \$67,600 from the bounty. Moreover, the language of the McKinley Act indicated that the bounty would be paid until at least 1905.<sup>26</sup> These



*Mule drawn carts unloading cane onto rail cars for transport to factory*

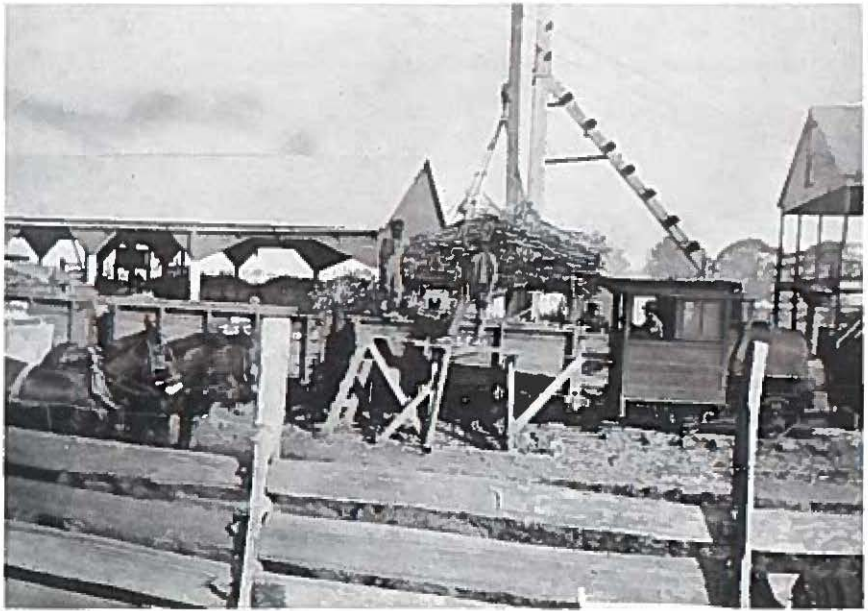
considerations were more than enough to justify the railroad expense and to warrant additional expansion.

In 1894 Mrs. Patout returned to granulating her own sugar. She contracted with John H. Murphy of New Orleans for \$24,523 of modern sugar-making equipment to be installed in a new refinery on Bayou Teche in nearby Hubertville. The contract terms specified that the new mill be ready for use by September 1, 1894.<sup>27</sup> Actually, it appears that the bayou-side facility did not operate before the following year. The 1894-95 *Statement of the Sugar Crop* indicates that M. A. Patout and Son processed 3,512,491 pounds of vacuum-strike sugar at their prairie mill.<sup>28</sup> This perhaps indicates that the improvements were made to the Enterprise sugarhouse instead.

The 1896-97 crop statement indicates that the refinery, using a steam train, vacuum pans, and centrifugals, granulated four million pounds of sugar. The entry for the back mill indicates that double-effect evaporators had been installed there.<sup>29</sup> This last development may have been an experiment, because the 1898-99 crop report indicates that the refinery was using the double effects and that the back mill had resumed its steam train, open-pan status.<sup>30</sup> At any rate, it is clear that the function of the back mill was to produce syrup for the refinery.<sup>31</sup>

By 1900, despite the demise of the bounty, M. A. Patout and Son had made the transition to central factory without incurring any long-term indebtedness. The census of that year listed Mary Ann as a widowed planter owning an unmortgaged farm.<sup>32</sup> At about this time, the Patouts probably joined most of the other large planters in the shift from coal and wood to more economical





*Unloading cane from rail cars at the factory*

fuel oil, with bagasse continuing to be used as a supplement.<sup>33</sup> The use of oil enabled such planters to end their reliance on wood or coal to start the boilers, even when they were using bagasse burners.<sup>34</sup>

Mary Ann Patout was respected not only for her business ability, but also for her contributions to the overall growth of the community. The *Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* referred to the region around Patoutville as “one of the richest sections of the parish and thickly settled by an industrious population . . . Patoutville, the center of the ward, is a thriving little village with a handsome church, and numerous business houses, and nearby is the Patout sugar house and railroad.”<sup>35</sup> There was also a public school, the land for which had been sold to the parish school board for one dollar by Mrs. Patout.<sup>36</sup> When the Board of Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church wanted to buy land to erect their church, Mrs. Patout provided the property at nominal cost.<sup>37</sup>

Another of M. A. Patout’s new directions involved the lumber business. The *Louisiana Planter* article which extolled the virtues of Patoutville noted that “There is also a new Enterprise going up—a first-class, up-to-date sawmill and factory, which will soon be in operation, drawing its timber by a large canal from a cypress swamp that has never been invaded by the woodsmen’s ax. Consequently the lumber will be first class.”<sup>38</sup>

M. A. Patout’s involvement in the lumber business was only one evidence of the growing diversity of Mary Ann Patout’s economic interests. She was clearly a woman who wanted to keep her surplus capital working and she was knowledgeable about business opportunities outside of the sugar industry. The range of investments she made suggests a basically conservative person with an



*The Patout Sugarhouse*

occasional taste for more exotic risks. For example in 1889 she bought twenty-five shares of capital stock in the Plata Reina de Sonora Mining and Milling Company.<sup>39</sup> Most of her ventures were more restrained and indicate that she was well aware of the opportunities arising from American industrial development.

Another major concern of planters was financing. Mary Ann Patout, following Felix's example, became an active participant in the development of local banking facilities. She bought stock in both the People's National Bank of New Iberia and the New Iberia National Bank.<sup>40</sup> Felix Patout was a member of the founding board of directors of the New Iberia National Bank, chartered on March 25, 1887, as the first national bank in southwestern Louisiana.<sup>41</sup> Mary Ann later became a board member, making her perhaps the first woman in Louisiana to occupy such a position.<sup>42</sup>

Near the end of the 1899 season, the *Louisiana Planter* noted that Enterprise had been crushing cane at a rate of 650 tons per day for a month and that they would finish in a few days. Eventually the increasing size of the cane crop obligated the Patouts to expand the capacity of the mill and to make other improvements. In 1904, the *Planter* reported that Enterprise was grinding cane "without cessation."<sup>43</sup> In addition to the Patout's own cane, the journal indicated that local farmers were "pouring in their loads by every possible means of transportation from the patient ox to the dandy team of horses, with mules predominating."<sup>44</sup>

To prepare for this increase, the Patouts had installed new brickwork under the boilers, raised a large new smokestack, and erected a Thornton derrick to transfer cane to the carrier at the mill.<sup>45</sup> Even with the improvements, Enterprise was still milling the 1904 crop in mid-January of 1905.<sup>46</sup>



*Felix Patout*

The 1905 season was even more trying. A mid-summer attack of cane borers caused concern, but the cane and corn crops were both large ones.<sup>47</sup> The mill began grinding on October 18, as the region worried about the potential severity of a recent yellow fever outbreak. Willie Patout had to make wide detours around certain neighborhoods as he searched for harvest labor around St. Martinville. Fred Schwing, who was to weigh cane at Enterprise, had been in quarantine for six days.<sup>48</sup>

In mid-November, the mill lost one or two days due to a minor breakdown, which fortunately occurred when the rains made it impossible to accomplish much outside.<sup>49</sup> They were then delayed by a broken shaft and bed plate on the cane crusher. Even after the crusher was repaired, Enterprise had more cane than it could handle and diverted some of it to other factories.<sup>50</sup>

By mid-1906, the *Louisiana Planter* was reporting that a new mill was en route to Patoutville.<sup>51</sup> According to the *Planter*, "the old mill, while a good one, was too small for the growing needs of this territory . . . ."<sup>52</sup> By early October, the new facility was ready, equipped with a Birmingham crusher, a six-roller mill powered by a Corliss Birmingham engine, and larger capacity boilers and evaporation equipment.<sup>53</sup> Cane was to be fed into the mill by a Bodley feeder, which required only four men to handle up to eight hundred tons of cane. The new mill operated quite satisfactorily and was not taxed by the 1906 crop, which was short of expectations.<sup>54</sup>

The 1906 grinding season was Mary Ann Patout's last one. Even though she had not been well for some time, it was not thought that her life was in danger. However, she was taken ill and died suddenly on the night of July 10, 1907. Even allowing for the florid prose which was often used in obituaries in this period, it is clear that she was held in high esteem by those who knew her. The *Louisiana Planter* said that "Her life was characterized by great energy, fine business qualities, with those beautiful womanly traits which shone through a life of home making, and many charitable acts endearing her to the entire community."<sup>55</sup> The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* noted that "she was always found at the bedside of her tenants whenever they needed assistance."<sup>56</sup> The Board of Directors at the New Iberia National Bank remembered her for her

“remarkable good judgment” and a “life filled with good deeds.”<sup>57</sup> To her heirs, she left an estate valued at \$294,865.47.<sup>58</sup>

The extent to which Mrs. Patout and, by implication, perhaps other women as well, were involved in the sugar industry is in some respects difficult to assess. They appear to have participated only in limited fashion in some aspects of the industry's life. Hippolyte, Jr. rather than Mrs. Patout went to the New Orleans market during grinding season. The social world of the sugar business appears as very much a man's domain, with their women primarily playing supporting roles. Grinding season activities in New Orleans involved well-established male rituals to which it would have been difficult for Mary Ann Patout to gain entry, even assuming that she wanted to or, for that matter, that she had the time to. Meetings of the Louisiana Sugar Planters' Association were similarly dominated by men. Mrs. Patout's decision to call her company M. A. Patout seems to indicate a calculated desire to avoid calling attention to gender in her business dealings.

There is little doubt about Mary Ann Patout's central role in the operation of M. A. Patout and Son. Hippolyte was indeed her partner, but she controlled two-thirds interest in the company. As he grew older, her younger son, Willie, developed his own business interests, often in conjunction with Hippolyte. The brothers business pursuits were often tied in with the larger fortunes of M. A. Patout, which they and their siblings would inherit at the death of their mother in 1907. And in running the business, it seems clear that Mary Ann Patout made the final decisions on matters which were of particular importance to her. A devout woman, she insisted that there be no work on the more important religious holidays, despite the objections of Hippolyte and Willie Patout.<sup>59</sup>

While it is important to document the non-traditional roles of women in American business history, it would be a mistake to view the business career of Mary Ann Patout only in that light. Her story provides us with a case study of how planters successfully adjusted to the changing nature of their industry in the late nineteenth century. Alfred D. Chandler and others have noted the importance of the case study to business history. Chandler's view is that the case study

permits examination of the response of a single enterprise to the changing situation in which it operated over a continuing period of time. If other enterprises operated under much the same conditions—that is, if they used comparable production methods and sold in comparable markets—and did so in the same time period, then they were faced with similar opportunity, needs, and operating problems. So the experience of one company can be legitimately considered as illustrative of the experiences of other firms operating under similar conditions.<sup>60</sup>

Mary Ann Patout belongs to that class of smaller late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century entrepreneurs who, while not as famous or as notorious as the Rockefellers or the Carnegies, were vitally important to American industrial growth. She was an ambitious, talented businessperson who, at least partly because

of her gender, did not attain the public prominence in her industry achieved by some of her male counterparts. Not surprisingly, she does not appear to have had any role in the Louisiana Sugar Planters' Association.

She was never at any point in her career the leading sugar producer in the Teche region, although the Enterprise mill regularly ranked in the top three in Iberia Parish. Her aspirations centered on her family, her region and her business.

At Enterprise, she laid the material foundation for prosperity and charted a strategy for long-term success in an intensely competitive business in which the majority of her peers would fail to survive. She trained the next generation of owner-managers at M. A. Patout and prepared the way for their survival in the exceedingly difficult years of the 1920s and 1930s, when still more sugar planters were forced out of the business. M. A. Patout would endure, while the Lewises, the Pharrs and even the Monnots would not. Today, only a score or so raw sugar mills still operate, and M. A. Patout is the largest of the remaining producers. Mary Ann Patout should be remembered primarily for her role in this achievement rather than as a female curiosity in a predominantly male business.



*Front view, Enterprise Plantation home, 1900*

*All illustrations in this  
article are from the  
Burns|Patout Family Collections*

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Joanne V. Hawks and Sheila L. Skemp, eds., *Sex, Race, and the Role of Women in the South* (Jackson, MS, 1983), xi.
- <sup>2</sup> Ann Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics* (Chicago, 1970), 17-18.
- <sup>3</sup> The records relating to the business of the plantation from 1847 to the Civil War leave little doubt that Appoline Patout was in charge. See, for example, Succession of Simeon Patout, January 19, 1848, Clerk of Court's Office, St. Mary Parish Courthouse, Franklin, LA, Original Estate Books, Book A, Folio 87, No. 629; Succession of Appoline Patout, Clerk of Court's Office, March 2, 1879, Iberia Parish Courthouse, New Iberia, LA, Probate Book 5, Folio 1, no. 287; see also *New Iberia Louisiana Sugar Bowl*, March 6, 1879, for Appoline Patout's obituary.
- <sup>4</sup> Patout Family Genealogy; Schwing Family Genealogy, both in possession of Mrs. George S. Broussard, New Iberia; the Succession of Appoline Patout contains detailed information on the duration and circumstances of the family partnership; Succession of Hippolyte Patout, Sr., May 22, 1882, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, New Iberia, Probate Book 9, Folio 47, No. 380.
- <sup>5</sup> Felix Patout to Mary Ann Patout, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, New Iberia, Conveyance Record, Book 14, no. 946, October 18, 1886.
- <sup>6</sup> J. Carlyle Sitterson, *Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753-1950* (Lexington, 1950), 250-52.
- <sup>7</sup> Lou Ferleger, "Technological Change in the Post Bellum Louisiana Sugar Industry" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1978), 136; John Heitmann, *The Modernization of the Louisiana Sugar Industry, 1830-1910* (Baton Rouge, 1987), 198.
- <sup>8</sup> A. Bouchereau, *Statement of the Sugar Crop, 1894-95*, 71a-73a.
- <sup>9</sup> Felix Patout to M. A. Patout, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, New Iberia, Conveyance Record, Book 14, p. 497, no. 745, October 18, 1886.
- <sup>10</sup> *Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (hereafter cited as *LPSM*), August 25, 1888; Alcee Bouchereau, *The Louisiana Sugar Report, 1893-94*.
- <sup>11</sup> "The Fuel Question in Louisiana," *LPSM*, July 21, 1888.
- <sup>12</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 261.
- <sup>13</sup> *LPSM*, April 13, 1889.
- <sup>14</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 261.
- <sup>15</sup> Florence Blackburn, "Pumping Syrup By Pipe Line Unique Feature of Patout Mill," *Franklin Banner-Tribune*, August 21, 1952, 7.
- <sup>16</sup> *LPSM*, August 17 and October 3, 1889.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> Bouchereau, *Statement of the Sugar Crop, 1890-92, 19; 1892-93, 4.*

<sup>19</sup> *LPSM*, April 13, 1889.

<sup>20</sup> *LPSM*, February 8, 1890.

<sup>21</sup> James Brown to Mrs. M. A. Patout, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, Conveyance Record, Book 18, no. 1974, May 4, 1889; Willie S. Patout, et al., to Hippolyte Patout, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, Conveyance Record, Book 61, no. 19722, July 24, 1907.

<sup>22</sup> *LPSM*, February 15, 1890.

<sup>23</sup> Iberia Corporate Conveyances, 1893, Book 24, nos. 3992-4008.

<sup>24</sup> William Edward Butler, *Down Among the Sugar Cane: The Story of Louisiana's Sugar Plantations and Their Railroads* (Baton Rouge: privately printed, 1980), 171-74.

<sup>25</sup> Bouchereau, *Statement of the Sugar Crop, 1893-94*, 4-5.

<sup>26</sup> Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 328. Louisiana planters realized some \$30 million in bounty payments for the 1891-1894 seasons.

<sup>27</sup> Clerk of Court's Office, Orleans Parish Courthouse, New Orleans, Contract, March 13, 1894.

<sup>28</sup> Bouchereau, *Statement of the Sugar Crop, 1894-95*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 1896-97, 5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 1898-99, 7.

<sup>31</sup> M. A. Patout and Son vs. Iberia-St. Mary Drainage District, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, Civil Suit 3520, December 17, 1900.

<sup>32</sup> Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Population Schedule for Iberia Parish, 3b.

<sup>33</sup> *LPSM*, October 25, 1902.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with George Smith, Patoutville, LA, December 22, 1984.

<sup>35</sup> *LPSM*, April 9, 1904.

<sup>36</sup> M. A. Patout to the Iberia Parish School Board, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, Conveyance Book 16, p. 444, no. 1418, November 11, 1887.

<sup>37</sup> M. A. Patout to Lincoln Smith, President, Board of Trustees, Methodist Episcopal Church, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, New Iberia, Conveyance Record, Book 21, pp. 123-24, no. 2801, January 20, 1890.

<sup>38</sup> *LPSM*, April 9, 1904.

<sup>39</sup> Stock Certificate, J. Patout Burns Papers, in possession of Mrs. J. Patout Burns, New Iberia.

<sup>40</sup> Succession of Mrs. M. A. Patout to Hippolyte Patout, et al., Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, New Iberia, Conveyance Record, Book 61, p. 324, no. 19726, August 4, 1907.

