



One Mind's View Of The South

By David McMullen

More than 50 years after its publication, W.J. Cash's book still invites discussion — and controversy.

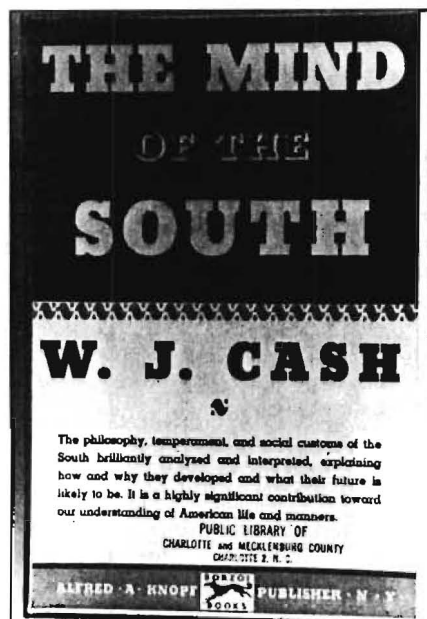
Outside university lecture halls, few North Carolinians recognize the name Wilbur Joseph Cash. Yet, he was one of the state's most influential writers.

To discuss the South — its history, its character and its unique qualities — without reading W.J. Cash's *The Mind of the South* would be unthinkable.

Published 51 years ago this month, at a time when most of the world was looking at the South through the eyes of Margaret Mitchell, W.J. Cash gave the world a far more realistic and certainly more comprehensive exploration of why the South was so different from the rest of the United States.

Cash was born May 2, 1900, in Gaffney, South Carolina, the day before the town switched on its electric street lights for the very first time. According to his most recent biographer, Bruce Clayton, Cash was the product of "plain, strongly religious country folk, Scotch-Irish mainly, who named their first son for an admired Presbyterian preacher."

As a child, Cash spent his summers with his grandparents in Boiling Springs, 13



miles north of Gaffney. As an adult, he lived most of his life in the Piedmont communities of Shelby and Charlotte. He graduated from Wake Forest College in 1922 and became a writer, penning articles for H.L. Mencken's *The American Mercury* magazine, editorials for the old *Charlotte News* and, of course, his famous book on the South. His life ended two months after

his 41st birthday, when he was found hung by a necktie from a bathroom doorway in a Mexico City hotel, the victim of circumstances that will never be fully understood.

Yet, Cash's ideas continue to influence each new generation of students who study the South and, as Charlotte journalist Jack Claiborne recently wrote, "...despite the passage of so much time, the memory of that shy and brooding man and the mystery behind his death continue to haunt the South and, in particular, the textile mill communities of the Piedmont Carolinas."

Cash's modest fame comes from more than a decade of writing and rewriting his only book. It is, according to the publisher, "the philosophy, temperament and social custom of the South, brilliantly analyzed and interpreted. The author explains how and why they developed and what their future is likely to be. *The Mind of the South* is firmly established as a highly significant contribution toward understanding American life and manners."

As a college student in the early '70s, I found Cash's book rambling and thought-provoking. Rereading it in the early '90s, I found it insightful, well-written and even

more fascinating than before. One of my favorite passages is Cash's description of the Confederate soldier:

"To the end of his service this soldier could not be disciplined. He slouched. He would never learn to salute in the brisk fashion so dear to the hearts of the professors of mass murder. His 'Cap'n' and his 'Gin'ral' were likely to pass his lips with a grin — were charged with easy, unstudied familiarity. He could and did find it in himself to jeer opening and unabashed in the face of Stonewall Jackson when that austere

Presbyterian captain rode along his lines.

"And down to the final day at Appomattox his officers knew that the way to get him to execute an order without malingering was to flatter and to jest, never to command too brusquely and forthrightly. And yet — and yet — and by virtue of precisely these unsoldierly qualities, he was, as no one will care to deny, one of the world's finest fighting men."

Cash had strong opinions about the Southern world and, with encouragement from H.L. Mencken, the courage to put his ideas into print. Writing for *The American Mercury*, he described Charlotte as a "...dreary ritual of the office, golf and the church — (it) becomes nearly unbearably dull even for Presbyterians not wholly pathological."

