

Florida's Heritage of Diversity and Justice: A Collection of Papers from
the Florida Southern College Honors Program
Volume II.

Under the Direction of
Dr. James Denham and Dr. Patrick Anderson

Edited by
Richard Soash

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Introduction

In 2003 *Florida's Heritage of Diversity and Justice: A Compendium of Honors Papers Produced at Florida Southern College* appeared. This collection contained honors papers produced under the direction of Professors James M. Denham (History) and Patrick Anderson (Criminology) in four previous semesters of a course entitled Florida's Heritage of Diversity and Justice. This second volume constitutes honors papers produced in the spring 2009 semester. The sophomore level honors course is designed to engage FSC honors students in the study and appreciation of the cultural diversity of Florida and the struggles for justice inherent in that diversity, as explored primarily through the disciplines of history and criminology. The intent of this collection is both to celebrate the fine original research of our students and assist FSC students and other interested persons in exploring similar topics.

After intense reading and discussion of specifically selected articles in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, students selected topics based on close collaboration with their professors. The resulting twelve essays represent original student research and writing. The extent and scope of this collection broadly reflects the varied interests of our students. For example, Jennifer Bruno uses her understanding of biology to analyze the devastating effects of disease on Florida's original inhabitants. Brent Willobee and Richard Soash scrutinize Florida's early nineteenth century military affairs. Ashleah Zigmond explores the letters of an army surgeon living in Fort King during the Second Seminole War. Tanja Speaker, Levis George, and Jillian Swartz engage the question of race in Florida's Civil War and Reconstruction era. Michael Politis traces Tarpon Springs's unique Greek heritage while Emily Canterbury delves into the early years of the Cassadaga spiritualist camp. Christine Simone surveys a little known aspect of South Florida's industrial heritage and Michael Saco investigates the connection of gambling the organized crime in early twentieth century Tampa. Finally, Eddie Sipple examines Lakeland, Florida's long time association with baseball. Taken together, these papers contribute to our understanding of the Florida Experience. They are the result of many revisions, re-writes, and collaborations. They are also based on extensive discussions (sometimes boisterous) with fellow students and professors.

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James M. Denham and Richard Soash to edit and produce the project. The college's Faculty Professional Interests Committee (Professors Eric Kjellmark, Peter Schreffler, Sue Stanley Green, Larry Ross, David Wood, and William Otremsky) voted to support the project. Tom Brennan and Cassie Paizis provided indispensable production assistance, and Randall MacDonald and the entire Roux library staff offered encouragement along the way.

Our students' hard work and fine accomplishments have inspired us, and thus we enthusiastically dedicate this compendium to them.

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A Decimating Sneeze: the Role of Infectious Disease in Destroying Native Americans Societies in Post-Columbian Florida

By Jennifer Bruno

Prior to the arrival of Columbus in 1492, the inhabitants of Florida were an isolated people. Florida Indians lived in agricultural and nomadic chiefdoms where they were culturally and socially sequestered from the rest of the world. As a result of their seclusion, Native Floridians represented a largely homogeneous genetic population, a factor which directly contributed to their grim fate upon the arrival of European pestilence. Hernando De Soto and his men were the first to make contact with the indigenous people in the interior of Florida during their 1539 expedition down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. De Soto's men wrote accounts of the complex and populous Indian societies they encountered. One hundred years later, however, European explorers that ventured from Florida's coasts were perplexed by the absence of the burgeoning chiefdoms described by the De Soto expedition.¹ Instead they found defeated stragglers decimated by European diseases that had spread throughout the Florida Peninsula. It soon became clear that diseases largely benign to the Spaniards were destroying the fabric of Native American life, effectively wiping Indian societies off the face of the Earth.

The cocktail of European infectious disease (smallpox, measles, influenza, tuberculosis, typhus pertussis and the plague) reached Florida through the first Spanish explorers. Juan Ponce de Leon was the first European to come into contact with Florida Indians in 1513. Leon landed on Florida's Atlantic coast but decided to return to Puerto Rico after two violent encounters with the Calusa Indians. Meanwhile, as Leon was exploring the Florida shore, smallpox made its way to Hispaniola between November and December of 1518, a quarter of a century after Columbus' first voyage to the Americas. This twenty-five year gap between the arrival of Columbus and the arrival of smallpox was due to a lack of non-immune Europeans to transport the disease across the Atlantic. If an infected person did manage to make the voyage to the Americas, the smallpox

¹ Charles Hudson, Chester B. DePratter, and Marvin T. Smith, "Hernando de Soto's Expedition Through the Southern United States," in Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, eds., *First Encounters: Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989), p. 78.

virus would run its course in the individual by the time he or she made landfall. Those who survived the disease were then immune and unable to infect others.²

Smallpox first made landfall in Santo Domingo and quickly spread to the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico. When Ponce de Leon returned to Florida in 1521, some of his men were likely carrying the newly travelled smallpox virus. On this voyage, Leon brought with him 200 settlers, among them priests and missionaries. Cattle, notorious vectors of disease, also came along for the ride. Juan Ponce attempted to set up an establishment near Charlotte Harbor, but was again chased off by the Calusa, who were a large nonagricultural Indian tribe that inhabited southwest Florida and the small islands off the coast.³

On April 14, 1528, the Spanish explorer Panfilo de Narvaez anchored his ships near Tampa. Narvaez set out on land with a group of his men, with instructions for his ships and the rest of the expedition to meet them at a harbor further up the coast. Unfortunately for this unlucky group of explorers, they were never able to locate Narvaez's ships, and the 300 men and forty horses marched to Tallahassee in desperation. Over the course of their journey, the partial expedition travelled through western Timucua chiefdoms, exposing the Indians to any variety of European microbes. Impending hostility from the Indians forced the Spaniards to set out to sea on makeshift rafts, where they were later shipwrecked.⁴

The Timucua chiefdoms were disturbed again in 1539, this time by the voyage of Hernando de Soto.⁵ The king of Spain appointed De Soto governor of Cuba, which allowed De Soto to use the island as a convenient base for his expeditions. De Soto was also awarded the Florida Peninsula to "conquer, pacify, and populate." His expedition landed in Tampa Bay on May 15, 1539, with 600 soldiers, 223 horses, and many pigs. Over the next four years De Soto and his men would cover 4,000 miles of territory, spreading European pestilence over the

² Theodore Morris and Jerald T. Milanich, *Florida's Lost Tribes* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004) p. 35; Michael Gannon, "First European Contacts," in Michael Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), p.20; Charles C. Mann, *1491* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), p. 92; Crosby, Alfred W. Jr. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), p. 46.

³ Alfred W. Crosby Jr., *The Columbian Exchange* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), p. 46; Gannon, "First European Contacts," p. 21; Charles Hudson and Jerald T. Milanich, *Hernando de Soto and the Indians of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), p. 22, 117.

⁴ Gannon, "First European Contacts," pp. 22-24.

⁵ Morris and Milanich, *Florida's Lost Tribes*, p.39.

greatest area of land to date.⁶ This group of Europeans was the first to explore inland Florida. The Spaniards travelled accompanied by their horses and pigs, unaware that the swine were carrying tuberculosis, brucellosis, leptospirosis, trichinosis, and anthrax. These diseases spread easily from pigs to turkey and deer, which were abundant in the southeast. These native species then served as vectors to infect Indian populations with new diseases.⁷

Throughout the summer of 1539 De Soto's men passed through Withlacoochee cove three times. The Spaniards came in close contact with the Timucuan in the province of Ocale, stealing their food stores and disrupting their societies. The epidemic that followed in their wake killed so many people that seventy individuals were buried in a mass grave on top of a Timucuan mound, with the miscellaneous bones of at least 240 people scattered among them.⁸ As the Timucua continued to fall victim to European illness, the Spaniards put increasing pressure on the agricultural Apalachee Indians to provide them with food.⁹ De Soto's men horribly mistreated the Indians they came in contact with, maiming and threatening them if they resisted handing over their food stores. At the end of the four year expedition, De Soto returned to Cuba with 311 men, no horses, and no swine (the pigs that had escaped were left wreaking biological havoc in Florida). The expedition did not succeed in settling any part of the peninsula and left thousands of Indians dying from smallpox, measles, and typhoid.¹⁰

The next major Spanish expedition began in September of 1565, when Menendez made landfall in Florida. Menendez requested that Jesuit missionaries be sent to the peninsula to aid in the conversion of Native Americans to Catholicism. He set up missions at Tequesta, Biscayne Bay, and San Antonia de Padua, a main Calusa village. Due to a lack of resources in Florida, however, Menendez regularly had to have supplies (and therefore pestilence) imported from Cuba. As if contact with the Spaniards wasn't deadly enough, black slaves deserted their Spanish masters at the newly settled establishments of Pensacola (1559), Fort Caroline (1564) and St. Augustine (1565). These self-liberated slaves took refuge with the Native Americans,

⁶ Gannon, "First European Contacts," pp.24-26.

⁷ Mann, 1491, p. 99.

⁸ Gannon, "First European Contacts," p. 27; Hudson and Milanich, *Hernando de Soto and the Indians of Florida*, p. 103.

⁹ Morris and Milanich, *Florida's Lost Tribes*, p.42.

¹⁰ Gannon, "First European Contacts," pp. 29-32.

unknowingly infiltrating their societies with European microbes. To make matters even worse, Menendez took it upon himself to set up one of the first missions in the large Calusa city of Calos, forcing the natives to live in close proximity with Spaniards and opening the flow of germs. This mission lasted a short three years, but it was only one of many fifteenth and sixteenth century missions in Florida.¹¹

Franciscan Friars began to set up missions throughout North Florida in 1595. These missions greatly affected the Timucua Indians living on the St. John's River near St. Augustine. Many Timucuan chiefdoms disappeared entirely as a result of disease, and by 1620 all surviving Timucuan chiefdoms were infiltrated by missionaries. Timucua society slowly began to disappear as the surviving population adopted Spanish culture and a smallpox epidemic further thinned mission populations between 1649 and 1656. Partially due to the devastation from the epidemics, the Timucuas led an uprising against the Spanish in 1565. The Spaniards killed eleven chiefs to put a stop to the rebellion. This event, coupled with the 10,000 Timucuas who died from measles, greatly destroyed Indian morale.¹²

The Calusa were also targeted by Franciscan missions, but these efforts were much less successful. Even the Calusa who lived in missions managed to retain their way of life until the 1700s. Letters and records from the Jesuits show that the Calusa had a pretty stable population through the seventeenth century. Their unique ability to survive until 1700 was due to several distinct factors. First, the Calusa were nomadic Indians who did not live in close quarters like the agricultural Timucuas, which made it significantly harder for infectious disease to spread between them. Secondly, many Calusa did not live in missions at all and consequently had contact with far fewer Europeans. Lastly, the large numbers of Calusa in Florida allowed their population to regenerate when some of their chiefdoms were affected by epidemics. The final demise of the Calusa around 1700 was probably due to contact with infected Indians in the north and with Cuban fisherman.¹³

¹¹ Eugene Lyon, "Settlement and Survival," in Michael Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), pp. 46-49; Gannon, "First European Contacts," p. 22; Hudson and Milanich, *Hernando de Soto*, p. 117.

¹² Morris and Milanich, *Florida's Lost Tribes*, pp. 39-40; John H. Hann, "The Missions of Spanish Florida," in Michael Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), p. 92; Hudson and Milanich, *Hernando de Soto*, pp. 246-247.

¹³ Hudson and Milanich, *Hernando de Soto*, p. 121.

It is readily apparent from the accounts of Spanish expeditions that Europeans and their domesticated animals were the vectors that carried infectious disease across the Atlantic. What is not as obvious, however, is why the same diseases that were merely childhood rights of passage to Europeans proved lethal to Native Americans. The answer to this complex question dates back to 10,000 B.C.E. when the America's first inhabitants crossed over the Bering Strait from Siberia. The harsh Alaskan cold is not a hospitable environment to microbes, and any individuals with debilitating diseases were not able to endure the journey and died off.¹⁴ Their voyage across the Bering Strait stripped the population of serious infectious disease, and led them to complete isolation in North America.

Before the migration of the Paleoindians, no other people, agriculture, or domesticated animals were present on the continent. As a result, the small group of Paleoindians procreated in isolation without coming into contact with new genetic material or disease.¹⁵ Over thousands of years, the progeny of the small group of people who originally crossed the Bering Strait populated the Americas. These individuals produced a population with genes that were largely homogeneous. The result was an astonishing uniformity among the different tribes of Indians in North America. It was said "that no population of comparable size has remained so uniform after expanding, in whatever time has been involved, over such a large area."¹⁶ An example of this uniformity is illustrated in the fact that 90-95% of Florida Native Americans had type O blood. This surprising figure does not explain why the majority of Indians reacted to viruses in the same manner, but it is a valid testimony to their homogeneity.

As well as being genetically similar to each other, pre-Columbian Native American genes were remarkably different from any other population in the world. Exposure to disease causing pathogens builds resistance, known as acquired immunity, which allows for tolerance between a parasite and its host. The Florida Indians had not been exposed to radically new pathogens for thousands of years and lacked gene variation within their population, together a recipe for disaster. When Spaniards arrived in the Americas with "new" microbes, the Indian's immune

¹⁴ Jerald T. Milanich, "Original Inhabitants," in Michael Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), p. 1; Alfred W. Crosby Jr., *The Columbian Exchange* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), pp. 30-31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

systems had no way to combat them. In genetically diverse populations variations exist between individual's genes that allow different people to respond to diseases differently. The Native Americans, however, came from such a small group of ancestors their DNA was very isolated, resulting in entire populations dying out from a single disease. As would be expected by this explanation, the highest mortality rate among Indians took place within the first one hundred years of European contact. Some populations began to recover when Indians procreated with Spaniards who had more resistance to disease, or when all the natives with weaker immune systems had died off.¹⁷

Another factor contributing to the Indian's vulnerability to European disease lies with their HLAs, or human leukocyte antigens. HLAs find small portions of viruses within the body and transport them to the surface of cell walls. The tiny bits of virus are recognized by white blood cells called leukocytes that set off an immune response and destroy cells infected with the virus. Each type of HLA has a binding site for a specific virus or type of virus that it is able to transport throughout the body. In diverse populations, people have dissimilar combinations of HLAs. Consequently, the same virus that makes one person sick will not affect another individual who has an HLA that prevents that particular illness. In a largely homogenous population like the Florida Indians, however, most of the population had the same conglomeration of HLAs and therefore responded to European viruses in a similar manner. Studies of South American Indians show that they generally carry less than seventeen different HLA classes, while Europeans carry more than thirty-five. This contributes to the fact that approximately 28% of South American individuals have similar immune systems, while in Europe the figure is less than 2%.¹⁸

Feverish illnesses were the most lethal diseases the Spaniards brought to the Americas. These diseases included smallpox, the first and most deadly epidemic, along with measles and typhus. Smallpox was so common in Europe around the time of Columbus that it was considered a childhood disease, much like chicken pox is today. The virus enters victims through the nose and mouth via droplets of sputum and contaminated dust particles. Smallpox can be acquired just by breathing air in the vicinity of an infected person, and in a previously

¹⁷ Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*, pp. 21, 37-39; Mann, *1491*, pp. 102-103.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 103-105.

untouched population, the disease will infect almost every person it meets. The smallpox virus is especially tricky due to its twelve day incubation period, during which the victim does not display any symptoms of the disease but is very contagious. The incubation period is followed by four days of fever and stomach sickness, and the body's surface erupts in painful open pustules. If the individual survives, then the pustules dry up, scab over, and fall off leaving characteristic pock marks. The lucky individual who survives will have resistance for years, usually for a lifetime.¹⁹

There is debate among historians over which of the documented smallpox epidemics were in fact the result of the smallpox virus. The debate centers around the word “viruelas,” a Spanish word that is often translated as smallpox. “It specifically means not the disease but the pimpled, pustule appearance which is the most obvious symptom of the disease.” Due to the messy translation of “viruelas,” statistics referring to what has been translated as smallpox might actually be referring to any assortment of the diseases that give a pustuled appearance, among them chicken pox, measles, typhus, and syphilis. It is also important to remember that many epidemics are made up of more than one disease, and that in accounts of Native American epidemics a correct diagnosis was not important. Pneumonia and pleurisy also frequently prey on the weakened immune systems of smallpox victims, further complicating the question of specifically which disease outbreaks were caused by the smallpox virus.²⁰

In addition to claiming catastrophic numbers of casualties, epidemics evoked extreme fear in Native American societies. Destruction by a horrifying, rapid, and unknown cause often ruined Indian morale. People went from being young, strong, and healthy to barely alive within days. An account from an Indian in Tenochtitlan describes the horror of smallpox.

Some it quite covered [with pustules] on all parts--their faces, their heads, their breasts, etc. There was a great havoc. Very many died of it. They could not walk; they only lay in their resting places and beds. They could not move; they could not stir; they could not change position, nor lie on one side; nor face down, nor on their backs. And if they stirred, much did they cry out. Great was its destruction. Covered, mantled with pustules, very many people died of them.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 42-44, 46.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

²¹ Ibid., p. 56.

On top of all of the destruction epidemics caused in Indian societies, Native Americans were completely perplexed as to why the Spaniards were almost completely immune. Some Indians were so enraged by the fact that their masters were immune to smallpox that they kneaded infected blood into their master's bread and dumped diseased corpses into their wells. Despite these efforts, the Spaniards still went untouched by the disease, leading some Indians to believe that the Europeans had the "shield of the gods."²²

Disease began to take its toll on Native American societies merely a decade after Columbus' arrival. One Yucatan Indian commented on life before the Spaniards, "There was then no sickness; they had no aching bones; they had then no high fever; they had then no smallpox; they had then no burning chest; they had then no abdominal pain; they had then no consumption; they had then no headache. At that time the course of humanity was orderly. The foreigners made it otherwise when they arrived here."²³ Diseases not only destroyed the Indian's health, but also their spirit and their culture. Acculturation is when one culture adopts aspects of another society's distinct culture. Some argue that acculturation occurred when the Spaniards came to Florida and Indians assimilated to aspects of European society. Other historians claim that it was deculturation that occurred, or the loss of elements of one's culture. This is evidenced by the fact that many central Florida Indians died out after De Soto's expedition. Major elements of Native American society ceased to exist, yet there was a lack of Spanish culture to take its place. This complete loss of culture fits the trend of deculturation.²⁴

The major infectious diseases that killed the Florida Indians were smallpox, measles, influenza, typhus, diphtheria, malaria, mumps, pertussis, the plaque, tuberculosis, and yellow fever.²⁵ North Florida became extremely depopulated when these diseases infected the Apalachee and Timucua people. The social and political structure of the Apalachee was effectively destroyed once they could no longer farm to support their chiefdoms or build large mounds as signs of power. Burial rituals began to change in the seventeenth century, indicating

²² Ibid., p. 38, 57.

²³ Ibid., p. 36.

²⁴ Marvin T. Smith, "Indian Responses to European Contact: The Coosa Example," in Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, eds., *First Encounters: Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989), p. 147.

²⁵ Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), p. 212.

a decline in social hierarchy. Those in power were no longer buried in separate special locations. Instead, Indians were forced to bury their dead in mass graves because the sickness spread so suddenly and rapidly. The spread of epidemics also brought an end to the organized warfare that was a common part of life for opposing chiefdoms. Disease destroyed political structures when leaders succumbed to illness and there were no suitable healthy individuals to take their place. Many Indian societies were founded on close familial structures. When diseases destroyed family units, they also destroyed the fabric of Indian life.²⁶ Epidemics greatly depleted populations, making it difficult or nearly impossible to maintain some semblance of social structure.

It is very difficult to find accurate pre-Columbian population demographics for the Florida Indians. The earliest existing population projections come from religious officials and Spanish explorers. These early statistics are thought to be skewed due to the fact that they are likely to only contain the number of Christian Indians living in missions. The first population approximations made by European explorers date to the early 1600s. By this time, epidemics from previous European contact had already diminished Indian populations, making it unfeasible to determine accurate Indian populations prior to European arrival.²⁷

Timucua Indians lived in communities consisting of a central chiefdom surrounded by several smaller villages. Estimates from the late 1500s and early 1600s indicate that these units consisted of roughly 750 to 1,000 individuals living in four to six small associated villages. Franciscan missions were primarily set up at the largest village within a chiefdom, making it possible to approximate the number of Timucuan chiefdoms from the number of missions. Estimating the number of smaller Timucuan villages, however, is nearly impossible. The number of Timucua Indians inhabiting the interior of Florida in the early 1600s probably ranged from 13,500 to 27,000 individuals, most likely approaching the higher projection. These low numbers are a consequence of dramatic population declines along the St. John's River and in

²⁶ Marvin T. Smith, "Indian Responses to European Contact: The Coosa Example," in Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, eds., *First Encounters* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989), pp. 141, 143-144; Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*, p. 54; Mann, 1491, p. 110.

²⁷ John H. Hann. *A History of the Timucua Indians and Missions* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), p. 261; John E. Worth. *The Timucuan Cheofdoms of Spanish Florida, Volume 2: Resistance and Destruction* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp. 2-3.

other interior locations in the 1500s. Archeologist Jerald T. Milanich estimates that there were a total of 150,000 coastal and interior Timucua Indians prior to contact with the Spaniards. Milanich's estimate is substantially higher than the previous estimate not only because it includes coastal Indians, but because the previous lower estimates were calculated based on data gathered after the Timucuas had had occasional contact with Spaniards and likely suffered epidemics.²⁸

Between the years of 1613 and 1617, half of all Timucuas fell casualty to epidemics that raged through the missions where they lived in close quarters with Europeans.²⁹ By 1675, military authorities in Florida found the entire population of the Apalachee, Timucua, Yustaga, Guale, and Mocama districts to be only 10,600 individuals, not counting small children. Only 1,370 of these Indians were interior Timucuas. The 1681 census showed an even further decline in population, with only 7,364 Indian adults living in Florida missions, and only 998 of these individuals were interior Timucuas. Over the course of only eight decades the population of Timucuas had dropped between 93 and 97 percent. Information compiled by Bishop Diego Ebelino de Compostela in 1689 state that only 646 families or an estimated 3,230 people inhabited coastal and interior Timucuan missions combined. By 1717, only three Timucua villages were left in the state of Florida, and by 1763 all of Florida's Native Americans had completely disappeared.³⁰

The Apalachee Indians survived longer than the Timucua, partly due to the fact that they were missionized later. The mission San Lorenzo de Ivitachuco was estimated to contain 2,600 individuals in 1655. Within twenty years, that number dwindled to a mere 1,200 people due to the effects of European epidemics and exploitation. In 1675 Florida's deputy Governor Juan Fernandez de Floriencia had a census taken of the eleven Apalachee missions in Florida. The census found that there were 7,580 inhabitants of these missions, though this number is thought to be underestimated. A Cuban bishop stated earlier in 1675 that there were more than 10,000 Apalachee Indians residing in missions. This same bishop, Diego Ebelino de Compostela, had

²⁸ Worth. *The Timucuan Chiefdoms*, pp. 3-4, 8.

²⁹ Morris and Milanich, *Florida's Lost Tribes*, p. 40.

³⁰ Worth. *The Timucuan Chiefdoms*, pp. 9-10; Hann. *A History of the Timucua Indians and Missions*, pp. 264-265, 307; Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, "Another World," in Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, eds., *First Encounters* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989), p. 26.

his priests draw up a comprehensive list of the number of families living in Apalachee missions. That number was multiplied by five to come up with an approximation of individuals, and it was found that there were about 9,600 Apalachees living in missions. The supposed increase in Apalachee individuals from the governor's 1675 census is further evidence that Juan Fernandez de Floriencia's populations were likely underestimated. It is more difficult to discern trends from Apalachee population data than from Timucua population data because of the large number of inconsistencies, along with evidence that population migration occurred between the Apalachee missions.³¹

Some historians predict that the original Native American population was approximately 20 million, with a decline of as much as 95% of the indigenous population after Columbus arrived in 1492.³² Such population statistics, however, are both hard to come by and widely disputed. Physiologist Sherburne F. Cook and Berkeley historian Woodrow W. Borah pieced together census, land, and financial records to determine a very different estimate. They proposed a much larger original population of 90-112 million, suggesting that at the time of Columbus' voyage there were more inhabitants in the Americas than in all of Europe. In 1928, James Mooney, an ethnographer at the Smithsonian, used government documents and primary sources to project an estimate of 1.15 million indigenous people living in North America alone in 1491. Berkeley anthropologist Alfred L. Kroebe built on Mooney's work and lowered his estimate to just 900,000 Indians, an approximation that evens out to less than one native per six square miles. Both Mooney and Kroeber admit, however, that their estimations do not account for geographical variations in population. The United Nations has estimated a world population of 500 million at the beginning of the sixteenth century. According to anthropologist Henry F. Dobyns, this means that that 80-112 million Indians or one fifth of the world's inhabitants were killed by a third of the way through the seventeenth century.³³

Yet Douglas H. Ubelaker, an anthropologist at the National museum of Natural History, is skeptical of these estimates. Ubelaker says that "[m]ost of the arguments for the very large numbers have been theoretical. But when you try to marry the theoretical arguments to the data

³¹ John H. Hann and Bonnie G. McEwan. *The Apalachee Indians and Mission San Luis* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp. 138-140.

³² Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, p. 211.

³³ Mann, *1491*, p. 94.

that are available on individual groups on different regions, it's hard to find support for those numbers."³⁴ One of the many reasons why it is so difficult to estimate pre-Columbian Indian populations is because disease from the coastlines spread inward and depopulated Indian societies before natives ever actually came into physical contact with Europeans. Their microbes beat the Spanish inland, leading explorers to perhaps vastly underestimate the original Indian population, which "...remains one of the great inquiries of history."³⁵

Other skeptics argue that not as many natives died as a result of European disease as originally thought. In fact, it is very difficult to speculate how many individuals died from a given smallpox outbreak because in modern times everyone has been vaccinated, which has led to a lack of case studies. An isolated study in India from the 1960s indicates that smallpox is lethal for about 43% of its victims. This makes sense because from a biological standpoint, for it is not advantageous for a virus to kill most of its victims. Dobyns' estimates that European epidemics killed at least 95% of Native Americans are widely contested by people who claim that the numbers are being exaggerated by "self-flagellat[ing]...guilty white liberals[.]"³⁶

From a statistical point of view, the argument over pre-Columbian Indian populations makes perfect sense; the starting Indian population and the population of Indians decimated by disease are both unknown. Rudolf Zambardino, a statistician at North Staffordshire Polytechnic in England, points out that "the lack of direct data forces researchers into salvos of extrapolation...[t]he errors multiply each other and can escalate rapidly to an unacceptable magnitude." Henige, an African studies bibliographer, takes this logic even further when he states that "[w]e can make of the historical record that there was depopulation and movement of people from internecine warfare and diseases, but as far as how much, who knows? When we start putting numbers to something like that-applying figures like 95% —we're saying things we shouldn't say. The number implies a level of knowledge that's impossible."³⁷

While the exact figures are widely disputed, it is readily apparent that European diseases had disastrous affects on Florida's Native American populations. The biological explanation for

³⁴ Ibid., p. 101.