- <sup>41</sup> Glenn R. Conrad, ed., *New Iberia: Essays on the Town and Its People*, 2nd ed. (Lafayette, LA, 1986), 151.
- <sup>42</sup> Minutes, Board of Directors, New Iberia National Bank, July 15, 1907, J. Patout Burns Papers.
- <sup>43</sup> *LPSM*, November 26, 1904.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>45</sup> *LPSM*, October 8, 1904.
- <sup>46</sup> *LPSM*, December 24, 1904.
- <sup>47</sup> *LPSM*, May 6, 1905.
- <sup>48</sup> Mary Ann Patout to Ada Mistrot, October 18, 1905, J. Patout Burns Papers; *LPSM*, October 14 and November 4, 1905.
- <sup>49</sup> *LPSM*, November 18, 1905.
- <sup>50</sup> *LPSM*, November 25, 1905.
- <sup>51</sup> *LPSM*, June 2, 1906.
- <sup>52</sup> *LPSM*, May 26, 1906.
- <sup>53</sup> *LPSM*, October 13, 1906.
- <sup>54</sup> *LPSM*, December 22, 1906.
- <sup>55</sup> *LPSM*, July 20, 1907.
- <sup>56</sup> New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, July 12, 1907, 11.
- <sup>57</sup> Board of Director's Minutes, New Iberia National Bank, July 15, 1907, J. Patout Burns Papers.
- <sup>58</sup> Succession of Mary Ann Patout, Clerk of Court's Office, Iberia Parish Courthouse, New Iberia, Probate, Book 24, p. 405, no. 1399, August 7, 1907.
- <sup>59</sup> Interview with George Smith, December 21, 1983. Smith reported that his mother's insistence on religious holidays would "irk the hell" out of Hippolyte, Jr.
- <sup>60</sup> Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA, 1977), 378.

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## Review Essay

### To Antique and New Lands: Travels 'Without' as Journeys Within

James B. McSwain

Frederic Trautmann, ed. and trans. *Travels on the Lower Mississippi 1879-1880: A Memoir of Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990, pp. 261. \$24.95. ISBN 0-8262-0709-X

Vincent Kohler and David F. Ward, eds. *Harlan Hubbard Journals 1929-1944*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987, pp. 202. \$19.00. ISBN 0-8131-1616-3

Harlan Hubbard. *Shantyboat: A River Way of Life*. Illustrated by Harlan Hubbard. Foreword by Wendell Berry. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977, pp. 352. \$10.00. ISBN 0-8131-1359-8

Harlan Hubbard. *Shantyboat on the Bayous*. Illustrated by Harlan Hubbard. Foreword by Don Wallis. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990, pp. 141. \$19.95. ISBN 0-8131-1717-8

Wendell Berry. *Harlan Hubbard: Life and Work*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990, pp. 108. \$23.00. ISBN 0-8131-1725-9

Man has travelled for many reasons and has left behind a wide-ranging literature to mark his wanderings. Recent publication of several works of this genre remind us of the long and distinguished history of travel and exploration and its importance to the area along the Gulf Coast.

Paleolithic man sought food and shelter. Ancients traveled and explored. Tribes roamed the steppes and deserts of central and east Asia in search of plunder and conquest, sometimes infiltrating and ruling wealthy contiguous civilizations in the Yellow River valley and Mesopotamia. The Greeks after 700 B.C. spread themselves around the Mediterranean for several centuries to acquire land and to gain trade opportunities in new colonies and towns. Germanic people moved south from central Europe to infiltrate and then to occupy the territory of the disintegrating Roman Empire around the western Mediterranean. Medieval European kings often spent their lives touring their realms to enforce justice and to maintain kinship and feudal ties with relatives and subordinates. Their pious clerical and lay subjects continued a longstanding Christian practice of pilgrimage to shrines and holy sites in search of purity, in imitation of Christ, to fulfill a vow or, in anticipation of an indulgence, to expurgate a deep sense of guilt, obtain healing, or satisfy a profound need for "community and good fellowship."<sup>1</sup>

Sixteenth-century Englishmen, as well as Dutch, German, Austrian, and Hungarian subjects, rambled about Europe as diplomats, merchants, and private

travellers, often under governmental supervision. For the young sons of the English nobility and gentry, trips abroad, often after a “stint in college,” were justified as an ‘art’ “to be practised by a properly taught young man” to gain seasoning and experience in preparation for royal preferment.<sup>2</sup> However, what had been an expedient became a conventional itinerary and then a fashion. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century scholars, young aristocratic men, middling elements of English and European society, and even poor folk sometimes took a “grand tour”<sup>3</sup> of the continent, particularly Paris and the “principal Italian cities: Rome, Venice, Florence and Naples,” to sightsee, pursue women, or seek knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

Spanish and French explorers tramped around in the New World in search of gold, glory, converts, and land. In 1519 Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, while in Spanish service, either saw one of the mouths of the Mississippi River at a distance or “perceived it by its mighty discharge.” He named it Río del Espíritu Santo, but Cortés’ landing in Mexico the same year left the river in obscurity and speculation. Hernando de Soto’s party apparently crossed the river in 1541 just south of modern Memphis, Tennessee, and in the spring of 1543, under the leadership of Luis de Moscoso, used the river as an “escape route” to the Gulf.<sup>5</sup> A number of eager and curious Frenchmen—Louis Jolliet, Father Jacques Marquette, and René-Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle, for example—probed the upper tributaries of the Mississippi River and then followed the main channel to the Gulf by 1682.<sup>6</sup> This waterway remained a favorite passageway for globetrotters, land speculators, surveyors, immigrants, soldiers of fortune, and those hungry for exotica, challenge, and new experiences.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the river voyage was irresistible to several young and impressionable Europeans.<sup>7</sup> Twenty-one-year-old Francis Baily, a banker’s son who later became president of the Royal Astronomical Society, journeyed down the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, and then back up the Natchez Trace to Nashville in the winter of 1796-97.<sup>8</sup> His description of the passage appeared posthumously in 1856.<sup>9</sup> Prince Bernhard, second son of the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, toured the United States in 1825-26. He visited many places, including the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, on the way to New Orleans, where he spent nearly two months, and then went by riverboat to St. Louis. His heavily edited, impressionistic travel diary, published in 1828, constitutes an “astute analysis of American culture” by a culturally sophisticated socially aware young statesman.<sup>10</sup> Even so, the account is an unpretentious and sympathetic commentary on American society. Prince Bernhard regarded it as the order of the future. The diary, however, was not uncritical, for it condemned slavery and racial prejudice as well as mistreatment of Indians.<sup>11</sup>

Youthful Duke Friedrich Paul Wilhelm of Württemberg (1797-1860), fired by travel accounts from Alexander Freiherr von Humboldt in Cuba and South America and the first two volumes of Edwin James’s *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains* (1822-23), visited Cuba and then explored the Mississippi River watershed from late 1822 until early 1824. Armed with scientific instruments to measure longitude, latitude, and barometric pressure

and humidity, this inexperienced aristocrat, schooled in the intolerances of the German military class, eventually became an ardent defender of various Indian tribes with whom he had contact. He recorded landmarks, military forts, and geological formations, as well as the great variety of animals and plants he saw.<sup>12</sup> By 1857 he had been in the United States seven times, often returning to New Orleans and the Mississippi River, and had amassed an enormous uncatalogued collection of scientific specimens, charts, compositions, and maps.<sup>13</sup>

Incomplete geographical charting of the Mississippi River expanse attracted the attention of other naturalists, scientists, and cartographers. In December 1832 Joseph Nicollet (1786-1843), a French immigrant trained in mathematics and a former astronomer at the Royal Observatory in Paris, left Savannah for St. Louis in anticipation of documenting the physical geography of the Mississippi River system.<sup>14</sup>

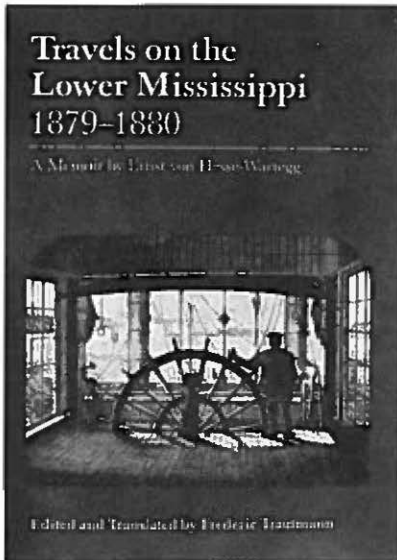
Traveling "down the Cumberland, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers to Natchez and then New Orleans," Nicollet kept astronomical and meteorological notebooks. He doubled back to Savannah in 1834 to study "an important eclipse of the sun" and the Gulf Coast of Florida, yet finally reached St. Louis in 1835 having delayed a visit to that "mecca for all would-be western travelers" owing to rumors of a cholera epidemic. In June 1836 with astronomical instruments in hand he moved north by steamboat into what is now Minnesota to explore the upper reaches of the Mississippi basin. He returned to Washington, D.C. in 1840 with a "well-earned" scientific reputation, having assembled an extraordinary amount of topographical, cultural, and geological data. Unfortunately he died three years later "overwhelmed by the struggle to organize the vast amount of material."<sup>15</sup>

The Mississippi River and its upstream feeders lured Bernese painter, Rudolph Friederich Kurz to North America. Enchanted from youth with "primeval forest and Indians," Kurz by 1846 had become weary of European society and manners. Sailing that year for New Orleans, he found the city and surrounding area interesting "with its cypress woodlands, Spanish moss, and low fan palms," but he detested "the public sale of slaves."<sup>16</sup>

On New Year's Day 1847 Kurz departed by steamboat for St. Louis. He took note of the progressively colder weather, changes in landscape and flora, and the fortunes and misfortunes of fellow German passengers. He spent some time in the company of a quaint "backwoodsman" and his family who were friendly but to Kurz unhealthy in appearance and careless with livestock. New Year's celebrations by "jovial Negroes" left Kurz with the impression that "when I witnessed their merriment and drollery in servitude, I could not help thinking them a fortunate people." After several short trips to Illinois in 1847, Kurz sailed north in April 1848 and spent the next four years in the upper watershed of the Mississippi along the Missouri River observing, writing about, and drawing Indians, fur traders, and settlers en route to the Far West.<sup>17</sup>

Five new or recent editions of important travel accounts on the Mississippi River add further insight into the lure of travel in the region. They make clear that human mobility, long a quest for survival, competitive advantage, and fortune, arises not merely out of curiosity about the natural world or the necessity of

making a living. An overwhelming passion to observe various human cultures and to explore unseen places firsthand leads the traveler to new lands. There he integrates the lost or partly-known past with his newly expanded awareness to discover his “true self.”<sup>18</sup>



The most scholarly of the works to be reviewed is Frederic Trautmann's new translation of *Travels on the Lower Mississippi 1879-1880: A Memoir of Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg* from the University of Missouri Press (1990). It introduces us to Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg (1854-1918), an upper-class cosmopolitan Austro-German infected with “insatiable wanderlust.” Hesse-Wartegg was not an imperial explorer, amateur naturalist or romantic youth looking for relief from familiar European scenes. He wrote more than forty travel books and innumerable magazine and newspaper articles summing up in readable style his extensive world excursions that included most states and territories of the United States, Mexico,

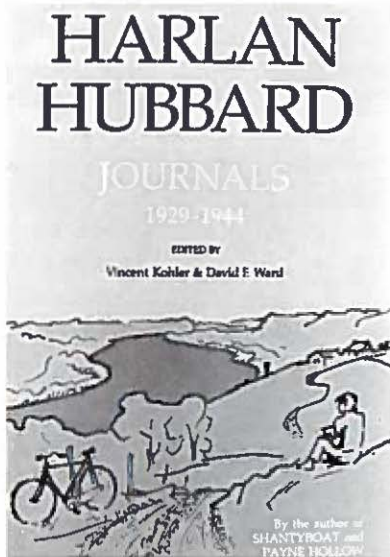
and Canada in addition to Syria, Korea, southeastern Europe and many other places. By the time he decided to venture down the Mississippi River in 1879 (and probably again the next year), he was an “accomplished, mature, and articulate” vagabond who was “seasoned in travel worldwide . . . and adept at writing about it.”<sup>19</sup>

An anti-democratic, anti-semitic monarchist, Hesse-Wartegg despised “lower races” such as Slavs, Arabs, and American Indians. His “narrative portrait” of the lower Mississippi is nonetheless insightful, engaging, often perceptive, and unfailingly trenchant and opinionated. Having appeared first in 1881 as *Mississippi-Fahrten: Reisebilder aus dem amerikanischen Süden, 1879-1880*, and now in English translation, the work has a symbiotic relationship with Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*. Twain freely borrowed from many authors including Hesse-Wartegg, who in turn paraphrased material on steamboats taken from Twain's writings. Hesse-Wartegg commented upon race, commerce, disease, scenery, climate and many other topics. His St. Louis to New Orleans steamboat journey, related apparently in a literary pastiche of several trips south, included lengthy passages on black stevedores<sup>20</sup>—whom he invariably depicted as laughable, inferior, and unfit for public responsibilities—boiler explosions, navigation, river hazards, gambling, cargo, and the unpleasant atmosphere of river towns.<sup>21</sup> Hesse-Wartegg made the cruise or cruises out of curiosity, from a boundless energy to be on the move, and the ambition to make a comfortable living “globe-trotting” and writing “best-sellers” about his roving for European audiences. Even though he wrote in an aristocratic vein, his progressive economic

views on what the South should do to recover from the war and to keep up with the energetic North are noteworthy and important.

Hesse-Wartegg took a railroad trip along the Gulf Coast through miles of "cypress swamps, and virgin forests, charming little seaside resorts, Negro villages . . . and dramatic river crossings." He noted that Bay St. Louis was a "favorite seaside resort among the Creole community of New Orleans," and that Ocean Springs, Biloxi, and Pascagoula were accessible by a railroad track that was often "barely above the water." Along the way he described busy "steam-powered sawmills," and finally Mobile where his nineteenth-century comments remind one of contemporary observations about the port city. He found Mobile in distress from the Civil War, general neglect, and harbor silting. These combined to bring commercial stagnation, empty streets, and rows of abandoned planter-aristocratic homes along Government Street. Hesse-Wartegg thought the city could have been one of the country's most prosperous ports, which was a courageous sentiment since yellow fever and debt by 1879 had forced surrender of the city's charter and rule by a state-imposed port commission. On the other hand Hesse-Wartegg judged Pensacola, buoyed by timber cutting and shipping, to be an agreeable municipality with a "bright future."

Some sixty-six years later another itinerant adventurer with a much different social background and vastly different purposes than Hesse-Wartegg came down the Mississippi to the Gulf Coast. Four excellent books from the University Press of Kentucky—a journal, two autobiographical narratives, and a companion volume containing a series of appreciative lectures by poet and novelist Wendell Berry—outline and analyze the movements, impressions, and worldview of Kentucky artist Harlan Hubbard (1900-1988).



The first work in the Hubbard corpus is *Harlan Hubbard Journals 1929-1944* (1987). It is a composite of entries drawn from small notebooks Hubbard kept from 1929 to 1968 whose typed version he corrected and supplemented with retrospective comments. *Journals* describes Hubbard's Kentucky childhood, early education in New York and Cincinnati, and his return in 1919 to northern Kentucky. There he worked at odd jobs such as casual construction labor, built a home for his mother and an art studio for himself. Finally he married Anna Eikenhout in 1943. Owing to this mixed format *Journals* has elements of both quasi-diary and incipient autobiography. On one hand the notebook entries often

lack the "long backward glance" generated by the autobiographical present reviving and giving meaning to the lost past.<sup>22</sup> Viewed in this mode *Journals* is a travel

diary of the soul. It presents Hubbard as a protagonist “being transported into an alien environment”—the complexities of an industrial order and the psychological dislocation of modernity. He must record each day’s events to understand which are potentially damaging and to deal with the unsettling “experience of travelling itself.”<sup>23</sup> *Journals* is also a painful and intimate record of an adult who daily grapples with the long shadows of childhood and adolescence and vocational uncertainty in the hope that such introspection will make clear a noble purpose for his existence.

Hubbard’s *Journals*, both a logbook of his gradual maturation and self-reflective registry of personal battles won and lost, contains three overlapping themes. First, are his keenly felt doubts, accompanied by depression and despair, about the artistic value of his paintings and his disappointment over their failure to garner public favor. Second, there is a romantic enthrallment, unevenly nurtured by reading Thoreau and venturing around Cincinnati on the Ohio River, with its natural beauty, solitude, and steamboats. Finally, Hubbard felt ambivalent over a life of youthful idealism tainted by loneliness, society’s demands for conformity, and his vague but often deep longings for a life of independence in the wilderness.



In contrast *Shantyboat: A River Way of Life* (1977), the Hubbard volume for readers with time for only one, is a smoothly composed narrative of a calm, confident, and mature man. He wrote it while he and his capable and loving wife, Anna, enjoyed a leisurely, steady glide in an engineless home-made “shantyboat” down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the bayou country of Louisiana Cajuns, shrimp, and coastal waterways. The story covers six years from the construction of the shanty in 1944, including a two year hiatus living on the vessel in Brent, Kentucky, before embarking on the Ohio, to their arrival in New Orleans in March 1950. There are fascinating sketches of warm, self-sufficient river folk, and the raw beauty, isolation, and majesty of the rivers themselves. He also describes ports such as Cincinnati,

Louisville, New Madrid, Memphis, Greenville, Vicksburg, and Natchez.