Describing the founder of one of North Carolina's most powerful companies, Cash wrote that the man "remained to the end essentially what he was at 17, a red-headed shambling Methodist-jake out of Orange County, North Carolina — Which is to say, a sort of peasant out of the 11th century, incredibly ignorant, incredibly obtuse, incredibly picayune."

About Charlotte's new Symphony Orchestra, he observed that it "at least allows one Italian fiddler to eat regularly and to wear a pair of sound pants — surely no mean success for a fiddler in Dixie."

Cash's ideas were controversial, no



W.J. Cash, right, with his publisher, Alfred Knopf.

doubt about it, and that was the way he liked it. According to an account of Cash's funeral in a 1967 biography by Joseph L. Morrison: "Assisting the regular pastor was one of Cash's cousins from Charleston, South Carolina, who proceeded to apologize both to God and the congregation for Wilbur's ideas.

"That preacher cousin must have read some of the author's sharp pieces in *The American Mercury*, because he first apologized for Cash's having maligned so many of the powers that be before assuring all present that Wilbur really had been a very good boy. Mary (Cash's widow) half-rose in her pew, but her mother physically restrained her as if fearing she might make a scandal. Mary was able to smile in later years, knowing how her husband would have whooped at it all, but at the time, as she later recalled, 'I was outdoors mentally burning down that church.'"

The Mind of the South has remained in print since its original publication. A year ago this month, Wake Forest University remembered its famous alumnus with a symposium to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Cash's landmark study. The symposium attracted some of the most prominent journalists and scholars of Southern studies. More than 500 people attended the four-day event.

The symposium provided an opportunity for praising Cash, for criticizing the

weaknesses of his work and for Clayton to introduce his biography. Most importantly, however, it was a time for continuing the discussion that Cash started so many years ago.

In his own words, Cash saw the South as "proud, brave, honorable by its lights, courteous, personally generous, loyal, swift to act, often too swift, but signally effective, sometimes terrible, in its action — such was the South at its best.

"And such at its best it remains today, despite the great falling away in some of its virtues. Violence, intolerance, aversion and suspicion toward new ide-

as, an incapacity for analysis, an inclination to act from feeling rather than from thought, an exaggerated individualism and a too narrow concept of social responsibility, attachment to fictions and false values and a tendency to justify cruelty and injustice in the name of those values, sentimentality and a lack of realism — these have been its characteristic vices in the past. And, despite changes for the better, they remain its characteristic vices today."

Looking at the changes in the South since Cash's time, Hodding Carter III, the symposium's keynote speaker, observed: "...leaving poverty and legalized racism behind is a great thing. But there are other attributes of Southernism which would be sad to lose and which are threatened by the mass culture — a strong sense of place, of civility, a basic sort of attitude about the land and a respect for the past, however mythical we made it. But, I'd say the average suburbanite in Atlanta is about as disconnected from that as somebody in Peoria."

Cash died on July 1, 1941, less than 18 months after the publication of his book. He had been upset for several days and was suffering from hallucinations. When his wife left him locked in their hotel room to seek help, he disappeared. He was found that evening in another hotel. He apparently had hanged himself.

Morrison discounts what he calls "the

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three false myths concerning Cash's death." They were the belief that the author was murdered by Nazi agents; that Cash suffered from an incurable brain tumor; and that foul play must have been involved because when he was found hanging, his feet were touching the floor.

Taking into account medical evidence that dated back to 1933, Cash probably suffered from an endocrine imbalance. This imbalance, complicated by heavy drinking, seems to offer the best clue. As Clayton explains, "Cash had been drinking for years and during the last year or so had begun to consume hard liquor, much of it bootleg and therefore of an undetermined amount of alcohol. It appears certain that his drinking complicated his endocrine problem and further imbalanced his system."

A far less scientific, but no less valid explanation came from the noted scholar V.O. Key Jr., who in 1949 wrote: "A depressingly high rate of self-destruction prevails among those who ponder about the South and put down their reflections in books. A fatal frustration seems to come from the struggle to find a way through

the unfathomable maze formed by tradition, caste, race, poverty...."

