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W. Eric Emerson, Karen Stokes, eds. *Faith, Valor, and Devotion: The Civil War Letters of William Porcher DuBose.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010. 392 pp. $49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57003-912-6.

Bobbie Swearingen Smith, ed. *A Palmetto Boy: Civil War-Era Diaries and Letters of James Adams Tillman.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010. 200 pp. $29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57003-905-8.

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Sons of the Palmetto State in the Civil War

Anyone familiar with the American Civil War–scholar, buff, or casual reader–knows that the conflict remains arguably the most written-about topic in American history. Contributing to the immense volume of scholarship is the prodigious number of surviving letters and diaries produced by soldiers. Literacy rates in both armies were very high. Soldiers in blue and gray constantly wrote letters home and eagerly awaited letters in return. Neither army consistently censored its soldiers' pens, which allowed both Johnny Reb and Billy Yank to pour out their hopes, fears, joys, desires, heartbreaks, and criticisms on paper. The plethora of correspondence that emerged from the war has constituted an invaluable source for historians. Two new published letter collections, just in time for the sesquicentennial celebration, have arrived from the press: *Faith, Valor, and Devotion: The Civil War Letters of William Porcher DuBose*, edited by W. Eric Emerson and Karen Stokes, and *A Palmetto Boy: Civil War-Era Diaries and Letters of James Adams Tillman*, edited by the late Bobbie Swearingen Smith. These books illuminate the hardships of the war experiences of two South Carolina soldiers who fought through America's bloodiest war. *A Palmetto Boy* explores the physical strains that service in the Civil War exacted on the mind and body of James Adams Tillman. It also sheds light on the oft-ignored western front, where Tillman fought in numerous major battles. His diaries as well as his letters reflect both the privations of service and the cult of Joseph Johnston, whose popularity mirrored that of Robert E. Lee's in the east. *Faith, Valor, and Devotion* explores the spiritual toll that the war took on William Porcher DuBose. DuBose entered the war with a strong faith in God, but events compelled him to question his faith. Ultimately however, DuBose became a chaplain on the western front, administering to the spiritual needs of soldiers.

The Tillman family dominates the late nineteenth-century history of South Carolina. Both George and Ben Tillman served in state and national politics during this period. However, the story of their brother–James Adam Tillman–has remained relatively obscure, but the late Bobbie Swearingen Smith, a descendant, has edited and published his diaries and correspondence. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Tillman had completed secondary education and was planning to pursue a teaching career. His brothers, George and Ben, conspired to keep him from volunteering, writing: "Education is a thing that must be got in youth or never afterwards. Besides three of our family have be [*sic*] food for bullets" (p. 6). Certainly, the Tillmans were no strangers to the violent honor-bound culture of the antebellum South: two Tillman boys had been murdered, while another died in the Mexican-American war. Indeed, the Tillman family's experience well illustrates the theses set forth by scholars like Orville Vernon Burton, Steven M. Stowe, and Bertram Wyatt-Brown.[1]

Despite his brothers' trepidations, Tillman joined the Twenty-Fourth South Carolina Volunteer Infantry. Till-

man initially participated in the defense of the South Carolina coast, and he fought in both battles of Secessionville in 1862. In 1863, Tillman was sent to Mississippi and then to North Georgia where he fought in the bloody battle of Chickamauga, in which he was wounded. Ben Tillman traveled to North Georgia and found his brother convalescing in a hospital. Ben brought his brother back home to recover, but James did not stay long. In 1864, James returned to duty and spent much of the year under Joseph E. Johnston's command fighting Sherman's March to the Sea. After the war was over, James returned home to Edgefield and witnessed the beginning of Reconstruction. Sadly, he died in 1866, likely due to complications from his wound.

A Palmetto Boy will interest historians of the Civil War South for a variety of reasons. Tillman's letters are a fascinating source for scholars interested in topics such as war experience, the western front, health, water, and supply. His letters and diary entries reflect the incredibly hard life that soldiers lived in the western theater. "Here I have been marching for over two months almost every day, sniffing dust or pulling through and continually sick all the time, living on worse that [*sic*] the dogs get at home and drinking water out of hog wallows," Tillman wrote his brother in 1863, from Mississippi (p. 77). Much of his correspondence is a string of complaints about his suffering and privations. His letters also shed light on an ignored facet of the western front: the cult of Joseph Johnston. Tillman exhibited a glowing admiration for Joseph Johnston that rivaled General Robert E. Lee's reception among troops in the eastern theater. Tillman held Johnston in such high esteem, that Johnston was very near a father figure to the young South Carolinian. "No General in the army is more universally beloved by his army than our noble General Johns[t]on. He is a general in any sense of the word and his superior is not in our Confederacy," he wrote in 1863 (p. 75).

