

Americana

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the greatest domestic achievement of his Administration, the Hepburn Act, he bargained away tariff reform to obtain railroad regulation.

Conservative though he may have been, he anticipated both Wilson and the second Roosevelt in his insistence that the national government should use its power to restrain corporate greed, while at the same time encouraging both labor and farmer organizations to work outside the government toward the same worthy end. In foreign policy he saw clearly the anachronism of American isolation, and unhesitatingly, at Algeciras and elsewhere, used the weight of the United States to help balance the international scales. He was at his worst in dealing with Latin America, but the steps he took had strong bipartisan popular support. He was a nationalist, not an internationalist, but he was convinced (and who is to say he was wrong?) that the United States must exert its strength unsparingly outside its borders to help keep the world at peace.

This is the right kind of book about T. R. Mr. Blum is not one of the "incense-swingers," but neither is he one of the snide critics of a later time who judged Roosevelt by their own age and not by his. Nor does he tire us by repeating the facts we already know so well; the book is an interpretation, not another biography. And it is convincing. Most readers will agree with the author that when Roosevelt is finally weighed he will not be found wanting.

Who's a Loser?

"General Jo Shelby, Undefeated Rebel," by Daniel O'Flaherty (University of North Carolina Press. 437 pp. \$6), is a biography of the Confederate general who refused to fight the Civil War as if it were a tournament of roses. Our reviewer, Bruce Catton, is the Washington newspaperman whose book, **"A Stillness at Appomattox,"** won last year's National Book Award in non-fiction.

By Bruce Catton

THE REAL trouble with the Southern Confederacy may have been that its principal leaders tried too consistently to live up to the roman-

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tic legend that would be invented after they had died. They had got themselves into a fight where the only really binding rule was that it would be very bad indeed to get licked. The situation cried aloud for an alley fighter, but whenever it found one the Confederate government looked the other way and thought about Sir Walter Scott.

This, of course, is not to say that the theory and practice of the all-out fight were lost on some of the Confederacy's principal generals. Robert E. Lee certainly had as much natural pugnacity as any American who ever lived, and Stonewall Jackson was abundantly capable of waging remorseless war in the style of Cromwell. Jeb Stuart, for all the plumed hat and the cloak with scarlet lining, was essentially a two-handed slugger.

Yet even these men (with the possible exception of old Stonewall) believed always in going by the rules, and it was of the essence of the situation in the 1860's that there were no rules. The situation was revolutionary, and every now and then the Confederacy needed someone who was willing to act accordingly—someone, that is, who neither knew nor cared what the formulas called for but who would set out to win with any weapon that came to hand.

There was Bedford Forrest, for example, who won recognition too late; and there was the central figure in Daniel O'Flaherty's fascinating new book, "General Jo Shelby, Undeclared Rebel." Jo Orville Shelby might just possibly have made the war west of the Mississippi go the other way if the people at Richmond had ever known how to use him.

Shelby was a Missouri planter before the war, Kentucky-born and bred, a man of wealth and fathomless energy and amazing talents. He had great personal magnetism; also, as Mr. O'Flaherty remarks, he had that mysterious ability to strike to the heart of a situation without bothering to reason it out—"the green ace, the ace of hippogriffs, which outranks all other cards in the deck and takes everything in sight; and it is another word for cavalry genius."

During the late 1850's Shelby was a leader of the Missouri "border ruffians" on the Kansas frontier, playing his full part in the cut-and-thrust fighting that had so much to do with bringing on the war. When the war finally came, Shelby treated it as nothing more than the Kansas border trouble grown great. He raised a division of cavalry and he swept up, down, and across Missouri like a destroying fury, picking up men, equipment, and supplies wherever he could find them, and from the very first

appearing in indignant Federal despatches as "the notorious Shelby."

He was a freebooter, and he was never nice in his choice of weapons; the notorious Quantrill owed some dim allegiance to him, and Frank and Jesse James got their start under him. Discipline in his command was almost non-existent, in a way—yet the discipline that could march men past the point of exhaustion, and keep them on the firing line after 50 per cent had been shot, Shelby imposed with an iron hand. All in all, he was a hard man to fight for, a bad man to have around, and an almost impossible man to have for an enemy. The Yankees never could handle him; their one advantage was that Richmond never supported him.

Confederate legend has never really claimed Shelby. He was an alley fighter, and the people at Richmond thought they had a tournament on their hands. Neither during nor after the war could Shelby look quite natural in the gallery of the plumed knights of the lost cause.

Which helps to explain why the cause was finally lost. Lincoln won Missouri, for instance, by letting two revolutionary-minded characters named Frank Blair and Nathaniel Lyon break all the rules in the book. Shelby was cut to their pattern, but the most he was ever able to do was plague the Federals while they were making their conquest good.

Mr. O'Flaherty has written a first-rate book about him, combining careful scholarship with the ability to tell a story in an engaging manner. The book is warmly recommended, both to the reader who wants to know more about the Civil War and to the one who simply wants to read about an interesting man doing interesting things.



General Jo Shelby—"an alley fighter."

Notes

MEXICAN WAR HERO: Historians of the Mexican War, Edward S. Wallace believes, have failed to give proper credit to one commander, the "forgotten hero" of the battle of Monterey. In "General William Jenkins Worth" (Southern Methodist University Press, \$5), Mr. Wallace tries to right the damage caused by "the baneful dead hand of Winfield Scott" and "the fine Italian hand of Ethan Allen Hitchcock."

The biography is badly proportioned and one-sided. Essentially, it is an account of Worth's battles and bickerings in the Mexican War. A full narrative of the soldier's earlier career, it seems, would have been rewarding, but Mr. Wallace gives us only a skimpy story of Worth's service in the War of 1812 (in which he advanced from private to brevet major), his teaching career at West Point (where he was appointed Commandant of Cadets and Instructor of Military Tactics at the age of twenty-six), his restraint of firebrand patriots on the Canadian border, and his campaigns against the Seminoles in Florida. (Yet he manages to find space for three pages on an unimportant junket of the cadet corps from West Point to Boston.) The contrasting detail on the Mexican War does demonstrate Worth's ability as a commander of the Patton variety (a comparison the author repeatedly makes), but Mr. Wallace's immoderate abuse of Scott, Hitchcock, Pillow, and, to a lesser degree, Taylor, and his uncritical praise of Worth will surely make even the most credulous reader question the validity of the defense.

Mr. Wallace bases his brief for Worth primarily upon George W. Kendall's manuscript history of the Mexican War. Perhaps the biography will serve a useful purpose if it leads to a serious, objective reexamination, in the light of the new evidence presented here, of the quarrel between Worth and Scott.

—J. MERTON ENGLAND.

SEMINOLE FIGHTER: "Florida is certainly the poorest country that ever two people quarreled for. . . . It is in fact a most hideous region to live in; a perfect paradise for Indians, alligators, serpents, frogs, and every other kind of loathsome reptile . . . why not in the name of common sense let the Indians have kept it?" So, half seriously, wrote Jacob Rhett Motte, a Harvard-trained army surgeon who described his life in camp and field during the Creek and Seminole wars, 1836-1838, in "Journey Into Wilderness" (University of Florida Press, \$6). James F. Sunderman has most