Exactly why Cash died will remain a mystery. However, a short essay he wrote about Easter, which appeared in the *Charlotte News* less than three months before his death, may provide some insight into his vision of what the future held:

"The story of the fecund and teeming and mysterious earth, unutterably terrible and unutterably beautiful. And of man — earthbound and terrible and bloody and aspiring man, with his fateful dream within him. The fragile leaf and the white bud and the newborn babe. And the great triumphant chorus and the brooding sadness which sees in the bud the shriveling of the rose, beyond the coming Summer and the return again of Death.

"But always and forever there is the Resurrection."

There is no doubt that after more than half a century, Cash's insights continue to be resurrected with each new generation that reads *The Mind of the South*. 

David McMullen is a Southern history buff and owner of a Charlotte public relations firm.

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Books and Book-Makers

W. J. CASH of Charlotte has at long last written a book. He calls it "The Mind of the South." It will be published tomorrow by Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.75. We recommend it unreservedly, not only to the Mayflower Cup committee in North Carolina and to all thinking and thoughtful Southerners, but to those people everywhere who would increase their understanding of a region that has too long been considered "Another Land."

SOUTH CAROLINIAN by birth, Mr. Cash (born in 1901) grew up in North Carolina. First he attended Wofford and then Wake Forest, being graduated there in 1922. "As an undergraduate," we read on the jacket of his book, "he won a short story prize, edited the college paper—always it came out late, and sometimes not at all—and won no success as a football player. But mainly, he confesses, he sat under the magnolias and thought about the girls. He has never married." He began his newspaper work on the staff of the Chicago Post. Since 1926 he has been on the staff of the Charlotte News, now being Associate Editor.

THE OLD SOUTH, Mr. Cash, warns in his preview to understanding, was a legend: "... a sort of stage piece out of the eighteenth century, wherein gesturing gentlemen move soft-spokenly against a background of rose gardens and dueling grounds, through always gallant deeds, and lovely ladies in farthingales, never for a moment lost that exquisite remoteness which has been the dream of all men and the possession of none." That opens the way for the leading statement that historians for years have been heaping up an irrefutable mass of evidence to show that actual Cavaliers, or even near Cavaliers, were indeed rare among the early Southern settlers.

ARISTOCRACY did not develop in any real sense until the passage of a hundred years after Jamestown, Mr. Cash points out: "Most of the Virginians who counted themselves gentlemen were still, in reality, hardly more than superior farmers." And even Virginia, he goes on, was not the great South. Virginia was not even all Virginia, as has been pointed out before and notably by Elizabeth Page in "The Tree of Liberty." The Virginia of the legend and the legendary aristocrats was a narrow strip of land and there was a vast backcountry of "homespun Scotch-Irish, dogged out of Pennsylvania and Maryland by poverty and the love of freedom; pious Moravian brothers, as poor as they were pious; stolid Lutheran peasants from Northern Germany; ragged, throat-slitting Highlanders, lusting for elbow-room and still singing hotly of Bonnie Prince Charlie. . . ."

SOUTHERN CHARACTERISTICS on which Mr. Cash dwells at some length are individualism and a tendency toward unreality, toward romanticism, and, "in intimate relationship with that, toward hedonism." Also, to understand the Southerner's mind it is necessary to understand the South's religious pattern. Mr. Cash explodes the theory that belief was mainly Anglican. What the Southerner needed was a faith "as simple and emotional as himself. A faith to draw men together . . . to terrify them, to cast them into the pit, rescue them, and at last bring them shouting into the fold of Grace. A faith, not a liturgy and prayer book, but of primitive frenzy and blood sacrifice—often of fits and jerks and barks." The Methodists, the Baptists and the Presbyterians supplied that need. And in the latter days there have been the "Cyclone Macks" and the Evangelist Hams.