³⁵ Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* p. 211.; Mann, *1491*, p. 94.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 99-100, 95.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 94-95.

Indians lack of resistance to European microbes is a widely supported and valid argument, but one that raises a poignant question—why should this argument not work both ways? If the Indians were particularly susceptible to European viruses one would think it logical to surmise that the opposite would be true—that Native Americans would have passed on their own pestilence to their conquerors. Yet the evidence refutes this claim. The spread of pathogens from the old world to the new appears to be almost completely one-sided.

In order to explain this phenomenon, one must look not as much at the humans involved but at the nature of infectious disease itself. The diseases that the Europeans passed to Native Americans are often known as “crowd diseases,” or diseases that infect large groups of people living in close quarters. The microbes causing these particular illnesses began to be sustained about 10,000 years ago when agricultural methods allowed people to settle down together in one place for significant periods of time. This not only allowed pathogens to spread at rapid rates, but it also allowed for the build up of human waste, a breeding ground for disease. Some areas in the Americas, such as Tenochtitlan had large enough populations to sustain crowd diseases, but they never developed.³⁸ The missing link appears to be a lack of domesticated animals in the Americas prior to the arrival of Columbus.

In pre-Columbian America, the only domesticated animals were limited to turkey in the Southwest, llama and guinea pig in the Andes, Muscovy duck in South America, and dogs. These animals, however, are not kept in large herds or flocks and do not produce milk that is consumed by the Indians. Consequently, it is unlikely that infectious disease would have evolved from these animals. Domesticated animals in Europe, however, often lived in close quarters with their caretakers who drank their milk, ate their meat, and cleaned up their waste. Many of the infectious diseases that affected Native Americans likely originated from resilient microbes passing from domesticated animals to their owners. Over time the pathogens adapted to living under human conditions and were able to be spread from person to person. This theory of infectious disease originating from domesticated animals is evidenced by the fact that cattle, swine, and domesticated birds carry several pathogens that are startlingly similar to those that cause devastating illness in humans. Cattle, for example, carry a virus known as rinderpest that is believed to be the source of human measles. Cattle also carry various pox viruses along with a

³⁸ Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, pp. 204-205, 212.

microbe very similar to that which causes human tuberculosis. Pertussis is believed to have originated from swine, and flu-like viruses are carried by pigs and ducks.³⁹ Such infectious diseases were not present in the Americas simply because they lacked a place to originate.

The one debated exception against the one-sided transfer of disease from Spain to the Americas is Syphilis. First documented in Spain in 1493, Syphilis rapidly spread through Europe, claiming many lives because no one had resistance. Three main theories exist concerning the origin of syphilis. The first, known as the Columbian theory, states that the men from Columbus' voyage picked up the disease in the Americas and brought it back with them to Spain. The second theory is that Syphilis did in fact exist in Spain before 1493. The last states that syphilis was present simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic at this time.⁴⁰ It is very difficult to discern which of these three theories is correct because evidence exists supporting each hypothesis.

Evidence for the Columbian theory suggests that syphilis was an imported disease. At the onset of syphilis in Europe the disease was known by many different names, each one suggesting that the disease was imported from somewhere else. The Italians called syphilis the French disease, the French called it the disease of Naples. Poles referred to the disease as the German disease, and Russians called it the Polish disease.⁴¹ The many different names for Syphilis indicate the widespread notion among Europeans that the disease was imported-from somewhere. The two best historians in Spain at the time of the onset of syphilis, Bartolome de Las Casas and Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdez both suggested that the disease was imported from the Americas. Columbus' son Ferdinand wrote an account of Arawak Indian folklore that was probably written in the 1490's. The folklore talks about a hero who has sexual relations with a woman and then becomes full of sores. Folklore is often deeply rooted in a people's culture and is very slow to change. If Syphilis originated in Europe, not the Americas, Arawak folklore would have had to evolve very quickly to include a mention of syphilis. Another piece of evidence for the Columbian theory involves reports of doctors treating men who seemed to have caught the disease in the Americas; the doctors were very puzzled as to

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 213, 206-207.

⁴⁰ Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*, pp. 123-125.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 124-125

what it was. Syphilis was also more deadly for Europeans than it was for the Native Americans, indicating that Indians had exposure to the disease for a longer period of time.⁴² Pre-Columbian remains have been found in the Americas with deformed foreheads, a symptom that biologists claim points to syphilis.

Despite all of this evidence for the Columbian theory, many biologists and historians have doubts about its validity. Some of these skeptics believe the Unitarian theory, devised by E.H. Hudson. This theory states that syphilis existed as a mild condition in Europe prior to the Columbian years, and then underwent a series of mutations to become the devastating disease that it is now. Other skeptics think that syphilis is just one manifestation of a broader disease known as treponematosiis that spread throughout the world in different forms before 1492. It is thought that treponematosiis originated in moist African conditions as a disease called yaws that lived on an individual's skin and infected the top layers. As people moved to dryer climates, such as the Middle East, the virus could no longer survive on the skin so it burrowed into its hosts and became the childhood disease known as bejel. Historians have theorized that as societies became more hygienic, the virus retreated even deeper into the body, into the bones, vascular system, and the nervous system. The microbe that causes treponematosiis is very finicky and need specific conditions in order to infect the body this deeply and manifest itself as syphilis. The disease could no longer be spread just from casual contact, and so evolved to spread through sexual contact.⁴³

The similarities between the treponematosiis viruses that cause yaws, bejel, and syphilis are startling. In fact, scientists cannot even discern the difference between the three viruses, and antibodies against one of the viruses provide immunity for all three. The only way to tell which treponematosiis virus causes which condition is to infect a lab rat and observe the symptoms. Even then, all three of the viruses cause lesions and sores, just at different depths and severities. In the seventeenth century, English doctor Thomas Sydenham deduced that syphilis was in fact a type of yaws that was brought to both Europe and the Americas from Africa, most likely on slave ships.⁴⁴ The actual origin of syphilis remains a mystery, where the biological and historical evidence seem almost to conflict.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 125-126, 138-140, 142.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 126, 142-143.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 143-144.

The decimation of Native American societies due to contact with European disease is one of the world's greatest demographic tragedies. Though the precise number of pre-Columbian Indians will remain one of history's most remarkable mysteries, it is likely that at the time of Spanish contact more individuals inhabited the Americas than all of the European countries combined. Further research on this topic should include a more extensive investigation into the census records of individual missions in Florida in order to allow the researcher to make more definitive conclusions about the population statistics mentioned in this paper. Regardless of the exact population demographics, it is apparent that the genetic homogeneity of Native Americans combined with centuries of geographical isolation produced a disastrous scenario. Entire Indian chiefdoms had no way of fighting off microbes that were merely a nuisance to their European conquerors. Indian populations declined by as much as 97 percent, destroying families, villages, and ultimately erasing entire cultures from the face of the Earth. The story of the European seizure of the Americas is not as much about battle and conquest as it is about biology and the cold unjust ramifications of a lack of viral immunity. This situation of scientific circumstance allowed a small group of ill-equipped Europeans to conquer a massive and populated continent

The Conflict Without Glory: An Analysis of Andrew Jackson's Role in Florida's First Seminole War

By Brent Willobee

The seeds of the conflict that would become Florida's Seminole Wars were sown during the Revolutionary War. During this time, the British controlled much of Florida and they would induce the Seminole Indians to conduct raids against frontier settlements in Georgia in order to weaken the southern colonies. These events established in the minds of both parties that the Seminole Indians and the United States could not peacefully coexist with each other. The end of the Revolutionary War did little to ease the conflict between the United States and the Seminole tribes. Although the treaty that ended the Revolutionary War gave Spain possession of Florida, they put very little effort into securing the borders and maintaining order. As a result, squatters from both sides would routinely cross the border to build their homes or camps and conflict would invariably arise among these border settlers.¹

These early settlers were largely farmers and livestock herders. Because they derived much of their sustenance from their land, it was important to them that they possessed the best lands possible for growing their food. The Spaniard's loose border policies only increased the temptation that these early squatters faced to continue moving further and further into the virgin lands of Florida.²

Florida itself was land of great strategic value to the new United States. Whoever controlled Florida also controlled the last stretch of all major rivers draining from the United States. In addition, the east coast of the United States extends down to the southern tip of Florida and America's early government wished to control Florida in order to prevent any European power from using it as a land base for an invasion of the United States. The United States attempted to acquire some of this strategic land from Spain by claiming that the Louisiana Purchase had included the western panhandle of Florida. This would have given them

¹ John K. Mahon. "The First Seminole War, November 21, 1817 – May 4, 1818." *Florida Historical Quarterly* , 77 (1998), p. 1

² Mahon, "The First Seminole War" p. 1

possession of several strategic outlets. Spain refused to sell Florida, and in 1810 settlers in West Florida took matters into their own hands and seized the local Spanish fort near Baton Rouge. They then petitioned the United States government for protection and President Madison authorized the governor of Louisiana to seize the western panhandle of Florida up to the Perdido River. Also President Madison secretly authorized “patriots” in Southern Georgia to seize the East Florida towns of Fernandina and St. Augustine. They were unable to fully accomplish this task. When word leaked out that this “plot to steal Florida” was under way without congressional authorization, Madison disavowed that he had ever ordered these attacks.³

As all of these events were taking place, many runaway slaves, rather than going north, would head south into Spanish-controlled Florida where they were mainly free to live off the land as they pleased. In fact, the Spanish soon realized the value of these runaways and even gave them their own fort and the supplies to defend it. In 1816, General Gaines attacked and destroyed the "Negro Fort," on the lower Apalachicola River. Gaines' gunboats fired on the fort from the harbor with hot shot (superheated cannonballs). The first shot hit the powder magazine, causing an explosion that was heard over 50 miles away! Lt. Colonel Clinch said, "The explosion was awful In an instant, lifeless bodies were stretched upon the plain . . . or suspended from the tops of the surrounding pines. Here lay an innocent babe, there a helpless mother The brave soldier was disarmed of his resentment and checked his victorious career, to drop a tear on the distressing scene."⁴

Although the loss was devastating for the Black Seminoles in West Florida, it only served to engender further hostilities against the United States. Raids across the international boundary increased in frequency and intensity. In 1817, one of these Seminole raiding parties murdered a family from Camden County, Georgia. This caused a detachment of soldiers from Fort Scott to march into the Seminole village of Fowl Town and demand that the chief, Neamathla, surrender to them the warriors who were responsible for these murders. The chief refused and in retaliation the soldiers attacked the village and drove the Seminoles into the surrounding swamplands. They then killed about twenty men and burned Fowl Town to the ground. This incident turned these minor border disputes into a conflagration of hostilities between the

³ Boyer, Paul S. "Expansionism." In *The Oxford Guide to United States History*, in Boyer, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 3-4.

⁴ Joshua R. Giddings, *The Exiles of Florida* (Columbus: Black Classic Press, 1858), pp. 35-43.

Americans and Seminoles living along the border and it became obvious that this border conflict would not be resolved without outside intervention.⁵

In Tennessee, General Andrew Jackson watched the growing conflict with interest. Known as America's great Indian-fighter, Andrew Jackson had defeated the Creeks at Horseshoe Bend and the British at New Orleans. When he became aware of the Fowltown incident, Jackson immediately wrote a letter to Washington asking for authorization of an invasion of Florida to put down these rebellious tribes. On December 16th, 1817, Jackson wrote: If ever the Indians find out that the territorial boundary of Spain is to be a sanctuary, their murders will be multiplied to a degree that our citizens on the southern-frontier cannot bear."⁶ However, ending the murders was not Jackson's only motivation. Despite the fact that the United States had already seized West Florida under the presumption that it had been included in the Louisiana Purchase, Jackson also wished to take the entirety of East Florida in order to prevent the British or the Spanish from using it as a base for the invasion of the America South.

On December 26, 1817, Jackson finally received the letter he had been waiting for from the newly appointed Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun. In his letter, Calhoun requested that Jackson, "Repair, with as little delay as practical, to Fort Scott and assume the immediate command of the forces in that section. . . and to adopt the necessary measures to terminate a conflict which it has ever been the desire of the President to avoid."⁷ Although this letter authorized Jackson to eliminate the Indian threat, it did not give him the authority to engage and Spanish or British forces that he would encounter. Therefore, Jackson immediately wrote back to President Monroe saying that

The whole of East Florida (ought to be) seized and held as an indemnity for the outrages of Spain upon the property of our citizens: this done, it puts all opposition down, secures to our citizens a complete indemnity, and saves us from a war with Great Britain. . . This can be done without implicating the Government; let it be signified to me through any channel, that the possession of the Floridas would be desirable to the United States, and in sixty days it will be accomplished.⁸

⁵ Hubert Bruce Fuller, *The Purchase of Florida* (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1906), pp. 237-238.

⁶ Jackson to Calhoun, December 16, 1817, in Harold D Moser, David R Hoth, and H George Hoemann, eds., *The Papers of Andrew Jackson* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 4: 161.

⁷ Ibid., John C. Calhoun to Andrew Jackson, Dec 26, 1817, p. 163.

⁸ Ibid., Andrew Jackson to James Monroe, Jan 6, 1818, p. 167.

Upon receiving this letter, Monroe directed John Calhoun to write back to Jackson and order him "not to attack any post occupied by Spanish troops, from the possibility that it may bring the allied powers on us."⁹ Yet Calhoun never sent this letter.

As the situation unfolded, Monroe's intentions were not made clear to his administration. Although he gave Calhoun the directive to restrain Jackson, a general known for his impetuous actions, why would Monroe take such a circuitous route to inform Jackson on such an important matter? In addition, considering John Calhoun's exemplary efficiency, how could the Secretary of War not pursue the matter, and why would the President not follow up on this important situation? One credible possibility is that Calhoun discerned Monroe's actual intentions were somewhat different from his commands, so the Secretary of War made a calculated decision not to send the directive.

Interestingly, Jackson had received a letter directly from Monroe, even before he had requested permission to seize Florida from Spain. In this letter, Monroe stated, "These Indians have long violated our rights and insulted our national character. The movement will bring you, on a theatre, when possibly you may have other services to perform depending on the conduct of the banditti at Amelia Island and Galvestown."¹⁰ This letter went on to say, "Great interests are at issue, and until our course is carried through triumphantly and every species of danger to which it is exposed is settled on the most solid foundation, you ought not to withdraw your active support from it."¹¹ Although Monroe sent this letter before Jackson's dispatch requesting permission to invade had arrived, it is clear that Jackson took the lack of response from Monroe as a sanction for his future actions. While Monroe's intentions in this matter are not completely apparent, the evidence certainly seems to point to the idea that the President gave tacit support of Jackson's actions.

On January 11, Jackson wrote Colonel Robert Henry Dyer, an officer who had served under Jackson in previous conflicts, and asked him to help raise an army in West Tennessee of volunteer mounted gunmen to accompany them to Florida to aid in their efforts. Over the next few days, Jackson wrote several letters to key officials and supply officers in efforts to gain the

⁹ Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2001), p. 138.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹¹ Robert V. Remini, *The Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1966), pp. 118-119.

necessary volunteers and supplies that would expedite the conflict. On January 27, Jackson arrived at Huntsville Alabama and wrote Calhoun to say that, "In passing through Tennessee it gave me pleasure to discover that my appeal had not been ineffectual, and that Volunteers were flocking to the standard of their country." He went on to say that, "There is little doubt that two full regiments will be mustered into service at Fayetteville The only difficulty has been the want of arms."¹² Although Jackson had made repeated attempts to ensure that his force would not be short the necessary supplies, his private contractors consistently failed to get Jackson the necessary supplies for his march. The situation continued to worsen throughout his march. At one point Jackson found himself down to "half a pint of corn and half a pint of flour per man."¹³

It took Jackson a total of forty-six days to cover the 450 miles from Tennessee to Fort Scott and he arrived at 7 P. M. on March 9, 1818. It was a point of pride for him that, despite the supply difficulties, he did not lose a single man to sickness or injury. Unfortunately for Jackson, the situation at Fort Scott was, if possible, even more serious than the situation of his army. He wrote, "The idea of starvation has spread far and wide and a panic is everywhere."¹⁴ Instead of receiving fresh supplies at Fort Scott, Jackson discovered that he had enough rations for exactly three days. (At this point, Jackson's army numbered three-thousand troops and an additional force of two-thousand Creek-Indian allies.) However, the commander of the fort had received word that two ships from New Orleans were on their way with supplies. As soon as Jackson received this intelligence, he resolved to head directly for the ships. The next morning Jackson redistributed his supplies among the newly added members of his army and set out for Florida and the supply ships that awaited him there.¹⁵

Jackson marched his troops along the east side of the Apalachicola River and his Creek allies moved along the western bank. Although Jackson's force had an uneventful march, his Creek allies, under the command of half-blood General William McIntosh, captured the Indian village of Red Ground, as well as a party of 180 women and children and Seminole warriors, all

¹² John C. Calhoun to Andrew Jackson, January 27, 1818, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 6: 172.

¹³ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, p. 141.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

without firing a shot!¹⁶ In five days, Jackson reached the site where the Negro Fort had formerly stood. He met the supply ships on their way north to deliver him supplies. These supplies completely altered his situation. He wrote to his wife in late March, saying, “until a few days past we have experienced bad roads, high waters, and constant rain, with the dreary prospects of great scarcity of provision. . . . This situation is changed and the prospect of plenty is ours, several vessels laden with supplies are in the bay, and the vessels separated (in the gale) are daily arriving.”¹⁷

Jackson immediately recognized the strategic value of the land upon which the Negro Fort had previously stood and ordered one of his aides, Lt. James Gadsden, to construct a new fortification at the site. Gadsden did such a fine job of rebuilding the fort that Jackson decided to name it Fort Gadsden in his honor.¹⁸ After a short furlough at Fort Gadsden, Jackson decided to continue his campaign by marching east toward the Spanish fort at St. Marks. Jackson wrote Calhoun saying,

I have no doubt but that St Marks is in possession of the Indians . . . I shall take possession of the garrison as a depot for my supplies, and since Spain has acknowledged ‘incompetency’ to ‘keep her Indians at peace with us’ I will possess it, for the benefit of the United States, as a necessary position for me to hold, to give peace and security to this frontier, and to put a final end to Indian warfare in the south.”¹⁹

The Seminole Indians, realizing the danger that Jackson’s force posed to their settlements in Western Florida, began seeking aid from Spain and Britain to repel this dangerous foe. They not only pleaded with both governments to supply them with proper weaponry and ammunition, but they also asked for the assistance of British officers to lead their forces against Jackson.²⁰

When the Seminole’s supplications went unanswered, the chiefs assembled a full council and appealed directly to King George requesting that, “British officers should be constantly kept among us, so that we should not be driven to the desert lands of the sea from the fertile fields of

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁷ Andrew Jackson to Rachel Jackson, March 26, 1818, in *Jackson Papers*, vol. 6: 183-184.

¹⁸ Alcione M. Amos, “Captain Hugh Young’s Map of Jackson’s 1818 Seminole Campaign in Florida.” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 55 (January 1977), p. 93.

¹⁹ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, p. 143.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 145.

our forefathers.” The Indians further pleaded, “as our good father King George knows, we have fought and bled for him against the Americans, by which we have made them our bitter enemies. Surely, then, he will not forget the suffering of his once happy children here”²¹

During this time, a Scottish trader named Alexander Arbuthnot also attempted to act on behalf of the Seminoles. He was seventy years of age and had come to Florida from the Bahamas in the previous spring in order to trade with the Seminoles. He formed such a good rapport with the Seminoles that they sought his council on important matters and the Creeks gave him the power of attorney to act on their behalf. With him was another Englishman by the name of Robert C. Ambrister. Ambrister had been an officer in the Royal Marines but lost his commission when he participated in an illegal duel. He came to Florida in search of adventure and sought a way to regain his commission. It is likely that he saw in the current conflict his chance to make amends for his past and he began to help Arbuthnot in writing letters to British officers requesting military aid for the beleaguered Seminoles.²²

On March 29 Jackson’s advance brought him to the banks of the Ochlocknee River where he constructed 19 canoes and began a crossing that his force completed by the following morning. His purpose for being in this area was to attack and destroy the Indian villages that surrounded the shores of nearby Lake Miccosukee. Jackson split his troops into several detachments and sent them around the lake to destroy the nearby villages more expediently. Although many of the Indians in the villages would simply run at the sign of the approaching forces, the detachments managed to kill almost a score of Indian warriors and to capture several more. In the center of most of these villages, Jackson also discovered “red poles” on which were hung the scalps of the Indian’s white victims. Jackson’s troops managed to identify some of these scalps as belonging to some of the white families that the Indians had murdered along the Georgia frontier the previous fall. When Jackson and his troops completed their sweep of the area on April 6, Jackson discovered that his forces had burned over 300 Seminole dwellings to the ground as well as confiscated a total in excess of 3,000 bushels of corn and other supplies.²³

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., pp. 145-146.

²³ Amos, “Captain Hugh Young’s Map,” pp. 93-94.

Jackson arrived at the Fort of St Marks on the evening of April 6, and he immediately dispatched Lieutenant Gadsden with a letter to the fort's Spanish governor, Francisco Caso y Luengo. In his letter, Jackson informed the governor of his intentions and the results of his army's march thus far, including their findings in the Indian villages around Lake Miccosukee. He also mentioned his concerns that the Seminoles might attack the fort in such force that the Spanish would be overrun. Based on these concerns, Jackson asked the Luengo for permission to garrison a detachment of American troops in the fort to aid in its defense in case of any attacks or demands made by the Seminoles in the area. Jackson even offered to pay the Spanish for the use of their barracks and personally guaranteed the property and rights of all Spanish citizens within the fort.²⁴

The following morning, Governor Luengo responded to Jackson's request in a very polite manner. Luengo congratulated Jackson on the success of his recent actions and wished him well in his ultimate objective of "chastising these savages." He also refuted any allegations that his fort had assisted the Seminoles in their depredations. He refused to allow Jackson entry into the fort, however, until he had received permission to do so from the Spanish mainland.²⁵ The next morning, Jackson seized the fort without resistance and discovered that the Spanish had indeed been assisting the Seminoles in the area with supplies and intelligence on his movements. He also found and captured Arbuthnot, who had sought refuge in the fort. Arbuthnot was held on charges of "exciting and stirring up the Creek Indians to war with the United States."²⁶

Although it is obvious that Jackson meant to take the fort regardless of the governor's response, he was very good at maintaining the outward pretenses of diplomacy with the Spanish. In addition, although he discovered positive evidence that the Spanish in the fort had indeed been directly assisting the Seminoles against his forces, he nevertheless ordered his troops to treat the personal property of the Spanish citizens with the utmost respect and even took an inventory of everyone's possessions to ensure that his troops followed his orders.²⁷

²⁴ Jackson to Luengo, March 6, 1818, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 6:186-187.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

²⁶ Amos, "Captain Hugh Young's Map," p. 94.

²⁷ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, pp. 149-150.

On April 9, equipped with only eight day's rations, Jackson and the main body of his force, minus 200 left behind in garrison, left St. Marks bound for Bowlegs Towns, approximately one-hundred miles to the east.²⁸ The forces of McIntosh joined them the next day and the full army continued their march without incident until the night of April 11 when the night sentries heard the barking of dogs and the lowing of cattle off in the distance. The next morning Jackson ordered McIntosh's forces to the front to act as a scouting party. They quickly discovered that the noises the night before had come from a town of Red Sticks rather than Seminoles. The Red Sticks defended their village fiercely, forcing McIntosh to call back to Jackson for support. Jackson hurried his forces to the front but they arrived a moment too late. The hostile Indians had managed to successfully retreat into the surrounding swamp and escape.²⁹

As Jackson's forces began their sweep of the abandoned town, they heard the screams of a woman coming from one of the village's houses. When they finally broke into the house, they discovered a Mrs. Stewart, the only surviving captive of the Fort Scott massacre. She was very bedraggled when the American forces found her, but she swore that the Indians had treated her hospitably for the entirety of her captivity. In addition to Mrs. Stewart, Jackson's forces discovered and took possession of hundreds of cattle and large stores of corn. They also found that they had lost only three men but had managed to kill over forty of the enemy braves and captured almost a hundred men, women, and children. The rest of the villagers vanished into the swamp and were never again seen by Jackson and his men.³⁰

Frustrated by his poor luck in securing the bands of elusive Seminoles, Jackson resolved to hurry his march to Bowlegs Town in fear that someone may have warned them of his approach and that they too would have ample time to elude him. On the morning of April 16, Jackson set out with the expectation that he would reach Bowlegs Town on the Suwannee River by 1:00 P.M. However, after a sixteen-mile march, Jackson discovered to his great ire that a vast pond blocked his path and that he was still six miles from his objective. He decided to camp for the night, but before the preparations could be made; six mounted Indians stumbled upon the

²⁸ David and Jeanne Heidler, *Old Hickory's War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1996) p. 147.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

camp and escaped. Presuming correctly that these Indians would warn the town of his approach, Jackson hurriedly began a forced march to his objective.³¹

He arrived at the two towns just as the sun began to set and he immediately launched into his attack. Jackson sent his second regiment and the armies of McIntosh to the left flank while he attacked from the center. Jackson planned to use his third regiment to cut off the Indians retreat from the rear. However, Jackson's elaborate plan immediately proved unsuccessful when the soldiers discovered that the bulk of Bowlegs towns were already deserted. Jackson's men quickly advanced through the towns and found that a large body of blacks and Seminoles had remained on the western banks of the Suwannee to cover the retreat of their townspeople. Although Jackson's forces were larger, better trained, and better equipped, the Seminoles fought for their very freedom and clung tenaciously to their hold on the western bank. However, just when it seemed Jackson would overwhelm them at last, they simply turned and retreated across the river. Jackson pursued them throughout most of the night, but to no avail. Fortune had again forced Jackson to content himself with gathering the livestock and corn his enemies had left strewn across the fields in their hasty retreat.³²

Although Jackson was fated to lose these Indians and Negroes forever, his journey to the Suwannee was not entirely a waste. On the evening of April 18, Jackson's soldiers were gathered around their fires, exchanging gossip. As the evening was ending, they noticed four strange men stroll into their encampment. The group of men, which included Robert Ambrister along and a few of Arbuthnot's former employees, thought that they were walking into a town still controlled by the Seminoles. They were completely unaware of the battle that had taken place two days prior. By the time the men had realized their mistake, Jackson's soldiers had them surrounded and seized immediately.