Readers will savor details of water dynamics, marine terminology, weather, and the finely drawn pictures of hidden draws, inlets, sandbars, and other out-of-the-way places along the Ohio, Cumberland, and Mississippi rivers. Hubbard and his wife sought shelter on these rivers and recorded the progress of innumerable craft—private, commercial and government. They watched as boats went downriver on a massive water volume seemingly oblivious to the gaggle of human passengers, freight, and machinery, or as diesel-powered tugs and barges surged upriver against that powerful current. The Hubbards, like their nineteenth-century counterpart,

Thoreau, sought to be self-sufficient or at least to reduce their contact with cities to sending and receiving mail, obtaining information, or purchasing tools and equipment. Consequently, they planted gardens during extended harborings in remote locations, hunted game and ate copious amounts of carp, gar, and catfish. They also kept a beehive, killed and ate possum, and scavaged corn, grain, and firewood. Though Hubbard's account abounds in oblique references to the superiority of life on the river, it is not as overtly philosophical, romantic, and transcendental as Thoreau's. Nonetheless, Hubbard implicitly condemns modern industrial society as artificial, stifling, and contrary to man's true instincts, nobility, and need to be self-sufficient.

## Shantyboat ON THE Bayous



HARLAN HUBBARD

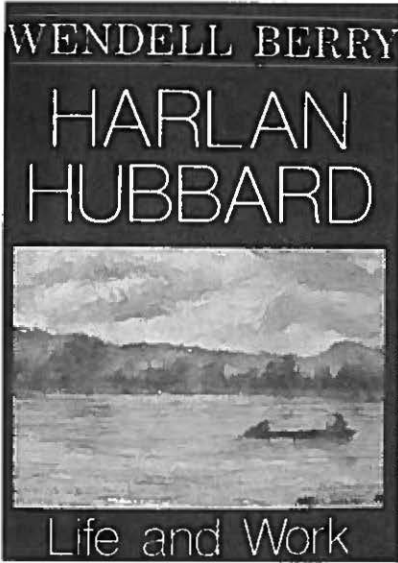
found the Louisiana Gulf Coast a combination of busy industrial activity—oil drilling, tugs pushing barges, and nightmarish chemical facilities—and open, sweeping, marsh wilderness offering opportunities for contemplation, good living, and recovery of man's proper habitat from the complexity and distractions of cities. At the conjunction of sea and land the wilderness prevailed and overwhelmed human perception. The "low, almost tideless shores of the Gulf of Mexico," wrote Hubbard, "are a grassy prairie with many bays and inlets" where "one loses his sense of proportion to such a degree that a single bush stands out like an oak."

But what is the meaning of this outing to the Gulf Coast and discovery of its natural power? In the fourth book of the Hubbard collection, *Harlan Hubbard: Life and Work* (1990), Kentucky writer Wendell Berry sympathetically surveys the life of his friends, Harlan and Anna Hubbard, and outlines their worldview in the context of their expedition to the Gulf Coast. According to Berry, Harlan Hubbard rejected modernity by uniting life and vocation, by disdaining the modern division of labor, and by extolling a simple lifestyle that employed a low level of technology and had a romantic appreciation of the earth.

*Shantyboat on the Bayous* (1990), the third Hubbard item from the University Press of Kentucky to be reviewed, is equally pleasing and well-written. It covers the period May 1950 to June 1951 and demonstrates that the Hubbards thought Louisiana and the Gulf Coast to be a fascinating if not exotic locale. In particular the Hubbards found Cajun habits and speech interesting. They pulled their houseboat with a small motorboat from Bayou Barataria, south of New Orleans, south and then west along the Intracoastal Waterway through Morgan City to Avery Island and Delcambre near Lake Peigneur. Here their odyssey ended with the decision to sell the boats and equipment and to go back to Kentucky. Harlan Hubbard

Hubbard struggled, not without complications, against a modern civilization which he deeply mistrusted. He never allowed machinery to come between himself and the "unmediated presence" of the pristine earth. Further he insisted upon freeing himself from abstractions, money, and a materialistic value system which demanded specialization in work and trapped mankind by means of "industrial

technology" in "the blighted city." The early despair clearly evident in *Journals* gives way to a mature self-awareness sustained by a definition of success that elevated being true to one's self over conformity, peer approval, and false customs. According to Berry, these ideals made the Hubbards unmodern but truly human. Thus, they regarded modern civilization as an aberration, a mistake, and the source of human discontent. This is a theme that has surfaced in several guises throughout Early Modern utopian literature, in Rousseau, Jeffersonian agrarianism, and modern Marxist and Feminist cultural and literary criticism, but rarely as consistently and graciously as in the case of the Hubbards.



Curiosity, restlessness, ambition, religious devotion, and social convention have propelled man across territories and oceans to "little-known continents" and "remote corners of the globe" in search of inner peace, satisfaction, or dominion.<sup>24</sup> Canvassing global topography may also be and often has been an inward odyssey from passivity, boredom, or ignorance to perfection, enlightenment, or self-realization. Hesse-Wartegg's *Travels on the Lower Mississippi* is a "chronicle of a journey" which, by interspersing great masses of factual information with personal observation and opinion, bridges the gap between sixteenth and nineteenth-century travel literature. The former sought to open up and reorder the known world with "facts" vividly presented by means of imagination and fantasy.<sup>25</sup> Early eighteenth-century writers were hesitant to elevate "personal or egotistical" remarks over bare "first-person" narration.<sup>26</sup> This was a precursor to the century's rising tide of "factually motivated," minutely detailed, perceptually-pure travel narratives. They self-consciously served the demands of humanitarianism, geographical discovery, and a Newtonian-inspired urge to conquer the physical universe.<sup>27</sup>

After 1750 there was a parallel trend in German travel writing away from largely impersonal accounts to essays combining factual details with comment, interpretation, and personal experience.<sup>28</sup> However, a segment of German travel literature in the 1890s floundered in the morass of impressionism—disintegration of the narrating self, retreat from the empirical world "into inwardness," and aimless episodic wandering. Hesse-Wartegg's material evinces epistemological



confidence and possesses literary unity. Further, it is attentive to social reality, a characteristic of the critical, politically liberal outlook of many nineteenth and early twentieth-century German accounts of travel in North America. Thus, Hesse-Wartegg anticipates a late nineteenth-century "social exploration" model in which a member of one social class makes a "rigorous exploration and analysis" of a lower social stratum, or a resident of one region of the world analyzes another locale.<sup>29</sup>

In a practical sense *Travels on the Lower Mississippi* satisfies the curiosity of readers and implicitly sets in sharp contrast the social conditions and geography of the New World with the settled and known circumstances of the Old. It is an ostensibly factual, external narrative that plays to the outlook and sentiments of Europeans. *Travels on the Lower Mississippi* offers them a measure of self-satisfaction and education, while also revealing the inner expectations, prejudices, and cultural assumptions of the author. The purpose throughout is more than satisfying curiosity or conveying pleasure. Fixing places on the globe, assigning identities to people, and producing "explanatory narratives" make the world more certain, more familiar, and more safely controlled.<sup>30</sup>

The Hubbard material advances beyond travel narration to autobiography, not by superior style, or more entertaining delineations of scenery, but through the progressive revelation of a self formed by intense introspection, and the impact of social, economic, and intellectual forces. Pervaded by modern existential tension, Hubbard's *Journals* has "the intimate and fragmentary quality of a personal notebook."<sup>31</sup> In documenting a prolonged crisis of selfhood and character, it functions as "private space for experimentation, revision, and resistance to prevailing notions of identity."<sup>32</sup>

*Shantyboat: A River Way of Life and Shantyboat on the Bayous* depict Hubbard in possession of a comfortable romantic persona. His "discovery" of the Mississippi River watershed from Kentucky to the Gulf Coast confirms for the reader that rejecting modernity has produced a superior invented self, born out of a conjunction of man and "the very earth of the New World." This new person is Harlan Hubbard, the artist. He is at once "inherently whole and self-sufficient" and assuredly free from the "net of social and political interdependencies" which characterize the industrial order, yet moved and awakened by "deep sources in nature" that confer "more vibrant quality to life."<sup>33</sup> Ironically the Hubbard remembrances are quintessentially modern accounts, in that they relate the particulars of the life of an ordinary man, not an archetypal hero or paradigmatic tragic figure.<sup>34</sup>

Read with Berry's *Harlan Hubbard: Life and Work* the Hubbard narratives underscore the persistently mythic character of American travel. In it the voyager discovers a regenerated self living in nature, like Huck Finn on the Mississippi River or Thoreau at Walden Pond, and thereby escapes a false worldliness imposed at birth to enjoy true civilization.<sup>35</sup> For modern consciousness, alternately attentive then oblivious to the judgment that "memory is man's greatest burden, not the daily hardships that he has to face," it is the final and perhaps most important reason for human travel.<sup>36</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Horton and Marie-Hélène Davies, *Holy Days and Holidays: The Medieval Pilgrimage to Compostela* (Lewisburg, PA, 1982), 20-41.
- <sup>2</sup> John Stoye, *English Travellers Abroad 1604-1667: Their Influence in English Society and Politics*, rev. ed. (New Haven, 1989), x-xi, 322-25.
- <sup>3</sup> A phrase first appearing in an English context in Richard Lassels' *The voyage of Italy* (Paris, 1670). See Edward Chaney, "The Grand Tour and Beyond: British and American Travellers in Southern Italy 1545-1960," in *Oxford China and Italy. Writings in Honour of Sir Harold Acton on his Eightieth Birthday*, eds. Edward Chaney and Neil Ritchie (London and New York, 1984), 134-35, n. 8.
- <sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Trease, *The Grand Tour* (London, 1967), 1-4; Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (London, 1985), 1-6; and his "Englishmen on the Italian Grand Tour in the 1700's," *Italian Quarterly* 28 (Spring 1987): 71-84, for firsthand descriptions of the Italian city-states by English travelers.
- <sup>5</sup> Robert S. Weddle, ed., *La Salle, the Mississippi, and the Gulf*, trans. Ann Linda Bell and Robert S. Weddle (College Station, TX 1987), 5; Timothy Severin, *Explorers of the Mississippi* (New York, 1968), 48-54; Paul E. Hoffman, *A New Andalusia and a Way to the Orient: The American Southeast During the Sixteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1990), 96.
- <sup>6</sup> Louis de Vorse, Jr., "The Impact of the La Salle Expedition of 1682 on European Cartography," in *La Salle and His Legacy: Frenchmen and Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, ed. Patricia K. Galloway (Jackson, MS, 1982), 64-69.
- <sup>7</sup> When American artist Henry Lewis displayed his Mississippi River valley panorama in Holland in the spring of 1852, reviewers reported audiences, who "greeted it with applause and stamping," were "seized with the desire to emigrate" and demonstrated a "fanatical love for the United States." A newspaper from The Hague observed that the Mississippi River panorama was for all who had a "yen for travel." See Henry Lewis, *The Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated*, trans. A. Hermina Poatgieter, ed. with introd. and notes by Bertha L. Heilbron (St. Paul, MN, 1967), 6.
- <sup>8</sup> Francis Baily, *Journal of A Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 & 1797*, ed. Jack D. L. Holmes, with a foreword by John Francis McDermott (Carbondale, IL, 1969), vii, xvii-xviii.
- <sup>9</sup> *Journal of a Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 & 1797* (London, 1856).
- <sup>10</sup> Heinrich Luden, ed., *Reise Seiner Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard zu Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach durch Nord-Americka in den Jahrn 1825 und 1826* (Weimar, 1828).
- <sup>11</sup> Marlis H. Mehra, "Prince Bernhard's Travel Diary: A German Aristocrat's View of American Customs and Social Institutions," *South Central Bulletin* 40 (Winter 1980): 156-58; on the "anti-American stereotypes" which flourished in many nineteenth-century European intellectual circles, see Gerhard K. Friesen, "'On the Very Boundary of Civilization.'" Adolf Halleen's *Drei Monate in Canada*," *German-Canadian Yearbook* 7 (1983): 100.

<sup>12</sup> *Reise nach Nordamerika während den Jahren 1822, 1823, und 1824* (Mergentheim, 1828); enlarged and reissued as *Erste Reise nach dem nördlichen Amerika in den Jahren 1822 bis 1824 von Paul Wilhelm Herzog von Württemberg* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1835). See Raymond Jürgen Spahn, "German Accounts of Early Nineteenth-Century Life in Illinois," *Papers on Language and Literature* 14 (Fall 1978): 476 n. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg, *Travels in North America, 1822-1824*, ed. Savoie Lottinville, trans. W. Robert Nitske (Norman, OK, 1973), *xiii-xix, xxii-xxv*, on the professional importance of natural science research and travel for nineteenth-century Germans, see Cornelia Essner, "Some Aspects of German Travellers' Accounts from the Second Half of the 19th Century," *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde* 33 (1987): 197.

<sup>14</sup> Nicollet subsequently gained a reputation as a scientist and geographer from his *Map of the Hydrological Basin of the Upper Mississippi River* (1843, 1845). See *The Journals of Joseph N. Nicollet: A Scientist on the Mississippi Headwaters With Notes on Indian Life, 1836-37*, ed. Martha Coleman Bray, trans. André Fertey (St. Paul, MN, 1970), *ix, 1, 3-4, 6*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6, 9, 28.

<sup>16</sup> *Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz: An Account of His Experiences Among Fur Traders and American Indians on the Mississippi and the Upper Missouri Rivers During the Years 1846 to 1852*, ed. J. N. B. Hewitt, trans. Myrtis Jarrell (Lincoln, NB, 1970), 1-4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-27, 344-48; a different view of slave fortunes comes from Samuel Ludvigh (1801-1869), an Austro-Hungarian German immigrant and rationalist lecturer. While travelling through Cincinnati in November 1846, he remarked sarcastically that across the river in Kentucky "black slaves labor for white plantation-owners and are less well fed than the draft animals that work with the slaves." See Frederic Trautmann, "Ohio through a Traveler's Eyes: A Visit by Samuel Ludvigh, 1846," *The Old Northwest* 9, no. 1 (1983): 72; Lawrence S. Thompson, "German Travellers in the South from the Colonial Period through 1865," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 37 (May 1972): 66-67. Different perceptions of slavery among German women travellers are in Linda Kraus Worley, "Through Others' Eyes: Narratives of German Women Travelling in Nineteenth-Century America," *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 21 (1986): 47-48.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Suzanne Schriber, "Edith Wharton and Travel Writing as Self-Discovery," *American Literature* 59 (May 1987): 260, 266-67; Robert Plank, "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: The Voyage as a Quest for Self-Discovery," *Exploration* 5, no. 2 (1978): 33-43.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Goetsch, "The Image of Canada in 19th Century German Travel Literature," *German-Canadian Yearbook* 7 (1983): 126, regards Hesse-Wartegg as a rarity among nineteenth-century central European writers because he successfully attached to travel a sense of excitement usually reserved for exploration.

<sup>20</sup> Emil Deckert (1848-1916), a German expert in North American geography, visited New Orleans in 1885 and contrasted the hard work of black dock workers—"nowhere so much in his element"—to the general "dissoluteness in a great majority of the Negroes." See

Frederic Trautmann, "New Orleans, the Mississippi, and the Delta through a German's Eyes: the Travels of Emil Deckert, 1885-1886," *Louisiana History* 25 (Winter 1984): 87, 90, 93-95.

<sup>21</sup> For the image and aesthetics of blackness and race in German literature, see Willfried Feuser, "Slave to Proletarian: Images of the Black in German Literature," *German Life and Letters*, n.s. 32 (January 1979): 122-34; Sander L. Gilman "The Figure of the Black in German Aesthetic Theory," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 8 (Summer 1975): 373-91; "The Aesthetics of Blackness in Heinrich Von Kleist's 'Die Verlobung in St. Domingo,'" *Modern Language Notes* 90 (October 1975): 661-72; *On Blackness with Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (Boston, 1982); Lawrence S. Thompson, "German Travellers in the South, 1865-1900," in *Studies in German Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Festschrift for Frederic E. Coenen*, ed. Siegfried Mews (Chapel Hill, 1970), 79; and Sara Markham, *Workers, Women, and Afro-Americans: Images of the United States in German Travel Literature, from 1923 to 1933* (New York, 1986), 59-61, 64-67, 69, 74-75.

<sup>22</sup> Joan FitzGerald, "Images of the Self: Two Early New Zealand Autobiographies by John Logan Campbell and Frederick Edward Maning," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 23, no. 1 (1988): 18.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew Hassam, "'As I Write': Narrative Occasions and the Quest for Self-Presence in the Travel Diary," *Ariel* 21 (October 1990): 33, 35, 37; and his stimulating essay, "Literary Exploration: The Fictive Sea Journals of William Golding, Robert Nye, B. S. Johnson, and Malcolm Lowry," *Ariel* 19 (July 1988): 29-30, 45.