Civil War soldiers ran an incredibly high risk of dying of disease. This was certainly the case for James, as he seemed to be sick throughout the entire war; his letters and diary entries are a litany of references to his constant sickness. James's illness reached a dangerous point in July 1863 as he marched with his regiment toward Jackson. He became so afflicted with constant diarrhea that he was forced to fall out of the march, a fact that hurt his pride and brought him to tears (p. 78). Throughout the fall months of 1864, James dealt with a lingering illness that threatened to break him down once again. A frustrated Tillman noted in October: "Sick, sick, sick, chill again and fever" (p. 111). Perhaps because he was constantly ill, Tillman was unusually aware of the importance of fresh water. Most soldiers did not have a concept of personal hygiene, and many fresh-water sources became contaminated with fecal matter. Consequently, tainted water became a potent transmitter of disease. Tillman, however, seemed to be very attuned to the importance of fresh water. On the march in Mississippi, Tillman was forced to drink poor water, and wrote his sister disgustedly: "Thirst almost suffocating. Water very scarce … I have drank out of mud holes" (p. 71). Perhaps due to his impressive education and his experience as a farmer, Tillman seemed to be aware of the causal relationship between poor water and virulent disease. He was very thankful, then, when he encountered clean, fresh water, and he often attributed the health of the army to the water it drank. On the march in Mississippi, James wrote: "The water we now drink acts like a charm. Johnson's army I may say is improving from this good water" (p. 78). *A Palmetto Boy* reminds us about the harsh realities of the Civil War as a lived experience. Soldiers such as Tillman had to endure constant and painful bouts with illness, a fact sometimes lost on historians.

Supply and the homefront is another theme in Tillman's letters that will intrigue historians. The Tillmans were an affluent, slaveholding family. The impressive wealth that the Tillman family benefited from allowed James to be comfortably supplied throughout the war. Historians sometimes forget that class created far different experiences for Southern (and Northern) men in the war. Soldiers from upper-class, wealthy planter families, such as Tillman's, could afford to have more of their basic needs met. Meanwhile, the average nonslaveholding soldier of the South remained destitute and undersupplied. James's correspondence reflects his position in the top economic tier; many of his letters comment on articles and foodstuffs received from home, or are filled with requests for additional supplies. For example, in November of 1862, James wrote a typical request: "A good oil cloth overcoat, with lining and plenty of pockets. A overcoat and pants of good grey jeans, two pairs of socks, pr [*sic*] shoes, two pr [*sic*] drawers, two nice thick shirts. The overcoat should have nine buttons in front and four behind, also a supply of pockets" (p. 57). Throughout the war, Edgefield remained an important source of supply for Tillman.

Bobbie Swearingen Smith provides the historical community with a very worthy collection of letters and diaries. Smith meticulously annotates the collection with background notes on all the people Tillman mentions in his correspondence. Smith also provides readers with

a very detailed Tillman family tree which helps readers decipher who was whom among the elite of the Tillman clan. The only criticisms that could be leveled against Smith is that she omits contextual notations regarding James Tillman's experience in the war. Readers are forced to decipher where Tillman is and what is happening to him throughout his experience in the war. She does, however, provide an appendix that details Tillman's career in the war. However, Smith would have done her readers a greater service by interspersing comments and notes throughout Tillman's correspondence. Moreover, historians will be disappointed with the meager bibliography which does not take advantage of the rich historiography of South Carolina and the Civil War. In the end, however, these minor criticisms certainly do not take away from the service that Smith has provided historians and Civil War buffs everywhere.

While *A Palmetto Boy* explores the physical strains experienced by soldiers, *Faith, Valor, and Devotion* examines the toll that service in the war exacted on the religious health of William Porcher DuBose. This work is a welcome addition for Civil War historians interested in religion. A native of Winnsboro, South Carolina, DuBose was highly educated. He had graduated from South Carolina Military College, held several degrees from the University of Virginia, and was enrolled at the Theological Seminary for the Protestant Episcopal Church of South Carolina when the war broke out. He considered himself a man of thought before the war, but his distinguished service in the Holcombe Legion proved he was also a man of action. During his career as a soldier, DuBose was wounded twice and was briefly a prisoner of war. In 1863, after a recommendation by several influential friends, DuBose became a chaplain in Kershaw's Brigade. DuBose served throughout the remainder of the war in his new position as chaplain.