THE WHOLE SOUTH is pictured in "The Mind of the South," not just a section, nor yet a fragment of society, calling itself aristocracy. Pretensions of aristocracy are there—in their proper place—along with the substantial farmers, others not so substantial, poor whites and the Negro. Always, throughout the book, Mr. Cash treats the Negro question with admirable understanding. From an actual genealogical record of an up-country Carolina family he quotes: "Hans Muller, who was a carpenter by trade and the son of Max Muller, who was the son of a Hamburg merchant and the daughter of a German emperor, immigrated in 1742 and settled in . . ." And we remembered that Great-Aunt Stasia used to tell us about Jeb Stuart—whom Mr. Cash lists as very near the Southern ideal (daring almost to the point of swashbuckling, handsome and gracious with it, and kneeling in prayer before battle or even a sortie against the Yankees)—James Ewell Brown Stuart, who rode away from Laurel Hill plantation to West Point; Stuart, that aide de camp to a Colonel named Robert E. Lee, who delivered a government's orders to John Brown at Harper's Ferry; Virginia's glamorous Jeb Stuart of plumed hat and gallant cavalry feats. That was fanning the embers of the legendary Old South. And Aunt Stasia always added, as final touch to her story telling, that the Stuart men were descended from the Stuarts who ruled Scotland and would have ruled England for a longer time than was their destiny. That was the essence of the spirit of the substantial farmer metamorphosed into aristocrat by time, expansion of the frontier and that particular Southern aptitude for glorifying the past and letting time in its flight give good red blood a distinctly bluish tinge. It was Henry Adams who said, strictly speaking, the Southerner had no mind; he had temperament. Mr. Cash says the Southerner did not (typically speaking) think; he felt.

OUT OF THE OLD SOUTH, with its tendency towards romanticism and its ability, unparalleled elsewhere in the rest of the country of which it had never quite seemed a part, came conflict. The Civil War and Reconstruction left the South not only stripped and bleeding but a frontier once more and by so doing multiplied those characteristics of mind and temperament most essentially Southern. Before-the-War became a Glamour-Land flowing with milk and honey, houses burned by invaders assumed manorial proportions in the minds of survivors—it was the Old South legend again under a magnifying glass. Mr. Cash likens the South during Reconstruction to a veteran army, standing to its captains, like the troopers of Austerlitz and Marengo stood to Bonaparte and his marshals. And at the same time the old frontier individualism blossomed in full integrity. But the march toward aristocracy was halted except in memory. Final result of Reconstruction, Mr. Cash sums up, was the establishment in the South of the savage ideal as it had not been established "in any western people since the decay of medieval feudalism, and almost as truly as it is established today in Fascist Italy, in Nazi Germany, in Soviet Russia." Paradoxical fact is that it was during this period that the South began to have a literature of its own.

THE SOUTH'S QUANDARY after the War led to the birth of a dream. The South's greatest need was money. To meet this need Southerners emulated the Yankees and began to worship Progress. Progress in the form of cotton mills. The South was envisioned as a great commercial empire. And after the factories came the schools. Progress was slow. And with it came an easing of racial and other tensions. Progress was not alone in cotton mills, but also in tobacco factories and towel mills. And Rotary clubs flowered and Chambers of Commerce began boasting. And there were some who heard behind the boasting the galloping of Jeb Stuart's cavalymen. It was Mr. Babbitt's Day.

THEN CAME 1914. Tensions returned. There was war abroad but prosperity for cotton-manufacturers at home. The South was in the marvelous mushroom expansiveness of a building boom. Roads were paved; skyscrapers built. The war was over and the boom continued. Real estate values skyrocketed.

DEPRESSION—called by Mr. Cash the Great Blight—followed. As early as 1927 it was felt in the land. And soon it was everybody and not just the cotton mill workers who found themselves at the little end of the Horn of Progress. Wages were cut, the stretch-out was introduced and strikes followed. North Carolina was not proud of Gastonia. But no strike could be successful with such an abundance of potential labor as the South possessed.