<sup>24</sup> Joanne Shattock, "Travel Writing Victorian and Modern: A Review of Recent Research," *Prose Studies* 5 (May 1982): 152; Percy Adams, "Travel Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Review of Recent Approaches," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 20 (Fall 1978): 489, 491, 512; *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington, KY, 1983), 38-80; Syed Vahiduddin, "Man's Encounter with Himself," *Diogenes* 109 (Spring 1980): 56; note also Mary B. Campbell who places human movement in the framework of repetition of or redemption from the "original displacement" after the primordial Fall. See *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca, NY, 1988), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Jenny Mezcziems, "'Tis not to divert the Reader': Moral and Literary Determinants in some Early Travel Narratives," *Prose Studies* 5 (May 1982): 1-2, 5, 7, 15, 18; Percy Adams, "The Discovery of America and European Renaissance Literature," *Comparative Literature Studies* 13 (June 1976): 101-2, 104, 107, 109-10; Walter Veit argues for an "interplay of intellect and imagination" which made possible understanding of new experiences in eighteenth-century voyages of discovery. See "The Topoi of the European Imagining of the Non-European World," *Arcadia* 18, no. 1 (1983): 2, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Joel L. Gold, "The Voyages of Jerónimo Lobo, Joachim Le Grand, and Samuel Johnson," *Prose Studies* 5 (May 1982): 20; Hans-Joachim Possin, "Englische Reiseliteratur des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Anglia* 103, nos. 1-2 (1985): 99-100; Charles L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley, 1978), 39, 46.

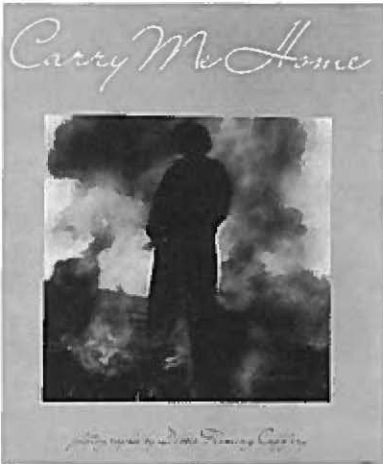
<sup>27</sup> Barbara Maria Stafford, *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760-1840* (Cambridge, MA, 1984), 11-12, 16-18, 19-21, 25, 28-29, 437.

- <sup>28</sup> Srđan Bogosavljević, "German Literary Travelogues around the Turn of the Century 1890-1914" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, 1983) 4-11, 33.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-57; Markham, *Workers, Women, and Afro-Americans*, 57, 59, 74; Peter Keating, *Into Unknown England 1866-1913. Selections from the Social Explorers* (Manchester, 1976), 13, 27, 31; Shattock's model is a variant on travel literature which explores the "range and variety of Human life." See "Travel Writing Victorian and Modern," 152.
- <sup>30</sup> Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, 1991), 20-21.
- <sup>31</sup> Donald Compton, "False Maps of the World—George Orwell's autobiographical writings and the early novels," *Critical Quarterly* 16 (Summer 1974): 150; cited in Shattock, "Travel Writing Victorian and Modern," 156.
- <sup>32</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, 1989), xii, xxi; Shattock, "Travel Writing Victorian and Modern," 163.
- <sup>33</sup> Myra Jehlen, *American Incarnation: The Individual, The Nation, and The Continent* (Cambridge, MA, 1986), 2-4; Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), 298-99, 372-73.
- <sup>34</sup> Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 286-89.
- <sup>35</sup> Peter Conrad, *Imagining American* (New York, 1980), 4-5; Charles L. Sanford, *The Quest for Paradise: Europe and the American Moral Imagination* (New York, 1979), 181-82, 255-56.
- <sup>36</sup> Zhang Xianliang, *Getting Used to Dying: A Novel*, trans. and ed. Martha Avery (New York, 1991), 225.

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## Book Reviews

Debbie Fleming Caffery. *Carry Me Home: Louisiana Sugar Country Photographs*. Essays by Pete Daniel and Anne Wilkes Tucker. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990, pp. 136. Cloth, \$35.00. ISBN 0-8-87474-311-7/Paper, \$19.95. ISBN 0-87474-299-4



Debbie Fleming Caffery is one of the most important photographers working in the South today, a fact which has been increasingly recognized, e.g., through recent exhibits of her work at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts. The appearance of *Carry Me Home* is a welcome event, pulling together, as it does, over eighty of her images. I had seen a number of the original photographs previously, but together, published as a book, they are a compelling collection, and it is good indeed to have them as a group in this format,

giving us a record of Caffery's over-all achievement as well as a moving visual experience. The volume's subtitle may seem to imply that these are photographs which document the world of sugar planting in Louisiana. Though, in a sense, they might be said to do that, the book is much more a personal and aesthetic document than a social or historical one. The title, though less direct and more poetic than the subtitle, is far more revealing of the nature of the book. This is Caffery's very personal vision of a place and its people. In 1986 she told me in an interview that she began to discover herself more fully as a photographer after coming home to the sugar country where she grew up. These photographs, taken over the last eighteen years, are the end-result of her having been "carried home." Her homecoming has taken her more and more toward using her environment for creating profoundly individual images which give a sense of human mystery, endeavor, and endurance that transcend place.

In his essay Smithsonian historian Pete Daniel writes of the sugar country and its past. Briefly he notes the development of the sugar industry, its labor troubles and tensions. He tells us, for example, that Caffery found herself "witness to an era of significant transformation" (p. 31) in the region, as the older way of cultivation and processing sugar gave way to increasing mechanization. His piece is sensitive and a model of conciseness. Yet it seems less to the point than the equally cogent essay contributed by Anne Wilkes Tucker, photographic curator at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, who discusses Caffery as an artist. Caffery's work, she says, "possesses documentary roots without documentary intentions" (p. 40), and this statement seems an excellent summary of Caffery's oeuvre. For example, Tucker calls attention to a photograph of a man holding a huge rabbit,

noting that this man "is a rabbit breeder standing near his hutches, but the cages are excluded along with all other contextual details" (p. 41). The picture is an extraordinary one, the man's muscles rippling down into the plump fur of the speckled rabbit. It suggests much about the form of living creatures and the relationships between humans and animals, but tells us comparatively little about a particular society or locality or about the practice of rabbit breeding. Caffery is intimately tied to a Gulf Coast culture, and she photographs that culture, but in such a way that she moves beyond it. Her images concentrate not upon delineating traditional labor so much as upon suggesting, through forms which may verge on the abstract, struggle and pride and an almost mythic relation to the land. Often she seems to have cut much of the "context" that a more documentary photographer would seek to provide (though her earlier images seem to show more of a documentary sensibility, her perspective has obviously changed through time).

One does not doubt that the power of the Louisiana sugar world is the ultimate force behind much of Caffery's work. One can agree that Caffery's "photographs embody the culture of south Louisiana" (p. 51), but it is not a visual dissection or exposition of that culture. Daniel is right when he concludes that Caffery's images "convey a sense of place, mood, and timelessness" (p. 32). She creates powerful impressions and catches the "feel" of the world of the Louisiana sugar country and its African-American residents with great visual force. As Tucker notes, the images are neither "crusading" nor "reportage" (p. 37). To the student of Gulf Coast history or culture, the book may be of minimal interest as a documentation of a culture. What it does best is give us the work of a very talented Louisiana artist who transforms her agricultural world into something more elemental.

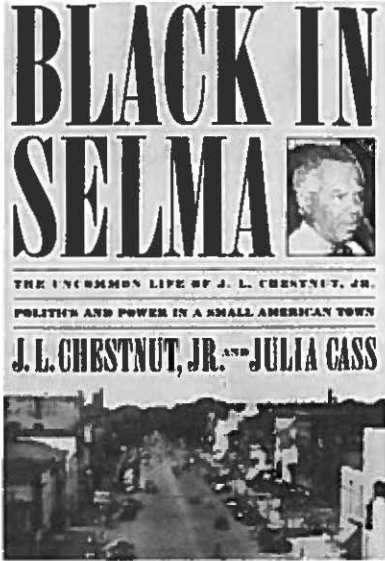
Frank de Caro

Louisiana State University

J. L. Chestnutt and Julia Cass. *Black in Selma: The Uncommon Life of J. L. Chestnutt*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1990. \$22.95. ISBN 0-374-11404-8

A recent and welcome trend in post-World War II southern Civil Rights literature is the move toward transcending great men, great deeds, and great confrontations in order to explore the dynamics of politics and race relations before, during, and after the Martin Luther King era. This is not meant to erode the legend as much as it is to probe inter and intraracial conflict and cooperation in relation to political mobilization and organization against entrenched interests and relationships at the local level. It is at this level, after all, that individuals had to decide whether and what they were willing to risk for the uncertain promise of a better future. Moreover, the shift in attention, after the passage of the Civil Rights (1964) and Voting Rights (1965) bills, to black nationalism, northern urban unrest, and New Left politics tends to obscure the ongoing struggle in the South to implement the legislative and legal victories won.

J. L. Chestnutt and Julia Cass make significant contributions to these underdeveloped areas in this collaborative work. According to Cass, who met the Selma attorney while a reporter with the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and subsequently worked with him on his memoir, Chestnutt was “a leader in the larger march, the process of turning the possibilities opened up in 1965 into real grassroots change long after the national spotlight and national civil rights leaders had gone elsewhere” (p. x).



The book is divided into five parts, each preceded by a brief narrative, which effectively provides the historical framework for understanding the direction of Chestnutt's life. The first details the years from his birth in 1930 through the end of his legal studies at Howard University in 1958. The second follows him back to his native Selma where his efforts to set up a practice are helped by a loan from the black Elks Federal Credit Union. He also developed, through trial and error, litigation strategies for defending clients within a hostile legal system where “the basic fact of life for a black trial lawyer in Alabama in 1959 was the almost virtual certainty of losing at the trial-court level in any case involving race” (p. 106). The

third through fifth sections span the years between 1963 and 1990, a period marked by SNCC's attempts to organize voter registration, the 1965 March from Selma to Montgomery, formation of a partnership with Harvard-trained lawyers, Harold and Rose Sanders, and the drive to mobilize black residents. He constantly faced the obstacle of “black folk conditioned to believe that voting was white folks' business, old people afraid to come to the courthouse to register, almost everybody more intent on daily personal survival than a better future for the group” (p. 319).

*Black in Selma's* significance, for scholars and general readers alike lies in its use of Chestnutt's life as a window into local community relations, intra and interracial class and status conflicts, patronage and patriarchy, and tradition. All of these have operated to maintain a racially stratified hierarchy in Selma that both black and white residents find difficult to abandon. Change in the status quo, regardless of how it came, was neither immediately nor unreservedly embraced. However, Chestnutt's description of his own “conversion” experience is a moving section. He witnessed SNCC's John Lewis and twenty other marchers refuse to back down to Selma Sheriff Jim Clark and his deputies. Instead, Clark backed down while Lewis and the others continued toward the Courthouse.



*Black in Selma* is equally compelling in detailing the subtle and explicit methods undertaken to erode the progress made during the "freedom high" period. White interests back black puppet candidates, manipulate absentee ballots, and employ other strategies to win elections. There have been changes and retrenchment in the court system also. All this demonstrates the precariousness of progress in the "New South." Throughout Chestnutt and Case resist simplistic characterization of issues as black/white opposition.

*Black in Selma*, however, is not without its weaknesses. Because the book is a memoir rather than an autobiography, some trade-off is expected between the private and the public life which makes a story worth publishing. In this case, the intersection of private and public is occasionally more distracting than instructive. Although we read of Chestnutt's wife and six children, one of whom is eventually arrested, and about alcohol abuse, the impact on his professional life remains unclear.

A second problem is the tendency to allude to significant episodes where Chestnutt's life intersects with national events. Instead of enlightening, these connections are introduced and briefly described, but their larger impact is left unresolved. He attended Howard University's law school, studying with many of the legal scholars involved in developing the school desegregation strategy employed in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* suit. He forthrightly notes his doubts, at the time, that the planned attack would work. However, we do not learn how his legal studies were influenced by his being at Howard or how that experience affected his later work as a trial and civil rights attorney in Selma.

Ultimately, the importance of *Black in Selma* lies in the manner in which his analysis of local politics moves us closer to a realistic, if not always flattering, look at a critical period in American history which is more instructive when not turned into myth. To the extent that this sparks additional work on the region and the area, our sense of the "New South" is only enhanced.

Karen K. Miller

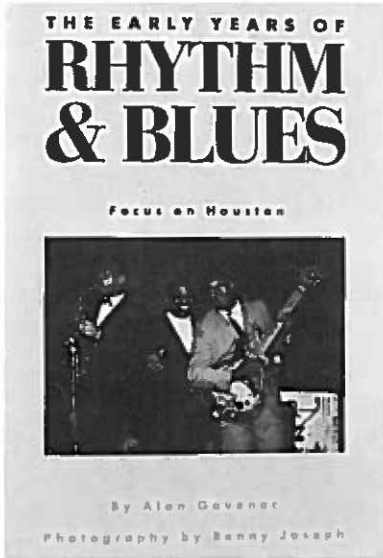
Boston College

Alan Govenar. *The Early Years of Rhythm & Blues: Focus on Houston*. Photography by Benny Joseph. Houston: Rice University Press, 1990, pp. 88. \$24.95. ISBN 0-89263-273-9

This book is a catalogue for an exhibit of the photography of Benny Joseph with an eighteen-page introductory essay by Alan Govenar. Fifty-eight black and white photographs by Joseph are printed, each on a separate page, along with a few others by Joseph and various other photographers printed in miniature to accompany Govenar's essay.

The photographs date from the mid-1950s to 1976 and were selected from approximately ten thousand available negatives. About eighty-five percent of Joseph's work was school portraits, and this material is not represented here. What we do get are studio shots of singers and musicians and other shots depicting segments of the life of Houston's black community. Joseph photographed weddings

and social events for private customers, news events for the local black press, and NAACP events. He also worked for KCOH radio and Don Robey's Peacock/Duke record company, the two most important forces in Houston's black musical entertainment during that period. "Rhythm and blues" was a music industry term for black popular music that encompassed the blues and more. The preponderance of photographs in this collection reflect Joseph's involvement in this music and entertainment scene. Others show local and national black personalities, including Martin Luther King, Barbara Jordan, Thurgood Marshall, and Cassius Clay. The most obscure of these personalities is actually the subject of Joseph's most famous photograph. It shows young Civil Rights demonstrator Felton Turner staring straight at the camera with a bandage on his cheek and the initials KKK carved on his abdomen. The remaining pictures depict life in the community, including Joseph's home, a car wreck, a dead baby in a casket, and the preparation for an Easter mass. Some of the latter, along with one or two of the radio station photographs probably could have been eliminated from the collection.



The reproduction and printing of the photographs are excellent. They appear to be full negative prints without the cropping that may have been intended for some of the studio portraits of entertainers. Joseph used a 4" x 5" Speed Graphic camera. Selenium-toned gelatin silver prints were made by Ron Evans following the printing style of the period in which the shots were taken. Many of the photographs reflect the search for dignity that characterized the Civil Rights era—a group graduating from kindergarten in caps and gowns, a father in a tuxedo proudly presenting his daughter at a debutante ball, and a youngster in ROTC uniform standing with his date dressed in an evening gown. One can see the spirit of this era also reflected in the

looks of hope and confidence on the faces of many subjects. Joseph generally tried to capture more than mere physical features. In the studio portraits of entertainers he often tried to depict a characteristic performing stance by having the artist go through his act in the studio. His shots of performers on stage or in clubs often include part of the audience to give a sense of the physical context. One shot in a club even includes the entrance to the men's rest room. Joseph's approach is generally straightforward, avoiding the extreme angles and camera tilts that were common in publicity shots of black entertainers at this time.

Many of the shots are excellent examples of the photographer's artistry, with subtle but telling detail. Teenage bobby soxers are in full swing at a high school dance; musicians at the Double Bar Ranch play on a floor littered with

cigarette butts with the pianist propped up on a wooden Pepsi case while a sign on the wall urges readers to re-elect the sheriff; Reverend Cleophus Robinson wears a gaudy robe in a prayerful pose, singing while a blind albino pianist accompanies him; the KCOH mobile van and station wagon stand beneath a large billboard advertising the station along with Italian Swiss Colony Wine while a smaller billboard to the side advertises new apartments “for colored.”

The reader is given only the date and location of the photograph, if known, along with a name or phrase that identifies the subject. More information would have helped. The strange appearance of Lightnin’ Hopkins in 1972, a combination of “ghetto dude” and California hippie, is more understandable if one knows that he had been working the coffeehouse folk scene for about a decade after firmly establishing his reputation in the juke joints along Houston’s Dowling Street. Other photographs cry out for simple biographical sketches. Who, for instance, are entertainers Paul Monday, Clifton Smith, John Browning, Johnny Brown, and Don Wilkerson? Some subjects are simply baffling. Why is disc jockey Clifton Smith playing an amplified ukelele? Was he ever a musician? Why is Don Robey eating his hat? Why does Eddie Vinson, normally known as “Cleanhead,” appear with a full head of hair? Finally, it seems strange that no gospel quartets or rhythm and blues vocal groups are depicted. Both were a prominent part of the black musical scene in Houston and on Peacock Records at this time.

Half of Govenar’s introductory essay is a discussion of rhythm and blues music in Houston during this period, while the rest is devoted to Joseph’s career and artistry. The latter is a valuable contribution, but the most useful part of the discussion of rhythm and blues is the extensive interview material from Evelyn Johnson who worked closely with Don Robey in his entertainment enterprises. Govenar’s description of the development of rhythm and blues in Houston is too brief and somewhat simplistic. Less than ten pages on the topic is clearly not enough for him to go into much detail, and he wisely prints a selected bibliography for the reader interested in knowing more about it. A discographical listing would have been valuable also.

