

## BOOK REVIEW

*Giant in Gray: A Biography of Wade Hampton of South Carolina.*  
By Manly Wade Wellman. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New  
York. Charles Scribner's Son, Ltd. London, 1949. Pp. xi, 387,  
including index. Illustrations and appendix.)

It might be asked why a book review? The definition of review might assist in answering that question. "Review" could not mean anything but "to see again", "another look." So it would follow that a book review would be another reading and analysis of some book.

Book reviews are oral or written. Sometimes you see a whole string of written reviews in magazines or professional journals and they are so empty and dry, we wonder what was the purpose.

The book itself must be its own excuse for a review of it. The subject, the content, the purpose, and the pleasure and profit found in its reading should move the reader to lift it high with pen or voice and say, "Stop, look, listen while I tell you book lovers of something fine, something stimulating and refreshing; here is something not only worth reading but worth buying and placing in your library or better still introduce it to a lover of books."

So, when I looked into the covers of a volume put forth by Charles Scribner's Sons, entitled *Giant in Gray: A Biography of Wade Hampton of South Carolina*, I found the story racy without being light, factual without being musty, moving and inspiring without being strained or strident. "Surely," I said, "Here is a book I want all my friends of taste and refinement to read, so why not tell them briefly about it?"

Here the writer likes to linger upon the best definition of history he has met: "There is no history, it is all biography." Manly Wade Wellman knew this when he wrote this story of Wade Hampton, the third Wade Hampton, born to the purple of Southern tradition, heir and master of five hundred thousand acres and five thousand slaves, a Colonel of volunteer infantry, a Brigadier General of cavalry under Jackson, the successor to General J. E. B. Stuart as Commander of all Southern Cavalry, ending his war service as one of only two lieutenant generals of the Southern Confederacy; a chivalrous figure riding forth as leader of his hosts and striking death and terror with his gleaming sabre; defender of his people in the reconstruction days; protector of the lost and deluded southern negro; Governor and United States Senator of South Carolina; all these and more are presented in this volume with ease, rightful color and authenticity.

Perhaps the preceding sentence in the last paragraph is too long. But book reviews must be brief to fit a space. So, upon pointing to the pinnacles of character and power Wade Hampton reached and assuring you that Wellman treats all of these with closest care but with a pleasing and meticulous pen, this review could well reach its end: namely, make a reader reach for the volume, *Giant in Gray*.

The author divides his book into six parts: (1) The Grandee; (2) Gentleman At Arms; (3) The Stricken Field; (4) There Was No Peace; (5) Freedom Hard Won; (6) The Rise and The Fall.

Instead of making analysis of the contents of this volume, I shall present some lights and shades by offering a few quotations from the six divisions:

#### DIVISION 1.

"On March 23, 1818, there was born in Charleston, South Carolina, a boy, blue eyed, big, and healthy. He was christened Wade Hampton."

#### DIVISION 2.

"The fighting raged [Battle of Bull Run] into the afternoon. J. E. B. Stuart led a charge of Virginia Cavalry; Hampton joined in the charge; someone fired at him and he fell, almost under the muzzle of the cannon; the bullet gash on Hampton's head was slight; he bandaged it and resumed the command of his Legion." . . . "More modest than J. E. B. Stuart in manner and dress, Hampton, no doubt, was undeniably a fiercer personal fighter; with the doubtful exception of Bedford Forrest, he was probably the most frequent and successful hand-to-hand combatant among all the general officers in American history."