BY 1932 all Southerners were either ruined or thought they were. They walked around in a kind of daze. And then came Roosevelt. Naturally opposed to a number of New Deal policies, the solid South nevertheless accepted the new President with hope and confidence. Hope springs eternal, and there had been despair in the land. And in the schools of the South there was "the modern mind and the new analysis." Editorial writers in the leading newspapers became crusading liberals. Southern authors moved toward a more clear-eyed view of the world in which they lived, or, at least, of which they wrote.

NEW QUANDARIES came out of the depression years. Mr. Cash does not point to their solution in a world where only a madman would prophesy the future. There is no chance of solving them, he says, "until there is a leadership which is willing to face them fully and in all their implications to arouse the people to them, and to try to evolve a comprehensive and adequate means for coping with them." The book ends with this appraisal of the South: "Proud, brave, honorable by its lights, courteous, personally generous, loyal, swift to act, often too swift, but signally effective, sometimes terrible in its action—such was the South at its best. And such at its best it remains today, despite the great falling away in some of its virtues. Violence, intolerance, aversion and suspicion toward new ideas, an incapacity for analysis, an inclination to act from feeling rather than thought, an exaggerated individualism and a too narrow concept of social responsibility, attachments to fictions and false values . . . these have been its characteristic vices in the past."

MISSISSIPPI PLAN for bringing industries to the South Mr. Cash scores in no uncertain terms. "It really solves nothing," he writes, "in fact, operates to make ultimate conditions worse. It gives away the wealth of the South on a scale hitherto unprecedented in a region which has always too eagerly given away its wealth . . . Carried through in an extensive fashion, the plan might well result in the creation of a true and permanent proletariat in the South . . . The South desperately needs new industries, as desperately as it needs a rationed agriculture, but not at this price."

A REFLECTIVE BOOK, written in beautiful prose, "The Mind of the South" gives evidence of the author's excellent background in history, economics, sociology, and literature and betrays an understanding of relationships and temperament seldom, if ever, found in the more technical volumes in those particular fields. His approach is not only literary and psychological but also philosophical. He presents the South as it has not been presented before in any one volume—and that a very readable book with a long life ahead of it.

—EDITH HARBOUR.

BOOKS OF THE TIMES

By THOMAS C. LINN

TO Southerners who want to understand themselves and to Northerners who would like to fathom Southern psychology, W. J. Cash has made an important contribution called "The Mind of the South."* This is a significant addition to those books which the South has given the nation's readers in recent years—an addition which helps to interpret those other books. Mr. Cash is one of the exceptional persons who, for purposes of study, can view their homeland with calm detachment, analyze its traits, and write about them unemotionally and well.

That a psychological gulf still exists between the Northern States and those that formed the Confederacy is perceptible by even obtuse travelers who cross Mason and Dixon's Line, but the exact nature of the difference and its causes are difficult to define. The late F. Scott Fitzgerald once essayed a brief summary of the situation. The North, according to him, is canine and the South is feline.

Mr. Cash is much more specific and detailed. Obviously, he has given much time to studying the problem. As a native Southerner he had an initial advantage for undertaking the study; and having worked at times outside the South, he enjoyed the additional advantage of having seen his native region from an outside point of view. He is now associate editor of *The News of Charlotte*, N. C.

While readers in both South and North will hardly accept all his generalizations, the skeptics will agree, no doubt, that he has shown keen insight. Some of the qualities which he has attributed to Southerners seem attributable in more or less degree to all Americans, as contrasted with Europeans. Regardless of differences of opinion among readers, this book deserves careful and widespread reading.

The volume is divided into three main sections. All deal with "The Mind of the South"—first, "Its origin and development in the old South"; second, "Its curious career in the middle years," and, finally, "Its survival, its modifications, and its operation in our time." As Mr. Cash's study approaches recent decades, it becomes progressively more detailed, until it finally develops into a broad picture of economic and social conditions in the South today.

The author thinks that while there are "many Souths," there is also "one South," which may be "roughly delimited by the boundaries of the former Confederate States of America, but shading over into some of the border States, notably Kentucky, also." This South, he believes, has "a fairly definite mental pattern, associated with a fairly definite social pattern."