David Evans

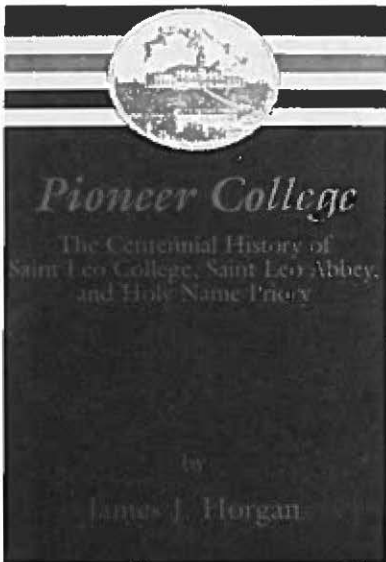
Memphis State University

James J. Horgan. *Pioneer College: The Centennial History of Saint Leo College, Saint Leo Abbey, and Holy Name Priory*. St. Leo, FL: St. Leo College Press, 1989, x, pp. 640. \$24.95. ISBN 094-575-901-0

This book is an account of how Catholic education took root and grew in the wilderness of west central Florida. “At Saint Leo College, we have lost the memory of our history,” James J. Horgan explains in his introduction. “We contracted collective amnesia in the 1960s . . . [and] much of what little survives in our common memory is mistaken” (pp. vii-viii). The author sets out to recover a “mislaid” past and to recount how Benedictine brothers and sisters built a college, abbey, and priory near the Catholic Colony of San Antonio, Florida,

just northeast of Tampa. Founded in 1889, Saint Leo went through several academic incarnations, first as a traditional college with attached preparatory programs (1890-1920), then as a rigorous, selective prep school (1920-1964), and once again as a college (1959-present).

The theme of pioneering runs through Horgan's story, which spans one hundred years and takes six hundred pages to tell. More than four hundred of those pages focus on Saint Leo's first four decades, when the institution was still in the hands of its founders. The spirit of exploration and building that animated the young college enlivens the book, and Horgan draws studiously detailed sketches of Saint Leo's early leaders, most notably Father Charles Mohr, the dominant figure from 1890 through 1931. Readers learn not just about Mohr's administrative style and his friendship with Teddy Roosevelt, but also about how he loved animals and how his hair suddenly turned white "from worry and trouble" (p. 79). Horgan's history is rich in turn-of-the-century detail—too rich, perhaps, for a wide readership, but hearty fare for an institutional audience.



Saint Leo College took its early character from several distinct sources, including the Catholic Colony of San Antonio, the state of Florida, the Order of Saint Benedict, and a "pluralistic study body" (p. 139). Here was a diverse mix of cultures. The colony, established in 1882, attracted settlers from the Northeast and Midwest, with Irish and German-Americans arriving in about equal numbers. Most (but not all) were Catholics. These colonists, coexisting with their Protestant neighbors on generally amicable terms, dug into the Florida countryside and raised oranges for their livelihood. Brothers and sisters of the Benedictine order soon brought their religious and educational mission to the colony, founding Saint Leo

College, Saint Leo Abbey, and Holy Name Priory and Academy in 1889. The Benedictines attracted students from the local area and boarding students from elsewhere in Florida. A few students came from the Northeast and Midwest, and at times there was a sizeable contingent of foreign students, especially Cubans. Protestants made up a large share of the enrollment, even outnumbering Catholics at one point. In a most unusual move, Saint Leo defied state law to admit a black student in 1898 and a black brother-candidate in 1908.

Horgan is an excellent writer and storyteller. He relies on meticulous records kept by Father Benedict Roth, a monk who "saved everything" that came his way during his years at Saint Leo, 1890-1925. Horgan's history thins out after

the mid-1920s because his major primary sources—Roth's scrapbooks and chronologies of daily events—stop in 1925, when the monk died. None of Roth's successors maintained records so thoroughly and systematically.

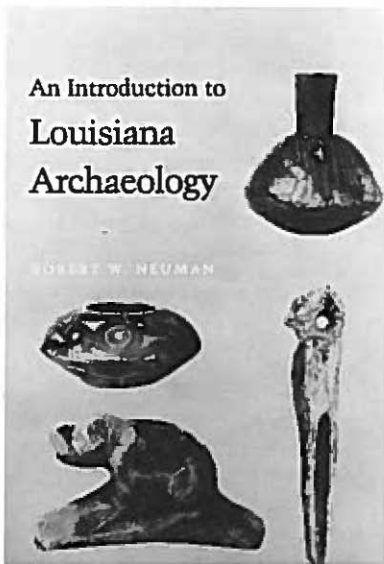
If Roth saved everything, Horgan feels the need to tell everything. Pursuing the pioneer theme, Horgan is especially interested in pointing out firsts: Saint Leo's first typewriter, first electric clock, first flush toilets, first motor car—even the first strawberry pie baked from berries grown on the grounds. Readers with a deep personal interest in Saint Leo may appreciate this rich texture, but others become impatient.

Horgan's eye for detail is keen, but his broad vision is not as clear. Had Horgan placed his primary sources against a better backdrop of secondary sources, he could have helped his readers understand important local issues in national and regional context. Consider the issue of race. How many other colleges in the South, Catholic or otherwise, dared admit blacks in the wake of *Plessy v. Ferguson*? Horgan could have enlightened his readers by explaining how exceptional Saint Leo's actions were. What accounted for such a bold stand? Benedictine theology? The racial tolerance of individual brothers? These questions are especially intriguing given Horgan's evidence that, in other respects, the monks at Saint Leo mirrored dominant white racial attitudes. The significance of the race issue may be lost on many readers because Horgan's analysis is so brief and his context so spare.

Ethnicity and bilingualism are two other issues that deserve better treatment. The Benedictine order originally came in 1886 because German-American colonists insisted on a German-speaking priest. German Benedictines remained in control of the church and the college for years to come, and Horgan shows they were proud of their ethnic culture. In 1888, however, the colonists voted to prohibit sermons in German. College classes, too, were conducted in English only, and the policy toward Spanish-speaking students was strongly assimilationist. How did other Catholic churches and colleges handle these issues, which were sensitive throughout the nation? Horgan does not say, but secondary sources suggest English-German bilingualism was still a viable policy in churches, colleges, and schools throughout Pennsylvania and the Midwest, where German-Americans sought to maintain their identity. The situation in west central Florida was different, of course, and analyzing the differences in national and regional context could help readers understand the particular brand of pluralism that developed at Saint Leo. Here, apparently, was Benedictine pluralism with a southern accent.

On Balance, *Pioneer College* is a successful institutional history. Although it has some of the shortcomings common to such works, this book is a fine tribute to Saint Leo College. Readers who share the author's affection for the college should be grateful for a job well done.

Robert P. Ingalls. *Urban Vigilantes in the New South, 1882-1936*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988, xi, pp. 286. \$29.95. ISBN 0-87049-571-2



Robert Ingalls has written what could be called a sociology of vigilante justice in Tampa, from 1882 to 1936. While he notes that his monograph is neither a “complete history,” nor a “full study” of ethnic and race relations in that Florida city, he tries “to understand the process of interaction among various groups of people in Tampa and to explain why struggles over power resulted so frequently in violence” (p. xx).

The book is organized topically, but does follow a specific chronology. Ingalls begins with a detailed account of the March 1882 lynching of Charles D. Owens, a black man accused of assaulting a prominent white woman. Ingalls’s investigation of the crime indicates that “the lynching was

carefully planned and sanctioned by the community at large” (pp. 4-5). This incident, and one over fifty years later, serve as “bookends” to the story. For Ingalls, Tampa’s resort to lynch law and other extralegal devices was a natural reflection of the city’s “roots in the Old South” (p. 5).

Ingalls argues that Tampa’s rapid industrialization and an influx of immigrant workers changed the externals of violence, but not the ultimate intent. He devotes four chapters to an analysis of the ways in which local business leaders, workers, and the cigar manufacturers interacted. Ingalls finds the rapid growth of the cigar industry produced conditions “which threatened the hegemony of the ruling elite” (p. 31). In particular, the local elite and management feared that their workers’ Cuban nationalism would be converted into labor radicalism and unrest. The elite acted quickly to counter this threat. In 1887 the Board of Trade had formed a vigilance committee to draw up a list of troublemakers. This committee hunted down nine suspected radical labor organizers and expelled them from the city and warned others they would suffer the same fate. Ingalls also found an interesting connection between the vigilance committee of 1887 and the lynchers of 1882. The leaders of the two incidents were virtually the same.

From 1887 forward, all labor disturbances and protests were handed over to a vigilance committee who investigated the charges and meted out their own brand of justice. Over time the immigrant cigar manufacturers joined the Board of Trade—the parent organization of the vigilance committees—in condemning all labor unrest. Virtually all the vigilance committees formed between 1887 and 1930 contained men who were business leaders and who had participated in past vigilante actions.

A major change in the way Tampa's elite handled labor unrest finally began in the 1930s. In that decade, "Tampa joined the rest of the country . . . and accepted a new social equilibrium that included union recognition for organized workers and generally excluded violence as a means of repressing workers" (pp. 116-17). This change can be related to the impact of the Depression and New Deal on labor relations in the cigar industry and to cigar manufacturers' embrace of the National Industrial Recovery Act's goals. In the quest for stability, local businessmen accepted NRA codes, including collective bargaining. The violence of 1934 and 1935, which culminated in the lynching of a black man and a white man, led to vocal protests from the press, state and local governments, and Tampa business interests. Finally the vigilante tradition was tamed by external pressure.

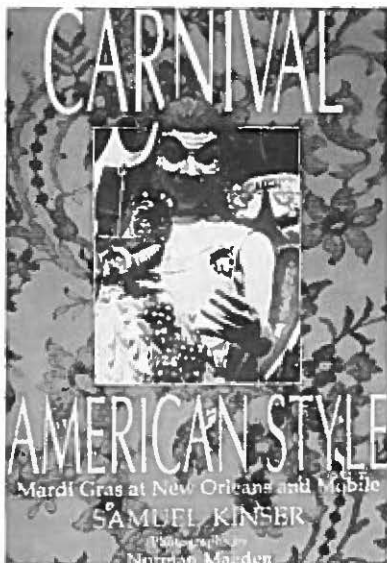
Ingalls's book is cleanly written and well-argued. He has used a vast array of newspaper sources, trial records, and private manuscripts. He has chosen excellent photographs of Tampa, its elite, and its workers to add dash to his narrative. But Ingalls also makes major assertions which are not borne out in the book. His case for the continuity of Old South Tampa's traditions of honor, and its defense of that honor, and the New South city's propensity for violence are not fully developed. Nor is he persuasive when he tries to link vigilante justice to the republican tradition in the South. Ingalls mentions this important concept in passing, and never returns to flesh it out completely. He would have been well-served to draw upon the work of Edward Ayers who examined this theme extensively in his book, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th Century American South* (Oxford, 1984). Perhaps an even greater flaw concerns Ingalls's reluctance to talk clearly about the role of ethnicity and race. His discussion of vigilantism and race often appears an afterthought. His dismissal of the ethnic component in the battles between management and Cuban workers seems a serious oversight. Given his contention that worker unrest from the 1880s through the 1920s was based on issues of power in the workplace, he should have analyzed the role of ethnicity in greater detail. Surely Tampa's ethnic component loomed large in the disputes between labor and management. Moreover, its heavy immigrant population undoubtedly made Tampa unique among New South cities.

Ingalls's study of violence in Tampa contributes to an oft-neglected topic in southern urban historiography. Further, his analysis of this Gulf Coast Florida city in the New South era will aid other scholars who desire to delve further into that state's postwar history.

Mary A. DeCredico

United States Naval Academy

Samuel Kinser. *Carnival, American Style: Mardi Gras at New Orleans and Mobile*. Photographs by Norman Magden. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990, pp. 415. \$39.95. ISBN 0-226-43729-9



*Carnival American Style* is a book for anyone with an interest in the history of Mardi Gras on the Gulf Coast. Professor Kinser's meticulous investigation of the origin and evolution of carnival challenges long-held myths, but, at the same time, confirms the celebration as a uniquely American one.

One of the most refreshing aspects of the book is that it was written by an outsider. As a detached observer Kinser is free to examine the celebration without being hindered by local prejudices. Conversely, because he is an outsider, there are portions of his book where he can only guess at what goes on.

Carnival was, and is, the real world turned upside down, inside out. Its Gulf

Coast origins date back to neither the malaria-ridden eighteenth-century French outposts of Fort Louis de la Louisiane nor Nouvelle Orleans. "Gulf Coast Carnival is neither a colonial nor a French inheritance" (p. 311). Rather, today's celebration properly traces its origins to the cotton boom towns of Mobile and New Orleans in the 1830s.

A combination of five factors laid the foundations for Mardi Gras as we now know it: "white plantation society's winter festivities, black society's need to adapt African customs in order to preserve them, the Gulf Coast's proximity to and influence by Caribbean festivities, its similar influence by the festival practices of Anglo-Americans migrating westward, and . . . the Spanish and then American commercialization of leisure time" (p. 21).

The rapid growth of both port cities yielded a rich multi-cultural environment which gave birth to a truly American carnival. Kinser's tribute to Michael Krafft and the Cowbellian de Rakin Society as the seed from which Carnival grew will probably make some New Orleanians wince. Mobilians, fond of the "French colonial" ancestry of their celebration, will react in similar fashion to the author's suggestion that the Pennsylvania Dutch custom of "belsnickling" was most likely the inspiration for Krafft's inaugural parade, not the eighteenth century Boeuf Gras fête.

Although carnival began in Mobile in a very traditional carnivalesque fashion—raucous, rowdy, and probably satirical—it soon became a fixture of the local elite's mid-winter social whirl. The same thing happened in New Orleans when six former Mobilians founded Comus in 1857.



In his examination of the cultural, racial, and sexual aspects of carnival, Kinser makes his greatest contribution. The closed social worlds of the cities that revolve around secret mystic societies (Mobile) and krewes (New Orleans) are an integral part of the magic that makes Carnival so special. He found enough individuals willing to give him a glimpse into that world, and he has presented it as well as anyone has to date. He's clearly fascinated by New Orleans' black "Indians" as the spiritual descendants of the European carnivals' "wildmen," but does not adequately cover Mobile's black celebrants or Joe Cain. The role of women has evolved from one of passive observer to that of social trophy: whose daughter will lead the ball or be queen? That is a *very* important question.

Elitism is a pejorative in many circles today. Yet, it is the author's conclusion that without the stability that social elites have brought to the Mobile and New Orleans Carnivals they would be in danger. Kinser asserts that the old-line mystic societies and krewes have been, and will be the salvation of Carnival as we know it. Because private organizations stage the celebration, they control its character. Elsewhere in the New World, carnival is in difficulty. Governmental interference in promoting the celebration (and hence tourism) has seriously undermined the character of carnival in Rio de Janeiro and Trinidad.

As a Gulf Coast native I very much enjoyed reading this book. There are, however, several criticisms. The photography leaves a great deal to be desired. I have no problem with black and white illustrations; however, in a study of a celebration in which the senses play a major role, I found the selection and quality of the photographs lacking. And, more careful proofreading would have prevented typographical errors such as the "Order of Mystics" (p. 10) and "Admiral Rudolf Semmes" (p. 99).

These criticisms aside, Professor Kinser has produced a book that places our unique Gulf Coast Carnival within a larger historical and cultural context. Since World War II, American culture has become increasingly homogenized. Along the coast, Mobile and New Orleans have become less Southern and more American, but despite all the changes, "Carnival remains Carnival: it is not by any means a hotdog-and-beer-fest with a Southern name" (p. 273). Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

Walter B. Edgar

University of South Carolina

James Marten. *Texas Divided: Loyalty and Dissent in the Lone Star State, 1856-1874*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990, x, pp. 246. \$25.00. ISBN 0-8131-1700-3

Studies of revolutionary eras, while varying in methodology and emphasis, almost always follow a theme when discussing those who did not support the revolutionary cause. Although generalizations can and usually are made, the picture is one of diversity, with so many exceptions to the generalizations that the analysis of the historian necessarily leaves the reader unsure, perhaps even confused. Such is not the fault of the historian; it seems to be one of the characteristics of

revolution. Studies of loyalty in the Civil War are similarly confusing, for the Civil War, though possibly not a revolution, required personal decisions much like those of a revolution.

James Marten's description and analysis of those Texans who did not support secession and war and who did not join the majority of whites in their posture during Reconstruction fits very neatly into the traditional pattern of diversity. He based his study on a description of the actions and treatment of certain individuals, for the most part, rather well-known ones, and the analysis of certain groups, primarily ethnic in character. From the information he presents, it is clear that people of similar background and experience did not always react similarly; that treatment of loyalists or "dissenters," varied widely; and that there was not even consensus on the definition of "loyalty" or "dissent."