When Jackson's men searched the intruders, they discovered a letter from Arbuthnot addressed to his store on the river at Bowleg's Town, warning his employees of Jackson's approach. When Jackson realized that this letter had assisted his foes in escaping his grasp yet again, he was completely furious. In fear for their lives, Ambrister and his friends cooperated fully with Jackson's demands and revealed that Arbuthnot's schooner, *Chance*, was anchored a

³¹ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, p. 152.

³² Heidler and Heidler, *Old Hickory's War*, p. 151.

little ways up the river about to set sail for Tampa Bay. Jackson sent Gadsden to capture the vessel. After the ship was in his possession, Gadsden found several additional documents that further incriminated Arbuthnot and Ambrister in a conspiracy to defeat Jackson's efforts in Florida. Gadsden also found papers that proved the British government had condoned the actions of Arbuthnot and Ambrister and were likely involved in undermining Jackson's actions the whole time.³³

Infuriated by this turn of events, Jackson turned his army around and began the march back to St Marks. Immediately upon his arrival five days later, Jackson ordered the trials of Arbuthnot and Ambrister under a special court martial presided over by General Gaines.³⁴ The court accused Arbuthnot of inciting the Creeks to make war against the United States, of spying for the Seminoles, and of inciting the Seminoles to kidnap, torture, and kill William Hambly and Edmund Doyle. The court accused Ambrister of aiding and abetting the Seminoles and of leading them into combat against the United States. Witnesses later said that although both men provided eloquent defenses, they seemed to realize that fortune had decided their fates far in advance and that the trial was merely a necessary formality. In fact, Ambrister finally gave up on a defense and threw himself upon the mercy of the court.³⁵

It was later determined that the evidence against Arbuthnot was largely manufactured or non-existent. Truthfully, Arbuthnot had nothing to gain from trying to incite war between the Seminoles and the United States. It was simply bad for business. In fact, several letters by Arbuthnot, written to a certain David Mitchell and Arbuthnot's own son, showed a man who was dedicated to preserving peace between the United States and the Seminoles. Historians believe that the most damning evidence produced against him was a letter he had written to Edward Nichols that accused Jackson and General Gaines of manufacturing the conflict along the border in order to have an excuse to seize the Seminole's lands.³⁶

In Ambrister's case, he was at least partly guilty. The court produced several letters he had discreetly written to British officers in Florida and back in England begging for supplies for

³³ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, p. 154.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³⁵ Heidler and Heidler, *Old Hickory's War*, p. 154.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

the Seminole army. He confessed he had believed in plans to raise an army of Indians and Blacks, under the British flag, to defeat the Spanish and American forces in Florida.³⁷

In the end, the court found Arbuthnot guilty of all charges but spying and sentenced him to death by hanging. The court convicted Ambrister of all charges and sentenced to a soldier's death by firing squad. However, at the last minute the court paused. Was Ambrister so unlike them? Perhaps he was simply a victim of fate, they said; and really, would any of them have acted any differently had they been in his place? It seemed for just a moment that his pleas had been successful as the court decided to alter the sentence to 50 lashes and one year of hard labor.³⁸

When Jackson heard of the court's decision, he was livid. Why, he asked, had the court, which had been on the verge of delivering "justice", suddenly gone soft on him? In addition, how could they be so presumptuous as to believe that their hearings and their verdicts counted for anything? Jackson, however, decided that he could easily correct this problem. He simply ordered that the court rescind the adjustment and reinstate the original verdict. At the appointed hours on April 29, Arbuthnot was hanged from the yardarm of his own schooner and Ambrister was executed by firing squad; both by the executive order of Andrew Jackson.³⁹ In his letter to Calhoun describing the incident, Jackson wrote,

The volume of testimony justifying their condemnation, presents scenes of wickedness, corruption, and barbarity at which the heart sickens. I hope that the execution of these two unprincipled villains will prove an awful example to the world, and convince the government of Great Britain as well as her subjects that certain, if slow retribution awaits those unchristian wretches who by false promises delude and excite an Indian tribe to all the horrid deeds of a savage war.⁴⁰

Whether Jackson honestly believed this to be true, or was merely being political and acting to cover his obvious wrongdoings is, and forever will be, unknown.

For the most part the war was over. Jackson had one last loose end to tie up before he returned to Tennessee. According to Jackson, there were reports at the time that large bands of

³⁷ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, p. 155.

³⁸ Heidler and Heidler, *Old Hickory's War*, p. 156.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴⁰ Andrew Jackson to John C. Calhoun, May 5, 1818, *Jackson Papers*, 6: 199.

Seminoles had been sighted in and around the area of modern-day Pensacola. Although no such reports have ever been found, Jackson, nevertheless, was undeterred. He wrote a letter to the governor of Pensacola informing him of these “reports” and said that he would take and hold Pensacola, “Until Spain has the power or will be able to maintain her neutrality.”⁴¹ Jackson occupied Pensacola without a struggle because the governor, Jose’ Masot, had already retreated to Fort Carlos de Barrancas. Not content with merely the town, Jackson attacked the fort and forced the surrender of the garrison on May 28, 1818. With this action, the First Seminole War had ended.⁴²

Historians still disagree about Jackson’s true motivations for his actions during the war. Did Jackson even believe that the Seminoles posed a significant problem or was he simply searching for an excuse to expel Spain and Great Britain and acquire Florida for the United States? The truth probably lies somewhere in-between the two possibilities. If scholars take into account Jackson’s obvious dislike for the Native American people, it seems likely that he actually considered the Indians a threat, or, at the very least, a pest that needed eradication. One can also see that since the beginning of his campaign, Jackson fully intended to take possession of the Spanish forts in Northwest Florida. His trumped up charges against Arbuthnot and the governor of Pensacola, in addition to the fact that he had no support for his suspicions that the Spanish were assisting the Seminoles when he attacked the fort at St Marks, provide ample evidence of Jackson’s plans⁴³ Jackson probably believed he was doing a service to his country by performing a necessary task that no one else had the courage to undertake; looking back with the hindsight of history, he may not have been entirely wrong. Ultimately, historians must decide if the benefits of Jackson’s actions in The First Seminole War were worth the wrongs he may have committed, or the truths he may have hidden, to get to achieve his ends. Only then can scholars truly judge the character of one of America’s greatest military leaders and Indian fighters, Andrew Jackson.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 208.

⁴² Jr., Noble Cunningham, *The Presidency of James Monroe* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996.), p. 60.

⁴³ The evidence to support these claims was found only after Jackson had taken possession of St. Marks and the ships in the harbor.

“Dear Grandpapa”: Letters from Fort King from Dr. George Rogers Clarke, 1833-1838

By Ashleah Zigmond

Territorial Florida during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) was not a place many soldiers wished to be stationed. Men became ill and the Indian attacks were sudden, plentiful, and deadly. Many of the troops stationed in Florida fell to diseases, such as malaria, yellow fever, and other plagues. The war lasted for seven years and cost the United States more than twenty million dollars.¹ The soldiers marched into Florida with heavy hearts and “felt that they entered it rather as executioners than warriors that its soil bore no laurels for the soldier and that while he encountered every hardship from the nature of the country and every danger from the character of the climate he suffered without sympathy and died without fame.”²

Arriving at Fort King in 1833, George R. Clarke served in Florida until 1839, when he was transferred to the Mount Vernon Arsenal.³ As assistant surgeon, he was responsible for treating the wounded and sick at Fort King. Often times, the work was slow and he took on other jobs around the garrison or moved from one establishment to another in order to better serve the army. He wrote often to his Grandfather Robert Beverly and his mother in Georgetown, Virginia, telling them of all the different things he witnessed in this new land. These nineteen letters housed at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia, written

¹ Also known as the Florida War, the conflict began December 28, 1835 when a group of 180 Seminole Indians, under the leadership of Micanopy, Jumper, and Alligator ambushed a regular army force of 108 men under the command of Maj. Francis L. Dade on the Fort King Road, a trail between Fort King (Ocala) and Fort Brooke (Tampa). They attacked and slaughtered the whole of Dade’s troops.

² Philadelphia *Public Ledger* quoted in *The Army and Navy Chronicle*, April 4, 1839, 222.

³ George Rogers Clarke became assistant surgeon on November 1, 1834 and resigned from the army on June 17, 1840. He was from Philadelphia, Pa., and lived in Georgetown, Washington D.C., and Fauquier County, Va. Clarke was a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania and practiced as a physician in Washington. He had one brother, and a close relationship with his mother and his grandfather, Robert Beverley Esq. He purchased land after the Second Seminole War in Arkansas. (Historical register and dictionary of the United States Army : from its organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903 ." [Internet Archive](http://www.archive.org/stream/historicalregist01heitrich/historicalregist01heitrich_djvu.txt), 20 Feb. 2008. <www.archive.org/stream/historicalregist01heitrich/historicalregist01heitrich_djvu.txt>); *The Army and Navy Chronicle*, April 4, 1839, 222.

from Fort King from 1833-1839, offer vivid descriptions of camp life and impressions of his surroundings. The letters give readers a rare glimpse of the Second Seminole War from one its most significant outposts.

Fort King was built March 1827 and functioned as a trading post at the site of modern-day Ocala. The Fort was a stockade 152 feet by 162 feet with a single blockhouse and large barracks.⁴ Located near the Ocklawaha River, the most convenient and least expensive source of supply for the Fort, the river connected with the St. Johns nearly thirty miles downstream. It was estimated that it would cost ten thousand dollars to remove every obstruction on the river. Travel between Fort Brooke and Fort King, the two major forts in Central Florida at the time, was nearly impossible. One would have to venture nearly a hundred miles through “the centre of the disaffected & hostile part of the Seminole Nation, there is no communication, the Indians having in several instances, stopped the runners, taken and broken open the letters.”⁵

On the same day as “Dade’s Massacre,” Chief Osceola murdered Indian Agent Wiley Thompson just outside the Fort King stockade. The two simultaneous events, ensured that Florida would enter into a sustained period of chaos. Though Clarke was there on the day that Thompson was killed, he saw little of the actual fighting. Sickness was the soldiers’ worst enemy. More died from illnesses than from wounds in battle. Often there were not even enough healthy men to answer roll call. For example Robert Archer, complained to Duncan L. Clinch that “nearly one hundred of the Command now at Fort King have been more or less sick within the last two or three months and although many of them for fit for Garrison duty, and most of the others are convalescent, they cannot be relied on, for active efficient service.”⁶

Based on his own personal prejudices and no doubt the violence breaking out around him, Clarke developed a prejudice for the savage society of the Indians. He wished, like most of his fellow soldiers in Florida, for the Indians to be moved out as quickly as possible. When he first arrived in Florida Clarke was optimistic that the Indians would move out as planned in 1835, but as the year went on, as others around him, he understood that some kind of violent outbreak was likely. Clarke’s mother worried constantly about her son. He often consoled her

⁴ H.W. Kaufmann and Tomasz Idzikowski, *Fortress America* (Da Capo Press, 2004), pp. 192-193.

⁵ Ibid, *Duncan Clinch to the Adjutant General* (Washington, 1960), p. 214.

⁶ Duncan L. Clinch to the Adjutant General, October 17, 1835, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1962) vol. 25: 186.

through his letters to her or his grandfather. The majority of the letters are addressed to his grandfather. Occasionally, Clarke would include a quick note to his mother at the bottom of his letters to his grandfather.

Detachment Head Quarter, Fort King
March 30, 1834

Dear Grandpapa,

Since I last wrote to you I have seen much more of this territory and have been very busy on duty. I have traversed the country around for seventy or eighty-miles acting as Surgeon to our various guards of soldiers stationed at different points within and without the Indian Nation. Since you have last heard from me there has been a reinforcement of troops at our Garrison. . . . There is also at Tampa Bay within one hundred miles of this [several] companies with their equivalent number of officers. This Post is however the Head Quarters of all the troops in Florida and the commanding officer . . . [is] Gen. [Duncan L.]. I could not desire a better superior than he is. He is a man of fine feelings. . . . He is a planter; his lands are within twenty-miles of this. The section he cultivates yielded him this year twenty-thousand dollars from sugar alone. He became acquainted with Uncle Williams in Mobile.

I visited an encampment of our men sixty-miles from here on the Withlacoochee River, a beautiful stream filled with fine trout and pike. I went according to the order of Gen. Clinch in company with my captain. We took our [food] with us and when we became hungry and would strike up a fire and eat. We arrived at the encampment on the night of the second day, when I found the men all well, and their tents in good order. I expected a sound sleep at night but was so annoyed by sand flies and mosquitoes that I was compelled to keep moving 'til day light. The country I travelled over is termed a ridge, from it lying between two rivers Ocklawaha⁷ and

⁷ The Ocklawaha River flows north from Central Florida and joins the St. Johns River. Its name is a distortion of *ak-lowahē*, Creek for “muddy”. In the 1800s and early 1900s it was used mainly for steamboat transportation.

Withlacoochee,⁸ the former emptying into the Atlantic Ocean, and the latter into the Gulf of Mexico. Although it was the middle of winter I found the wild Tulip a beautiful flower in full bloom and growing . . . luxuriantly. . . .

I have been lately on military duty. I was asked by Gen. Clinch at breakfast how I would like to be detailed as officer of the day; my reply was if detailed I would willingly serve. Accordingly, he put me on duty, so I have been marching above the Garrison armed with a sword and belt. It is quite a responsible duty as the Officer of the day has to see that order is kept in the camp, [check on] sentinels and visit the guard of the Garrison. I have sent on to New York for a Chapeau, epaulets sword and belt. The whole will probably cost seventy five dollars. I am compelled to have them as I must appear on the parade ground on inspection in full dress. If not, you are reported to the General. I commenced this letter on the eighteenth of last month, but was ordered away on duty before I had time to finish it. I have been traversing the country as Surgeon to a detachment of men in search of Indians who frequently go beyond their boundary, and commit [depredations] on the whites. I returned day before yesterday. I had a more pleasant time than I expected; the weather was good, and I had fine sport shooting. I am not pleased with their country. There is entirely too much [poor] land. I think I am not far off the mark when I say that nine tenths of this territory is pine woods.⁹ This winter has been a month extraordinary cold for this latitude. On the eighth of last month the thermometer was as low as eleven degrees above zero, a circumstance which has not occurred before for fifty-one years. There was a continuance of freezing weather for weeks and it is supposed by many persons that the Orange Groves are very seriously damaged. The reed sugar cane on many plantations has been totally destroyed. It is probable that the Indians will be removed in a month or two--If so our company will be ordered to Baton Rouge where I hope to get into a good private practice. Should the removal of the Indians be postponed until the fall we will go to Baton Rouge as my Capt. is entitled to that station

⁸ The Withlacoochee River originates in the central Florida Green Swamp, east of Polk County, and flows in a northwestern direction emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. The river is approximately 86 miles long. The name probably stems from a Muskogean dialect, and is compounded of Creek *we* (water), *thlako* (big), and *chee* (little), or *little big water*.

⁹ Forests covered about 28 million acres of Florida's 35.7 million acres of land, and the longleaf pine grew in most of these forests. Fires started by lightning and the Indians allowed pine to do well. It also made the land easy to travel because of the low grasses and plants. In the 1830s, the cutting of Florida timber increased near rivers, which were strategically employed to float logs to sawmills.

Fort King

November 14, 1834

Dear Grandpapa,

So it was only this morning that the Capt. mentioned he intended to send an express to St. Augustine today. I have taken up my pen to give you a letter dated Fort King. I am sorry it cannot be a long one as I have just finished a few sheets to Mother; I must repeat to you much which I have said to her. Before going any further with my penmanship let me say to you that your letter which I received two days ago I have pondered over well. I thank you for it. The advice you give me and your anxiety for me have kindled up a feeling in my breast which will never die. I admit my former errors. . . . Peace is in the power of any man to censure me. . . . As to drinking I have determined in my absence from you never to touch one drop of wine or any other liquor. There are no . . . spirits here nor any allowed in the whole Indian Nation. My . . . mates are all . . . temperate men. The Capt. . . I have found a very pleasant man, a perfect gentleman in his manners and a full blooded Virginian in his feelings, Gen. [Wiley] Thompson the Indian Agent . . . is a . . . scholar and an accomplished man in every respect. He was the Congressman from Georgia in Washington for twelve years. Our regiment will be reinforced on the first of January by five companies which is equivalent to two hundred and fifty-men; this will give me a good society--practice a plenty and company enough. The cause of this reinforcement is an opposition on the part of the Indians to remove . . . in the spring according to a solemn treaty – which they made with the Government last summer.¹⁰ They held a counsel talk here about three weeks ago at which all the . . . were present. Gen. Thompson told them the Government would certainly remove them in April, and [they] refused. You will no doubt hear many reports relative to the resisting going and the determining to open a war with our troops but be [assured] they are all false as I have the opinions of Gen. Thompson and our commanding officer. You may think it looks something like war for us to be sending to Head Quarters for troops but it is only for the purpose of showing to the Indians what folly it would be for them to

¹⁰ The Treaty of Payne's Landing was a negotiation that required the Seminoles to move west if the land was found suitable. They would be going to a Creek reservation and would assimilate to the Indians already there. The agreement gave the Seminoles three years to move west of the Mississippi. The US Senate ratified the treaty in April 1834. The government decided that the three years would start when the negotiations had started, in 1832, so the Seminoles would be required to move in 1835.

oppose the Government [in] their removal in the Spring. The Captain thinks we will remove to Baton Rouge the Head Quarters of our regiment. . . . The Capt. I know prefers going to Baton Rouge and he has taken such a liking to me that he is determined to have me with him. There I will have an excellent [practice] and if industry and application can make me succeed you will no doubt hear of me as a practitioner of Medicine there. I work a few days ago with Capt. Graham on a [scout] to the Eulachia [Alachua] Prairie which is sixteen miles wide and twenty long. He killed several Deer [and] a great number of wild Ducks. . . . After our hunt he took me to an Indian Dance the most . . . savage sight I have ever witnessed. There were assembled about four hundred Indians together with their women and children draped in their hunting shorts and short gowns the men with their heads ornamented in the most fantastic style and the women with their necks decorated with silver medals of many shapes and sizes. They were divided into companies each company headed by a chief and dancing around a pile of blazing wood. Every now and then at a signal . . . by their leader they would make the woods [reverberate] with their unearthly sounds and savage yells. You may imagine what my feelings were while I . . . compared the amusements of a savage life with the many pastimes of civilization. With this imperfect sketch of [the scene] I must close my letter. I will write to you again by the mail of next Thursday week. If you will read the Intelligence of the 18th of Oct. you will see a piece dated Fort King. It will give you some idea of the Country.

Your affectionate Grandson,
George R. Clarke

Fort King
August 18, 1835

Dear Grandpapa,

This is a difficult matter for one hemmed up in a Garrison as I am to find news for a letter, or to make [something seem] interesting. Nothing new or novel occurs around us; we have every day the same loud rolling of the drums and the shrill notes of the fife. A life in the

army is not what it is cracked up to be; A residence at one of three frontier parts aloof from the world and all society is not so very pleasant. As to our climate this is certainly as fine a one as there is in the whole new world. This is a peculiar county and I think well adapted to the growth of many of the tropical plants. Its productions are numerous; you may have your Sugar Cane, Corn and rice all growing within a stones throw of each other. On Gen. Clinch's plantation I have seen each article I have mentioned growing in great luxuriance besides vegetables of every variety and sort. There is a peculiarity which has struck me very forcibly: the great preponderance of the poor over the rich land; there must be at least 20.000 acres of indifferent pine land to 20 of [good land]. As to it – climate- is not [unlike] Italy; I have read glowing descriptions of an Italian sun but

“There is a splendour in the Southern skies
Oftimes at sunset which I have nowhere seen
Wide as my range about the world hath been
Save on Italian shores; and there the dyes
Have less of magic in them;”¹¹

As to the Geology of this county it will take a man of the learning and research . . . to explain it. He perhaps can give the rationale why I can stand with our foot upon rich and the other upon poor land, gathering with one hand the finest Cotton which with the other I shall be able to pick up only a few scattering pine leaves. I have been making more inquiries relative to the good lands of this Territory and find they are very [few]. I am still very anxious . . . to make a purchase here. I am very much [determined to inspect the] lands on the Vacasausa [Wacasassa] Bay.¹² Perhaps I may be more pleased with them. The [area] is well watered and within twenty-miles of [the coast] I think 1000 acres of this good land with about thirty-hands is a [certain] fortune for any young man.

As to [horse] flesh I am doomed to be unlucky. . . . My fine horse died about ten days since; he fell a victim to the [climate and] I am . . . afraid to make another purchase; I have my eyes upon a very handsome one which I am very anxious to get as a riding horse for Mother.

¹¹ *The Southern Literary Messenger*, vol 1. Richmond: T.W. White, 1834.

¹² The bay is Located Southeast of the mouth of the Suwannee River. To the south, it opens into the Gulf of Mexico. It is 20 miles in diameter and is accessible to many vessels. It also had good anchorage only eight miles from the town of Saint Mark. The waterway is now called Waccasassa Bay. (Darby, William, and Theodore Dwight, Jr.. A new gazetteer of the United States of America. Hartford: Edward Hopkins, 1833.)

[The man] who owns him will take fifty-dollars for him he shall be mine. I am afraid the Commander in Chief is wrong as to the Indians breaking ground in Dec. They are to commence . . . at [that] time but will not I think embark for their new home until sometime in February. I shall apply for a [furlough] to return home in the Spring. I wish you to secure [money] for me. I owe Mapes and Waldron in New York sixty odd dollars for my Sword. I wish you would tell me my [method] for transmitting to them the [money]. As I wish to say something to Mother I must [also enclose a letter to her.]

Your affectionate Grandson

Geo R Clarke

My Dear Mother,

Your letter of the 29th July came to hand by the day's mail; I was afraid you were becoming uneasy at not hearing from me. You must by this time be relieved having received two letters from me. I shall not [allow] a mail [to escape] me again without [enclosing] my letter. As Grandpapa has tapped my brain nearly empty I have not much remaining to say to you. You will see a check on Uncle for fifty-dollars; I wish you to send it on to Williams . . . as a present from me; I will in a measure fill up the [void] which happened unexpectedly to his pocket while in Phil[adelphia]. You can't imagine what a great pleasure it is to me to be able to make their presents. The remainder of the interest Uncle can give me credit for on the original. What think you of the death of my horse; I know you will say [that] George is the most unlucky fellow in the world. . . . I must get a furlough to return home, . . . Remember me kindly to all my relations particularly to Cousin Virginia. [We are] just going to strike our tents here and march immediately into Fort King.

You affectionate Son,

Geo R Clarke

Fort King

November 9, 1835

Dear Grandpapa,

I now fulfill my engagements by writing you my promised letter. My epistle I am afraid will savour somewhat of the monotony of our retired Garrison, but no matter I must fill my sheet of paper with something. The time for the removal of the Indians is drawing near, and this is much reason to fear we shall have to encounter great difficulty in effecting it. The number of friendly Indians is but small compared to the whole nation. General Clinch has accordingly applied to the War Department for a reinforcement of troops, consisting of three companies of Artillery, and one hundred and fifty-mounted Militia. He thinks as soon as this detachment arrives, the Indians seeing our great strength, will immediately yield. If not he says they must be brought to their [senses] by ball and cartridge. This it is true appears rather warlike, but we still think the matter will be amicably settled. In the event of our having to appeal to arms, it will keep Dr [Robert] Archer and myself very busy; but [it] will secure us from all danger as the Surgeons are never exposed. As no movement however is to be made til' sometime in Jan; every thing may yet go straight, and our. . . war like talk may turn out like the French war--mere smoke. With regard to this Indian business, I am certain that the Government has determined to remove the whole nation this winter. I hope it may be done without the firing of a single musket. I do not wish it mentioned out of our family that we are expecting a reinforcement to our Garrison, until it is announced officially. The sale of the lands in this Territory which was to have taken place this month, has been postponed one year, on account of the majority of the Indians having refused to go. Of course I shall not be able to make a purchase. As I hope to be at home in the spring. I will then give you a minute account of this section of Country. I am well acquainted with the good lands here, and know there are several tracts which may be purchased to very great advantage. I shall continue this winter to make inquiries in relation to the lands here, and shall take a memorandum of what I saw, and heard. The best tract I have seen is the Big Swamp, containing many thousands of acres, and is within five or six miles of this place. A great part of it has been cleared by the Indians. If I have a thousand acres of it with twenty-hands, I believe I should be worth in the course of ten years, forty or fifty-thousand dollars. I would build a house here for my residence, as this is one of the healthier spots – in the Union. We have lost but two men here this summer from sickness out of about three hundred and fifty. I am very anxious to return home next April on a leave of absence, and shall write soon to the Department on the subject. I see from the papers that some English gentleman has bequeathed to the City of Washington 200,000 [dollars] for the erection of a College in the

District. It is a noble legacy, and may add much to the resuscitation of old George Town. The political cycle is about taking place in Washington, nothing would please me more than to hear the death song of Van Burenism, lights have been flittering long enough around our government; It is time now to let in the pulse White rays of republicanism –

My love to all my relations –

Your affectionate Grand Son,
George R Clarke

My Dear Mother,

Your letter of the 20th of October I received by our last mail. I have written three or four letters to you since the 10th of Oct. From my letter to Grandpapa you will see we are about to array a strong force here to show to the Indians what folly it will be to resist the Government. On the arrival of the reinforcement I feel confidence the Indians will yield like [reasonable] men, and that this removal will be effected without further difficulty. . . . You have heard of my being sick. I had two slight chills after my return from Augustine. . . . My love to Cousin Virginia-

You affectionate Son,
George R Clarke

Fort King
January 3, 1836

Dear Grandpapa,

If Mother has received my last letter you must know that we are in a state of warfare with the Indians. It is found that a majority of the nations are opposed to going and force is resorted to bring them into [line]. We have had one engagement with them. It took place last Thursday morning within a short distance of the Withlacoochee River. We gained the victory, but with the loss of four killed and fifty wounded. Among the wounded are three officers. The engagement commenced immediately after the regulars had [crossed] the river, which they did, by going over in a canoe, carrying nine men at a time. Although there was accompanying our Regular Troops a large force of mounted volunteers, they were not in the action, as it was found impossible get

them across the river. Some however, to the amount of fifty, succeeded in forcing their horses across and were in time to take part on the field of battle. The main body was attempting to build a bridge, but the firing commenced before it was made possible, and they were unfortunately thrown out of the action. Had they succeeded in it, the Indians would have been entirely cut to pieces. As it was they suffered severely. It is [thought] that there were between thirty and forty of them killed, with a due proportion of wounded. This battle took place about forty miles from here, and was headed by Gen. Clinch, as brave a man as ever drew a sword. I must say that I was very much disappointed in not being present. . . . It so happened that I was compelled to remain here, as my services could not be dispensed with. What will be the result of this stroke upon the Indians I cannot say positively. I am however inclined to think that it will prove a death blow to them. Some of our wounded arrived today, and I am expecting more of them from Gen Clinch in a day or two. I am the only Surgeon here, and I can assure you my hands are full.