#### DIVISION 3.

"Heth's Division advanced across Hatcher's Run [Grant's Battles around Richmond October 1864] to counter attack with Hampton. Hampton rode almost to the front of the charge. With him was young Wade, his son (the 4th Wade Hampton). Among the young officers riding by was one waving his hat; it was Preston Hampton, Wade's brother. The next instant, a bullet struck him in the groin and he fell from his saddle. Young Wade spurred ahead and dismounted by his brother's side. Even as he bent over Preston, his brother, he was struck in the back and fell beside him. General Hampton seeing this, swung out of his saddle. A wintry rain was falling, bullets whistling; he knelt and caught Preston in his arms, 'My son, my son,' he muttered brokenly. He kissed his boy tenderly and bent to whisper in his ear. The boy could not move. 'Too late, doctor,' General Hampton called to Dr. Taylor who sat holding Preston's sagging head upon his shoulder. Then suddenly turning his horse he joined some artillery to direct their fire into the thickest of the enemy. The victorious Southerners held the hard-won field in the chill, pelting rain. Hampton prepared the report of his victory. Gravely he mentioned the casualties; 'In this charge while leading the men and cheering them by his words and example, Lieutenant William Preston Hampton, Aid-de-camp, fell mortally wounded and Lieutenant Wade Hampton who was acting on my staff, received a severe wound.' "

#### DIVISION 4.

"Hampton who had marched to the war as the richest gentleman of the South, came back as one of the poorest." . . . "Others of the South had kindly feeling but at this time, nobody seems to have gone so far as Hampton in advocating a clearcut recognition of Negro citizenship rights." [1869]

## DIVISION 5.

"Night fell (November 7, 1876) and newspapers and bulletin boards throughout South Carolina posted the returns as they came in [Gubernatorial election]. By morning of November 8, Hampton was declared the winner [Governorship] by a majority of approximately one thousand. . . . On March 23, 1877, President R. B. Hayes wrote cordially to Hampton, asking him to visit Washington and discuss South Carolina's knotty problems. On his departure, Hampton speaking to a crowd gathered around him at the depot said, 'I go there to assure him that we are not fighting for party, but we are fighting for the good of the whole country. I am going there to demand our rights—nothing more—and, so help me God, nothing less.' "

## DIVISION 6.

"In June [1877] he [Hampton] went to Auburn, New York, to speak before a large crowd. He concluded by calling attention to the presence of another guest of honor at the meeting: 'I come to do honor to my distinguished friend, General Shields. He wore the blue and I wore the gray, but we can let the curtain drop over those years, and go back to the time when that flag borne by him waved alike over the men of the South, and the men of the North, and we can look beyond the future, when through all time that flag shall float over a free and prosperous and reunited country.' . . . On February 24, 1879, Hampton resigned as Governor to accept the election to the United States Senate. On April 16 he appeared in the Senate chamber at Washington, where Butler (senior senator from S. C.) proudly presented him for his oath of office. . . .

"Benjamin Ryan Tillman was born in 1847 in Edgefield County, S. C. In 1880 he campaigned busily, organizing what he called the Farmers' Movement. On March 27, 1890, his supporters met and named a full slate, headed by Tillman as the Farmers' Movement candidate for Governor. They also announced a policy of overthrowing the 'aristocrats'. Tillman [during a point in the campaign] whirled around on the platform and glared full into Hampton's face. 'The grand mogul here, who ruled supremely and grandly, cannot terrify me!' he snarled at the top of his voice. . . . 'When any man comes here and talks about my record I simply spew him out at the mouth,' he yelled. 'The Democratic party is full of leprosy . . . . 'Blot out Wade Hampton from the history of the state for the past thirty years and you blot out South Carolina', said an editorial in the *Charleston News and Courier*. Irby was chosen to succeed him in the Senate, as of March, 1891."

"Weaker he grew, and weaker. . . . 'All is black', he muttered weakly. 'My children are on the field—heroes forever—forever'—he aroused himself briefly 'God bless all my people, black and white'. He died at 8:30 a.m. on April 12, 1902."

The nature of this volume is reflected in the inserted sentences better than if a ream of paper should have been used in mere comment and analysis. This sort of book belongs with such volumes as Lincoln Steffens' *Lincoln*, Southall Freeman's *Lee and His Generals*, Dwight Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe*, and Winston Churchill's *The Finest Hour* for collateral reading in all high school and collegiate forces in American history. This story of Wade Hampton is not a sectional book, but one belonging to all America, for it tells when American manhood was in flower. It throws new and vivid light on one of the greatest epochs in American history.

—Charles Evans.

Oklahoma Historical Society.