With respect to those who questioned the wisdom of secession but who eventually cast their lot with the Confederacy, Marten discusses men such as James Throckmorton, notable for his vote in the Secession Convention; Benjamin H. Epperson, the out-spoken former Whig; William Pitt Ballinger, a Galveston attorney; James H. Bell, a justice on the Texas Supreme Court; Sam Houston, who retired from active politics in despair; and a number of lesser-known figures. He also discusses those who refused to accept the Confederate cause. Some, such as A. J. Hamilton, Elijah M. Pease, George Washington Paschal, and Edmund J. Davis, are all well known for their Unionist views, and he considers several whose names are less familiar. There

is no common theme to explain why these men acted as they did or to explain their treatment at the hands of secessionists.

Marten discusses three major groups—Germans, Mexicans, and slaves. Traditional studies of Unionists in Texas have always emphasized the Unionist role of Germans, particularly those on the frontier, and this is duly noted. However, Marten also points out that "hundreds" of Germans dutifully served in Confederate forces. He notes that Mexicans in Texas, who probably had even less reason to be loyal to the Confederacy and who did provide some Union troops, served in much larger numbers in the Confederate army. The discussion of slaves as "dissenters" during the war is relatively brief but clearly indicates that different slaves dealt with wartime conditions in many ways.

Early in the book Professor Marten presents what may well be the essence of his study: "In many ways, the real civil war in Texas was fought not over the state's relationship with the federal government, but over relationships among Texans" (p. 2). Certainly, he demonstrates that there was a substantial amount



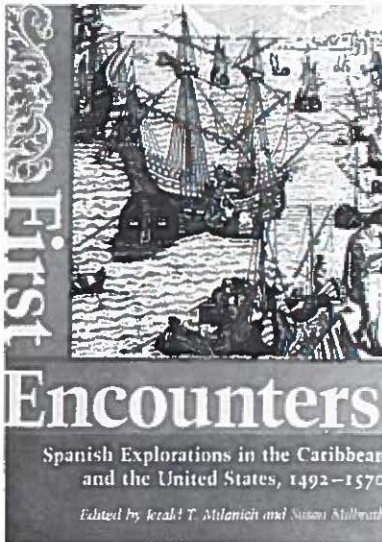
of internal conflict in Texas, although there may be reason to question whether or not internal conflict in Texas was any more serious than in several other states.

Professor Marten's study treats an era that has been examined many times and in many different ways. But he offers a novel approach with the selection of a time period extending from 1856 through 1874. Thus, he looks at the conflict leading to secession, the secession experience, dissent and dissenters' treatment during the war, and the experience of Unionists during Reconstruction. This approach affords a degree of continuity not ordinarily found in studies of this type. The result is a useful confirmation of traditional interpretations. Citations and bibliography entries show that Professor Marten examined the manuscript collections available to him, particularly those of the Barker History Center of the University of Texas, with considerable diligence and care. But he is also very aware of the secondary literature on the topic. His familiarity with what has been written is evident in both narrative and bibliography. Indeed, *Texas Divided* may be considered a useful synthesis of current scholarship on this aspect of Texas in the Civil War.

Adrian N. Anderson

Lamar University

Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, eds. *First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989, pp. 222. \$16.95. ISBN 0-8130-0947-2



This handsome volume was published to accompany a traveling exhibition of the same name, sponsored by the Florida Museum of Natural History. Written in engaging, congenial prose, the thirteen chapters acquaint the general reader with the circumstances and consequences of European contact with native people in the Caribbean and Spanish Florida.

In their introduction the editors emphasize the degree to which Spain's exploration and settlement of the southeastern United States remains even on the eve of the Columbian Quincentenary, a story largely forgotten. Though the Hispanic heritage of the Caribbean and the American Southwest is today clearly evident, the modern legacy of La Florida is poorly understood and overlooked by most Americans. The exhibition *First Encounters*, and this accompanying volume, attempt to bring this story to a broader audience.

One highlight of the volume is Kathleen Deagan's vivid description of her search for La Navidad, the ill-fated town established by Columbus after the wreck of the *Santa Maria*, on Christmas Eve, 1492. The non-specialist will appreciate the non-technical description of the often sophisticated and esoteric ways in which archaeologists ask their questions. Even the most field-hardened archaeologist will admire Deagan's restraint and caution in evaluating her excavation results. Despite the several field seasons of archaeological investigations, Deagan still argues that En Bas Saline remains only "a strong candidate" for the key site of La Navidad. She also emphasizes the importance of shifting the focus away from Columbian archaeology per se and of understanding the changing Taino-Arawak lifeways represented at contact period sites such as En Bas Saline.

Elsewhere, Eugene Lyon describes how he happened onto long-missing documentation describing the appearance of the *Niña*, Christopher Columbus's favorite caravel. Most surprising was Lyon's discovery that the *Niña* had been outfitted with four masts, rather than the two or three previously thought. Many readers will enjoy reading how Lyon's literary reconstruction was quickly translated into an accurate scale model, based on information found in the *Libro de Armadas*. This tabletop *Niña* was then constructed at two-thirds scale, to appear as centerpiece for the *First Encounters* exhibit.

Charles Hudson, Chester B. DePratter, and Marvin T. Smith describe in readable detail how they went about reconstructing the epic wanderings of Hernando de Soto throughout the American Southeast. They detail their methods—an eclectic combination of documentary, topographic, archaeological, and historical geographic evidence—in understandable terms, critically comparing their results with those obtained fifty years ago by the U.S. De Soto Commission. They explain why the exact de Soto route is so difficult to trace, and demonstrate how their reconstruction should ultimately lead to a deeper understanding of social geography of Native American chiefdoms during the protohistoric period.

The final chapter by Susan Milbrath explores the impact of the New World discoveries on the Old World mindset. Drawing heavily on surviving sixteenth century visual imagery, she traces European misconceptions of Native American physiography, cannibalism, material culture, and natural history. She also documents the late sixteenth-century trend toward romanticizing the American Indian, depicting a number of allegorical images in which bare-breasted women astride armadillos and alligators came to represent America in the European imagination.

Other chapters address a broad range of topics including discussions of recent archaeological investigations at early Spanish settlements such as Puerto Real (Charles R. Ewen and Maurice W. Williams), St. Augustine (Edward Chaney and Kathleen A. Deagan), and Anhaica—the newly discovered 1539-1540 winter camp of de Soto (Charles R. Ewen). Jeffrey M. Mitchem describes the nature of archaeological evidence resulting from earliest Hispanic explorations of Spanish Florida. Charles Hudson and his colleagues consider the nature and impact of the Tristán de Luna expedition of 1559-1561, and Marvin T. Smith specifically considers Native American responses to such exploration. Two chapters are adapted

from previously published articles: the continuing search for Columbus's landfall (William F. Keegan) and Pedro Menéndez's strategic plans for the Florida Peninsula (Eugene Lyon).

*First Encounters* is an attractive and accessible introduction to the Columbian encounter. But the editors have produced more than simple coffeetable fare. Although the specialist will find much that is familiar within these pages, several chapters contain succinct accounts of on-going (and in a few cases, previously unpublished) investigations. In this sense, *First Encounters* succeeds not only in presenting the specific conclusions of modern historical inquiry, but it also addressed the assumptions, approaches, and everyday procedures employed.

David H. Thomas

American Museum of Natural History, New York

Robert W. Neuman. *An Introduction to Louisiana Archaeology*. 1984. Reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990, xvi, pp. 366. \$14.95. ISBN 0-8071-1651-3

Robert P. Ingalls

**URBAN VIGILANTES  
IN THE NEW SOUTH  
TAMPA, 1882-1936**



This book is a paperback reprint of Robert Neuman's 1984 work. As he states in the Introduction, his aim was to write an account of archaeology as it has been conducted in Louisiana, presenting information about the state's original inhabitants that only it can provide. Neuman has succeeded admirably in marshaling a large body of data into a readable and interesting work.

The first chapter is an overview of archaeology in the state, beginning in the early nineteenth century. Neuman synthesizes the diverse publications (including many obscure references) that contained archaeological information, and presents a chronological discussion of the personalities who contributed to the development of the field in Louisiana.

In subsequent chapters, Neuman describes what is known about the prehistoric inhabitants of Louisiana, from 10,000 B.C. to the eighteenth century. He begins with the earliest traces of human occupation, the Paleo-Indian Era (10,000-6000 B.C.). Very little is known about this time period, but Neuman does a good job of discussing the available data in a balanced fashion. There is considerable debate among archaeologists about the interpretation of some of these early sites, and the sources of uncertainty are recounted.

Neuman then tackles the Meso-Indian Era (6000-2000 B.C.). He notes that data on this period in Louisiana are very sparse, and uses examples of archaeological work in Kentucky and Tennessee to illustrate the remains typical of this time period. As he indicates, much work must be done to understand the Meso-Indian Era in Louisiana.

The bulk of the remaining chapters deal with the Neo-Indian Era, dating from 2000 B.C. to A.D. 1600. In Louisiana and surrounding regions, the sequence of development of aboriginal cultures during this time period is exceedingly complex, and Neuman divides the Louisiana data into seven distinct archaeological cultures. The first is the Poverty Point culture, lasting from about 2000 to 750 B.C. He examines the results of excavations at the Poverty Point site in northeastern Louisiana, where fascinating evidence of wide-spread trade and other culture contact was found.

A description of the Tchefuncte culture (500 B.C.-A.D. 300) follows, with detailed discussion of subsistence remains and settlement patterns. Neuman points out that the distribution of Tchefuncte sites indicates that there are large areas of the state that appear to have no sites of this culture, and the nature of occupation in these areas remains unresolved.

The author then turns to the Marksville culture, with an extensive description of the Marksville site and the many archaeological excavations that have taken place there. Neuman includes several photographs from excavations in the 1930s, and provides a detailed discussion of the remains from this and other sites of the culture. They suggest extensive contact with other parts of eastern North America during the period of 200 B.C. to A.D. 400. One problem is that little is known about daily life of the Marksville people. Almost all excavations have concentrated on burial sites.

In the case of the Troyville-Coles Creek culture (A.D. 400-1250) Neuman summarizes the results of excavations at the Troyville and Greenhouse sites, and includes subsistence information for a coastal shell midden (Morton Shell Mound). He also examines the Caddo culture, especially the spectacular remains recovered at a number of Louisiana sites. These sites date from as early as A.D. 800 to after European contact.

Two chapters deal with the late prehistoric Plaquemine and Mississippian cultures that flourished after about A.D. 800 in various parts of the state. These were regional variants of coeval Mississippian cultures from other parts of the Southeast. Neuman discusses results of excavations of a number of sites. A brief chapter on archaeology of historic period Indians follows, concentrating on the Tunica and Adaes groups. The final chapter is a summary of the major cultural developments.

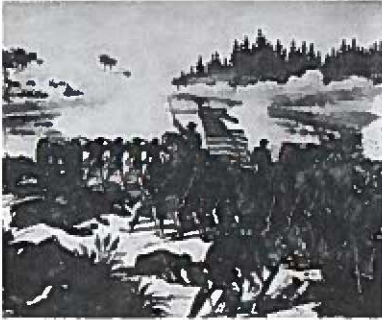
There are some drawbacks to Neuman's book, not all of which are the fault of the author. Information for some of the periods is deficient, making coverage uneven. Neuman does a good job of presenting the available data, however. Many archaeologists would take issue with his repeated suggestions of Mexican connections, specifically Olmec connections with Poverty Point (p. 102) and Mesoamerican origins of Mississippian traits (p. 277). Another drawback stems from limiting coverage to the present boundaries of Louisiana, since many of the cultures extend into adjacent states and up the Mississippi Valley. On balance this is a very good overview of the state's archaeology, suitable both as a textbook and as a general introduction for non-specialists. I recommend it as an inexpensive introduction to the archaeology of this part of the Gulf Coast.

William H. Nulty. *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990, *xi*, pp. 288. \$27.95. ISBN 0-8173-0473-8

# Confederate Florida

## The Road to Olustee

*William H. Nulty*



outlines the unsuccessful attempt of Governor Milton to direct Confederate attention to Apalachicola. Milton clearly saw the merits of defending this area not only for Florida, but also for Georgia and Alabama. Yet Confederate authorities never agreed with him. Chapter one leaves the reader with the misimpression that the work will explore the political affairs of the state during the war.

In the second chapter, Nulty shifts his focus to the blockade and subsequent raids by Federal troops who attempted to destroy Confederate salt works. Here the author demonstrates the vulnerable nature of the state due to its long coastline. He also notes that the disadvantage could have been an advantage, if the state had had an adequate internal transportation network. Failure to develop an effective way of moving goods from the hidden coves and inlets to places where the Confederacy or the state could use them negated any potential advantage.

Finally, in chapter three the author actually develops the events that lead to the Battle of Olustee, which is the main purpose of the book. Florida produced food, in particular cattle and sugar cane, which were desperately needed by the Confederacy. Florida's emergence as a food source for the Confederate armies and the desire on the part of Union forces to interdict that source, finally brought about the battle which is described in the last three-quarters of the book. What follows is the work's strength. Nulty fully understands the reasons for, the course, and the results of the Battle of Olustee.

The first three chapters, although their relation to the rest of the work is confusing, provide a necessary backdrop to the battle. But they are poorly organized, the reader is caught in a thicket of political history and unprepared for the jarring events of the battle. There is absolutely no doubt that both the political situation

William H. Nulty has produced a brief, well-researched, and well-written account of the Battle of Olustee. Unfortunately the first seventy-six pages are confusing. In the first three chapters the author explores Florida's early trials as a member of the Confederate States of America; the effect of the blockade and subsequent raids upon the state; and finally the renewed interest in Florida as a source of supplies for the army. However, the author's objectives are muddled, leaving the reader confused.

Chapter one is a political history of the Confederate Florida's first two years, highlighted by a description of the fight between the state and national government for scant manpower resources. It also

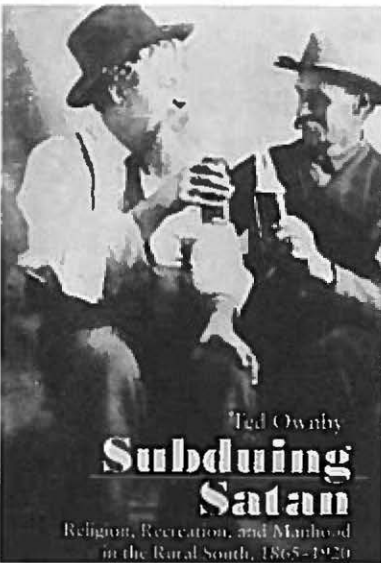
and the blockade were important elements that eventually led to the Battle of Olustee, but the narrative as prepared will leave the readers confused. We suddenly find ourselves caught up in a rather engaging battle account, and we are not at all sure how we got there.

Yet, to condemn *Confederate Florida* because of its organizational flaws would be an injustice to the author. Nulty demonstrates a profound understanding of the Battle of Olustee and what it meant to the armies and the governments who were participants. However, do not expect this work to answer many questions regarding Florida's participation in the Southern Confederacy. Rather the author delivers a chronicle of the Battle of Olustee and the events that led directly to it. This is the strength of the book. Military historians will find this a valuable work. Others may find it to be of more limited appeal.

Joseph E. Brent

Kentucky Heritage Council

Ted Ownby. *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990, xii, pp. 286. \$29.95. ISBN 0-8078-1913-1



Ted Ownby repeatedly states the central theses in this social history of southern evangelicalism: "The region's saints were more saintly, its sinners more sinful than in most of the Anglo-American world" (p. 1); "Male culture and evangelical culture were rivals, causing sparks when they came into contact and creating guilt and inner conflict in the many Southerners who tried to balance the two" (p. 14); "If some men were extremely sinful on Saturday, some evangelicals were extremely virtuous on Sunday; and if some evangelicals pushed harder for self-control and virtue at home, some men sinned with added fervor on their trips into town" (p. 54).

Professor Ownby draws on a wide variety of sources in this survey of southern religion and culture, ranging from church records and personal memoirs to the dialogue of William Faulkner's and Mark Twain's fictional characters. The author has a good eye for local color and humor, and he spins a good yarn.

Ownby divides his book into three parts. The first, called "Male Culture," surveys the south's "sinful" locales, the places where men hunted, drank, gambled, and killed. The second section, entitled "Evangelical Culture," discusses the "feminine" side of southern culture—the home, the church, and revival meetings. A third part examines the rise of modern mass culture and the growth of moral reform. In this section, Ownby concludes that "moralism was an important element



of the nationwide Progressive movement, but nowhere was that element so strong as in the South" (p. 211).

While there is much here that is both entertaining and enlightening, serious readers will be nonplussed by Ownby's sweeping generalizations about "the South" and its presumably generic religion, "evangelicalism." Frequently Ownby's characterizations of the South are stated without apparent effort to verify them empirically. Sometimes they are sustained by a quote or two from real or fictional people. For instance early in the narrative we are thus told that Southerners were peculiarly concerned about "lurid sins of commission" (p. 10) and loved dogs because they rendered to their masters "slavish affection" (p. 26). Most of Ownby's depictions of southern culture would describe much of nineteenth-century rural America. Thus they undermine rather than support his claims for southern uniqueness.

Even more problematic is Ownby's portrait of "feminine" evangelicalism. Though he does not closely define "evangelicalism," he cites a wide variety of southern denominational sources as if they formed an identifiable southern theological system. In fact, these were years of dynamic tension and change in southern religion, years in which evangelical churches forged sharply differing views of both the church and society. The plethora of sects and denominations in the South by 1920 shared many moral and religious values among themselves and with similar groups outside the region, but they also revealed the increasing diversity of religious thought in the South.