A melancholy scene occurred here on the 28th of last month. Gen Thompson Indian Agent and [Lt. Constantine] Smith of the Army were most [barbarously killed and scalped] by a party of Indians within a very short distance of our Garrison. They had walked out a short distance after dinner and were murdered by the Indian who [came] out from a small hammock on them. Mr Rogers . . . to our [sutler], and two of his clerks, were massacred at the same time. They had gone up to their . . . lodgings about a quarter of a mile from this. Our Garrison was under arms immediately, but it was impossible for us to pursue the Indians, as our Fort would have been weakened had we detached any of our men. We are very strong here as our [fort has] a very firm picket fence, and can defend it against all the hostile Indians if they are foolish enough to attack it. The individuals murdered lost their lives by not following the advice of the Commanding officer who requested every one to come in, and to remain within our fortification. He has now . . . an order to that effect. I am so very busy, and my mind is so [constantly] occupied in making out my reports and returns to the surgeon Gen . . . that I cannot write more at present.

Your affectionate Grandson,
George R. Clarke

My Dear Mother,

Do not [allow my enclosed] letter to Grandpapa [to] imagine a thousand different things relative to me. I am doing my duty, and feel confident of security. If the whole party of hostile Indians, nay even twice their number, were [bold] enough to attack this Fort, they would be cut to pieces. If the engagement we have had with them proves not to be a decisive, I do hope they will be bold enough to attack our Garrison, for with our six pounders, and mark [my words] we will cut them all to pieces. Our mails now are very irregular, and it may be some time before you can hear from me. You will hear from me through the Surgeon Gen. shortly, as I am making out some reports . . . to him . . . ¹³ I hope to be with you sometime in the Spring. My love to all my relations. Your letter of Dec 3rd I received-

Your affectionate Son,
George R Clarke

St. Augustine
July 21, 1836

Dear Grandpapa,

I arrived here this morning in company with Col. Grave and Dr [Hamilton] Hawkins both of the Army.¹⁴ I had a very pleasant passage from Charleston to this place. We left the former place day before yesterday morning in a packet and anchored early yesterday afternoon in sight of this place. Had not the wind died away we should have landed her after a sum of forty hours a

¹³ Thomas Lawson, the Surgeon General, served from Nov. 30, 1836 to May 15, 1861. He was born August 29, 1789 in Virginia. No records of his education can be found, so it is assumed he studied under and with the practitioners of his home community. He entered the navy March 1, 1809 as a surgeon's mate. January 12, 1811 he resigned and the following month he was appointed the position of garrison surgeon's mate in the army. On May 21, 1813, he was promoted to the post of surgeon, 6th Infantry, in which position he went through the War of 1812. With the reduction and reorganization of the army at the close of the war, he became surgeon of the 7th Infantry on May 17, 1815. Upon the reorganization of the medical department in 1821, his name appeared upon the roll as the senior officer in the grade of surgeon and remained so until his advancement to Surgeon General in 1836. Lawson arrived in Washington only in the late spring of 1837 and was then detailed to accompany ex-President Jackson to his home. He never married. On May 15, 1861 Lawson was stricken with apoplexy and died soon after.

¹⁴ Hamilton S. Hawkins was a surgeon stationed in New Orleans. He became assistant surgeon November 22, 1824, major surgeon July 4, 1863. He was killed August 7, 1847 serving in the Mexican War as the surgeon of the Artillery Regiment. He had a son, General S. Hawkins Jr, studied at West Point, though never graduated, and joined the army in 1861.

very quick passage at this season of the year as the winds are from the south. I leave this in the morning with Dr Hawkins for Garys Ferry,¹⁵ where I shall remain and endeavour to make myself comfortable. From what I have heard of the place from the officers who have been there it is quite a pleasant situation, particularly in this time of war as it is well supplied with provisions and other articles of comfort. Everything appears indicative of a failure in terminating the campaigns this summer. From a report brought in by a negro who made his escape from the Indians and came into this place two days ago it appears that their crops are very short and that they have divided themselves into small parties and are out in the country committing depredations and plundering and stealing what property they can. He reports that they . . . are nearly out of corn and [got a] great quantity of [it] from many plantations which they destroyed. An express arrived here this morning from Fort Drane bringing information of a battle with the Indians the day pervious.¹⁶ The troops were evacuating Fort Drane and retiring to Micanopy¹⁷ when the baggage train was attacked by about three hundred Indians. . . . Our troops fought hard for about one hour and succeeded in getting into Micanopy. There were between twelve and fifteen wounded on our side and several horses were killed and wounded. The Indians made this desperate effort to capture the train in hopes [that] by so doing [the would] to come into the possession of a large supply of provisions. They suffered very much but the number of their killed and wounded is unknown. Nothing has been heard of [Gov. Richard Keith] Call's¹⁸ twelve hundred [volunteers] and I am very strongly [led] to believe from what I have heard that it will be rather late before the summer campaign is commenced. I shall not have time to make

¹⁵This location was used to navigate the Black Creek, and during the war was a place of great importance as a depot for provisions, troops, and arms.

¹⁶ Fort Drane was established on General Clinch's plantation about twenty miles northwest of Fort King. It was abandoned in July 1836 because of illness. Five out of seven officers and 140 men were on the sick list.

¹⁷ Micanopy, the oldest inland city, is located about 11 miles south of Gainesville and was founded in 1821. It is believed that the area was settled centuries ago as a settlement of Timucua. This group of indigenous people was killed off by Europeans by the 1700s. The town is named after a local Seminole leader; the Seminoles moved to Florida in the 1700s. Fort Defiance was built there in 1835 but burned to the ground. Fort Micanopy replaced it the following year and was active until the end of the Second Seminole War.

¹⁸ Governor Richard Keith Call was appointed governor of Florida in 1835. He was a native Virginian. He spent the majority of his term serving as the General of the Florida Militia. He not only campaigned against the Indians in the field, but contributed his own money when funds for the war ran dry. At one time he kept up at his own expense a line of posts from the Suwannee to the Eucheeanna. He often wrote strongly-worded letters to President Van Buren on the subject of war, a trait which led to his removal from office. He was replaced by Judge Robert Raymond Reid, who held office for only one year. When William Henry Harrison became President, Call was reappointed and served as governor until 1844.

any inquiry from the land office(s) here as I leave early in the morning. If possible I will see the registrar of the office(s) whose name is Downing before I get off. There is however I am told no offers made for lands now, and the probability is that no more will be made for a year as nobody seems willing to make investments in a country which has been so ruined as this. . . . I wish you would subscribe to the [Washington] daily National intelligencer for me. I will enclose the money to the Editors as soon as I find my paper is forwarded to me regularly. . . . I have trusted myself in the hands of the Almighty and hope he will guide me and protect me.

Your affectionate Grandson

Geo. R Clarke

My Dear Mother,

I have got thus far on my journey safely and expect to be at my post in two or three days. I shall look anxiously for a letter from you as nothing gives me more pleasure than to break a seal of one of your letters. My health has I think improved. I have determined not to go on the campaigns unless I become perfectly strong and hearty. I shall I think protest against going out in the woods again as I have seen enough of hard [duty]. Indeed I believe sometimes that I will resign my situation in the Army and endeavor to locate myself where I can be with you. It does indeed seem almost unnatural that our family which is so small should be separated from each other far and wide. I trust however that almighty God will protect each one of us and bring us together again not to be separated. My love to . . . and all my relations.

Your affectionate Son

Geo. R Clarke

St. Augustine

August 24, 1836

Dear Grandpapa,

You are no doubt apprised of my arrival here as I wrote to Mother. . . . I was very glad to get away from Gary's Ferry which I think a miserable place. The quarters are very poor There are now at that Post only twenty-five effective regulars two of the companies having been

withdrawn to accompany the baggage train which left for Micanopy, Newnansville, and Gary's Ferry. I came around from Black Creek with 120 sick men 97 of whom were brought from Micanopy, leaving still at that Post between 130 and 150 sick and wounded, all of whom are expected here in the course of ten days. An express which got in here the day before yesterday from Micanopy brought news of a great battle with the Indians in which Major Pierce commanded.¹⁹ Major Pierce left Gary's Ferry with 110 men on the morning of the 17th for the purpose of bringing away the sick from Micanopy and evacuating that Post. Information was given to him that the Indians were at Fort Drane. After collecting all his effective forces amounting in all to 110 men he pushed on to Fort Drane distance 12 miles. He arrived there about sunrise and found a force of at least 300 Indians in possession of the Fort and its vicinity. He immediately placed his force in order of battle and after one hour's hard fighting succeeded in driving the Indians $\frac{3}{4}$ miles in a dense Hammock and was prevented from driving them still further by the thickness of the Hammock. The engagement must have been kept up for some time in an open field as the nearest Hammock is more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the Fort. Few Indians were left dead upon the field and it is supposed twenty- or thirty- more were killed. Great numbers were seen staggering off who must have been mortally wounded. The losses on our part was one man killed sixteen wounded only one or two severely. Powell [Oseola] was said to have been there. After such a defeat he will no doubt begin to think that he cannot contend with the whites so long as he says he will. It is said Pierce will if possible give them another battle before he comes off with the sick and wounded. In a short time I expect we will have a more detailed account of the battle.

I went to see Mr. Downing the register of the land office day before yesterday. I examined the sections of Land as noted down on the survey. I could ascertain from the survey

¹⁹ Benjamin Kendrick Pierce was the eldest son of Gov Benjamin Pierce and was born at August 29, 1790. He studied at Philip's Exeter Academy and entered Dartmouth College in the fall of 1807. He commenced the study of the law with David Starrett Esq. He continued in Starrett's office until the commencement of the war with Great Britain when he entered the regular army as lieutenant of artillery. In August 1813, he was appointed Captain, in June 1836 he was promoted to Major of the First Regiment of Artillery and ordered to Florida. October 15, 1836 he was made Lieutenant Colonel by brevet for distinguished services in the affair of Fort Drane and the same month was appointed by Governor Call of Florida Quartermaster General and Colonel of the regiment of Creeks attached to his army. Because of his failing health, he was stationed north in Plattsburg, then Houlton and New York City. In 1838, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the Eight Regiment of the Infantry and his appointment confirmed by the Senate but he declined the appointment preferring the arm of service. The climate did not improve his health and he died of disease of the brain in New York in 1849. Browne, George Waldo. *The History of Hillsborough, New Hampshire, 1735-1921* (Manchester: John B. Clarke Company, Printers, 1921).

but little about them as the field notes only give a general description of the kind of land through which the lines pass dividing the township off into sections. For example the land on the line of section 21 & 28 is said to be first rate land with a growth on each side of it of Live Oak and Bay Trees. No mention is made of any water but he told me that the blue lines on the Western side of sections 20 indicated a water course and the flow circle in section 21 is a pond of water. You will see the same marks on the survey at the land offices at Washington. He mentioned he had written on to Washington to have the sales postponed as there were no purchases and that no entries could be made now, at least until he had received an answer. He told me though that this would be no difficulty in my securing some of the land and that cash payments were required. He could not take my draft on you payable at the Treasury in the District but thought I could get the Bank or some gentleman here to cash a draft. I will see him tomorrow and have more conversations with him and write you again by Monday's mail. He told me he would enter for me at the time of the sale if I would have the money with him. Nobody I think is acquainted with this land but Gen Clinch. He seemed to think no land would be purchased until after the termination of the Indian War. I have recruited a little. I have determined to return North if I receive permission.

Your affectionate Grandson

Geo. R Clarke

My Dear Mother

I expect Mr Eviry will call to see you by whom I wrote. I received a letter from you on Aug 2. Your letter being directed here accounts for my not hearing from you when at Gary's Ferry. My health is better since being here. I expect an answer from the Surgeon General about the last of this month. I am not compelled to do duty. I however visit 26 patients every morning. I am going up to the Garrison to live as it will be more comfortable and agreeable to me. I have been staying at Mr Livingston's Hotel with Dr Hawkins and Lt. Miller . . . I have written Grandpapa all the news.

Your affect. Son

G.R.C.

Fernandina Island

Off the Coast of Florida

December 27, 1836

Dear Grandpapa,

I wrote to you the day before I left George Town . . . of my having purchased eight hundred acres of land in Arkansas and advising you to make a purchase of eight hundred adjoining me. I am told by two officers of the Army who have been all through that county that it is the richest and healthiest section of the South or West they have ever seen. The land produces fourteen barrels of corn and a bale and a half of Cotton to the Acre. I was offered for my purchase eight dollars an acre. . . . I hope on this that . . . the strong winds of December have blown all your ailments far away and that you are now as strong and active as ever. . . . I have nothing to honor . . . or worry me. I am as happy and as contented as the days are long. I shall make Gary's Ferry my Head Quarters when it would give me great pleasure to hear from you. . . . I expect to reach Gary's Ferry tomorrow. I am told I shall have nothing to do there as there is not a single cause of sickness at the place. I am going to amuse myself in collecting a Cabinet of curiosities which I intend to make. . . . Nothing from the Army they are now in the narrow and every one has sang . . . hopes of the war being terminated before New Year. I really hope it may. Thus far Osceola has foiled all our Generals and if he should [foil Thomas] Jesup²⁰ he will well deserve the name of the great Indian Chieftain. I saw some of the discharged [men] in Savannah. I never saw men so broken down both in health and spirit. They savor Vengeance against Call for his folly and . . . called him a d--md old ass not fit to command . . . men. Poor fellows they were well received in Savannah a dinner and [fancy] ball were given there. . . . They are a brave and daring set of fellows a true representation of [Leaucpaus ?]. I should like to hear from you whether you intend purchasing in Arkansas. I am told it is one of the richest states in the Union.

A happy New year and good health

Your affectionate Grandson

Geo. R Clarke

²⁰ Thomas Sidney Jesup was born December 16, 1788 in Berkeley County, West Virginia. He joined the military in 1808 and fought in the War of 1812. President James Monroe appointed him temporary Adjutant General and Quartermaster General on May 8, 1818. He was detached by President Jackson to deal with the Creek tribe in Georgia and Alabama in 1836. He assumed command of all US troops in Florida during the Second Seminole War. He violated truces with the Seminoles, which resulted in the capture of Osceola. He oversaw the supplying of troops in Mexico during the Mexican-American War. He died in office in Washing D.C. June 10, 1860.

Dear [Brother]

Well have you determined to be a follower of Hippocrates.²¹ I think it the best [field] you can study. There is now a good field for us in the West and South. Physicians very soon make fortunes there and retire to enjoy the fruits of their industry. I write to you to write to me. . . . I would be obliged to you if you would send me some of your Agricultural [productions].

A happy New Year

Your affect. Brother

Geo. A Clarke

Tell Grandpapa I have a large supply of Medicines and Bottles such as are required on a plantation in George Town. He can have them for Blundfield.

Fort Drane E. Fla.

January 10, 1837

Dear Grandpapa,

Here I am again in the land of war Indians and Hammocks. I have been ordered to pitch my tent here and to make this my Head Quarters. Well I am perfectly satisfied for I am told this is a complete palace compound in all the Posts which have been established between this and Tampa Bay. I wish you could only enter my apartments to see how beautiful their architecture is, and how splendidly they are furnished. I hardly know what order to refer my building to. It certainly is not of the [order of] the Gothic but it may come under the class economic. It is built of no particular form . . . with any mathematical accuracy but as it keeps out the wind and rain it is all I wish. My floor is carpeted with the bark of Pine, and my room is papered moss. My mantle piece is purely haste as it is formed of one simple pine board supported on pillars of cedar. My [desk] is plain and solid as its legs are of hickory and its [top] of live Oak. I am now

²¹ Hippocrates of Cos II was an ancient Greek physician. He lived from 460BC to 370BC. He was considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of medicine.

Ashleah Zigmond

writing seated in my elegant arm chair bottomed with the skin of a Deer and backed with the hide of an ox. For ornament sake I have my paddle and bridle up on one side of my room with pistols and holsters occupying the other. I had almost forgotten to mention two of the most important articles I have being the entire heads of two Indians who were killed here in August last by Col. Pierce in Katsy Tuskegee the principal Micasukes Chief and one of his warriors.

In each apartment all alone to be

Oh what delights and extacy's

There is nothing of interest or importance doing by the Army at present. [We are] preparing to open another campaign in a few days which is confidently believed will terminate this odious War. Would that it may and my prayers will be that I may never see another Indian or hear another war whoop. I do not know whether I shall take the field again; should the . . . officers of this Post be ordered to do so I will of course attend him.

I have just returned from a scouting expedition of about twenty miles having been put in the command of a company of horse. This duty was entrusted to me by the . . . officer who has great confidence in me and looks upon me as quite a veteran in this war. I was unsuccessful in finding any of the enemy altho. I saw many fresh signs of them. I felt very anxious to encounter them and . . . their battle and put in practice some of my military skill. The men have great confidence in me both as a Surgeon and as an officer and would have fought well under my orders.

You may perhaps object to my going out on these expeditions but it is certainly better than to be spending my days in . . . picketed garrison. I don't think however I will volunteer on another for in case of my distinguishing myself in action it would not give me promotions. I received your letter dated 17th Dec just as I was leaving Gary Ferry. I will attend to entering the two sections you have named and will take two myself. I have now eight hundred dollars which I shall keep for the purpose of paying for one section. Many of the officers are very much pleased with the county and have written onto the land office for permission to enter lands. . . . I shall lose no time in entering . . . for us. I shall at any rate write to the [registrar] of St. Augustine and request him to secure those four [sections] for me. I am confident he will do it as he told me he would secure them for me provided I determined to take them. I shall not mention the number to him until I am certain whether he will enter them.

Your affect Grandson

Geo. R Clarke

Dear [Brother] It is time you had determined what to do. As you seem to have a taste for Medicine why not go at it. . . and prepare yourself to attend Lectures next week. I believe it is . . . most lucrative profession you can follow.

Your affect. Brother
GRC

Fort Drane
March 10, 1837

Dear Grandpapa,

I believe Gen Jesup may now with old Falstaff say O Hal I pray thee give me leave to breathe awhile. [No one ever] did such deeds in arms as I this day have done. I have conquered the Seminoles and subdued Ocoola proud Monarch of the woods. It is I think now certain that the war is ended. An express from the Army this morning brings news that. . . more than two hundred Indians have assembled at Fort Dade and that Micanopy was expected in with all his warriors. Such news is indeed cheering to us poor fellows who have been drinking of the cup of solitude, and tasting of the hardships of this campaign. This war however has been to me metaphorically speaking one of the happiest incidents in my life. I have learned from it more than I could from twenty-years of reading. I have seen studied and treated disease in all its complicated forms. Pandora's Box could not have contained more varieties than I have seen. As to wounds I have viewed them in every form and shape. My scalpel now moves in my fingers almost as easy as my pen.

My thoughts are now bleak upon leaving this country and I hope in about one month to shake from my flesh the dust of Florida soil. What my destination will be I know not. I have determined however not to be buried in the woods again I will resign before I will consent to it. I am now by virtue of my term of service entitled to a good Post. I prefer Annapolis to all other stations. Perhaps Gen Macomb would assign me to that Post were you to make the application of me. If not that perhaps he would give me some other good station.

As to matrimony I must say I would rather ten thousand times be a married man than living as I now am. I should be much happier and would not have to complain of the tedious [duty]. I am not many years from thirty--and if I reach that period single I think I will remain so. Marriage with me will be [tantamount] to resigning and my purse is too short for that. [My] life would no doubt be very pleasant. I could then be surrounded by my relatives and friends of whose pleasures I could add. The object of our being both here and here after is undoubtedly happiness and if we can attain it we certainly should and I know of nothing which could add more to mine than a good wife. . . .

As the . . . confusion and excitement of war is now over my thoughts as turned homewards and the many friends and comforts I shall find there on my return. I have applied to Gen Jesup for orders to accompany some of the troops North and he has assured me I shall so soon as we make a move. For the future oh fortunes preserve me from ever having any thing to do with Indian campaigning or Indian fighting. I would rather [shovel or break] stones on a turnpike than ever draw my sword again in such a cause. Only see how our [politicians] have been amusing themselves the whole winter . . . while we poor fellows have been warring . . . with Indians and wearing out ourselves on hard bread and Pork. I have lived upon Pork so long that [you can call me a] whole hog man. . . .

Hurrah boys the war is over
The Seminoles will fight no more.²²
Such was the news ___ Staulow (?) told
Dismounting from his charger bold
Come in come in days our old ___
And take a glafs [glass] of Brandy
Heres to our Troops and Gen. ___
Ho: Yankee Doodle Dandy.

I am no poet but . . . the news is so cherry I had to say something. Give my love to
Mother

Your affectionate Grandson,
Geo. R Clarke

²² The Second Seminole War would not commence until August of 1842.

P.S. The . . . from the Army states that Micanopy, Alligator and other Chiefs have concluded a treaty by which they . . . shall leave Florida by the last of April. Osceola is expected in shortly.

Fort King East Florida
November 1, 1837

My Dear Grandpapa,

Well here I am again anchored at my old station, but there has been such a drifting of the tides, and such a change made in the harbour that every thing appears new and out of place. . . . What was once Ft King has fallen from its high estate & is now nothing more than a medley of logs, tents et cetera. I am now seated in a Block house forty feet from terra firma, with my back resting against a cannon, and my feet supported upon [cannon] shot. Around me are all the implements of war, and [except] for my driver, and a [few] slices of Pork, and two or three crackers of hard bread. [I] know too that I am beyond the [confines] of the U.S. . . .

To forget Indians, and wile away my . . . life, I am amusing myself with Lockhart's Memoirs of Sir W. Scott . . . I am experimenting every day, to make myself as comfortable as possible; my tools and utensils [are not here] but I . . . found on my arrival here on the 27th 50 men on the sick report, five of whom were at the brink of death. I have reduced my report down to 20 and have proved that altho and [the four are] now recovering. I am much better pleased with my profession than formerly; this like the art of navigation; there are fixed [rules] to govern you in its practice, but it requires a keen eye, and observations to pass with safety through the many blows, and storms you have to encounter. . .

Being in the midst of the Army I must let you know what we are doing to put an end to this miserable war. I wrote . . . from Picolata of the surrender of Powell and 100 warriors. Since then nothing of consequence had occurred; the passing of each night brought orders for all the Troops, except our [troops] and [and those at Fort] Harlee Micanopy and this place, to leave without delay to Garry's Ferry. Each of the above named Posts in addition to [others] will be garrisoned. . . . Gen. Jesup contemplated moving on the fifth, with a strong force down to Lake Monroe, from which place he, marching to the strong hold of the Indians. . . . More glorious

Ashleah Zigmond

news!!! The express has just arrived with official information that 30 more warriors have surrendered. It is the belief that the war is nearly over. I am confident it is. . . .

Your affectionate Grandson,
Geo. R. Clarke

Dear Mother,

I hope it will not be long before we meet, every thing in this quarter is going on favourably. I have much to say, and I suppose much to hear. I have received no letters since the 10th. This no doubt arises from my shifting my post so often. I have determined to remain quietly here. I have seen enough of hammocks and swamps. . . .

Yr affest: Son: Geo. R. Clarke

Fort King
December 19, 1837

Dear Grandpapa

In all my reading and from all my observations, I have never seen or heard of any thing with more than two ends, before encountering this Seminole War. With all its endings, it has again broke out with...vigor. On last tuesday, Clouds Nephew, came into Fort Mellon, with a message to Gen Jesup that [a chief] and Ho.la.tu.chee were on their way in, and that Jumper being lame wished the [commander] to send him a horse. This request [was] complied with; Clouds nephew took the horse, and two of the Cherokee delegation went out with him to see [Micanopy]. On their getting within one mile of . . . Camp, Cloud's nephew told them, that all he had said was a lie, and that they had better make their escape; that the Indians were ready for a fight, and were determined not to leave the country. They could muster he said about 2000 warriors, and were ready to meet Jesup at any time. That night twelve of the warriors at Fort Mellon made their escape. Old Micanopy with about 30 men is still with them. The celebrated

[Wild Cat] with 13 others have escaped from the Fort at St. Augustine. So you see here we are a little over two months from the spring, and the war to begin again.

The different columns of the Army are ordered to move forward without delay, and will no doubt meet with a [warm] reception. Gen. Nelson . . . has arrived in our vicinity with fourteen hundred mounted men. [The] Alabama regiment left us on Sunday morning to join Jesup.

It is now my decided opinion that the war will not be ended this winter. The Indians after fighting have yet an immense unexplored country to retreat to. Had Jesup mustered into service a regiment of Blood hounds, they would have been worth all the Militia who have ever been in the Territory. I wish the members of [Congress continually] spouting about the failure of this war, were marched here in a solid body. They would then have a practical demonstration of the great difficulty of terminating it. . . . After much deliberation I have determined to continue a Bachelor, and remain in the Army. I have too much pride to marry in any but the very first society and no money to support a wife of such a grade, as she should be. As to hunting for the fortunes, and marrying for riches alone, I cannot; it will only be putting myself under the government of petticoats, which of all [prisons] is in my opinion the very worst. My love to Mother I shall write to her by the next express.