To portray and analyze this pattern Mr. Cash needs many pages. His final summary, however, gives an idea of his findings. He writes, "Proud, brave, honorable by its lights, courteous, personally generous, loyal, swift to act, often too swift, but signally effective, sometimes terrible, in its action—such was the South at its best. And such

at its best it remains today, despite the great falling away in some of its virtues.

"Violence, intolerance, aversion and suspicion toward new ideas, an incapacity for analysis, an inclination to act from feeling rather than from thought, an exaggerated individualism and a too narrow concept of social responsibility, attachment to fictions and false values, above all, too great attachment to racial values and a tendency to justify cruelty and injustice in the name of those values, sentimentality and a lack of realism—these have been its characteristic vices in the past. And, despite changes for the better, they remain its characteristic vices today."

* * *

In the light of these virtues and vices, as he sees them, Mr. Cash interprets economic and social conditions in the South today. It is a thoroughgoing interpretation, ranging from cotton mill strikes and lynchings to contemporary Southern literature. These conditions, he believes, are the logical outcome of modern events operating on the old Southern pattern.

That pattern was formed, as Mr. Cash sees it, by the conditions out of which the South originally developed. For instance, one feature of the pattern—marked individualism—was a survival of frontier life, which he thinks nearer in time to the Southern planters than many people suppose. He dismisses the tradition of a pre-Civil War South dominated by aristocratic descendants of Cavaliers.

While an aristocracy had had time to develop in Virginia, according to Mr. Cash, by far the greater part of the pre-war South began to emerge from frontier conditions only with the invention of the cotton gin. At the end of the American Revolution "the vast back country of the seaboard States" was inhabited largely by "the pioneer breed." The successful planters of the time of the Civil War developed out of this same pioneer stock that produced the poor whites. It was this relatively recent pioneer background which made the Southerner intensely individualistic. The inheritance of individualism persists to this day.

* * *

So Mr. Cash goes on, picking out and analyzing one after another of the Southern traits, even to "the famous Southern manner." Certainly, one of the most provocative sections of the book deals with what he calls "another great Southern characteristic." This is "the tendency toward unreality, toward romanticism, and, in intimate relation with that, toward hedonism." The origins of some of these traits still seem problematical and some of Mr. Cash's arguments oversimplified.

The effect of the Civil War was not to change the characteristic Southern mental pattern, according to this book. "Rather, after the manner of defensive wars in general and particularly those fought against odds and with great stubbornness, it had operated enormously to fortify and confirm that mind and will."

Today Mr. Cash finds the old pattern still vital. If it has broken down "in most intelligent quarters," its "power over the body of the South" remains "tremendous, even conclusive."

LATE W. J. CASH WINS BOOK AWARD

Mayflower Cup Given Posthumously; Dr. H. A. Royster Heads Literary Society

"The Mind of the South" by W. J. Cash last night was declared winner of the Mayflower Society cup as the best literary work of a resident North Carolinian during the year ending August 31. The presentation closed the 41st annual session of the State Literary and Historical Association here.

The Society of Mayflower Descendants made the award posthumously for the first time in the 11-year history of the cup. Mrs. Mary Ross Cash of Charlotte, wife of the author who died suddenly in Mexico City last summer, received the cup from Macon R. Dunnagan, member of the society.

Josephus Daniels addressed the final session on "Mexico and the Good Neighbor Policy" and paid special tribute to the Mayflower winner.

Praises Book.

"I am greatly gratified that the cup goes in recognition of the genius and ability of W. J. Cash, a brother journalist of Charlotte, given posthumously to his wife, also a journalist," he said. "The Mind of the South" won instant recognition, bringing Mr. Cash the most favorable reviews by competent critics and a Guggenheim fellowship carrying a two-year period of travel and study.

"His ability was recognized by the

See MAYFLOWER, Page Two.

Mayflower Cup Awarded Posthumously



Mrs. Mary Ross Cash of Charlotte (center) last night received the Mayflower Society cup on behalf of her late husband, Wilbur Joseph Cash. His book, "The Mind of the South," was judged the best literary work of the year in North Carolina. Congratulating Mrs. Cash are Macon R. Dunnagan (left), who presented the award, and Hubert A. Royster of Raleigh, new president of the State Literary and Historical Association.