David E. Harrell

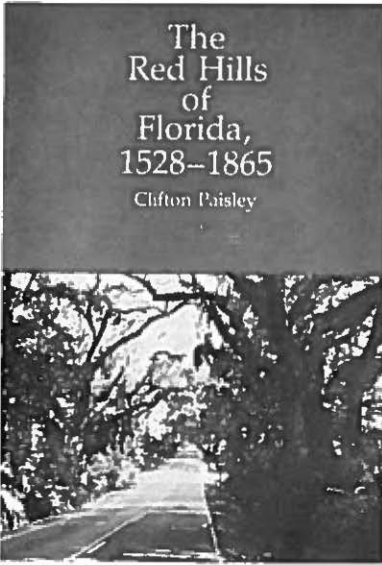
Auburn University

Clifton Paisley. *The Red Hills of Florida, 1528-1865*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989, pp. 290. \$26.95. ISBN 0-8173-0412-6

The Red Hills of Florida encompass a line of five counties—Leon, Gadsden, Jackson, Jefferson, and Madison—centering upon the capital city of Tallahassee and lying just south of the Georgia-Florida state line. Distinctive because of their hills and valleys, lakes, and rich soil, they bear little resemblance to the winter tourist's concept of peninsular Florida. They are, in fact, the heart of West Florida. To an historical description of this region Clifton Paisley brings more than thirty years of intimacy, of fond familiarity with unpaved back roads not far from busy I-10 and ghostly plantations marked only by fire-scarred pillars and broken tombstones. He draws equally upon the manuscript records of the state and the files of early Tallahassee newspapers, and his bibliography displays the many contributions of the region's local historians—among whom Mark F. Boyd deserves particular pride of place.

Paisley's deft touch sketches the story smoothly from its prehistoric cultures to the Indian farming civilization of the Apalachee, visited in 1539-1540 by Hernando de Soto. In the early seventeenth century the Spanish friars arrived and for a century maintained a fragile missionary network that succumbed to hostile English incursions. With little change in the Red Hills, the whole of Spanish

Florida passed to Great Britain, then back to Spain, in the eighteenth century. The nineteenth century brought the new Americans, an army led by Andrew Jackson, the forcible elimination of both Europeans and Indians, and hardy settlers from Georgia like Henry Yonge, whose family both made and preserved Florida's history.



The greater portion of *The Red Hills* is devoted to the last forty years of its chronological framework and to the men and women (and the crop) that raised the region to modern visibility. It is the nature of local history to focus upon individuals. Local history forces readers to recognize harsh and often unpleasant realities underlying romantic generalities and philosophic abstractions. Paisley is painstakingly honest in showing the nature of the cotton plantation society and the political aristocracy that dominated antebellum Tallahassee and the Red Hills. It was a frontier land of speculative investment, of capital increased by well-considered marriages, of diversification of profitable activities, of bankruptcies and

forced sales, of violence, murder, and early death—as well as noble houses, a state capitol, and rich fields of cotton. The top and bottom of the social scale, master and slave, are most clearly defined; the small farmer left little to mark his passage beyond impressive statistics in cotton production and depressing statistics in Civil War casualty lists. The plain folk are not forgotten—they are merely invisible.

Like the cotton lords around Tallahassee, Paisley looks south to the Gulf Coast, to St. Marks, Newport, and Apalachicola. Antebellum produce moved south by river, but then came the railroads and a system that looked to the Atlantic and Savannah. That and the Civil War blockade had a traumatic impact upon the Red Hills and coastal ports alike.

For Gulf Coast historians, *The Red Hills* is a highly pertinent reminder of the necessary and delicate relationship between sea and soil—and their mutual dependence upon factors that may be neither local nor geographic. The dominant role of West Florida (certainly of northern Florida) in the state's history before the later nineteenth century is apt to be lost to modern observers and non-Floridians. Fine local history like this, well-researched and well-written, restores a proper balance. Paisley's book has many illustrations and excellent maps defining the distribution of major plantations, but the text cries for a map showing the antebellum development of Tallahassee and those modern landmarks so carefully noted by the author. This is an admirable historic guide to the Red Hills that will please Floridians and enlighten every reader.

Lauren C. Post. *Cajun Sketches, from the Prairies of Southwest Louisiana*. 1962. Reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990, xi, pp. 215. \$9.95. ISBN 0-8071-1605-X



## Cajun Sketches

from  
the  
prairies  
of  
southwest  
louisiana

LAUREN C. POST

"This book records just a portion of the old. Let us hope that the rest is recorded soon, for when it is all replaced, we can truthfully say that an important and pleasant part of the American way of life will have been lost."

Thus Lauren C. Post concluded his 1962 book on the Cajuns of Southwest Louisiana. Even thirty years later *Cajun Sketches* is an important contribution to the history of a people who have changed much during that time. Reissuing this work in paper is timely and appropriate, especially for those who, with the recent popularization of Cajun culture, think Cajun means spicy food and Zydeco music. It corrects the notion that all Cajuns live on the bayou. Many prairie Cajuns, Post

observed in 1962, had never seen a pirogue. He does, however, use "Acadian" and "Cajun" interchangeably, a practice which most historians now avoid. They distinguish the Acadian émigrés from their Cajun descendants.

Post's account stresses how and why the Acadians came to Louisiana and where they settled, quickly focusing on the Southwest. He typifies the Cajun people as rural, Roman Catholic, and among the older generations, illiterate, with strong family ties, and cultural homogeneity. Their uniqueness, he writes, is in their "French-Acadian" dialect and in their folkways. Post's "sketches" are an effort to record, before they disappeared, the culture and folkways of the Cajuns of the prairies, especially in Lafayette and Acadia Parishes. As a "cultural geography," however, Post also describes some aspects of life identified more with the Creole or American residents of these predominantly Cajun parishes. A native of Acadia Parish and a "Cajunized" Anglo, Post, who had learned to speak Cajun French as a child, used observation and interview to gather much of the material for this book. It benefits from his insider's account.

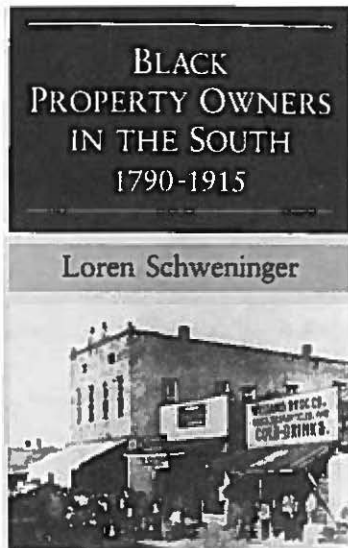
"Sketches" is exactly the right word to describe what Post has done in this very interesting and readable volume. In each of thirty-nine chapters he presents an aspect of Southwest Louisiana history, culture, or folklife. From the central occupation of cattle-raising, including a whole chapter on brands and branding, he describes house-building, transportation, spinning and weaving, co-ops and other business arrangements, and social customs. It is a meticulous and affectionate account, and no detail is too small to overlook. We learn how Cajuns dug wells, made fences and chairs, even brewed coffee ". . . strong enough to 'trow the spoon out of the cup." We learn of Cajun horse racing and cock fighting, of

their courtship and marriage customs, the *fais-doda*, and the Cajun Mardi Gras. The illustrations, mostly 1930s photographs, compliment his descriptions. His book, then, is not so much a study of Cajun culture as it is a recounting, for posterity, of (predominantly) Cajun customs and practices. If some of what he recorded thirty years ago already then belonged more to posterity than the present, how much greater is our gratitude today to Post for having written his *Cajun Sketches*.

David W. Moore

Loyola University, New Orleans

Loren Schwenger. *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790-1915*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990, xvii, pp. 426. \$39.95. ISBN 025-201-678-5



The Africans who were brought to Jamestown in 1619 came from a culture which practiced communal ownership of property. Hence, they were unaccustomed to the concept of private ownership of property to which Englishmen subscribed. Within two generations, however, black attitudes toward property ownership had changed “dramatically.” As they acquired property for themselves, these and subsequent generations of African-Americans “believed that the possession of property would help them protect their families, assert their rights in court, and secure the goodwill of whites” (p. 77).

Loren Schwenger, who has published widely on the subject, traces the practice of property ownership among blacks in the South from their African past to the eve of

World War I, by which time African-Americans had eagerly embraced the private ownership concept. The book commences with a detailed discussion of a subject that does not receive much attention—slave ownership of property—and uncovers information that generally is not known about these “virtual” slaves who hired their time. They lived away from their masters, managed their own households, selected their own type of employment, and controlled their wages. There were some among them, moreover, who even owned other slaves but hid this ownership by placing it under the names of their free mates. The main body of the volume discusses free black property owners. Schwenger divides them into Lower and Upper South residential groups. Within these two groups are three subdivisions: rural, urban, and affluent.

Prior to 1860 free African-Americans in the Lower South enjoyed a distinct economic advantage over their counterparts in the Upper South whose blood ties to whites, pursuit of skill trades, and ownership of property were less

noteworthy. Louisiana had more wealthy African-Americans than any other state in the South. In 1830 the value of black-owned property in New Orleans, which together with Charleston were "centers of affluent" African-Americans, exceeded that owned by African-Americans in the entire Upper South. By 1850 nearly three out of four prosperous southern free African-Americans lived in the Lower South, and in that sub-region two out of every three lived in Louisiana. Those affluent African-Americans were mainly mulattoes who separated themselves from the poorer free African-Americans and worked in skilled trades. In the Upper South, on the other hand, they were mainly black, did not separate themselves from their poorer counterparts, and tended to work in unskilled jobs.

The Civil War began an era of significant economic changes among southern blacks. In the Lower South, such "Old South cities" as Augusta, Charleston, Mobile, Natchez, New Orleans, and Savannah, eventually lost ground to such "New South cities" as Atlanta, Birmingham, Galveston, Houston, Jacksonville, and Little Rock. Black property owners in the Upper South outnumbered those in the Lower South; black businesses began to locate in predominantly black areas and cater to a mostly black clientele; and the undertaker business became very popular. All these changes occurred between 1870 and the 1890s.

"By the early twentieth century the differences among prosperous blacks in the Lower and Upper South—in residency, background, occupational status, wealth accumulations, and relations with whites and other blacks—had nearly vanished" (p. 186). The South's new center of affluent African-Americans, moreover, was the District of Columbia, which replaced Charleston and New Orleans. African-Americans continued to believe, however, that property ownership was the key to autonomy, good relations with whites, and respect.

Schweninger is conversant with the secondary literature on the subject and uses it to help piece together a regional study of black property owners that heretofore had been described incompletely in state and local studies. The author has also combed tax rolls, census reports, private collections of papers, and other primary sources. Numerous charts, clear analyses of data, and succinct summaries of bodies of information facilitate digesting the plethora of figures and names that appear in the book. The author could have benefited, however, from perusing National Archives' Record Group 217 (General Accounting Office) to complement information found in Record Group 56 (Department of the Treasury). Nevertheless, Loren Schweninger's volume fills a void in the literature and is a welcomed account of black property owners in the South.

Whittington B. Johnson

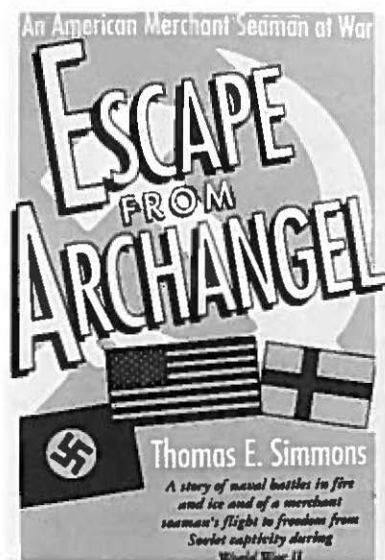
University of Miami, Florida

Thomas E. Simmons. *Escape from Archangel*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990, pp. 168. \$17.95. ISBN 087-805-461-8

In the euphoria following the Allied victory in the Second World War it was easy to overlook the crucial role played by the United States Merchant Marine in the overall war effort. Indeed, the sailors of the Merchant Marine ran the same risks as their military counterparts, endured severe hardships, and

suffered appalling losses. "By early 1943," Thomas Simmons writes in *Escape from Archangel*, "the run to the northern Russian ports of Murmansk and Archangel had become so costly—out of fifty ships in one convoy, only sixteen survived—that they were stopped." Nevertheless, when the merchant seamen returned home, they were virtually ignored. There were no parades, no GI Bill, no veterans benefits. In chronicling the extraordinary experience of native Mississippian O. M. (Jac) Smith, Jr., Simmons brings to light much that went unnoticed or was simply disregarded about these forgotten seamen.

A high school student in Biloxi at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Jac Smith turned eighteen in 1942 and shortly thereafter joined the Merchant Marine. Having distinguished himself during Basic Training, Smith later served as an instructor aboard the training vessel *Joseph Conrad*. Anxious to do more for the war effort, he applied for sea duty and was made acting boatswain on board a new T-2 tanker, the *Cedar Creek*, which made its first run through the U-boat infested waters of the frigid North Atlantic in January 1943. He would make many more runs aboard the *Cedar Creek*, transporting high-test aviation fuel to Scotland and England, until the ship was acquired by the Soviet Union, via Lend-Lease, in April 1944.



Smith and two other Americans contracted with the Soviets to assist the *Cedar Creek's* green Russian crew in making the dangerous Murmansk run in early May. At this point, Simmons' narrative takes a sharp, ominous turn. On their arrival in Archangel, the three Americans were arrested by the Soviets and interned in a forced labor camp. Smith eventually escaped by simply walking away, using his seaman's knowledge of the stars to guide him westward. Taken in and sheltered by sympathetic Laplanders, he eventually made his way to Norway and from there to Scotland, where he had considerable difficulty in convincing British authorities that he was not a German spy.

Thus presented, Jac Smith's story has all the earmarks of high adventure. Unfortunately, perhaps owing to the lack of corroborative evidence, *Escape from Archangel* is decidedly unadventurous. For one thing, the reader never really gets to know just who Jac Smith is, as the all-important details of his life are absent. It is as if Simmons, like many biographers became so fascinated by his subject that he lost his bearings, in the process forgetting to tell the story in such a way that the reader can share in the fascination. The prose is flat, never rising to crescendo, even when Smith is incarcerated or is dodging Germans on his way across Scandinavia. Finally, one wishes that Simmons had done

more homework in preparing *Escape from Archangel*. Dates are approximate, few individuals are named, and details that would breathe life into Smith's adventure are omitted.

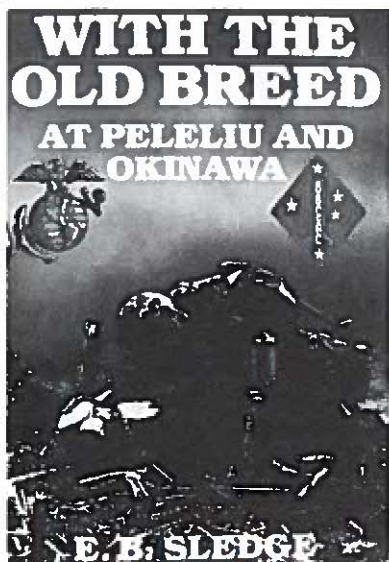
Nevertheless, there is merit in *Escape from Archangel*, as Simmons gives overdue credit to the merchant seamen who served their country so well during the war and who were forgotten at its conclusion. Simmons also provides a chilling reminder of the helplessness of individuals in the face of Stalin's totalitarianism.

Stephen Hathaway

Wichita State University

E. B. Sledge. *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*. 1981. Reprint, Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1990, pp. 326. \$9.95. ISBN 0-89141-119-4

*With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* was first published in 1981. I read it at that time and learned to a small degree what it was like to be in close combat. Reading it again was as much a learning experience as before. The author, E. B. Sledge, is a native of Mobile and recently retired from the University of Montevallo.



Sledge begins by telling the reader why he joined the Marine Corps, and what it was like to go through the hard and relentless Marine "boot camp." He introduces the reader to a Marine Corps tradition—in this case named Corporal Doherty—the Drill Instructor, or DI. At that time, the rank of corporal in the Corps did not come in a few months; it could take many years—years of experience in the ways of training and combat.

After basic training, the author was sent to Camp Elliott, where he was introduced to the small but effective 60mm mortar and to the wise advice of Marine combat veterans from earlier campaigns on Bougainville and Guadalcanal.

After Camp Elliott, Private Sledge was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, which was then at Pavuvu (an abandoned coconut plantation on the British Russell islands) undergoing rest and training after months of intensive combat on Guadalcanal. The next target of the 1st Marine Division was to be the island of Peleliu.

The Japanese defenders under Colonel Kunio Nakagawa had heavily fortified Peleliu. Their positions were located in deep coral caves and possessed multiple firing ports with inter-locked fire patterns.

In addition to extensive fortification, the Marines faced new enemy tactics. The Japanese had stopped the suicidal, strength-depleting *banzai* attacks when the Marines landed. They bitterly contested every yard on Peleliu and inflicted heavy casualties on the Marines.

On D-Day I (September 15, 1944), the 1st Marine Division suffered twice the expected casualties. On the second day, the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, was involved in bitter attacks against the Five Sisters and Horseshoe positions and took heavy casualties. Many of Private Sledge's friends were killed or wounded in these offensives.