Your affectionate Grandson,
Geo. R Clarke

Fort King
January 8, 1838

Dear Grandpapa,

This is the anniversary of the battle and victory at New Orleans. Would that I could anticipate before we shall be compelled to go into summer quarter, a day when the jubilee of victory, or even of extermination shall be sounded over our savage foe. The war has but begun; one column of our Army has been temporarily paralyzed. Whether they have again moved I have not heard. This maneuver on the part of the Indians was a beautiful military movement; the very plan of [it was] to crush parties, and surprise the [army]. Jesup thought and so did others.

Ashleah Zigmond

He was the individual who saw that his immediate command would be attacked by the whole Indian force. Instead of this, this great Warrior has attacked where least expected, and has carried the day. Major Wilson has had two engagements with them on [Peas] Creek; with what success I have not heard. Gen. [Persifor] Smith of the Louis Vols. has captured forty prisoners near Charlotte Harbour. They are all Seminoles and among them Ho.la.tee.chee . . . This however is a new drop in the bucket. That party has always [been] in favour of peace, but have heretofore been kept in check by the [others]. The latest intelligence direct from Gen Jesup is of the 28th; the next day he was to leave all his baggage wagons, and [embark] with all his mounted force; He must have been within hearing of the guns of Col. Taylor's battle of the 24th. The sound of [artillery] pieces were heard . . . very distinct on that day. . . .

Our [campaign] is very roughly handled by the New York American, and other papers, for violating as it is said in the capture of Powell and his party [under] the flag of truce, a standard which is held as [sacred] in the deserts of Arabia, as on the shores of mighty England. I shall express no opinion on this subject, but to the public I say reflect well before you pass judgment upon our Commander

I presume you must have a very [fine] time in the District as in the language of Jack Downing when he got . . . a mighty Whig tide a big black cloud took a mighty rise in Vermont some four weeks ago, and is now showering downward. . . . and . . . I can tell you who these Vermonters . . . now lay close, and . . . will rise a mighty flood which will float the whole South clean away from the North. . . . the Dogs of war had again been let loose.

Your affectionate Grandson,
Geo. R. Clarke

Fort King
April 29, 1838

My Dear Grandpapa,

A short letter is better than nothing. Orders have just been received for all the Artillery, the 21th Infantry, and 6 companies of Dragoons to repair to the Cherokee nation without delay and I shall go with the Artillery by way of Savannah. The Infantry will go up the Mississippi.

Alligator with his people . . . [is] now at Tampa and many other Indians are continuing to come in. This letter is written in very great haste as an unexpected express has just arrived from Tampa with orders for determination of but five minutes. My love to Mother, tell her expect I will reach home sometime in June.

A long letter may be expected from me by our next mail.

Your affectionate Grandson,
Geo. R Clarke

This final letter closes the correspondence between George Rogers and his grandfather. It is uncertain what became of Rogers after the war. There are many questions that are left unanswered. Some of the mysteries include: Did he ever get married? Did he ever have children? Where did he end of living the rest of his life? Did he continue his practice in New Orleans like he wanted to? Did he continue his medical practice at all? Did he end up living on the land he bought in Arkansas or did he sell it? When and where did he die? How old was he when he died? Where was he born? What was the extent of his early education? Did he return home to his mother after the war? Where did he live the rest of his life? Did he pay his grandfather back the money he borrowed to buy the land? Was the land profitable? Who did he live with? These and so many other questions remain. While Rogers' letters give few clues to his later life, they do provide a fascinating look at life in Fort King during a turbulent part of Territorial Florida's history.

On Another Frontier: William Worth and the Second Seminole War

By Richard Soash

On May 31, 1841, when Colonel William Worth assumed command of the US army in Florida, he inherited a violent, unstable situation from his predecessor. The Second Seminole War had raged since 1835, with no end in sight. Various generals, including Winfield Scott, Edmund Gaines, Duncan Clinch, Richard Keith Call, Thomas Jesup, Zachary Taylor, and Walker Armistead had failed to find a way to end the hostilities. Yet over the course of fourteen months, in the face of tremendous difficulties, Worth succeeded in bringing the war to a close.

William Jenkins Worth was born in 1794 in the fast-growing city of Hudson, New York. Though his mother, Abigail Jenkins Worth, died when he was six, Worth stayed in contact with the well-to-do Jenkins family. Using the Jenkins' connections, Worth attended the Lennox Academy before taking a position as a clerk at the firm of Sheldon and Company. Worth abruptly grew dissatisfied with commercial life and enlisted as a private in the army after the outbreak of the War of 1812.¹ Possibly due to Worth's experience as a clerk or influence-peddling by the Jenkins family, the War Department appointed Worth as an aide to two generals, Morgan Lewis and John Boyd. The battle of Chrysler's Field exposed Lewis as too infirm and Boyd as too incompetent to hold independent command. Under such ineffective generals, Worth had no hope of rising in the ranks. Luckily for Worth, he had the good fortune of being transferred to the staff of the ascending young military genius, Brigadier General Winfield Scott.²

Winfield Scott ranks as one of the most remarkable generals of his era. Even though Scott was only in his late twenties, he had proven to be an extremely effective commander on the northern front. Scott and Worth possessed many of the same traits, including driving ambition, vainglorious self-confidence, and thinned skin pompousness. The two men struck up a friendship almost immediately.³

¹ Edward S. Wallace, *General William Jenkins Worth, Monterey's Forgotten Hero* (Dallas: Southern University Methodist Press. 1953) pp. 13-14.

² Wallace, *General William Jenkins Worth* pp. 15-17.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Scott quickly proved his strategic flair in the Battle of Chippewah, which provided the Americans with a much-needed victory. For his valor during the fight, Worth was brevetted to captain; later in July, Worth received promotion to the rank of major for his bravery at the Battle of Lundy's Lane. This gallantry came at a high price, for during the fierce fighting, a British soldier shot Worth in the thigh. The injury proved extremely serious and kept Worth away from the front for the duration of the war.⁴ Worth would not take the field again until 1837, twenty-three years after Lundy's Lane.

At the age of twenty-six, Worth received the prestigious appointment as Commandant of Cadets and Instructor of Military Tactics at West Point. Worth made a favorable impression on several classes of cadets and even developed a rapport with the young engineering student Robert E. Lee. The West Point cadets gave Worth the fitting nickname "Haughty Bill," but generally held him in high esteem. Worth served at West Point until 1828, and received a promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Once Worth left the military academy, he could not, however, manage to secure a lineal promotion from the president. Worth's connection to Scott probably held him back; at the time Scott was skirmishing with President John Quincy Adams over a perceived snub in the war department.⁵

Peacetime did not sit well with Worth. He craved military action, and received little of it during the early 1830s. In 1831 Worth was posted at Fort Madison, a monotonous duty far from the Indian conflicts on the frontier. The monotony of the assignment was broken briefly by the Nat Turner Rebellion, which forced Worth to hurriedly march a small number of troops out to protect an arsenal just north of Richmond. In 1832, Scott assigned Worth to accompany him on an expedition in the Black Hawk War, but at Detroit, Worth contracted Asiatic cholera and had to return back east.⁶

In 1838, Congress authorized the creation of the 8th Infantry unit. Worth received command of the new regiment, along with a promotion to colonel.⁷ Worth's men spent the

⁴ Ibid., p. 20-21.

⁵ Wallace, *General William Jenkins Worth* pp. 22, 27, 30, 34-35.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 34, 36

⁷ Ibid., p. 42.

period from 1838 to 1840 first patrolling the Canadian border, then actively campaigning in the Wisconsin Territory against the Winnebago Indians.⁸ After the Winnebagos were rounded up, the War Department moved Worth south to participate in the never ending conflict known as the Second Seminole War.⁹ In the backwater hellhole known as the territory of Florida, Worth would seize the chance to develop a reputation for himself in a theatre that had proved to be a graveyard for other military careers. Years before Worth gained national fame in Mexico at Monterey and Churubusco, he held independent command on a very different kind of frontier.

When Worth first arrived in Florida, he must have been tempted to walk right out of the territory. The war, from the American perspective, was in chaos. Conflict with the Seminoles raged on, just as it had for the past five years. The commanding general, Walker Armistead, had expressed a desire to be transferred out of Florida.¹⁰ The frontier settlers had developed a deep distrust and, in some cases, downright hostility to the US army. The soldiers serving in Florida were ill and dispirited, while the majority of the regulars outside of Florida considered the assignment a death trap and hoped to God to avoid duty there.¹¹ Indian raids, violent and sudden, continued unabated throughout central Florida, forcing Armistead to accept the services of a militia that managed to be simultaneously over-expensive and undertrained.¹² And while the whites had immense difficulty trying to find the Seminoles in their own territory, various Indian leaders routinely entered American fortifications. John T. Sprague, a first Lieutenant in the 8th Infantry and Worth's aide-de-camp, neatly summarized the unenviable situation facing the army during Armistead's tenure.

The extreme heat of the season, the unknown haunts of the Indians, and sickness among the troops frustrated the operations of [General Armistead]. These results, at this period, had caused in the army and country, a general feeling of despair. All resources seemed

⁸ Ibid., p. 39

⁹ Richard H. Wilson, "The Eighth Regiment of Infantry," in Theophilus F. Rodenbough and William L. Haskin eds., *Historical Sketches of Staff and Line with Portraits of Generals-in-Chief* (New York: Maynard, Merrill, & CO., 1896), pp. 511-512.

¹⁰ R. Jones to W. K. Armistead, May 19, 1841, in John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2000), p. 265.

¹¹ James M. Denham, "Some Prefer the Seminoles: Violence and Disorder among Soldiers and Settlers in the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 70 (July 1991), p 39.

¹² John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War 1835-1842* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), p. 280.

exhausted; the troops laid in camp unoccupied, and the enemy roamed unmolested, striking a blow wherever and whenever his inclination or wants dictated. Peace and war, friendship and hostility, went hand in hand, so often alternated, that defeat and disappointment were the inevitable result.¹³

Unsurprisingly, in the spring of 1841, Armistead requested to be relieved of his command; greener pastures than Florida existed for a general.¹⁴ At the same time, due to the costly nature of the militia, the Florida non-regulars were discharged at the end of March. These two events paved the way for Colonel Worth to take command, for without the Florida volunteers the secretary of war no longer felt the need to send down generals to outrank officers in the militia.¹⁵

Even though Worth only held the rank of colonel, he did not have to endure many overbearing critiques from Washington. As a prodigy of Winfield Scott, Worth stayed in the good graces of the high ranking U.S. army officials.¹⁶ In one of the first letters Worth received from Adjutant General Roger Jones, the official wrote that Secretary of War John Bell has “entire confidence in your ability and patriotism.”¹⁷ Worth would receive even more support from the military hierarchy after June 25, 1841; on that day the commanding general of the United States Army, Alexander Macomb, died and was replaced by Winfield Scott himself.¹⁸ In his orders from Scott, Worth usually received broad discretion to pursue his own decisions.¹⁹

While Worth kept good relations with Washington, his rapport with his peers in Florida occasionally lapsed into the acidulous. Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock wrote in his diary that Worth was “as arrogant and domineering as pride can make a man.” On one occasion, Worth

¹³ John John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2000), p. 247

¹⁴ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 287.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 292-294.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 309

¹⁷ Sprague, *The Florida War*, p. 265

¹⁸ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 301.

¹⁹ Winfield Scott to W. J. Worth, May 22, 1842, in Clarence E. Carter, ed. *Territorial Papers of the United States* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1962), vol. 25, pp. 477-478.

almost had Colonel William Gates arrested for shipping out an Indian leader.²⁰ The distinguished Seminole War historian John K. Mahon attests to the faults of Worth's personality. "[Worth] had a petty streak mingled with overweening vanity, which cropped up when he was not in a fight. Rash and impetuous, he often said things he regretted afterward. His mind was intense and narrow; he was self centered."²¹

When Worth assumed command in May of 1841, his superiors put immediate pressure on him to end the war as soon as possible. The war had become a national embarrassment and the Tyler administration wanted the political credit for ending the conflict. To that end, Adjutant General Jones, in letter written to Worth on May 14, gave Worth four main goals to accomplish: eliminate unnecessary expenditures in Florida, keep the regulars well disciplined, protect the citizenry, and terminate hostilities as quickly as possible.²²

Worth quickly began removing several of superfluous expenses in the army. Sprague, Worth's aide-de-camp, wrote the Floridians had grown so lecherous from profiting from the U.S. army that the civilians were doing all they could to protract the war.²³ Over the course of a year, Worth managed to save the war department almost \$175,000, though a portion of the savings came at the cost of removing units of both the infantry and dragoons from Florida.²⁴

The budget cuts, along with many other perceived transgressions, left the white settlers simmering with resentment towards Worth. Sprague disdainfully wrote that "the military, from the commander on down, were considered aggressors upon the rights and liberties of the civilian."²⁵ Soldiers viewed the white frontier settlers with contempt, while Floridians routinely criticized the commanders' military tactics, the average soldier's skills, and the heavy handed attitude of the military towards civil officials.²⁶

One of Worth's primary concerns as commander involved keeping discipline amongst his troops. The governor of Georgia picked a fight with Worth when he alleged to the Secretary of

²⁰ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 299.

²¹ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, pp. 294-295.

²² R. Jones to W. J. Worth, May 19, 1841, in Sprague, *The Florida War*, p. 267.

²³ Ibid. p. 268.

²⁴ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 298.

²⁵ Sprague, *The Florida War*, p. 268

²⁶ James M. Denham, "Some Prefer the Seminoles," p. 40.

War that Florida regulars had beaten and robbed two merchants from his state. Worth removed his regulars from the Georgia, but forcefully stated that the governor's complaints had no bearing on the situation.²⁷ The white settlers managed to vex Worth in other ways. The selling of liquor to the soldiers was illicit as per a territorial law of 1832; both the soldiers and settlers generally ignored the regulation. One incident is recorded where an itinerant musician shot a sergeant because the officer had attempted to confiscate the liquor the man was trying to sell.²⁸ While the white Floridians never scalped any of the regulars, the settlers must have been almost as annoying to Worth as the Seminoles he was trying to fight.

The elected territorial officials of Florida, both Whigs and Democrats alike, proved just as troublesome to Worth. Richard Keith Call, the Whig governor of the territory, repeatedly petitioned Worth to raise a six hundred man militia to protect the frontier.²⁹ David Levy, Florida's territorial delegate, actually called for the war department to override Worth's judgment that a militia was not needed. Levy even asked for an officer independent of Worth to take command of the militia, insinuating that Worth should restrict his tactics to offensive operations. In reply to Levy's letter, Secretary of War J. C. Spencer sent a tactful, but forceful response back in which he fully backed Worth.³⁰

Sprague, probably echoing Worth's thoughts on the matter, considered the officials' requests for a militia to be ignorant, popularity-seeking acts.³¹ To his credit, Worth was continuously refining his strategy for protecting the frontier. Originally Worth intended to eliminate the Indians between the frontier settlements and Withlacoochee area before traveling south.³² A raid on the Mandarin settlement on the St. John's River forced the commander to move north to take charge of the area. Worth maintained flexibility in positioning his forces along the frontier and instructed his commanders to do the same.³³ Worth's directions to his

²⁷ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 298.

²⁸ James M. Denham, "Some Prefer the Seminoles," pp 42-44.

²⁹ Sprague, *The Florida War*, p. 283.

³⁰ J.C. Spencer to David Levy, October 21, 1841 in Carter, ed. *Territorial Papers*, vol. 26: 381-382.

³¹ Sprague, *The Florida War*, p. 404.

³² Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 297.

district commanders show his devotion to defending the settlements. He ordered his commanders to expand their patrols, directed that any Indian who visited a checkpoint be arrested immediately, and revoked all previous restraints formerly imposed on his district commanders in respect to offensive expeditions.³⁴

After attempting to make the Florida frontier as secure as possible, Worth went on the offensive against the Seminoles. Worth believed that both military action and coercion could effectively eliminate the Indians from the state. By 1841, Osceola was dead, and Micanopy and Alligator had emigrated.³⁵ From 1841 to 1843, Worth was opposed by four chief foes. The first was Coacoochee, who led eighty warriors near the headwaters of the St. John. Halleck Tustenuggee operated near the Wahoo Swamp with approximately forty followers. Thlocko-Tustenuggee, also known as Tiger-Tail, controlled sixty braves near the Suwannee River. The last hostile group numbered about one hundred and sixty warriors led by Otalke-Thlocko, who was also known as The Prophet. The Prophet, while never doing any fighting himself, allied with a number of other chiefs in the Big Cyprus Swamp, such as Billy Bowlegs, Sam Jones, Hospetarke, and Fusse Hadjo.³⁶

Sprague credits Chief Coacoochee, who was also known as Wild Cat, with committing the most atrocities in Florida.³⁷ One of Worth's first experiences negotiating with an Indian leader occurred with Coacoochee during Armistead's tenure as commander. In March of 1841, Worth agreed to meet the Seminole leader in Fort Cummings. Coacoochee strolled into the fort dressed in a Hamlet costume that he had pillaged from a traveling troupe near St. Augustine. A second Indian in his retinue wore a Horatio costume, while yet another had attired himself as Richard III.³⁸

Coacoochee made a habit of impudently visiting frontier forts. The white officials would fruitlessly cajole the Seminole to agree to immigrate to Arkansas, while Coacoochee secured

³³ Ibid., p. 305.

³⁴ Sprague, *The Florida War*, p. 275.

³⁵ Kenneth W. Porter, "Billy Bowlegs in the Seminole Wars," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 45 (January 1967), p. 225

³⁶ Sprague, *The Florida War*, pp. 270-271.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 271.

³⁸ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, pp. 285-286.

food and supplies for his people. Days later, Coacoochee and any other Indians accompanying him would then inevitably disappear back into the forests and swamps. In early May, Coacoochee tried the same gambit at Fort Pierce with Major Thomas Childs. Childs managed to get the chief to agree to emigrate within the month. As the days went on, Childs began developing realistic suspicions that Coacoochee did not intend to honor his word. On June 4, Childs had Coacoochee and fifteen of his tribesmen seized.³⁹ The whites had suddenly caged the Wild Cat.

From that day on, Worth used Coacoochee as a pawn to bring in other Indians. Worth threatened Coacoochee and his fifteen followers with death if he could not convince his tribe to emigrate. By August 8, Coacoochee had brought in seventy-five of his eighty warriors. His band was dispatched to Arkansas, but Worth gave Coacoochee a bribe of eight thousand dollars to reel in other tribes. Coacoochee, who held great reputation in the eyes of other Seminoles as Chief Phillip's favorite son, would eventually persuade scores of Indians to surrender.⁴⁰

Coacoochee's greatest success came in luring one of The Prophet's followers, chief Hospetarke, to Worth's camp. Dressed in his "official gaudy dress," Coacoochee went to Hospetarke and explained that the whites wanted to have a peaceful council. In September, Hospetarke brought more than a dozen warriors to the council, where the Indians bartered for gun powder and enjoyed the free food. Coacoochee noticed signs of the band preparing to disappear into the wilderness and alerted the whites, reinforcing Worth's own suspicions. Worth brought Hospetarke and a few of his warriors onto a steamboat and generously offered to transport Hospetarke and his entire tribe west within a few months. When Hospetarke refused, Worth sprung a well-executed trap. Soldiers with bayonets blocked all the exits, while the officers menaced the unarmed Indians with swords.⁴¹ Hospetarke, who was approaching eighty years of age, peacefully surrendered. Coacoochee soon wandered onto the boat feigning drunkenness, thereby relieving himself of any appearance of wrong doing. Hospetarke's entire

³⁹ Ibid., p. 299.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 300.

⁴¹ Sprague notes, without a trace of irony, that right before the disreputable trap was sprung, "an informal council was held, congratulatory upon all sides that the white and red man could again meet each other in friendship." Sprague, *The Florida War*, pp. 299-300.

tribe surrendered itself to Worth a few days later.⁴² On October 12, 1841, Worth shipped off two hundred and eleven Indians, including chiefs Coacoochee and Hospetarke.⁴³

While deceit had proved to be a useful tool for capturing the Seminoles, Worth employed other tactics. In June, Worth sent out detailed orders to his field commanders. They would take the offensive against the Seminoles with a concerted thrust into Indian territory from Fort Brooke, Fort King, and Fort Harrison. Worth hoped to catch the Seminoles off-guard, summer campaigns in Florida were unheard of. Each command of two hundred men was broken up into individual groups of twenty soldiers, supplemented by a troop of dragoons. The groups would scour the swamps and forests, looking for trails to Indian settlements. Worth did not treat his men lightly. Mahon writes the Worth pursued his plan “with a zealot’s energy. His instructions were explicit and detailed ... ‘Scorn the exposed points in every direction - keep the men in constant motion-tax their strength to the utmost.’”⁴⁴

In July of 1841, 2,428 men were on the sick roll. In a letter to the Adjutant General, Worth wrote that the huge number of soldiers on the sick list soldiers had nothing to do with the strenuous campaign life—instead, the lack of excitement, heavy food and available indulgences of garrison duty were the real causes of the sickness.⁴⁵ The number of soldiers that succumbed to Florida’s various diseases is utterly appalling. From June of 1841 to February of 1842, over 15,000 men were listed on the sick rolls!⁴⁶

Worth drove his soldiers hard, but Sprague wrote that the back-braking pace of the campaign was the only way to get to the heart of the Seminole problem. Highly paid Negro guides and friendly Indians would lead the soldiers to Indian camps deep in the bowels of the Florida wilderness. In the extremely rare cases that the Seminole bands could be brought to battle, as illustrated by Major William Belknap and Major Joseph Plympton’s separate

⁴² Sprague, *The Florida War*, pp. 299-303.

⁴³ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 302.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 300-301.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

expeditions, the conflicts often resulted in unsatisfying draws netting two or three Indians killed or captured.⁴⁷

More often than not, the troops would come across recently abandoned camps; the soldiers could only vent their frustrations by hacking down the wooden huts and burning the Seminole's crops. Thus, Worth, like his predecessors, waged a war of attrition against the Indians' villages. While this reverse scorched-earth policy failed to satisfy the dispirited soldiers, the strategy's benefits became apparent over time as the Seminoles were steadily forced southwards.⁴⁸ In the winter of 1841, Lieutenant Sprague wrote:

The enemy found, to their sorrow, that they could be pursued at all seasons. Thirty-two fields were destroyed, containing all kinds of products, from five to twenty acres in extent. Five Indians were captured and one hundred and eighty sheds or huts burnt. The bands of Indians which for years had lived, from season to season, in the enjoyment of abundance... harassing the white man as suited to their convenience or inclination, were now driven to remote and unhealthy hiding places.⁴⁹

Worth also made use of another tactic: he worked to coordinate his activities with the U.S. navy. Naval Lieutenant John T. McLaughlin borrowed over sixty canoes from the army to conduct expeditions into the Florida swamps. The large number of canoes and the subsequent expeditions became known as the "Mosquito Fleet." McLaughlin quickly learned that the expeditions would be pointless without skilled informants to lead the sailors to the Indian haunts, so from then on out the army supplied the fleet with black interpreters and captured Indians to serve as guides. Worth also provided McLaughlin with the use of Fort Dallas to use as a shore base.⁵⁰ While the marines had to work incredibly hard for the smallest of victories, their efforts paid off; the operations of the Mosquito Fleet made it nearly impossible for the Seminoles to travel undetected in large groups in the coastal swamps.⁵¹

As Worth forced the Indians to retreat further and further into the wilds of South Florida, he instituted several policies designed to attract settlers to the newly vacated areas. Worth made

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 305-306.

⁴⁸ Sprague, *The Florida War*, pp. 276-277.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 283.

⁵⁰ George E. Buker, "The Mosquito Fleet's Guides and the Second Seminole War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 57 (January 1979), pp. 310-311.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 326.

army rations available to the inhabitants willing to return to the settlements they had previously fled from.⁵² Abandoned forts were turned over to settlers. Worth offered military help for the purpose of constructing additional forts, roads and cabins. He also assigned one of his officers for the specific task of overseeing resettlement. Worth's efforts first came to fruition in August of 1841, when twenty-one settlers established themselves at Cedar Hammock. A little while later thirty-three people settled at the Natural Bridge. Within seven months, twelve different settlement points sprung up on the new frontier containing over 600 new souls.⁵³

In August of 1842, Congress passed an Armed Occupation Act for Florida into law. The act allowed any head of family to obtain a title to 160 acres of Florida land, provided the settlers follow a few conditions: The family would pick land south of an invisible line that ran from a point three miles north of Palatka and ten miles south of Newnansville. The settlers would reside on that land for a five year period. The family would build a house and clear at least five acres. Lastly, the settlers were restricted from living within two miles of a military post. Governor Richard Keith Call originally developed the idea for such an act back in 1838, but the new law escalated Worth's existing policies for resettlement.⁵⁴

By February of 1842, Worth became convinced that the war was drawing to a close. On February 14, he sent a long letter to Scott detailing his opinion. Worth wrote that of the 300 Indians left in Florida, only 112 were men with fighting capacity. He then gave an extremely controversial assessment: Active military campaigning had succeeded its point of usefulness. The remaining Indians needed to be secured through "pacific and persuasive measures or not at all." Keeping the current number of troops in Florida steady simply gave the settlers, the soldiers, and the country as a whole inordinate expectations. With the war department's permission, Worth was prepared to restrict his operations to defense purposes only. In the mean time, he would bring back a couple of the immigrated chiefs in order to convince the remaining Seminoles on the wisdom of surrendering.⁵⁵

⁵² James M. Denham and Keith L. Huneycutt, Echoes from a Distant Frontier: The Brown Sisters' Correspondence from Antebellum Florida (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), p. 151.

⁵³ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 301.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁵⁵ W. J. Worth to Winfield Scott, February 14, 1842 in Carter, ed. *Territorial Papers*, vol. 26: 436-438.