Faith, Valor, and Devotion will intrigue readers interested in religion during the Civil War. Shortly before the secession crisis, DuBose had committed himself to becoming a man of God. When the war broke out, DuBose was hesitant to join the conflagration because of his new covenant. "I go so far as to believe that one who has devoted his life to God can no longer call it his own, & therefore has no right to give it away, or even to endanger it in any other cause whatever, even though it be so sacred a one as that of Country," he wrote in 1861 (p. 17). However, DuBose changed his mind and decided to volunteer after he received a letter from his father urging him to join the war effort. As the war progressed, DuBose and his comrades witnessed both victory and defeat. During the dark times of loss, DuBose turned to his faith to bolster his sinking optimism. DuBose employed the religious rhetoric of the jeremiad to help explain defeat in theological terms. Randall M. Miller, Eugene D. Genovese, and recently, George C. Rable have explored jeremiads, and their work helps illuminate the peculiar theology to which DuBose subscribed.[2] Minister and layman alike employed religious jeremiads to help explain Confederate defeat while still maintaining the belief that God supported the Southern cause. "Imagine our great cause finally unsuccessful & our beloved country conquered & ruined. I do not apprehend any such fate, but it might be God's will, & if so, it would be right.... Our enemies might be more wicked than we, but the Bible teaches us that the 'ungodly are a sword of the Lord,' " DuBose wrote to his fiancée in 1862 (p. 46).

Faith, Valor, and Devotion reminds modern readers that religious men struggled to live up to the standards they set for themselves. Often, men like DuBose doubted and faltered as they sought to remain true to their goals, whether these involved temperance, courage, or in this case, faith. DuBose had committed himself to the cloth, but camp life, with its many temptations, often blew him off course. Life in a Civil War camp imposed rigid hours of duty and drill upon DuBose. His leisure time was often spent writing letters to his fiancée and family and spending time with his mess mates. With little time left to devote to anything else, DuBose often felt that he was failing in his commitment to God, a fact that deeply troubled him. "My unsettled & eventful life during the past six months has rendered me almost incapable of calm, connected & sustained thought or reflection.... I find that the same difficulty has grown upon me in my intercourse with God, I find it hard to be still, & rest in His presence," DuBose wrote his fiancée in 1862 (p. 113). DuBose's correspondence reveals how men struggled to remain religious in the presence of the many doubts associated with war. DuBose aptly demonstrates that religious men were not static in their faith, but rather, vacillated between belief and doubt throughout their lives.

Faith, Valor, and Devotion will interest readers who are fascinated with the war experience of Confederate soldiers. DuBose was extremely well educated, thoughtful, and sensitive to the destructive nature of the conflict that he was involved in. Throughout the war, DuBose carried out his duties honorably, yet he was never quite comfortable participating in the conflict. "I do not like to realize the fact that I am engaged in a profession whose avowed object is to destroy my fellow man, & create widows & orphans throughout the land. I feel no desire to

be in a battle, and would be perfectly satisfied for peace to come before I win my laurels," he wrote his fiancée in 1862 (p. 74). Yet, despite his reservations, he soldiered on through the war. His letters reflect many of the struggles that most soldiers dealt with through the conflict. Those struggles included boredom in camp, the incredible physical and emotional strain of soldiering, hunger, thirst, excessive bodily filth, fear, homesickness, illness, and death. Sadly, DuBose was terribly affected by the deaths of his parents on the homefront during his service in the war. His mother's death, due to natural causes, seemed to weigh on him considerably. "Our dear Mother, after having been so long in mercy spared to us has been at last called to her reward.... Never in my life have I suffered such anguish, sometimes torture, of mind as during these past two or three weeks. What they must have suffered at home," he wrote his fiancée in 1862 (pp. 69-71). Certainly, DuBose will interest anyone researching or interested in emotional history or death in the nineteenth century.

W. Eric Emerson and Karen Stokes have provided a genuine service to the historical community in their skillful editing of DuBose's letters. Emerson is a director of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia, and Stokes is an archivist with the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston. Both editors have experience in primary documents, and their experience shines in their editing skills. Throughout DuBose's correspondence, Emerson and Stokes insert biographical information pertaining to the people and events mentioned. Moreover, Emerson and Stokes provide the reader with context and a very impressive bibliography. Clearly, Emerson and Stokes are familiar with the historiography of South Carolina in the Civil War. The only criticism that could be leveled against *Faith, Valor, and Devotion* is that Emerson and Stokes do not provide readers with the genealogy of the DuBose family, which would have been helpful. Aside from that small quibble, *Faith, Valor, and Devotion* is a fantastic set of letters for anyone interested in the broad experience of soldiers in the war or the more specific topical themes of religion.

Notes

[1]. Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Steven M. Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990); and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[2]. Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Eugene D. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998); and George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen People: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

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