The chapters on the Peleliu fighting contain several recurring themes. First, the fighting was among the hardest and bitterest of the Pacific conflict and taxed the marines to and beyond the limit of endurance. Second, shared danger in combat is one of the strongest and most enduring bonds of friendship that can be forged. Third, war is truly a dehumanizing process. Continuous combat numbed marines to the point where the omnipresent death and destruction hardly moved them.

Peleliu was not to be the 1st Division's final battle. Even tougher fighting was in store for the division because it was slated to be part of the attack on Okinawa.

The Japanese commander on Okinawa, Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijimi, developed intricate lines of fortification similar to those encountered by the Marines on Peleliu. Again, the Japanese defended every inch of terrain and inflicted terrible casualties on the attacking marines. The author's company, K/3/5, almost disappeared. Only twenty-six Company K men who had survived Peleliu made it to the end of Okinawa. The author was one of the very few in his unit who survived both Peleliu and Okinawa without earning a Purple Heart.

Sledge's descriptions of the savage fighting for Half Moon Hill on Okinawa gives the reader considerable insight into the deep, inner feelings of a fighting man. One of the most poignant is that of confronting fear. Private Sledge wrote that he lost all fear of dying as a result of witnessing so much pain and suffering among his comrades.

Although *All Quiet on the Western Front* will never be equalled as a book highlighting the horrors of combat, *With the Old Breed* comes as close as any other book to making clear the harsh realities of war. Since the United States has recently taken part in a major conflict in the Middle East, those who wish to understand the nature of combat should read this book.

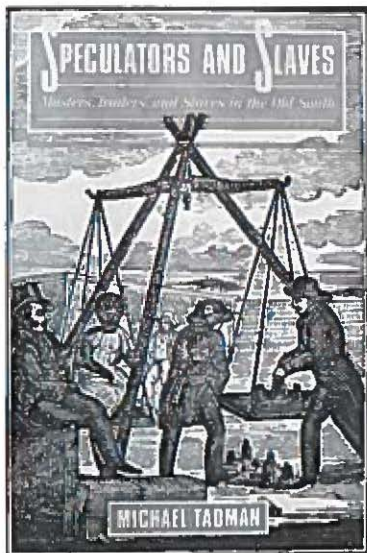
In the final sentence of the book, the author gives eloquent testimony to a strongly held belief he held in 1944 and undoubtedly still holds today: "If the country is good enough to live in, it's good enough to fight for. With privilege goes responsibility."

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Michael Tadman. *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989, pp. 336. \$27.75. ISBN 0-299-11850-9



Some of the most poignant, powerful, and alarming images of American slavery involve human beings on the auction block, women stripped to the waist, men poked and prodded, their muscles squeezed, their teeth examined as if they were draft animals, babies seized from the very bosoms of their mothers, men, women, and children herded in coffles like so many cattle to be sold and exploited. These are the images of the domestic American slave trade. The slave trade was central to the functioning of American slavery and the plantation system, and yet our understanding of that trade is remarkably deficient given the wealth of interest and work devoted to the study of the peculiar institution in the last few decades. Michael Tadman's *Speculators*

and *Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South*, is one of the most important works on slavery in more than a decade, because it offers the first serious examination of the nature and extent of the interregional slave trade and uses the evidence to challenge dominant interpretations of American slavery.

There are three major foci of Tadman's *Speculator and Slaves*. First, he outlines the parameters of the interregional slave trade. The process of buying slaves in the upper South and selling them in the Gulf states, the volume of the trade, the economics of the trade, and the character of those who made their living trafficking in slaves is presented using the census, probate records, newspaper advertisements, ships manifests, and a careful gathering of the records of individual slavetraders. Tadman's findings present a clear picture of a massive interregional movement of roughly two hundred thousand slaves per decade during the antebellum period. This large volume of traded slaves, Tadman argues, was the result of both the obvious high demand for slaves in the lower South and, more importantly, the slaveholders' desire to maximize profits speculating on and selling slaves. Tadman also argues convincingly that the average slavetrader was not the dissolute and déclassé parasite of southern legend, but rather a reputable and respectable southern businessman.

Second, Tadman examines the effects of the slave trade on the slaves and how it reflects on supposed slave-slaveholder relations, specifically the paternalistic ethos. For the slave, Tadman tells us, slave commerce was a destructive force on the family and community and a source of fear. Tadman estimates that over fifty percent of all slaves in the upper South experienced some type of familial division or separation during their lifetimes.

Finally, if Tadman is less than certain on the ultimate impact of the trade on the slaves, he is clear that the size and speculative nature of the slave trade is a signal of the innate and heedless racism of the slaveholders as a group and the opportunistic character of the paternalistic ethos. If paternalism truly existed in the Old South, Tadman asserts, it was only to "rationalize the unreconcilable, to generate comfortable, self-serving, defensive images." The slaveholder who participated in the slave trade had little concern for the individual slave or the family. For the slaveholder-speculator, a paternalistic relationship with the slave existed only in his own mind.

Tadman's work is a solid effort to bring the domestic slave trade to our attention and to attach a central role to it in the antebellum South. His evidence of the volume of the trade, although often based on estimates culled from limited data sources, is valid; his understanding of the speculative nature of the trade is both well taken and profound in implication. Tadman's presentation of this material is dense and at times overburdened. His descriptions of the individual traders, the "coffles" (the groups of transported slaves), the "baracoons" (slave holding pens), or the act of "sizing up" (both the preparation and display of the traded slaves), are lively and engaging. On the interpretive level Tadman can be criticized for an overwrought attack on paternalism; his evidence significantly damages the concept, but he offers nothing to replace it. Further, it is difficult to place Tadman's work in the historiography of slavery. It echoes Kenneth Stampp's neo-abolitionism and the violence of Stanly Elkins's unmitigated exploitive capitalism, yet clings to the resilient black family and community of Herbert Gutman and John Blassingame. Even so, Tadman's *Speculators and Slaves* is a major contribution to the historiography of slavery, and its findings should engage any student of the Old South.

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Daniel H. Thomas. *Fort Toulouse: The French Outpost at the Alabamas on the Coosa*. Introduction by Gregory A. Waselkov. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989, *xliv*, pp. 90. \$9.00. ISBN 0-8173-0421-5

In an age in which "dated" can refer to last year's knowledge, the republication of a book-length article from the Fall 1960 *Alabama Historical Quarterly* may seem something of an oddity, even more so when one learns that it is based on a masters' thesis completed in 1929. Nonetheless, there is merit to this new edition of Daniel Thomas's *Fort Toulouse*.

*Fort Toulouse* tells the story of its namesake, which was viewed by many inside and outside French colonial Louisiana as the most important site for the security of the colony after New Orleans and Mobile. There France managed relations not only with the nearby Alabama Indians, but also through them with the entire Creek confederacy. Thomas analyzes the origins and construction of Fort Toulouse, and such topics as daily life at the fort; its function as a military, commercial, and diplomatic center; and its role and fate in the Seven Years' War.



historical introduction. Archaeologists know much about Fort Toulouse today because they have identified and excavated new sites; historians know more today about what Fort Toulouse meant to Europeans and Indians because they have asked new questions and have access to primary sources that were not available in 1929 or even 1960. The major problem with Thomas's original article, which Waselkov does nothing to correct, is in the importance Thomas attached to Fort Toulouse as a military center. Thomas and Waselkov recognize that the fort was established at the request of the Alabama Indians themselves, in the name of the entire Creek nation, to counterbalance the British presence in the Southeast, just as Verner Crane did in his classic 1929 study *The Southern Frontier*. Despite this, the fort was characterized as "quite successful" (p. xxviii) from the French point of view, a view reinforced by a contemporary quote from British Indian trader William Sludder (p. 42). The fact is, the fort only limited British expansion in the region because of the Indians, not the French. With its pitifully small garrison and lack of any commercial or military might, Fort Toulouse—and indeed Louisiana itself—remained a factor in southeastern affairs only because the Creeks needed a scarecrow to ward off the British. While it is possible that the French could have "lost" the Creeks after 1715, they would have had to try to do so. The Creeks well understood that without the "French card" the British would have been a far less tractable and more troublesome "ally." The testimony of William Sludder and others shows just how masterfully the Creeks succeeded with this difficult and dangerous diplomatic exercise.

There are always little things to pick at in any book. I would have liked the introduction to include a reference to Daniel Usner's Duke dissertation, "Frontier Exchange in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Race Relations and Economic Life in Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1783," as a more recent and deeper discussion of the frontier economy. It is also regrettable that the press did not take the

The new introduction by Gregory A. Waselkov is worth the modest price of this slim volume. Waselkov brings Thomas's story up to date with the scholarship of the last thirty years, although as an archaeologist he focuses on the fort itself and the results of his own and others' excavations. Although some of this new material is available elsewhere in published reports, it is brought together quite nicely here in an article-length essay that should be read by historians and students of both sides of the imperial frontier.

This publication could have been made even stronger, however, had the University of Alabama Press commissioned a historian—an ethnohistorian or an Indian historian—to write a companion

opportunity to correct some of the spelling problems of the original. Despite this, *Fort Toulouse* is a worthwhile study for non-specialists, especially with Waselkov's additions. This is a good source for southeastern colonial history, even if it is not the last word on the subject.

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John Wilds and Ira Harkey. *Alton Ochsner, Surgeon of the South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990, xv, pp. 268. \$24.95. ISBN 0-8071-1564-9



Alton Ochsner, as founder of one of the leading clinics in the United States, deserves a biography, and Wilds and Harkey have done a good job. Ochsner was a complex individual who combined the talents of a first-rate surgeon with those of a great promoter. He came from a successful Midwest German background, graduated from the University of South Dakota and Washington University Medical School, served a residency under his cousin, a well known Chicago surgeon, and then spent two years studying medicine in Germany. His career moved upward rapidly. After two years as a hospital surgeon, in 1926 he received an appointment to the University of Wisconsin Medical School. The following spring he was invited to visit Tulane

University Medical School as a candidate for the head of surgery. With the retirement of the famous Dr. Rudolph Matas, factionalism had made it difficult to select a local candidate. Suffice to say, Ochsner, as the outsider, won the position.

Like his predecessor, Dr. Matas, Ochsner was both personable and able, and he soon won an excellent reputation both for himself and his department. Tulane had no university hospital, and Ochsner and a group of other faculty members decided to establish Ochsner Clinic in 1942. The appearance of clinics in other cities had aroused bitter opposition among private practitioners, who were opposed to any form of group practice, and this situation held true for New Orleans. Fortunately, Ochsner and his partners were able to draw most of their staff members from the Tulane faculty, and the clinic expanded rapidly. Within two years the original small clinic became the Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation, and not too long afterward the Ochsner Clinic had its own large hospital. Much of the credit for the rapid growth of the Ochsner Medical

Foundation goes to Ochsner himself for his ability to develop a rapport with his patients and wealthy individuals. He moved in prominent circles both locally and nationally, and this enabled him to bring large donations to the foundation.

He was an exceptionally able surgeon, but, as the authors point out, he was not a great one. Nonetheless, as his own reputation and that of the Ochsner Clinic and Hospital grew, Ochsner was called on to treat well-known national and international figures, men such as President Juan Peron of Argentina, Ben Hogan, and Gary Cooper. As Ochsner had foreseen, the clinic and hospital drew increasing numbers of wealthy Latin Americans, thus contributing to making New Orleans a major medical center.

Much of surgery involves developing techniques, and Ochsner deserves credit for contributing more than his share of these. While he does not rank among the major surgical figures, he was an active researcher and contributed a great many surgical papers. He is probably best remembered for his crusade against smoking. As early as 1939, he, along with Michael DeBakey, recognized the association between smoking and lung cancer. From that time on Ochsner led a determined campaign to discourage smoking.

As the authors state, outside of his field Ochsner was rather naïve. He came from a conservative German background and was a leading advocate and patron of ultra-conservative causes. He wrote home from Germany in the 1920s blaming the Jews for much of the country's troubles. He was one of many conservatives to whom the name Roosevelt was anathema and the word 'liberal' an epithet. The authors do not mention it, but on one occasion he sponsored the appearance in New Orleans of Gerald K. Smith, a rabble-rousing anti-Semite and anti-communist. It was probably this same violent anti-communism that led him to oppose the introduction of fluoridation into New Orleans.

Wilds and Harkey have placed their emphasis rightly on Ochsner's surgical career and his work with the foundation. At the same time they have not glossed over his somewhat aberrant political views. While the first two chapters depict an Horatio Alger youth, on the whole the authors have produced a well-written and well-balanced biography.

John Duffy

Tulane University, University of Maryland

## From the Archives. . .

### University of South Alabama Archives

George H. Ewert

The University of South Alabama established the Photographic Archives in 1978. While originating as an archives for the photographic record of Mobile and south Alabama since the late nineteenth and the twentieth century, this institution, now the University of South Alabama Archives, has expanded the scope and depth of its collections into other areas as well. As a division of the university library, it is also responsible for some of the university's more valuable special collections material.

While retaining its character as one of the largest photographic collections in the region, with a variety of reproduction services available to researchers and to the general public, the archives has acquired a large collection of historic manuscripts and corporate records. This expansion has been in an effort to preserve significant nineteenth and twentieth century historical collections that would otherwise have been lost.



*Empire Theater, Mobile*

*Erik Overbey  
Collection*

Being too numerous to name individually, the following is a brief account of some of the more important holdings of the archives: the Erik Overbey (c. 1906-1963), the T. E. Armitstead, the S. Blake McNeeley and other photographic collections document life in the region since the 1890s; the papers of Alabama Congressman Jack Edwards (1964-1984); the photographs and other records from the Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company, particularly strong for the World War II period; a large collection of the records of the Mobile County Circuit Court (c. 1814-1917); a large volume of the corporate records of the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad (c. 1840-

1980); the German Relief Association Papers, a benevolent organization created to aid German immigrants in the region, (1866-1941); the Elizabeth B. Gould photographic and manuscript collection containing over one thousand 35mm slides and research notes from her two books on Mobile architecture and its history; and the John LeFlore Collection, papers representing a portion of the official correspondence and other manuscripts relating to the Mobile chapter of the NAACP from 1939 to 1969. The archives' collections also include a variety



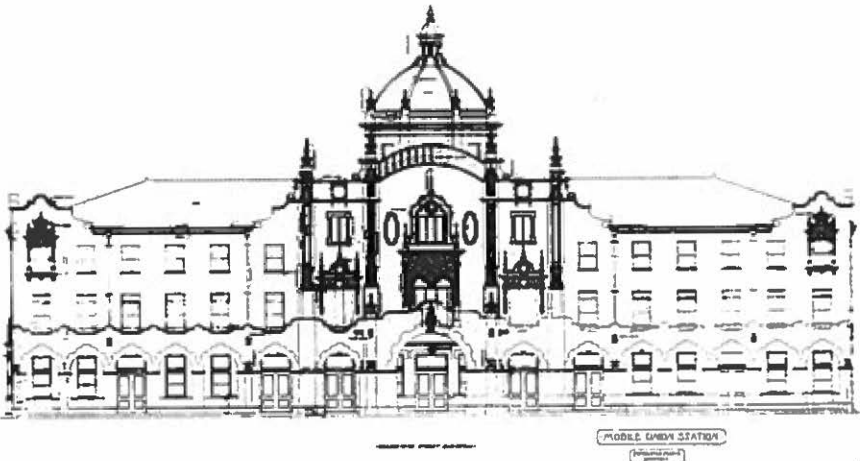
*World War II women welders,  
Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company*

*ADDSCO Collection*

of legal material such as the *Acts of the General Assembly of Alabama* from 1829 to 1976, volumes of the *Code of Alabama*, *Journal of the House of Representatives of Alabama* and *Journal of the Senate of the State of Alabama*; area newspapers such as the *Azalea City News*, the *Mobile Labor Journal* and the *Mobile Metro*; and the *Mobile City Directory*, volumes for most years from 1837 to the present. The archives also has begun a collection of material relating to the University of South Alabama and its history: publications, public relations photos, Faculty Senate documents, theses, dissertations, etc. There are a variety of finding aids available to researchers including a printed *Guide to the Archives* which may be purchased for \$5.00.

The University of South Alabama Archives is continuously building its collections by accepting gifts and donations of photographs, records of businesses, civic organizations, and individuals, and other materials which help document later nineteenth and twentieth century history of our region. It is also engaged in an ongoing collection of historic maps of the area. Recently the archives acquired a microfilm camera which will enable it to preserve fragile material in its own collection and assist other institutions with microfilming needs.

Visitors are welcome at the archives. The hours are Monday through Friday, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. (closed 12-1 daily). Those planning a visit should contact the archives prior to their anticipated arrival so that a determination can be made as to which collections will best serve their needs and to assure their availability. At that time any restrictions that may apply to archival materials can be explained and research procedures can be outlined. Prices for photographic reproductions and other services of the archives are available upon request. The telephone number is (205) 434-3800. The University of South Alabama Archives is located at 1504 Springhill Avenue (formerly Providence Hospital), Room 0722. The mailing address is University of South Alabama Archives, USA Springhill, Room 0722, Mobile, AL 36688.



*Architect's rendering of the Beaugard Street elevation of Mobile's Union Station, c. 1905*