Scott referred Worth's letter to Secretary of War Spencer. Spencer held a military council on the matter; out of all the officers present, only Major General Jesup concurred with Worth. The council felt that in light of how much blood and treasure had been spent on the war, the American people needed to see the conflict end on a tangible high note. Ironically, though the politically sensitive military council determined that Worth should not declare an end to hostilities, they ordered the commander's other propositions to be carried out in full. Back in Florida, the news of Worth's letter caused an utterly predictable public outrage.⁵⁶

His request denied, Worth increased his drive to capture Halleck Tustenuggee, the chief blamed for the Mandarin raid back in December. Sprague described Halleck as "a savage by nature, without a virtue of the head or heart to redeem his character. Adroit in his movements, bold and intrepid in action ... he had made the pioneer feel, as well as the army, that he was no ordinary antagonist." The Indian leader had skillfully operated from as far north as Mandarin to as far south as the Wahoo swamp. Halleck had been engaged in battle with Major Plympton near Dunn Lake on January 25th. When it became apparent that Plympton had the upper hand, Halleck and his Mikasukis easily disengaged from the fight.⁵⁷

On April 23 of 1842, Halleck and forty warriors were finally brought to battle near Pilacklakaha Swamp. Colonel Worth himself brought almost four hundred soldiers against Halleck's braves, who were positioned in a hammock surrounded by water. The Seminoles had cleared a field for defensive purposes, and assembled a log barricade at the front of their position. Worth directed the 2nd, 4th, and 8th infantry to form two lines, before sending them crashing through a mass of foliage and mud to break through the Indians' center. The vegetation was so thick that both sides had difficulty picking clean targets - only four whites were injured, one fatally, in the contest. As the infantry moved forward, Worth personally led a detachment of dragoons to hit the Seminoles from the rear. When Halleck realized the dragoons had maneuvered behind his warriors, he ordered the Indians to make a hasty retreat.⁵⁸ Worth's plan worked well. The fight against Halleck constituted the last action of the Second Seminole War

⁵⁶ Sprague, *The Florida War*, pp. 276-277.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 456-460.

that could be called a battle, but it proved decisive. Worth had captured a primary Indian hideout and destroyed the spirit of Halleck's band.⁵⁹

About a week later, Halleck agreed to travel north with Worth for a peace conference. Worth let Halleck make demands for supplies and to come and go from camp as he pleased. He took the chief off for a supposed trip to Fort Brooke and left instructions for Colonel John Garland to wait a few days before rounding up Halleck's exposed tribe. Garland succeeded at securing all of Halleck's tribe in one place by throwing a drunken feast for the band. As soon as Worth got word that Garland had Halleck's entire tribe in custody, the colonel had Halleck arrested. Using these duplicitous measures, Worth captured forty-three warriors, thirty-seven women, and thirty-four children - more than one third of the total number of Indians Worth had guessed remained in the state.⁶⁰

Worth then proceeded to use Halleck in much the same way he had manipulated Coacoochee. Halleck's tribe was shipped off, but the Seminole himself was bribed to communicate with other chieftains. Worth made good use of the discretionary powers granted by Scott and employed Halleck to pass on a friendlier message to the remaining Indians. If the Indians agreed to move to a predetermined reservation south of Peace Creak, they would be allowed to settle and plant without white interference.⁶¹ Worth took particular care to calculate the limits of the new reservation so that the boundaries would be easily containable and fall on land that white pioneers wouldn't have wanted to settle on anyways.⁶²

By the spring of 1842, the Tyler administration badly needed the political credit for ending the unpopular war. Secretary of War Spencer sent a letter to Scott on May 10, in which Spencer made clear that the president ardently desired a quick and efficient end to the conflict. Spencer wrote that Worth was now authorized to declare an end to hostilities at his own discretion.⁶³ Scott forwarded a copy of Spencer's letter to Worth on the eleventh, along with his

⁵⁹ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 308.

⁶⁰ Sprague, *The Florida War*, p. 463-466.

⁶¹ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, p. 309.

⁶² J. T. Sprague to the editor of the St. Augustine Herald, September 16, 1845, in Sprague, *The Florida War*, pp. 508-512.

⁶³ J. C. Spencer to Winfield Scott, May 10, 1842 in Carter, ed. *Territorial Papers*, vol. 26: 436-437.

praise for the capture of Halleck.⁶⁴ Though this went unmentioned in the Spencer letter, Worth's seizure of Halleck's band gave the public appearance that the war was ending on a triumphant note. With that "victory" in hand, the Tyler administration had the cover to claim their efforts for ending the war were a success.

Approximately a month later, on August 14, 1842, Worth formally announced in Order No. 28 that hostilities within the Florida territory had ceased.⁶⁵ Three days later, Worth ceded command to the officer next in rank, Colonel Vose of the 4th infantry, and immediately left for Washington. Along with his staff, Worth met with both President Tyler and Secretary of War Spencer. Tyler presented Worth with the commission of brigadier-general for "gallantry and highly distinguished services as commanding the forces in the war against the Florida Indians." Worth, for his part, took the opportunity to say that he was indebted to the activity, promptness, and endurance of his men.⁶⁶

Worth's stay in Washington, which probably seemed like a paradise compared to the time he had spent in Florida, was destined to be short lived. Colonel Vose, Worth's successor, had ran into trouble. Chief Tiger Tail was showing reluctance to stay within his assigned boundaries, while small bands of fighters caused chaos in middle Florida. Vose, sympathetic to the hardships of the Seminoles, vacillated over whether to use negotiation or force to corral the errant Indians. To make matters worse, on October 4th, a hugely destructive hurricane hit Cedar Key. The damage proved so great the Indians became even more unruly, convinced that the Great Spirit itself had struck the blow. Colonel Vose's regiment left Florida on September 30, 1842; Vose asked to follow it north. Worth assumed command once again on November 1.⁶⁷

Upon retaking command, Worth decided to go ahead and arrest Tiger Tale. Worth used the same dishonorable tactics that had worked so well against Coacoochee, Hospetarke, and Halleck. Worth, who was directly responsible for the capture of three of the four previously mentioned Seminole leaders, never received the same infamy allotted to Jesup after his seizure of Osceola. The circumstances under which the Indians were captured seemed remarkably similar, but fortunately for Worth's reputation, none of the other Seminoles matched Osceola's fame.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Winfield Scott to W. J. Worth, May 11, 1842, pp. 437-438.

⁶⁵ Sprague, *The Florida War*, p. 486.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 488.

⁶⁷ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, pp. 316-317.

And by 1842, the rest of the country had grown so tired of the Seminoles that they ceased to care about Worth's methods. Had his seizures of the Indians occurred earlier in the war, Worth would likely have ended up as maligned as Jesup.

All things considered, Worth lacked an appealing alternative. If he had used force against the Indian leaders willing to negotiate like Tiger Tail, the beleaguered bands would vanish back into the wilderness, only to reappear against the defenseless frontier settlements. Worth did his best to get the various Seminole leaders to emigrate on their own free will. Regimental aides Cooper, Seawell, and Sprague recorded a June 22 conversation Worth had with a sub-chief, Fosse Hadjo, urging him to relocate to Arkansas. Worth's appeal to Fosse Hadjo, in which he couched his message in terms he thought familiar to the Indians, looks ridiculous in retrospect. Worth said,

He had received word he the Great Father in Washington that there be no more fighting between his white and red children and that no more blood be shed between them, but that they must be friends and shake hands together, that although he lives a great distance from them he sees the bleached bones of those who have been killed and it makes his heart sad.

Worth declined to mention that the nagging political cost of continuing the Seminole War also made the Great Father in Washington's heart sad. Worth continued,

The Great Father in Washington who sends this word is not the same they had some time since but has recently been chosen by his white children.⁶⁸ He is willing his red children should remain in Florida or go to Arkansas as they may prefer; but as their friend and father he advises them not to remain here.

Incidentally, Fosse Hadjo chose to remain in Florida.⁶⁹

With Tiger Tail out of the way, Worth sent his men out far and wide to search deep into remote areas of the wilderness for small, unorganized hostile bands. By this time, the 8th infantry was the only regiment remaining in Florida. Considering how hard Worth drove them, the 8th had ample cause to resent their former commander. The conflict, despite Worth's formal

⁶⁸ It is unclear which president Worth is referring to. William Henry Harrison defeated Martin Van Buren in the election of 1840, but by the time Worth spoke, Harrison had died in office and been replaced by John Tyler. Should Worth have been talking about Harrison, he carefully omitted the fact that that particular Great Father was no longer giving the orders.

⁶⁹ Minutes of a Talk Held at Fort Brooke, July 22, 1842 in Carter, ed. *Territorial Papers*, vol. 26, 436-438.

declaration in August, continued to sputter tiredly on. The few remaining bands eventually disappeared into the Everglades, ostensibly under the command of Billy Bowlegs.⁷⁰

Worth's next few years in Florida were relatively easy. He set up his headquarters and St. Augustine and thoroughly enjoyed the benefits of the city.⁷¹ Corinna Aldrich, a doctor's wife living in St. Augustine, wrote that "Gen. Worth is still in command of the Garrison and his officers and staff form an attraction to [northern visitors] ... The old general is very likeable and entertains a great deal of company."⁷² In Aldrich's 1845 letters, she twice mentions attending rousing balls thrown by General Worth.⁷³ During Worth's tenure at St. Augustine, he found many reasons to celebrate, first and foremost his daughter's wedding to his aide-de-campe. On June 5, 1843, Brevet Captain John Sprague married Mary Worth, and Worth bought his new son-in-law a coquina house on Marine Street. The dwelling still stands today and is known in St. Augustine as "General Worth's house."⁷⁴

Worth's agreeable time in Florida came to an end in 1845. In March of that year, a joint resolution to annex Texas passed both houses of Congress. Then in July of 1845, President James Polk ordered Brigadier General Zachary Taylor to the Texas border to repel any potential Mexican Invasion. Taylor took up a position on the bank of the Nueces River, where Worth was assigned to join him. On October 13 Worth arrived at Taylor's position at the head of the newly formed 1st brigade, which had been formed by combining the 8th Infantry with twelve companies of artillery.⁷⁵

Worth's experience in the Mexican American War marked both the zenith and nadir of his career. Worth performed heroically in two critical U.S. victories, the battles of Monterey and Churubusco. Worth's enthusiastic biographer, Edward Wallace, compared Worth to a nineteenth

⁷⁰ Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, pp. 318-321.

⁷¹ Wallace, *General William Jenkins Worth*, p. 61

⁷² Corinna Aldrich to Mannevillette Brown, Oct 21, 1844 in James M. Denham and Keith L. Huneycutt, *Echoes from a Distant Frontier* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), p. 182.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 182, 185.

⁷⁴ Wallace, *General William Jenkins Worth*, p. 55.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-72.

century George Patton, while Mexican War historian Karl Bauer wrote that as a commander, Worth showed flashes of brilliance.⁷⁶

John Mahon, the foremost scholar of the Second Seminole War, put it perfectly when he wrote, “Could Worth have remained forever on the field there probably would not have been a more famous officer in the army.” Away from the battlefield, Worth’s impetuous vanity caught up to him. Before the actual fighting with Mexico began, hostilities erupted in Taylor’s camp. Worth and General David Twiggs became embroiled over a disagreement as to who stood second in rank to General Taylor. Taylor ducked the controversy and the matter ended up being referred to the war department.⁷⁷ Scott sided with Worth, a decision which caused one of Scott’s numerous adversaries, President Polk, to wade into the fray on Twiggs’ behalf. When Worth learned of the President’s involvement, he self-righteously tendered his resignation to Taylor. To Worth’s dismay, Taylor accepted.⁷⁸ Worth would later return to Taylor’s army, but because of his own reticence, he missed the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.

Eventually, Zachary Taylor’s thrust into northern Mexico stalled, and many of the officers, including Generals Twiggs and Worth, were transferred to an expedition led by Winfield Scott. Scott’s invasion of Vera Cruz and subsequent march on Mexico City should have been a glorious occasion for both Worth and Scott, instead, the campaign had the effect of turning the two lifelong friends to fierce enemies. Their feud grew so vicious that Worth, who originally named his only boy Winfield Scott Worth, made his son change his name to William Scott Worth. The fight between the two generals would stall Worth’s career and mar Scott’s triumphant campaign.

Unsurprisingly, the bad blood between the two men originated over a perceived slight. After Scott had seized Vera Cruz, he needed to send out an advance division to look ahead for Santa Anna’s main army. Twiggs’ division was encamped closest to the main road; logically, Twiggs received the honor of leading the advance guard. Worth, perhaps because of his earlier dispute with Twiggs, took his commander’s decision personally. He complained, and Scott’s

⁷⁶ K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican American War, 1846-1848* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p. 365.

⁷⁷ Eisenhower, *So Far from God, The U.S. War with Mexico 1846-1848* (New York: Random House, 1989), pp. 38-39.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p 65.

brusque reply failed to sooth Worth's psyche.⁷⁹ As the campaign went on, Worth started to interpret all of Scott's actions as personal insults.⁸⁰ After the war, Scott remembered Worth's streams of complaints and really began to twist the knife in.

After the capture of Mexico City, a controversy emerged between Generals Scott, Pillow, and Worth. Gideon Pillow, who was excellent as Polk's personal spy on Scott but a subpar general, wrote an anonymous letter to a New Orleans newspaper insinuating many of Scott's victories were due to Pillow's unadulterated, yet unrecognized, genius. This incensed Scott, who then issued an order banning all publicity-seeking letters containing accounts of specific battles. Worth was caught in the crossfire after an officer named James Duncan wrote an anonymous letter to the Pittsburg Post that credited Worth with discovering a useful trail at the battle of Tampico. Duncan confessed to writing the letter, but Scott, in an irritable fit of temper, had Pillow, Duncan, and Worth arrested for insubordination.⁸¹ The matter eventually was moved to a court of inquiry where Worth was absolved of wrong doing.⁸² Unfortunately, the inquiry proceedings were so outlandishly vitriolic between the commanders that the whole event marred the triumphant time after the great American victory.

The inquiry inflicted severe casualties on both men. Scott, who had been vying with Taylor for the Whig nomination for president in 1848, received only negative press from the whole situation. Taylor would win the nomination and the Presidency in 1848; then, in the Election of 1852, Scott lost the general election to a lesser war hero, Democratic candidate Franklin Pierce. Meanwhile, Worth experienced a steady decline in health. In December of 1848, Worth was transferred to Texas, where he took command of the state's Military Department. In San Antonio, Worth contracted Asiatic Cholera, the same disease that he had caught in the Black Hawk campaign in 1832. This time Worth lost the battle and died on May 7,

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 269.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 303.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 354-355.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 371-372.

1849, in his headquarters.⁸³ Scott outlived him by seventeen years, which guaranteed Worth's memory seventeen additional years of bad press.⁸⁴

General William Jenkins Worth left behind an interesting legacy. Many of Worth's contemporaries called him "the Murat of the American Army."⁸⁵ This title is particularly fitting, not because of Worth's exploits, but because Murat's enjoyed notoriously rancorous relationships with the other Napoleonic Marshals. Among Mexican War historians, the general consensus of Worth revolves around his trivial feuding with Twiggs and Scott, not his military feats. Throughout his career, Worth exhibited a level of petty obstinacy equal to Scott himself, but that fact should not obscure the daunting obstacles Worth overcame as a commander in Mexico and, especially, in Florida. While Worth will always be remembered as the petulant general of Mexican War fame, he deserves credit for the service he rendered his country on an American frontier far from Mexico.

⁸³ Wallace, *General William Jenkins Worth*, p. 187.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

Slavery, Suspicion, and Secession: St. Augustine during the Sectional Crisis

By Tanja Speaker

Throughout the history of the United States, the North and South have differed on many issues such as the preferable size of government, which political party to back, and the driving forces of the economy. However, the most significant difference between the North and the South involved slavery during the Antebellum period. Though slavery had been a common practice in both the English and Spanish empires, by 1850, slavery had died out in America except for in the South. By that time the issue became the greatest source of agitation between the two sections. This paper will explore the sectional conflicts of the mid-nineteenth century as they played out in the pages of the *St. Augustine Ancient City*.

Slavery in St. Augustine and other areas in the East Florida region was different because it operated, in large part, on Spanish traditions. Under Spanish custom, control was looser and work was done generally based on what historians have called a “task system.”

This system allowed slaves some freedom of movement away from the direct supervision of their masters. As historian Larry Rivers has noted, the Spanish officials also utilized blacks in defense of their isolated and poorly defended colonies.¹ The transition of Florida from Spanish to American control involved quite a shift in policy towards slaves.

When Florida became a territory of the United States in 1821, harsher slave codes were passed almost immediately, as was the pattern in other states in the South. Nervous about the large number of free blacks, fugitives, and Indians living around them, the planters in Northern Florida clamored for stricter slave laws. Slaveowners felt the mere presence of these groups of people would tempt slaves to runaway or disobey their owners. There were no minimum requirements of how much food or shelter a slave had to receive, but there were limitations on punishment, which masters often disregarded. But for the most part, planters took very good care of their slaves because they were the biggest investments on the plantations.² The

¹ Larry Rivers, *Slavery in Florida, Territorial Days to Emancipation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), pp. 2-9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8, 25-27.

production and efficiency of a farm was directly related to how well the slaves were able to carry out their tasks.

Questions regarding management of the slaves were of constant concern to the planters. For example, one article that appeared in the St. Augustine *Ancient City* cautioned not to treat their slaves too cruelly. Otherwise, slaves might fall prey to the temptations of the abolitionists who were trying to entice the blacks away with foolish notions of freedom. The *Ancient City* also speculated that only about one in a thousand slave owners treat their slaves harshly, and the few that do suffer rebuke from their neighbors.³

Slaves were chattel property, and master paid taxes on every slave.⁴ Free blacks were also susceptible for taxation on their own account. Both free blacks and slaves were closely regulated by state and city statutes. In St. Augustine, blacks had to obey strict rules. They were not allowed to be outside their plantation past 10 o'clock, to behave in "riotous" manner in public places, to meet with other persons of color for any reason, be intoxicated in public, or serve drinks.⁵ Also, white people were forbidden from mingling in public with blacks or allowing people of color to meet on their premises. Punishment for these acts always consisted of a fine, imprisonment, or whipping (possibly to the point of death) depending on the circumstances; but a white man committing the same crime would almost always only have to pay a fine.⁶ The enforcement of these state laws was not as rigid in East Florida because of the looser traditions that the region inherited from its strong Spanish roots.⁷

By the 1820s, the tradition of pairing a slave state and a free state had begun to preserve the balance of power between the states, especially in the Senate. On March 3, 1845, Florida entered into the union as a slave state along with Iowa, which was free.⁸ White abolitionists from the North started petitioning Congress against slavery as early as the 1930s, causing a great backlash from the Southern States. The Northern abolitionists were able to lobby Congress by

³ St. Augustine *Ancient City*, August 2, 1851.

⁴ Ibid., January 17, 1852.

⁵ Ibid., November 23, 1850.

⁶ Rivers, *Slavery in Florida*, p. 141.

⁷ Ibid, p. 142.

⁸ Ibid, p 14.

disguising their arguments to appear like they were only “against slavery in the District of Columbia and against what they call the internal slave trade.”⁹ However, the Southerners were not fooled by this ploy, and were immediately aware of the plan to overturn slavery in its entirety. The South felt abolitionists had no right to ask Congress to make an amendment about slavery because they had no control over individual state governments. The South passionately believed that the North was only using Congress as an instrument to ruin and degrade the South, and in response, Florida’s law enforcement in particular was greatly influenced by the fear of the North targeting the institution of slavery.¹⁰

The abolitionists were adamant about abolishing slavery; they felt, even though it only took place in one region of the country, slavery cast a dark shadow on the entire nation. The constitution forbade the North from meddling with the peculiar institution and Northerners were required, by law, to do nothing more or nothing less than return fugitive slaves back to their Southern Masters. And yet Northerners often laxly enforced the Fugitive Slave Laws, or turned a blind eye altogether. Many white Floridians tried to make the case that slaves in the South faced far better conditions than free and runaway blacks in the North.¹¹ Slaveholders sincerely believed that escaped slaves had a horrible lot. To the Southerners’ minds, their former slaves would go hungry, lack a means of supporting themselves, and fail to find food or shelter without the paternal supervision of their white masters

In the North, while blacks were often spoken about with words of sympathy by abolitionists, the general populace still treated them like outcasts. A St. Augustine Newspaper quoted an article that appeared in the New York Tribune to prove that blacks enjoyed better lives in the South, as many of the former slaves had become vagrants and drunkards once away from the South. Black populations in the North, the article claimed, were dying out.¹² The cotton field was said to be the only place where “Negroes could thrive and they are intended to stay

⁹ Ancient City, June 13, 1850

¹⁰ James M. Denham, “*A Rogue’s Paradise*”: *Crime and Punishment in Antebellum Florida, 1821-1861* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press) p 207.

¹¹ St. Augustine *Ancient City*, August 3, 1850.

¹² *Ibid.*, July 12, 1851.

here.”¹³ The St. Augustine *Ancient City* boasted that if “one of these ‘free soil’ philanthropists should visit a plantation in Florida, he would find the slave the happiest being on earth.”¹⁴

Southerners’ also had strong economic reasons for wanting to keep the slaves on the farm. To abolish slavery, white Southerners believed, would leave the southern region desolate and be a huge blow to the commerce of the entire country. “Southern slavery will stand as long as modern civilization will stand.”¹⁵ The South did not want to give up their right to own slaves because they were such a vital part of their agricultural economy. Already, slave stealing was the most serious and hated offense in Florida.¹⁶ This was a capital offense, punishable by \$1,000 fine, an hour on the pillory, 6 months in jail, or even being branded with a “SS”.¹⁷ Freed blacks were seen as a likely potential threat to help slaves escape, so white Floridians were always trying to get them either back into slavery or out of Florida. The biggest fear of Southerners was that free blacks were being used as tools of abolitionists to get closer to the slaves.¹⁸

Again, it was asserted by advocates of the institution that slave labor was the only way to ensure the cultivation of cobs in a hostile southern climate, excessive heat and mosquitoes drove away free labor. The third of American land with slave labor produced more than the rest of the country.¹⁹ The Jacksonville *Standard* pointed out that when Haiti emancipated their slaves, exports dropped dramatically. Georgia Senator Alfred Iverson asserted in 1859 that the same drop in the economy would occur, especially in the cotton and sugar markets.²⁰ The whole American economy, both in the South and in the North, would suffer.

Daniel Webster, a Whig Senator from Massachusetts and Secretary of State at the time, was the cause of uproar in June of 1851 in St. Augustine. Webster had previously voiced his support in Congress of both Northern and Southern rights under the Constitution, but when he

¹³ Jacksonville *Standard*, March 10, 1859.

¹⁴ St. Augustine *Ancient City*, August 3, 1850.

¹⁵ Ibid., August 16, 1851.

¹⁶ Denham, *A Rogue’s Paradise*, p 96.

¹⁷ Ibid., p 97.

¹⁸ Ibid., p 98.

¹⁹ St. Augustine *Ancient City*, October 26, 1850.

²⁰ Jacksonville *Standard*, February 24, 1859.

opposed the westward spread of slavery, the *Ancient City* and its readers quickly turned against him and felt he could not be trusted to fight for the rights of the southern States. The *Ancient City* printed that Webster “regretted extremely” the fact that Congress had “no power to do anything about slavery in the South.”²¹ Webster also stated that the only states that should have a right to own slaves were the original thirteen colonies which were formed before the Constitution was written, and if he had the power, he would never have consented to slavery anywhere.

Dr. Daniel Lee, an agricultural professor at Athens College in Georgia, acknowledged that slavery was evil, but decided the benefits outweighed those evils.²² He also noted the reproductive nature of slavery, which added to its power and value in Southern heritage. The only limiting factor affecting slave populations besides than abolitionists, he argued, was the ban on the African slave trade, which began in 1808. Yet if slavery was an untouchable institution in the South, why should the slave trade be illegal? Without the African slave trade, the price would continue to increase and only the wealthy planters would be able to have their own slave, preventing other whites from really prospering.²³ More slaves would mean more profits for all, including Northern and European manufacturers of cotton. Without a strong slave trade to increase supply, the logic went, small planters would not be able to obtain more slaves due to the increasingly high demand and corresponding cost. And without a large slave population in those states, abolitionists would have an easier time undermining the system.²⁴

The most significant controversy that led directly to the Civil War was the issue of the expanding slavery into the Western territories, especially given the tradition of pairing free states and slave state’s admittance into the Union. Originally, Congress admitted Maine as a free state and Missouri as a slave state and prohibited slavery in the Louisiana Territory north of the 36-30° line. After the Mexican War, the United States annexed land west of Louisiana and Texas. California moved so rapidly creating a state constitution banning slavery that Congress had to immediately take up the issue of whether slavery could expand beyond the borders of the former boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase Territory. Congress attempted to settle the issue by

²¹ St. Augustine *Ancient City*, June 14, 1851.

²² Jacksonville *Standard*, March 3, 1859.

²³ Ibid., March 10, 1859.

²⁴ Ibid.

passing the Compromise of 1850. The legislation provided that the New Mexico and Utah territories be added to the Union with no mention of slavery. California would be a free state, and the slave trade in the District of Columbia would be abolished.²⁵

The main benefit for the South in the Compromise was the addition of the Fugitive Slave Act, which called for all runaway slaves in the North to be captured and returned to their masters in the South. As it would turn out, however, the South would ultimately be disappointed by the act because it proved almost impossible to enforce. Abolitionists were doing everything they could to encourage the populace to disregard the law. Cities like Boston held meetings to discuss ways of obstructing the law.²⁶ The state of Vermont even passed an act to nullify the Fugitive Slave Bill in their state, though some in the state later stated that they felt nullification was regrettable.²⁷

The St. Augustine *Ancient City* *printed that most Southerners should not trust this confession because there is already a law already on record in Vermont from years past that states that no public figure is allowed to aid in the return of fugitive slaves. The South argues that returning slaves is much less of a hassle than trying to overturn the law. A man claimed a returned slave on June 26, 1852, and there was no excitement, problems, or disturbances. The slave was placed back into the property of the man and they went on their way.^{28*}

The South felt cheated by the Compromise of 1850 because it had to give up territories which the South paid for in blood during the Mexican War. In addition, many Southern whites believed the abolition of slave trade in the District of Columbia was unfair and just the first step for outlawing slavery as a whole. Congress, they insisted, had no right to ban slavery in the territories as was stated in Wilmot Proviso. The South needed to band together to protect itself from northern aggression against their institution.

By September of 1850, calls for secession from the Union began to appear in Florida newspapers. The South reasoned that they had a right to secede because the states entered the Union voluntarily, and if they did not receive the rights they were entitled to, they could

²⁵ Ibid., February 3, 1859.