MAYFLOWER

Continued From Page One.

University of Texas, which honored him with an invitation to deliver the commencement address. Leaving Austin, where his address was acclaimed as able and original, Mr. Cash went to Mexico, accompanied by his wife, and planned in the Spanish-American countries to gather material for a book which he hoped to make his masterpiece.

"Then came the sad tragedy, the sudden snapping of the cord that bound him to life. He was not without friends in that country. His reputation had preceded him. The American Embassy felt privileged to give welcome to his sorrowing wife and to aid in seeing that his ashes could be brought to rest in his native Cleveland County, to which he had brought distinction, to await in the sacred native earth the day when the just will receive their everlasting reward. In life he brought honor to the State he loved. And tonight the award of the cup to the author of 'Mind of the South' assures him a lasting place in North Carolina's Hall of Fame."

Washington, Dec. 5.—(AP)—Those responsible for the publication of a secret Army-Navy war plans study were accused by Secretary of War Stimson today of "wanting in loyalty and patriotism." Acknowledging that the general staff had plans for every conceivable type of emergency, the War Secretary asserted that documents disclosed yesterday by The Chicago Tribune were "unpublished studies of our production requirements for national defense" and "never constituted an authorized program of the government." "Their publication will doubtless be of gratification to our potential enemies and a possible source of information."

a Lack of Patriotism

11011 OF WAR STUDIES ON

And tonight the award was given to the author of 'Mind of the South' assures him a lasting place in North Carolina's Hall of Fame."

Wake Forest Man.

Cash attended Wofford College and graduated from Wake Forest College. He taught English at Georgetown College and elsewhere and wrote for newspapers, including The Charlotte News. He contributed to several magazines and won particular note for "The Little Giant—and the Giant Killer," referring to the late Senator Simmons and to Senator Bailey. He was 40 years old at his death.

Herbert Agar, Louisville (Ky.) publisher, was scheduled to address the final Literary and Historical Association session, but his plane was grounded in New York and he did not reach Raleigh. Daniels substituted for him and devoted his time to picturing Mexico's feudal background and the obstacles which faced the Good Neighbor policy enunciated in President Roosevelt's first inaugural address.

Comparing the policy to the Monroe Doctrine and to Woodrow Wilson's declaration that the United States would add no new territory by conquest, Daniels asserted that the Good Neighbor policy had worked and now stands as "the only bright star in a dark world."

The former Ambassador to Mexico was introduced by John A. Park, publisher of The Raleigh Times, who dealt briefly on the international situation and predicted that out of the confusion the American editor always will retain his role of free presentation and interpretation of the news.

Royster New President.

Final literary sessions marked the election of Dr. Hubert A. Royster of Raleigh as the new president of the association, a general review of the 48 books eligible for the Mayflower cup and an appeal for the salvaging of valuable historic records now stored in boxes, trunks and attics.

The N. C. Folk-Lore Society, the N. C. State Art Society and the N. C. Society for the Preservation of Antiquities held their annual sessions in conjunction with the literary conference during the past three days.

Cash Book Lauded.

The Cash book was termed "broad and brilliant," by William T. Polk of Warrenton in his review of the year's literature before the society's morning session.

Polk said the volume "is a deep, keen and comprehensive analysis of one strangely simple, yet complex, mentality."



wrote "The Mind of The South" and the Mayflower Cup.

An Analysis Of The Southern Mind

W. J. Cash Writes Of Temperament, Customs And Philosophy Of The Region

THE MIND OF THE SOUTH. By W. J. Cash. Alfred A. Knopf. New York. 429 pp. (With Index). \$3.75.

If all our histories could be written like this, there would be little basis for the constant charge of dullness, of lack of significance. For instead of names and dates and all the surface show of our past, we would learn of the basic—usually unspoken—hopes, prejudices, fears and failures of the men who were responsible for the churning wheels of progress and the dead hand of recession. All of this would probably shock us as well as inspire us; but chiefly it would give us perspective with which to view the problems of the present.

