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A Small but Spartan Band: The Florida Brigade in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia by Zack C. Waters and James C. Edmonds

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associations. These positions are far from just honorary. The author describes how Smith exercised leadership as head of the global bar successfully to advance the rule of law and liberty in many parts of the world during and after his two-year term.

The final chapter focuses on Smith's continued dedication to and teaching of the professional responsibilities of a lawyer. The qualities of character, competence, and commitment that Smith has consistently modeled and taught typify his life and career.

This biography will help the reader understand the many ways in which this remarkable individual, now chair emeritus of the Carlton Fields law firm in Tampa, has worked to make our world a significantly better place.

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A Small but Spartan Band: The Florida Brigade in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. By Zack C. Waters and James C. Edmonds (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. xii, 254 pp. List of illustrations, foreword by Robert K. Krick, introduction, B&W photographs, maps, illustrations, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95, cloth)

On July 22, 1863, Council A. Bryan, a Confederate captain from Florida, explained to his wife, "When the Secret history of the war is Known – then we will get justice I hope" (3). In their book, Zack C. Waters and James C. Edmonds chronicle the relatively unknown military experiences of the fifteen thousand Floridians in gray in General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

The authors note correctly that historians tend to remember Florida's Confederate troops as "being harbingers of bad fortune" and "for an embarrassing spate of desertions that plagued the unit during the siege of Petersburg." About the most authoritative conclusion Waters and Edmonds can offer about them is that Florida's contingent in Lee's army "fought well in some battles and poorly in others" (3). "Perhaps the oddity is not that so many deserted," they argue, "but that so many remained in the ranks" (167). "They [*sic*] Floridians were certainly not the best brigade in Lee's fabled army, but they generally fought bravely and don't deserve neglect" (194). Few readers will consider such analysis satisfying or worthy of publication by a university press.

That said, with limited source materials at their disposal, the authors nonetheless do their best to narrate the service of Florida's Confederate units from mobilization in 1861 to demobilization in 1865. These troops served with mixed results in the Peninsula campaign, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna, Cold Harbor, Petersburg,

and operations thereafter.

Waters and Edmonds maintain that the Second Florida Infantry fought valiantly at the bloody Battle of Seven Pines, Virginia, May 31 - June 1, 1862. The battle, however, virtually crippled the unit. It suffered a 45 percent casualty rate: 198 casualties among the 435 effectives. The regiment's officer corps succumbed to extreme losses. Ten of the eleven company commanders either received wounds or died.

Assessing the Florida brigade's performance at Antietam poses more problems. Though General Lee found little to praise in the Floridians' fighting at Bloody Lane, Waters and Edmonds blame the troops' lackluster performance on the inept leadership of Virginia General Roger H. Pryor (who at a critical moment replaced the wounded South Carolina General Richard H. Anderson) and the inordinate number of casualties to the Floridians' officer corps. "For a while a lieutenant directed the Second Florida Regiment and noncoms commanded several companies. Still, the casualties suffered by the Florida units seem to indicate that want of courage had not been the reason for the failure to hold the sunken road" (39). The gray-clad Floridians lost approximately 50 percent of their force as casualties.

Captain William Baya's poor leadership, some said cowardice or insubordination, at Fredericksburg led to the capture of twenty-two of his Floridians and the captain himself. Though Waters and Edmonds conclude that "Baya's contingent certainly set no standard for steadfast heroism" during the battle, they place partial blame for Baya's weak performance on Mississippian Andrew R. Govan's command. According to the authors, while Govan sheltered his troops in Fredericksburg, he "essentially pinned a bull's-eye on Baya's unit, stationing it in an open, unprotected area where it would be the focus of enemy fire" (44).

Unquestionably Florida's gray coats fought tenaciously at Gettysburg, again in spite of inconsistent leadership and high casualties. On July 2, Colonel David Lang's men overcame the Yankees at the Emmitsburg Road but a day later experienced embarrassing defeat during General George E. Pickett's inglorious charge. On July 3, another 20 percent of Lang's thinning ranks were killed, wounded, or captured. "It seemed that any evil that could befall a soldier in combat was visited upon the men from the southernmost state," Waters and Edmonds assert (78-79). Floridians endured the highest casualty rate of any of Lee's units during the general's Pennsylvania invasion. Perhaps it is this to which the authors refer when they mention that Florida soldiers "developed a healthy streak of paranoia" (3).

Unfortunately, the authors tell their story in a herky-jerky fashion. Their narrative relies on quotations and lists of officers and units. Battle summaries highlight troop movements, comment on changing commanders, and enumerate casualty figures. The conclusion profiles influential soldiers who survived the war. *A Small but Spartan Band* thus resembles a parochial regimental history, including its use of such language as the "War Between the States" and "Marse Robert." Small errors mar the maps. The index references "Black Confederates" but omits slavery

and the U.S. Colored Troops.

Waters and Edmonds thus succeed only partially in making known the “secret” history of the Floridians’ war.

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The Life of Ruth Bryan Owen: Florida's First Congresswoman and America's First Woman Diplomat. By Sarah Pauline Vickers (Tallahassee: Sentry Press, 2009. xviii, 231 pp. Dedication, acknowledgments, preface, introduction, B&W photographs, bibliography, index)

Every Floridian should know Ruth Bryan Owen: she was the first congresswoman from the South, and Florida voters elected her in 1928. That was just eight years after Florida women got the vote via the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution – which Florida did not ratify until May 1969. Sally Vickers, who earned both a Ph.D. and a J.D. from FSU, recently published a biography of Owen. This work begins to fill a void on Owen’s fascinating life but still leaves room for more extensive exploration.

The problems begin with the subject’s name. Writers of women’s history deal with this difficulty every day: Thomas Jefferson, for example, is Jefferson all his life, but many women have three or four surnames during the course of their lives. In this case, the biography’s subject was Bryan at birth; Leavitt after her first marriage (which ended in divorce); Owen after her second (when she was widowed); and Rohde after her last. Which name to use indeed poses a problem, but the bottom-line rule is consistency. Vickers instead uses as many as three variants on a page – a real frustration for those new to the subject.

If readers can get past such editorial neglect, Owen’s life is well worth examination. She was the daughter of the famed William Jennings Bryan and Mary Baird Bryan – and her mother’s life also merits attention. Mary Baird Bryan earned a law degree from the University of Nebraska in 1888 when Ruth was three years old. The very first law degrees granted to women were in 1871 (by Washington University in St. Louis), and it was extremely unusual for a married woman to go to college at all in this era, let alone a young mother. This milestone of educational history, however, goes unexplored, as do other aspects of young Ruth’s formative years.

Even such basics as the place being discussed require the reader to put in effort: in her first pages, Vickers refers to “Jacksonville” several times without adding the state, and only when the Bryans move to Nebraska does it become semi-clear that the biography begins in Jacksonville, Illinois. Nothing is said about family life in Washington during Ruth’s childhood in the 1890s when her father served in Congress,