²⁶ St. Augustine *Ancient City*, October 15, 1850.

²⁷ Ibid., January 4, 1851

²⁸ Ibid., June 26 1852.

overthrow or begin their own government. The St. Augustine *Ancient City* declared that secession was the only reasonable release because the North refused to adhere to the Fugitive Slave Act. The Constitution is a compact between both regions of the Union, and if one does not adhere to its regulations, the other has the right to withdraw from the compact.

Southern newspapers reprinted excerpts from newspapers in the North that stated how they were aware of fugitive slaves living among them. Those same Northern newspapers invited any interested abolitionists to come to meetings so they could discuss ways to draw more slaves away from the plantations. In response, Southerners warned that the North had not yet seen the “hidden thorn” of the South when it becomes ready to take action.²⁹

South Carolina was most radical state in regards to states’ rights and secession. Congressman Langdon Cheves believed the unity of the South had become very strong at this point and the states would secede together. He believed the South “cannot exist under present Government ... without being a degraded and oppressed people.”³⁰ Even as late as 1859, Georgia Senator Alfred Iverson still opposed secession, even as he hoped the Union would respect and honor every region of the nation.³¹ He claimed the only way Georgia would secede from the Union was if the Federal Government abolished slavery outright.³² Iverson was not sure whether or not the Union would actually act to eliminate slavery in the South.

The slavery question, along with controversies over state’s rights, helped pave the way to the start of the Civil War. Both sides of the Sectional conflict had very strong feelings on the morality of slavery, not to mention the economic aspects of that institution. The North opposed slavery on moral grounds and also feared the economic power that the institution gave slaveholding interests in the government. The South believed northern agitators were disregarding the Constitution in their attempts to do away with slavery. Florida would officially secede from the Union in January of 1861.³³ A few months later, the first shots of the Civil War

²⁹ *Ancient City*, October 12, 1850.

³⁰ St. Augustine *Ancient City*, August 9, 1851.

³¹ *Jacksonville Standard*, February 3, 1859.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Rivers, *Slavery in Florida*, p 229.

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were fired on April 12, 1861. Regardless of which side was correct, both combatants stood their ground, the situation escalated, and the nation plunged into one of the darkest times in American history. That terrible, bloody Civil War, along with the buildup that led to the conflict, would make a huge impact on Florida for decades to come.

“With Malice Toward None and Charity for All”: Emancipation and Reconstruction in Florida, 1865-1868

By Jillian Swartz

The Emancipation of slaves and the period of Reconstruction that followed was a time of tumultuous change and reform which had far reaching implications on Florida society, politics, and its people. The time marked an end of the Civil War, as well as the beginning of an era of inevitable and much needed change. Every aspect of life was affected—employment, industry, social norms and customs, family, schools, population demographics, race relations, and political views and opportunities, to name a few. While both the motivation behind Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation and Congress’ success in facilitating Reconstruction are debatable, it cannot be denied that the attempt to implement such a sheer transformation was indeed a wonder in and of itself.

At the closing of the war, Florida was in a dire condition. Out of all the Confederate States, Florida had the smallest population, which numbered less than 200,000 people and was spread out across 60,000 mile of mostly rural land. The state was relatively impoverished, consisting of a people who were, for the most part, “dirty, poor, and destitute” and harbored much animosity towards both Northerners and the government.¹ Emancipation was initially granted on May 9, 1862 by Major General David Hunter, who was the Commander of the Department of the South; this action proclaimed the freedom of slaves in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. Though the President initially overrode Hunter’s decision, he ironically issued his own Proclamation of Emancipation on September 22, 1862 after the Battle of Antietam and the passing of the Second Confiscation Act. This first order declared that all slaves in any Confederate state would be freed if that state did not rejoin the Union by the start of the New Year. The second order, given on January 1, 1863, specifically named each state.

The government took steps to build upon Lincoln’s Proclamation, a process which took the form of three major initiatives. The first of the three was to recruit blacks into the Union army soon after the Proclamation was issued. It provided able-bodied men for the Union and

¹ Joe M. Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida 1865-1877* (Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1965), pp. 2-4.

also gave blacks a sense of pride in fighting for their own freedom. All in all, some 180,000 blacks enlisted in the army and another 18,000 served in the navy the remaining two years of the war. A little over 1,000 blacks from Florida served in Union forces.² The second initiative involved formulating a way to free all slaves, as the Emancipation Proclamation only emancipated the slaves in Confederate states. To that end, Congress eventually passed the Thirteenth Amendment on December 6, 1865. Lastly, the Freedmen's Bureau was created to assist the former slaves in their pursuit of freedom.

As one might imagine, after a 250 year old institution had been abolished, both whites and blacks were left trying to make some sense of their newfound positions in life. Because the Proclamation freed slaves in Confederate areas, liberty did not come for most of these blacks until the war ended and troops infiltrated the area, releasing the slaves as they went. Many slaves tested their newfound freedom gradually. To walk off their plantation without permission or fear of punishment was so novel to the former slaves that many of the men simply roamed; most eventually came back to the area of their previous homes to find work. The freed slaves each reacted differently; some responded with shock, others with tears of joy, and more than a few must have felt sheer bewilderment. While many blacks migrated, some chose to stay at their plantation to harvest the crop and make earnings in order to afford a new home. Some still chose to follow the Union army in hopes of employment, others simply moved to towns where they might find work, while another portion chose to avoid towns completely and settled in what became known as the "black belts".

The majority of the former slaves did not respond aimlessly to their newfound freedom. Blacks delineated freedom not only by the removal of the physical reminders of their enslavement, but also by exercising their own free will and independence. This is why so many picked up and moved; they did so simply because they could. More importantly, freed slaves refused to be subservient any longer, and in doing so, fought back against the very basis of slavery-the idea that blacks were a lower class of human being and ought to be treated as such.³

White people's reactions, on the other hand, ranged from disapproval to outright hostility. While there were a few die-hard Southerners who refused to accept reality, most recognized

² Jerrell H. Shoffner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1974), pp. 19.

³ Michael Perman, *Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc, 2003) pp. 15-16.

Emancipation, but acted in a way that limited blacks' freedom in an attempt to reinforce the idea of inferiority and subservient status. The infamous set of laws that came to be known as the Black Codes exemplified the southern push to make blacks second class citizens. Racial violence was commonplace, and now that the freedmen lacked the protection they had had when they were defined by law as property, blacks were forced to put up with physical intimidation from potentially all hostile white Southerners, not just their masters.

While slavery was gone, the idea of racial inferiority still permeated the state of Florida. In July 1865, the Jacksonville *Florida Union* declared, "In every respect the whites are the dominant race, and would remain so though the negroes had the ballot to-morrow.... So far as controlling intellect, nervous energy, ambition, education, self-possession, and self-dependence, constitute elements of dominancy, they will be with the whites. So far as the power of a dominant race is increased by the exercise of power, and by the possession of hereditary and historical freedom ... much also will the continued supremacy of the white race in the South be guaranteed."⁴ There had previously existed a set of slave codes in the state, a few of which were found unconstitutional, but it was these that gave way to the development of the black codes that whites used to keep blacks disenfranchised. Early Black Codes were drawn up both in Mississippi and South Carolina, and while these set of conditions received strong criticism from Northerners, Florida drew up codes that were almost as harsh as the slave codes had been. The Black Codes were not set in stone; rather, they were an arbitrary arrangement of various laws that sought to make blacks feel inferior. They covered acts dealing with labor contracts, vagrancy, apprenticeship, marriage, taxation, the judicial system, and crime and punishment. The punishments blacks received usually far exceeded the offense, and undisputedly worked in the whites favor. For example, a crop lien law ordered that a black who had rented land to raise crops on failed to pay out at the year's end, he would be liable until next year's crop when he could finally pay.⁵

Indeed, many southern states had begun drafting constitutional conventions before the war had even ended, which renounced their succession and declared the abolition of slavery. Yet

⁴ Jacksonville *Florida Union*, July 22, 1865.

⁵ Jerrell H. Shoffner, *Nor Is It Over Yet* (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1974) pp. 48-53.

the conventions set out ordinances pertaining to indenturement and apprenticeship and through careful phrasing, deliberately left a vague intermediate between slavery and free labor.⁶

While many of the former Confederate States' constitutions did not specifically discriminate against blacks, the laws were obviously written with the free Negro in mind. The Mississippi Convention did away with a grand jury in cases involving affray, drunkenness, and vagrancy. The Alabama Convention specifically forbade the intermarriage of blacks and whites. The Florida convention allowed Negroes to testify only in cases involving another black, but the jury was to be all white. Negroes were often subjected to extreme punishments, much more so than their Caucasian counterparts. Many freedmen could not get their cases heard at all, or if a crime was committed against them by a white man, the offender often got away unpunished.⁷

One of the early initiatives of Emancipation by the federal government was the formation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedman, and Abandoned Lands on March 3, 1865. Originally, the Bureau was to oversee the transition from slavery to freedom and to be a kind of guardian to ex-slaves. However, members of the Freedmen's Inquiry Commission agreed that this would be coddling the former slaves and such oversight was clearly the wrong way to go about helping blacks. Indeed, the commissioner's report stated, "There is as much danger in doing too much as in doing too little. The risk is serious that, under the guise of guardianship, slavery, in a modified form, may be practically restored....The freedman should be treated at once as any other free man."⁸

The Bureau was formed under the War Department and was to function for a period lasting only one year after the end of the war. Officially, the Bureau existed to supervise and manage all abandoned lands and to control all subjects related to freedmen and refugees in the Confederate states.⁹

The Freedmen's Bureau had problems to begin with: it had broadly defined powers (i.e. "all subjects related to freedmen and refugees") but little financial support. The Bureau's

⁶ Theodore Brantner Wilson, *The Black Codes of the South* (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965), pp. 61-66.

⁷ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, pp. 44-45.

⁸ Perman, *Emancipation and Reconstruction*, pp. 24-25.

⁹ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, p. 19.

resources were so inadequate that it depended upon funding from benevolent northern associations in order to survive. President Andrew Johnson was not supportive of the Bureau from the very beginning; the Jacksonville *Florida Union* stated that he initially “returned the Freedmen’s Bureau Bill to the house without his signature” and “the legislation it proposes is not consistent with the welfare of the country, and that it falls clearly within the reasons assigned in his veto message.”¹⁰ There was also a palpable feeling of dislike among white Floridians towards the Freedman’s Bureau. The Jacksonville *Florida Union* was of the understanding that “the scheme of Colonizing this state by freedmen, has been a favorite object of the Freedman’s Bureau” supported by the “radicals” in Congress.¹¹ General Oliver Otis Howard was appointed commissioner of the Bureau, a position that he held until the organization ceased to function. Howard saw the Bureau as a means of both helping the former slaves adjust to their new position in society and ensuring that freedmen received equal treatment under the law.¹²

The Freedman’s Bureau took some time to establish itself in Florida. Even though Major General Rufus Saxton was appointed Assistant Commissioner of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida on June 13, 1865, the Bureau did relatively little during this time. The Freedmen’s Bureau did not start to function effectively until Colonel Thomas W. Osborn was made assistant commissioner in September of 1865.¹³

The Bureau went far beyond what had been mandated to them by Congress. They dispensed relief like food, clothing, and land, established special tribunals for freedmen to obtain the justice they were denied in Southern courts, organized labor contracts between freedmen and landlords, and set up and administered schools. These responsibilities had not been assigned to them by Congress, yet the Bureau took each challenge on and in the process made the organization much more effective. By rising to meet each obstacle, the Freedmen’s Bureau increased its power far beyond the limited functions Congress had originally allotted for the organization¹⁴

¹⁰ Jacksonville Florida Union, July 21, 1866.

¹¹ Jacksonville Florida Union, February 3, 1866.

¹² Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, p. 59.

¹³ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴ Perman, *Emancipation and Reconstruction*, p. 25.

Relief was the immediate task at hand for the Bureau. Freedmen, as well as white refugees, needed to be fed and sheltered. This problem was closely tied to the employment system. Therefore, Osborn encouraged freedmen to stay on plantations or return to the ones they had previously left. With only a limited amount of provisions, Osborn issued the least amount of supplies possible in order to turn away what he saw as “professional ration-drawers.” Still, approximately 20,000 rations were issued each month during the winter of 1865-1866. Most of the food went to Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Fernandina, as these towns had the highest concentration of freedmen and refugees.¹⁵

While the Bureau temporarily took the task of issuing rations in order to avoid mass starvation amongst the freedmen, the biggest change the organization undertook involved the labor system in Florida. A system of compensated labor had cropped up after the war, in which a planter and several freedmen signed some kind of contract. Most of the contracts were grossly unfair towards the freedmen; it was these that required Bureau intervention. The contracts that seemed reasonable were overseen by the Bureau to make sure they were settled as it stated in the agreement. Usually the contracts involved the planters giving land, tools, mules and housing for the laborers and their families. The freedmen then worked from Monday morning until Saturday night, occasionally less as long as the crop didn’t suffer. There were, of course, variations, but this arrangement seemed to be the norm.¹⁶

Bureau officials saw to it that blacks were treated fairly and received adequate compensation. They also provided strong enforcement of the contracts that the freedmen had signed. Sometimes an agent had to bring a freedman back to the plantation that he had left so that he might complete his contract. While the Bureau tried to be an impartial negotiator, the first year of its existence it had a persistent problem with being understaffed, which made real progress difficult. For a large part of the Bureau’s existence, it rarely had the resources or the manpower to enforce a labor contract when a complaint was made.¹⁷ The Bureau also took upon itself the responsibility of launching investigations if any harm was done to Negroes working on

¹⁵ Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁷ Perman, *Emancipation and Reconstruction*, p. 26.

plantations.¹⁸ With a small clerical staff in Tallahassee, and 25 field agents around the state at various times, to say the Freedman's Bureau was stretched thin is an understatement.

In July 1866, Congress overrode a presidential veto to extend the life of the Freedman's Bureau for another two years. This was beneficial in helping the Bureau accomplish its longest-lasting contribution in Florida-education for blacks. Not only did they encourage and build schools for Negroes, they left a lasting educational system to build upon. While money was limited, charitable associations contributed large amounts of money and many supplied teachers as well. Since most of the property confiscated during the war had been given back to its Confederate owners, there was also a shortage of buildings. As a result, many church buildings were used, but even these were demanded back in some cases. Whites often did their best to obstruct in any way they could, limiting the buildings blacks could use for educational purposes and intimidating northern whites from teaching at black schools were both particularly effective tactics. Most of these teachers found it hard to find a place where room and board was cheaper than their monthly salary, while other locations refused to let them take housing altogether. Some whites actively threatened northern teachers, vandalized school buildings, and harassed the black students, all in an effort to prevent the education of their former slaves.¹⁹

Despite these setbacks, available education for blacks continued to grow; the average student attendance in 1866 stood at 2,726, as opposed to 1,900 only a year before.²⁰ As a whole, the Bureau also reported the creation of 740 new schools by January of 1866 in the former Confederate states and border states combined, with a total of 1,314 teachers and 90,589 students. Four years later, these numbers increased to 2,677 schools, 3,300 teachers, and 149,581 students.²¹ Having been denied the chance at formal education for so long, freedmen approached learning with great enthusiasm and interest. Many whites were impressed, albeit surprised, at the black students' progress; indeed, a woman who had taught for twenty years remarked upon observing a class of freedmen, "I could not have believed it possible that these people could have made such progress in the time. I am astonished at the improvement they

¹⁸ Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, April 24, 1866.

¹⁹ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, p. 104.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

²¹ Perman, *Emancipation and Reconstruction*, pp. 26-27.

have made.”²² However, regardless of the freedman’s enthusiasm for learning, academic growth was usually very slow. This was partly due to the fact that some teachers were hardly better readers than the students they were trying to educate.²³ As time went on, and opposition to the education of freedman declined as funding increased, older men and women began enrolling in classes too.²⁴ By 1868, attendance had increased to 3,328 students who regularly attended classes, and the Bureau was even able to start erecting buildings designated as schools.²⁵ These events showed the whites who were still opposed to Negro schooling that the drive for education was not going to be diminished with time.

Ostensibly, once slaves were freed, the question of what exactly freedom entailed came up. While Negroes were free men, many whites were strongly opposed to their enfranchisement.²⁶ Their defiance toward “immediate universal” black suffrage was based upon several factors. There were whites who were simply racist and were against any legislation that would make them and the Negro equal. Then there were those who feared enfranchisement might give blacks a dangerous newfound sense of power. And a somewhat legitimate fear was that the freedmen were simply unqualified for suffrage.²⁷ Some even thought the freedmen were apathetic toward suffrage, though on the contrary a number of Florida freedmen had “sent a statement to the U.S. Senate requesting that no state be allowed to pass an amendment to the Constitution which would disfranchise anyone because of race or color.”²⁸ The November election in 1865 of Governor David S. Walker, along with his subsequent speeches, summed up the general feeling of Florida whites. Walker stated that freedmen should be protected, but not granted suffrage. He was adamant that Florida “not give in” to the demand for Negro suffrage.²⁹ However, a few whites were not against Negro suffrage; the Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel* gave

²² Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, p. 102.

²³ Ibid., p. 103.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 107.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 130.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 131.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 132.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 134.

updates on news from Congress and the progress made in forming new propositions regarding voting.³⁰

Ultimately, the First Reconstruction Act was passed on March 2, 1867, despite President Johnson's veto, granting freedmen the right to vote. The former Confederate states could not reenter the Union until they had "formed a constitution framed by a convention of delegates elected by universal manhood suffrage, had guaranteed Negro suffrage, and had accepted the Fourteenth Amendment."³¹ Also under the First Reconstruction Act was the ensuing military control in ten Southern states. The former Confederate States were subsequently divided into five military districts. Florida was part of the Third Military District, which also contained Alabama and Georgia.³² The power and privileges of the state politically, the eventual removal of troops, and the state's return to the Union were based upon their progress in granting Negro suffrage. Dubbed the "military bill" by Southerners, the First Reconstruction Act led to many states engaging in "masterly inactivity;" The majority of the unrepentant Southerners preferred to stubbornly remain under military government and have no representation in Congress rather than give the black man the right to vote.³³

Many Southern states held out by not ratifying the 14th Amendment, hoping it would be ruled unconstitutional. The more sensible route to take would have been to reenter the Union so they could have influenced the outcome of the 1868 election and effectively ended military rule. Congress made up their minds for them by passing the Second Reconstruction Act on March 23, 1867, which made the commanding generals of each of the military districts responsible for voter registration. Registration boards were composed of three civilians, two whites and one black, while army officers and Freedman's Bureau agents were present at enrollment sites to keep the peace. The registration count in Florida consisted of 11,148 whites and 15,434 blacks who had now taken the oath to become eligible to vote.³⁴ To further clarify voting procedure, Congress passed a Third Reconstruction Act on July 2, 1867. This subsequently gave the voter registration

³⁰ Tallahassee, Florida Sentinel, April 28, 1866.

³¹ Ibid., p. 139.

³² Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, p. 158.

³³ Ibid., p. 159.

³⁴ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, pp. 140-141.

boards the power to deny registration to anyone they believed to be disfranchised along with the ability to revise the vote registration lists according whom they deemed eligible or ineligible.³⁵

The issue of Negro suffrage was eventually taken up by whites seeking to manipulate the black vote; various groups contested for the new voting block. Various groups such as the Union League (also known as the Loyal League), the Lincoln Brotherhood, and the Union Republican Club were involved in the advancement of Negroes in politics. The Lincoln Brotherhood was a secret organization for freedmen founded and led by Assistant Commissioner Osborn as president of the Bureau³⁶. The Union League was initiated in order to compete with the Lincoln Brotherhood in organizing freedmen politically. It was founded by Northern minister Liberty Billings, along with the African American William U. Saunders and a white man named Daniel Richards, both of whom served as representatives of the National Republican Committee.³⁷ Most blacks by 1867 came to support this radical group, which was ultimately denounced by native white Democrats, conservative Republicans, and military officials.³⁸ The third major “splinter party” of the Republicans was the Union-Republican Club, which originated in Jacksonville. The well-known Republicans that led this group included Ossian B. Hart and Harrison Reed; the club worked to “aid in establishing and maintaining Republican government in the State.”³⁹ Many whites feared these societies of freedmen and accused the Republicans of being guilty of corruption and deceit.⁴⁰ But even without the influence of whites, it seems natural that freedmen would ally with the Republicans. African Americans remembered Republicans as the party that had secured their Emancipation; it was the party of Lincoln.⁴¹ The Southern white Democrats were in the habit of telling the freedmen that as their former masters,

³⁵ Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, p. 164.

³⁶ Colonel Thomas W. Osborn was appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Freedman’s Bureau in September 1865.

³⁷ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, p. 143.

³⁸ Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, pp. 168-169.

³⁹ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, p. 147.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

they were black's best friends, all the while denouncing Negro suffrage with a passion. The Democrats could not have been surprised when their former slaves did not support their party.⁴² As time went on, however, those running for office realized the benefits of reaching out to blacks, seeing as they were a large part of their constituency now. Freedmen did not gain much ground in terms of the number of blacks serving in the state legislature, but they did increase their number in smaller offices. From 1868-69, there were 267 black delegates that attended state constitutional conventions, and almost 800 black candidates were elected to state legislatures in former Confederate states.⁴³

Another important aspect of this time period was the establishment of Negro churches. The church served as a fundamental cornerstone for the freedmen: it was a place to worship, a social meeting place, a political forum, a safe haven, and simply a place they could call their own. Slaves had previously gone to church with their masters, therefore blacks were forced to be the same denomination as their masters.⁴⁴ After slavery ended, the freedmen clearly were not interested in staying in yet another subservient role in their master's churches. While in 1862, a substantial percentage of the Methodist Episcopal Church's 19,000 members in Florida were black, that number by 1867 had dropped to only 6,266 members, most of which were white.⁴⁵ The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was organized and a few hundred Negroes transferred from the former to the latter. But most Negro Methodists joined a different church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) or the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ).⁴⁶ The African Methodist Episcopal Church was the largest church in terms of numbers. The 1870 Census listed eighty-eight churches in Florida, forty-nine of which were AME, eighteen were other Methodist churches, and nineteen were Baptist.⁴⁷ Methodist churches were very well organized, with leaders that actively sought out new members across the state. Baptist churches were much more local and tended to be independent of one another. Whites pushed for

⁴² Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, p. 165.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 80.

⁴⁴ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, p. 83.

⁴⁵ Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, p. 142.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 143.

⁴⁷ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, p. 86.

segregation within their churches; blacks, it seemed, wanted their own churches as well. Subsequently, by 1875, most churches were completely segregated.⁴⁸ The Negro church became central to the lives of freedmen's lives, politically, socially, and culturally, it gave them a freedom to express themselves as they never had been able to previously.

A major obstacle affecting Florida's, as well as every other states economy, was that of finding a new system of labor to replace slavery. With nearly 10,000 farms in 1870, and 42,000 people engaged in agriculture in the state, most planters realized they would need to rely on freedmen for labor.⁴⁹ While freedmen now received wages, and store credit, many seemed unaware as to how to save or manage their income properly; as a result, many made no money or even went into debt. With the result of a poor 1867 crop, many planters went into debt themselves. The financial downturn hit everyone as land values plummeted and loans were quickly called in.⁵⁰ While many freedmen continued in agricultural work, some 23,000 took up other occupations.⁵¹ Most freedmen farmed, but many were employed as railroad workers, laborers, blacksmiths, cooks, housekeepers, seamstresses, nurses, sawmill workers, and servants. The turpentine and lumber industries seemed to pay the most at \$20 to \$40 a month, though trained servants also received half-decent wages. As long as adequate payment was provided, the freedmen now worked to secure their own livelihood just as everyone else did.

The time following the Civil War was an era characterized by dramatic changes for all peoples and all aspects of society. The fact that emancipation was achieved is a milestone that should be commended, but just as important were the attempts to create some kind of stability during Reconstruction for blacks and whites alike. Quite possibly, this era came to know the largest instance of domestic reform ever undertaken in America's history. Such a radical change had never been enacted before, and no one knew how it would turn out, which makes Reconstruction all the more fascinating. Once emancipation was achieved, many wondered what the newfound freedom meant. Slowly but surely, progress was made in all areas of society, whether it was politics, religion, the economy, or social issues. The sheer immensity of such an undertaking and the change involved should be acknowledged by all. Looking back, this

⁴⁸ Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, p. 142.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 123-124.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 128-132.

⁵¹ Richardson, *The Negro In The Reconstruction of Florida*, pp. 66.

tumultuous period of simultaneous military occupation and black emancipation pushes readers to understand the question of what freedom really entails.

Black Churches during the Post-Civil War Era, 1865-1870

By Levis George

To slaves and free blacks, the end of the Civil War signaled the dissolution of slavery and freedom for all human beings. This was a newfound concept for these formerly enslaved blacks and their former white masters who clung onto the notion of slavery.¹ Once Reconstruction had begun, the relationship between blacks and whites would never be the same again. Blacks were no longer tied to the confines of their white master's religions, but could form their own churches and follow the religion of their pleasing.²

Reconstruction was a period when the freed blacks felt a passionate urge to form their own churches and have their own black preachers lead those churches. However, their self-established churches and freedom of religion further strained the relationship between whites and blacks. In antebellum Florida, the blacks had a "social intimacy" with the whites that would never again be recaptured.³

Prior to the Civil War, religion might have been a black slave's cruellest oppressor. Dolla Bess Hilyard, daughter of an antebellum cotton picker, remembers that white preachers never spoke of heaven to slaves, but instead "they were told to honor their masters and mistresses and of the damnation which awaited them for disobedience."⁴ Other blacks recalled times when the white preacher would beseech them to "mind your masters, you owe them your respect."⁵ Following the Civil War, however, a new law established on January 15, 1866 made it a crime for blacks to be involved in white church service or any general meeting of whites. This law kept whites from interfering in black ceremonies as well, and further segregated the two races.⁶

¹ Robert L. Hall, "Yonder Come Day: Religious Dimensions of the Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 65 (April 1987), pp. 418.

² Robert L. Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58 (October 1979), pp. 185.

³ Hall, "Yonder Come Day," pp. 418-419.

⁴ George P. Rawick, *The American Slave* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1941), p. 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶ Hall, "Yonder Come Day," pp. 418-419.