Writing historically W. J. Cash does just this. He tells of the sweat and travail of the early frontiersmen, of the invention of the cotton gin, of the happy but corroding independence of the poor white families who couldn't make the economic grade, of the skillfully patronizing plantation owner who still left his poorer brother his self-respect, of the convenient Negro slave before the Civil War and of the terrifying Negro competitor after the Civil War, of the belligerent pride of race and section born of a feeling of inferiority that characterizes the South and of the attempts, mostly failures, to ease the sometimes intolerable social tensions through the explosive violence of lynch mobs.

We are introduced first to the real Southern aristocrat—a *nouveau riche* type who fought his way up by a process of survival of the fittest from the lowly immigrant, acquired hundreds of acres of land, dozens of slaves and the trader's ability to strike a hard bargain for his cotton. We are introduced also to the men who failed in the survival process—the poor whites. These retired to the backwoods, existed on what they could scratch from the poor soil and basked in the reflected glory of their more pushing relatives and fellow immigrants. They were essentially simple people, Cash points out, "perhaps as simple a type as Western civilization has produced in modern times."

Basically the poor white was an individualist and since he had none of the world's goods with which to show off, he asserted himself in puerile demonstrations of physical prowess, of his ability to be a "hell of a fellow." Tied with this, says Cash, is an incurable romanticism born chiefly of his simple nature. For a simple mind "necessarily lacks the knowledge and the habit of skepticism essential to any generally realistic attitude."

These two traits, romanticism and individualism, have a direct bearing on the Southerner's penchant, now as then, to resolve many of his doubts and difficulties either in the determination not to see trouble or in violence to relieve his feeling of worry about it.

But the poor Southerner of ante-bellum times was unique in that his failure to make the grade economically did not carry with it the usual penalty of subservience. Poor whites were ignored by the economic system. The manual work was done by slaves and the surplus whites were just not needed.

Into this brittle relationship, the Civil War and Reconstruction exploded. The fact that overnight, almost, the Negro became a competitor in the struggle for money (which recognized no race lines) had a curious effect. Though the poor white's interests did not lie with the planter class, he nevertheless joined his standard out of pure hate for the Negro.

A partial temporary solution to the problem of surplus labor, Negro and white, which plagued the South after the war was found in the establishment of the cotton mills. Communities undertook as a project the construction of a mill for the sole purpose, not of making money, but of providing employment, "which, by common agreement, should be closed to the Negro."

Because of the paternalistic cooperative element in the cotton mill's inception (however much this might change later) class consciousness was deferred still further. Per-



W. J. Cash
Associate Editor of The Charlotte News

haps primarily, Cash indicates, it was the experience of fabulously high wages during the World War which made the mill worker dissatisfied with his lot and led, along with other factors, to the Gastonia strikes and other labor disturbances. Though failures, these strikes pointed dramatically to the fact that the unthinkable in social relations was at last becoming thinkable.

The problem of surplus labor, of poverty still exists today. Cash comments that though in recent years leadership has developed on a heartening scale—he mentions the Chapel Hill sociologists, liberal newspaper editors, and ministers—"this leadership was almost wholly unarticulated with the body of the South. If the people of the region were not entirely unaffected by what the men who represented the new analytical and enquiring spirit were doing, they were still affected by it only remotely and sporadically." For this he blames the politicians. North Carolina's Josiah Bailey, "who directs his efforts mostly to pleasing the conservative large landowners and the industrial and commercial interests," and Robert Rice Reynolds "posing as the great champion of the people, but doing nothing for them..." are the typical examples.

Solutions to the South's problems may be difficult, Cash says, but you can't even start towards solving them until the leaders of the section are "willing to face them fully and in all their implications, to arouse the people to them, and to try to evolve a comprehensive and adequate means for coping with them."

Though apologies in reviews are usually futile, we would like to emphasize that any summary of the book cannot possibly convey the true richness of its contents. Essentially it is big and sprawling, at times digressive. But it is the South for all that—a biography which for all its muckraking, is also constructive. Southerners will learn a lot about themselves from this book.—J. A. C.