A plethora of white Christians, primarily the more well-to-do, aided the blacks financially in their efforts to create independent black churches. However, at a time in Florida when white brutality towards blacks was at its peak, all the aid in the world could not protect the blacks from the kindled wrath of the white mobs that laid destruction to any black establishment.⁷

The black church was the most important of these establishments, and a constitutional amendment giving all men, including blacks, the right to vote was the first step in making black churches a place for politics as well as prayer. Black churches and their clergy would do whatever it took to attract and seize as many black votes as it could. Black churches were also used as a safe haven, where members of secret black societies could gather in places that they knew whites would scarcely visit. One of these clandestine societies was the Lincoln Brotherhood, an organization of blacks that vowed to never let their people return to slavery.⁸

Slavery seemed to be the primary reason for black illiteracy, but as their bonds broke following the Civil War, blacks Floridians wanted to learn to read just as much as any white. The main object they desired to comprehend was the Bible, and they pursued that goal with fervor. An American Bible society agent, Simon Richardson, stated in 1866 that “all the negroes wanted a Bible. They seemed to feel that to own a Bible made them better.”⁹ Blacks seemed to see their newfound freedom following the Civil War as a prime opportunity to do what they could not do while in bondage, and blacks in all parts of Florida channeled the expression of their freedom through religion.

A hotspot for black religious activity was in Tallahassee, Florida. The black churches of Tallahassee each had a distinctive quality to call their own. Not only did they follow different religious persuasions, but they varied in their political affiliation and origins as well.¹⁰

Black Floridians who were Methodists could choose to dutifully remain with the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church, but those who wished to sever ties with their former white masters could join the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Originally founded in

⁷ Ibid., 420.

⁸ Ibid., p. 423.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 429-430.

¹⁰ Hall, “Tallahassee’s Black Churches,” p. 185.

Philadelphia back in 1786, the A.M.E church first made its way to Tallahassee on February 20, 1866. The A.M.E. was unique in the fact that it is hailed as “perhaps the first large Christian denomination in the Western Hemisphere which sprang chiefly from sociological rather than theological differences.”¹¹ In 1865, the AME church was an infant in Florida, but because of the nurturing of two great black leaders, William G. Stewart and his successor, Charles H. Pearce, the African Methodist Episcopal church would grow to become a powerful social and political force.¹²

William Stewart organized the first AME church in Florida in a neighborhood known as Midway, which is located some miles west of the city of Jacksonville. Stewart continued to lay the foundation for more AME churches across Florida. Stewart played the key role in the addition of the St. James AME Church in Marianna, the Arnett Chapel at Quincy, and the Bethel AME in Tallahassee. Stewart also accepted several other black Methodist congregations into the AME. Despite all he had done for the growth of the AME in Florida, Bishop Daniel A. Payne remained unsure if Stewart was the correct man to lead Florida. Stewart was not well-educated, and as a deacon, Stewart did not have enough power to “ordain other ministers.” In turn, Bishop Payne decided that Charles Pearce, a well-respected and educated elder, was the man who would conquer Florida in the name of the AME church.¹³

Elder Charles H. Pearce came to Florida in February 1866, and he arrived with three ambitious goals. Pearce wished to develop and form more AME churches, build public schools to induce education among freedmen, and wanted the AME church to be intertwined into the politics of the localities as well as the state.¹⁴ Some believed Pearce was the undisputed “Father of the AME Church in Florida,”¹⁵ but all blacks seem to agree that he was the pinnacle of spirituality and politics.¹⁶

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 185-186.

¹² Canter Brown Jr., Larry E. Rivers, *Laborers in the Vineyard of the Lord: the Beginning of A.M.E.* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), p. 23.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 28-32.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁵ Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, April 7, 1868.

The A.M.E. church under Elder Pearce did not perceive a clear-cut separation between church and state. For example, in March of 1868, masses of Florida's A.M.E. deacons lodged a staunch protest against the lack of representation received by blacks. The Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian* referred to the event as "a document conceived in folly and brought forth in impertinent impudence."¹⁷ Furthermore, in 1866, the church was used as a covert gathering of blacks to vote in Joseph Oats as the representative for all Leon County free blacks at the National Negro Convention.¹⁸

Reverend Charles Pearce himself was the best example for the melding of church and politics. Pearce helped exterminate a bill that forced segregated schools when he worked on the Florida Senate Committee on Education in 1868. In 1869, Pearce worked as a superintendent in Leon County, and in 1876 he was a presidential nominee for the Republicans.¹⁹ Pearce knew politics was the only way to protect his congregation, and he felt his people were "like a ship out at sea, and they must have somebody to guide them; and it is natural that they should get their best informed men to lead them."²⁰

Pearce wasted no time in assigning functions to other black leaders and ministers. William Stewart was sent to South Carolina, Dennis Wood would be placed to watch over the counties of Gadsden and Jackson, Robert Meachem would be sent from his current Tallahassee church to Monticello, and Pearce would continue to preside in Tallahassee, where he would oversee the operations of all the other AME churches.²¹ Yet life was not perfect for "Bishop" Pearce. He had many political adversaries, most of them opposed to his power in the A.M.E. church, and his house was set on fire by antagonists on a handful of instances.²²

¹⁶ Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," p. 187.

¹⁷ Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, March 17, 1868.

¹⁸ Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," pp. 186-187.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

²⁰ Brown and Rivers, *Laborers*, p. 34.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²² Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," p. 188.

March 2, 1867 was a pivotal date in the history of the AME as well as all freedmen in Florida. The U.S. Congress passed the First Reconstruction Act, which meant military rule for the Confederacy until the states created a new approved constitution written by delegates elected by all “adult freedmen.” This newfound voting right created an air of excitement in the black community, and during this time, the AME Church grew rapidly. By June 1867, Pearce’s congregation consisted of 5,242 people, including 2,500 kids attending Sunday school.²³ The AME Church expanded in both size and political influence. The Republican Party and the Loyalists led by Ossian Bingley Hart were pivotal to the enhancement of black churches and freed blacks in general.

On March 14, 1867, with the aid of the new black vote, Ossian B. Hart was voted in as mayor of Jacksonville. Union loyalists from the south acted as the primary guardian of black rights. Most loyalists even dropped of the “Union party affiliation” and called themselves Republicans. Loyalists and blacks had a great relationship in Jacksonville and they felt that all freedmen would “accept their leadership.” This was not the case, however, because three other factions within the Republican Party itself would be vying for control. These included the Lincoln Brotherhood led by Thomas W. Osborn, the Union League Chapters led by Liberty Billings, Daniel Richards, and William Sanders, and the “conservative businessmen, professionals, and public officials” led by Harrison Reed. The common goal of all of these factions was to recruit blacks, whether for selfish reasons or for more altruistic ones.²⁴

Ossian Hart Bingley would not allow many blacks to stray away. On May 25, in a large meeting of blacks in Jacksonville, Bingley urged blacks to vote Republican stating, “I hope both races will unite to organize a Republican government for the state of Florida, and I hold we must unite to do it successfully with the Republican party, the only true Union party, the party that saved the Union and destroyed slavery.” Hart received a positive answer at the first AME annual conference at Tallahassee when Robert Meachem pronounced that the choice for blacks from “all quarters of the State is the Republican Party.”²⁵

²³ Brown and Rivers, *Laborers*, pp. 43-46.

²⁴ Canter Brown Jr., *Ossian Bingley Hart, Florida’s Loyalist Reconstruction Governor* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), pp. 188-192.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-196.

The Loyalists and Hart would suffer a blow, however, when Elder Charles H. Pearce of the AME gave his support to the Union League Chapter, which soon took control of the Republican Party. Elder Pearce was an eloquent speaker, he was connected to several thousands of black voters, and he proved to be a “counterbalance” to the Lincoln Brotherhood, whose primary supporters were black Baptists.²⁶

Although he often sparred with them in the political arena, Ossian B. Hart had a fairly amiable relationship with AME leaders, which included William Bradwell, Robert Meacham, Charles H. Pearce, and John R. Scott. They came together to enjoy each others company as well as to discuss the serious social issues engulfing Florida. Whether playing a game of croquet at Hart’s home in Jacksonville, or jousting in a political standoff, these men seemed to have great respect for one another.²⁷

The relationship between Governor Harrison Reed and the AME church was much more strained. Charles Pearce was referring to Reed when he stated, “Every appeal for my race has been voted down by the Conservatives, aided by these weak-kneed [carpetbag] Republicans.” Reed further frustrated Pearce and the AME church when he vetoed a bill that would have given blacks the same access as whites to hotels and railroads, because he felt it was “unnecessary.”²⁸ The governor and the black AME leaders eventually ended their relationship on a good note as days before his “impeachment controversy,” when Reed supported a bill that would include free public schools with no racial segregation. Not coincidentally, Reed remained governor of Florida and that there would be no talk of impeachment thereafter.²⁹

The AME churches throughout Florida were filled with much jubilation in 1869. The church was involved deeply in politics, membership was growing, and education was improving among blacks.³⁰ On several occasions, The Bethel A.M.E. Church in Tallahassee held picnics, festivals, parades, and concerts. Not only were these events fun, but they were employed as a source of funds for assisting church organizations. Education was of primary importance to the

²⁶ Ibid., p. 202.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 229-230.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 231.

²⁹ Brown and Rivers, *Laborers*, pp. 57-58.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 58.

A.M.E. church, so the money raised was used to end literacy among blacks and to construct theological schools in which young black Methodists could further their education.³¹

Most of the educators of the black AME schools happened to be women. As the AME church grew, the black women's role within it grew as well. They were exceptional volunteers in matters of the church, as well as primary contributors financially. The AME church even created a "Board of Stewardesses" in 1868. While black women seemed to be doing well for themselves, the black church was still controlled heavily by males, and their ambition to help acquire more rights for women was lackluster at best.³² Reverend Charles H. Pearce explained the situation best when he said

Ladies, I can only say to you, though you are deprived from going to the ballot and giving a vote to either party, you are also deprived from the Legislative halls, and many other places where you cannot go as men do ... Yet I feel gratified to find that you are engaged in the cause of human rights ... Let me say to you, ladies, go on, be found in every good work.³³

The A.M.E. Church in Florida was spreading like a virus, and a majority of blacks caught the fever. In 1860, there were 8,110 black Methodists in the white Southern Methodist Episcopal Church. However, by 1866, this number was depleted by more than 48%, leaving only 3,935 blacks in the white dominated churches.³⁴ The Southern Methodist Episcopal Church assisted this outflux of blacks from the white Episcopal Church by encouraging Africans to set up black churches. In 1870, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of America was born, and by 1873, the C.M.E. Church boasted 14 annual conferences with a total membership of 67,888, which includes 583 local preachers, and 635 itinerant preachers.³⁵ While the AME and the CME Churches were expanding to many regions across Florida, they would have trouble growing in Key West and Pensacola, the two biggest cities in

³¹ Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," pp. 188-189.

³² Brown and Rivers, *Laborers*, pp. 58-59.

³³ Jacksonville *Florida Union*, December 24, 1868.

³⁴ Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," pp. 189-190.

³⁵ Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, April 8, 1873.

Florida. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church had found a home in these towns, “and its congregations were prospering.”³⁶

While their names may be similar, the AMEZ and AME were two completely different institutions. Joseph J. Clinton “spearheaded the effort” to bring the AMEZ church into Florida. The first church of the AMEZ was built in Key West and they would plan to expand from there. Clinton picked the majority of his missionaries from the locality where he wished to build a church. The AMEZ church itself had a hierarchy for the clergy. The bottom of the hierarchy includes the exhorters, who were “religious public speakers, licensed by the Quarterly Conference,” the local preachers, who were “licensed” by the Quarterly Conference “to preach as local clergymen,” and itinerant preachers, who travel from place to place “to collect and organize societies, and to serve those already organized as pastors.” The top of the hierarchy consisted of the ordained clergy, which were the deacons and the elders. To become an elder, a deacon would have to “travel two years as an itinerant preacher prior to being ordained.” The elder was the “highest of holy orders,” and only an elder has the power to give out the Holy Communion or to wed a couple.³⁷

Once the AMEZ church was stable in Key West, it was time for the church to expand to other regions of Florida. The first expansion would occur more out of sheer luck rather than effort. Joseph Sexton, an itinerant preacher of the AMEZ, missed his family in Polk County terribly, so he took a ship from Key West to Tampa. In Tampa, Sexton met several black Methodists who had abandoned their white churches. They greeted him warmly and they decided to associate themselves with the AMEZ. Joseph Sexton became “the first pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Tampa.”³⁸

Following the expansion to Tampa, Pensacola was next in the sights of the AMEZ leaders. In late 1866, the Talbot Chapel AMEZ Church was born in Pensacola and it was pastored by E.S. Winn. Elder Winn was an opportunistic man, and when he saw a chance to

³⁶ Brown and Rivers, *Laborers*, p. 49.

³⁷ Canter Brown Jr., Larry E. Rivers, *For A Great and Grand Purpose: the Beginnings of the AMEZ Church in Florida, 1864-1905* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), pp. 26-27.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

expand, he took it. Northwest of Pensacola, he was able to gather a group of black Methodists and founded the Spring Hill AMEZ Zion Church, and northeast of Pensacola, he encouraged members of an all-black society in Milton to form the Isaiah Chapel AMEZ Zion Church.³⁹

While the AMEZ church was progressing at a fairly successful rate, it could not match the rapidly growing AME. Following the Civil War, most of the freedmen remained in Middle Florida. AMEZ did not have the money or the manpower to explore this region and harvest church members. The AME, on the other hand, wasted no time in dispatching bodies and bills to harvest the Middle Florida black population. When the AME population reached a record high of 5,240 in 1867, Elder Charles Pearce proclaimed, “We are all looking forward to a glorious future.” Trapped in Key West and Pensacola, this glorious future for the AME meant a bleak one for the AMEZ in Florida.⁴⁰

As the “Military” Reconstruction Acts were passed, the AMEZ clergy were in unanimous support of the Republican Party, and they encouraged all blacks to get involved in the political forum and wanted those in their congregation to run for political offices as well. Unlike their AME and Baptist counterparts, the AMEZ clergy did not seek a political office, local or state. This absence of political involvement by the AMEZ clergy may have discouraged some blacks from taking membership, but unlike some AME and Baptist ministers, the AMEZ ministers could focus in on education and other matters important to their congregation and their race.⁴¹ Even though it may seem that the AME and AMEZ churches were in a competition against one another, they were both important organizations that provided blacks a cocoon in which they could grow socially, religiously, and politically. Furthermore, after 1865, with the effort blacks put into African Methodism, both the AME and AMEZ were able to grow at a blistering pace.

Methodism was not the only religion that was flourishing among blacks. The Baptist religion also played a pivotal role in the lives of Post-Civil War blacks, and offered black Christians a choice of religion that contrasted with Methodism. The primary tool for the organization and leadership of Black Baptists in Tallahassee was

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 37-39.

Reverend James Page. During the time of unrest following the Civil War, when blacks needed a true leader to guide them, Page rose up and acted as a spiritual advisor for the blacks living in Leon County.⁴²

In 1831, James Page had become a preacher, following the path of his white master, John Parkhill, a deeply religious fundamentalist.⁴³ J.M. Johnson, son of a former slave, recalls fond memories of Page, describing him as a “free colored man” who could “read and write and would visit all the plantations in Tallahassee, preaching the gospel.” Page would meet with the slaves once a month on a Sunday to sing gospels, read from the Bible, and perform baptisms.⁴⁴ The Parkhills understood that Page had a special gift, and they never deterred him in his quest to teach his people the word of God. He held a close relationship to the Parkhill’s, and Post-Civil War, Page returned to the Parkhill’s for guidance. With his determination and Harriet Parkhill’s assistance, Page was able to form a Sunday School in Bel Air that would aid in the fight to end illiteracy among blacks.⁴⁵

As his renown grew, politics soon became part of Page’s life, although his ardor for politics was rather dubious. In 1867, Ossian Bingley Hart, Florida’s most notable loyalist, called on Page to work as a voter registrar, and Page dutifully worked as a public official in Leon for 2 years. As the time for state elections rolled on in November 1867, the Republic party was being torn apart from the inside out. Incredulously, each of the contingencies within the party itself fought for control of Florida. Instead of guiding their congregation spiritually, black Baptists and Methodist ministers were seen clashing on the political forum. This constant political animosity between the Republican circles greatly depressed Page. In November 1868, he wrote to Lucy Parkhill stating, “Much of the people bother me sometime so much about these Political Affairs that I think very often on moving to Jacksonville and teaching a little...school.”⁴⁶

⁴² Larry E. Rivers, “Baptist Minister James Page: Alternatives for African American Leadership in Post Civil War Florida,” in Mark Greenberg, Canter Brown, and William W. Rogers, eds., *Florida’s Heritage of Diversity: Essays in Honor of Samuel Proctor* (Tallahassee: Sentry Press, 1997) pp. 47-48.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁴ Rawick, *The American Slave*, pp. 244-245.

⁴⁵ Rivers, “Baptist Minister James Page,” p. 48.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 48-50.

No matter how disillusioned he was by Florida politics, Page, nevertheless, ran against Reverend Charles Pearce of the African Methodist Episcopal Church for the Leon County senate seat. Page lost handily for three reasons: blacks were not sure if he represented them or whites, Page's running mate, Tom Mason, was a self-declared Democrat, and Page's reputation was ruined by association, and the AME was much better organized than the Black Baptists in Florida.⁴⁷

Even though Page was involved in politics at the local and state level, he never turned his back on his true calling, which was guiding his congregation. Page continually prepared events to raise funds for his church, and to serve the needs of the black community.⁴⁸ As new arrivals poured into Tallahassee daily, Page sought to build a bigger and better church in the "heart of the city."⁴⁹ The Tallahassee Sentinel even urged whites to donate to the cause saying, "Aid them to build their churches and schools and you will thus build the surest protection around your dwellings and your henroosts."⁵⁰ After much dedication to the cause, Page and his congregation were able to move into the Bethel Missionary Baptist church in 1871.⁵¹

One common goal of both Black Baptists and Methodists was to educate and further their race. Page especially felt that as a literate black, it was one of his many duties to educate other less fortunate blacks. In 1872, Page wanted all blacks, Baptists and Methodists, to unite for the singular objective of teaching the uneducated.⁵²

Black ministers, preachers, reverends, and bishops, no matter the denomination, would be involved in politics during Reconstruction, whether they were just organizing votes or running for a position as a public official. Even Illiteracy was not enough to stop ministers from certain denominations, like the Primitive Baptists, from running for office. A Primitive Baptist preacher by the name of Henry Griffin exemplified this case. He was the definition of illiterate, but he

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 51.

⁴⁹ Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," p. 191.

⁵⁰ Tallahassee *Sentinel*, April 24, 1869.

⁵¹ Rivers, "Baptist Minister James Page," p. 51.

⁵² Ibid.

promised that when elected to Florida's legislature "he would do whatever Governor "Starns" told him to do."⁵³

Whites of Tallahassee saw some of these aforementioned similarities between blacks and often grouped all black churches into one category. The Tallahassee Weekly Floridian proposed "that the colored people begin services earlier and preach short sermons" when whites were protesting "the singing and exhorting at a late hour."⁵⁴ This was a naïve assumption because "colored people's churches" differed just as much as the white churches. For example, not only did their denominations vary, but their congregations also diverged on the style in which they were organized. Baptist churches were local, self-governed, and independent establishments. African Methodist churches, on the other hand, were controlled by a hierarchy stemming from the national level.⁵⁵

Following the Civil War, blacks countered white discrimination primarily through their efforts to build up their churches. The black church acted not only as a place of spiritual guidance, but also provided a place of politics and "became a social cosmos." Black Churches were there for its people from the moment they were born till the day they died. Black Churches not only provided a great service for the freed blacks following the Civil War, but played an invaluable role for the "dominant white community." The African American Church was successful in reducing black crime and seemed to play right into the hands of white society, whether they knew it or not.⁵⁶

Black Churches during Reconstruction were crucial for the advancement of a race that had been enslaved in the U.S. for well over 200 years. The black preacher personified a shepherd who nurtures his flock through strenuous times, following the example of the Good Shepherd himself, Jesus Christ. The name and association of the church did not matter; the black Church, in and of itself, was a beacon of inspiration to its congregations. With the guidance of their churches, the spirits of the once downtrodden slaves were uplifted, inspiring African

⁵³ Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," p.195.

⁵⁴ Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, August 12, 1879.

⁵⁵ Hall, "Tallahassee's Black Churches," p.193.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-197.

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Americans to take control of their own destiny. Blacks were finally able to see that in the eyes of God, everyone is equal.

The Development of Tarpon Springs with Emphasis on Greeks and Sponging

By Michael J. Politis

If you ask a native Floridian about Tarpon Springs, Florida, chances are the response will be something about all the Greeks who have great food and sell sponges from the Gulf. That would be accurate, but a larger, more profound history of this small city exists. The many details of the city's past are often lost in the shadow of the strong Greek cultural influence that attracts tourists and locals alike to the beautiful coastal community in northern "Point of Pines" Pinellas County.¹ In a relatively short thirty-year timeframe, Tarpon Springs underwent a transformation from an untouched oasis of greenery and water to the sponge headquarters of the world, complete with both a unique industry and a distinctive Greek culture.

The Pinellas Peninsula encompasses the communities of the western Tampa Bay area, most notably present-day Tarpon Springs, Clearwater, and St. Petersburg. Pinellas Peninsula, by the end of the Civil War, was only accessible by trails from the Tampa area.² Some of the earliest settlers in Tarpon Springs (which was unnamed at the time) were Benjamin Franklin Meyer, his brother Frederic, and their wives, all of whom were from Ocala, Florida. They built cabins near the Anclote River, a waterway that flows into Tarpon Springs.³ Although both the Meyer brothers died not long after the move, their families stayed in the small cabins, and soon they were joined by additional settlers as more people began trickling into the area along the Anclote.⁴

¹ Pinellas County Government. "Know Your County: About Pinellas." <http://www.pinellascounty.org/DRG/DRefG.htm> (accessed March 21, 2009).

² Gertrude Stoughton. *Tarpon Springs Florida: The Early Years*. (Tarpon Springs: Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, Inc., 1975), p. 5.

³ Interview with Robert McPhee, February 28, 2009.

⁴ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 6.

In the decades following the Civil War, many fisherman, traders, and spongers from Key West became frequent visitors to the community on the Anclote. A small town sprang up, complete with a school, general store, and post office. Anclote became popular with many British families. Victorian houses were built around Spring Bayou, many of which are still standing today. By the late 1880s, a railroad was built that connected Tampa and other parts of Florida to Tarpon Springs. Downtown Tarpon Springs (which is inland from the Anclote River and away from the present-day sponge docks) was becoming more of a city than the village immediately along the Anclote.⁵

In 1876 a South Carolinian named A. W. Ormond built a cabin along Spring Bayou.⁶ With him lived his single daughter, Mary Ormond.⁷ While the Ormonds were living in their cabin, Joshua Boyer, a single man who was from the Bahamas, frequently sailed to Key West, Florida, where he fished and sponged.⁸ One day, as Boyer was sailing up the Gulf Coast from Key West, a storm set in, and he was forced to take cover in what is today's Anclote River. The inlet where the Anclote meets the Gulf is still today a safe haven for fisherman during stormy weather.⁹ Boyer is said to have met the Ormonds when he took refuge in the river's inlet.

After becoming friends of the Ormonds and a welcomed guest, Boyer married Mary and became A. W.'s son-in-law.¹⁰ The Ormond's 1876 cabin still stands today and has since been moved to Largo, Florida.¹¹ Supposedly, Tarpon Springs got its name from Mary. Boyer and Mary Ormond were near the Spring Bayou and Mary exclaimed that the tarpons were springing from the water, thereby creating the name "Tarpon Springs."¹² As an adventurer, Boyer had a natural enjoyment of exploring and naming places up and down the Gulf Coast of Florida.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷ Robert McPhee Interview.

⁸ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 7.

⁹ Robert McPhee Interview.

¹⁰ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 7.

¹¹ Robert McPhee Interview.

¹² Ibid.

Tarpon Springs quickly turned from a quiet settlement into a bustling town during the late 1800s. Roads began developing and the number of businesses started increasing, especially from the mid-1880s through the 1890s.¹³ With development booming and the population increasing, a newspaper called *The Tarpon*, began printing in 1886. *The Tarpon* provided the citizens with local and international news.¹⁴ Also in 1886, Tarpon Springs' first church opened, which happened to be of the Universalist persuasion. The Universalist church prompted other Christian denominations to build in the area during the following years.¹⁵ Seeing the potential for imminent growth, the tycoon Hamilton Disston began purchasing land in the area to later resell.

Starting in the early years of the 1880s, Tarpon Spring was gaining notoriety as a winter resort-town, with non-Floridians coming down as snowbirds. Spring Bayou became the destination for northerners wanting to build residences.¹⁶ During this time, prominent figures who built houses in Tarpon Springs included Marshall Alworth, an iron-ore giant from Duluth, Minnesota and Senator Ebenezer Hawkins, also of Minnesota.¹⁷ For a short period, Tarpon Springs also enjoyed a reputation as a health resort. People visited Tarpon Springs to drink Spring Bayou's water. Spring Bayou had a spring that shot up sulfurous water similar in taste to that of the Fountain of Youth in Saint Augustine, Florida. The water was bottled and thought to have healing powers. The spring has since been blocked and the water is longer leaping up like it used to in the past.¹⁸ In 1887, a notable guest, the Duke of Sutherland George Granville William Leveson-Gower, built a house on inland Lake Tarpon. He resided in his house from 1887 to 1889.¹⁹ Tarpon Springs was beginning to become known around the world in addition to the United States. Also built in 1887, Tarpon Springs' Anclote Key Lighthouse was used by the many fishermen and seafarers who used Tarpon Springs as a home base.²⁰

¹³ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 11.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 33

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁶ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 25.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹⁸ Robert McPhee Interview.

¹⁹ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, pp. 22-23.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 20; Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society. "Tarpon Springs History." <http://tarponspringsareahistoricalsociety.org/history.html> (accessed March 21, 2009).

Development of Tarpon Springs continued seamlessly into the 1890's.²¹ Tarpon Springs' very own ice plant was acquired.²² The downtown continued to develop, but, in 1894, a fire broke out and destroyed most of the store buildings. To replace the burned out stores, the citizens of Tarpon Springs constructed stone buildings, a large number of which still stand today.²³

The atmosphere toward blacks was generally very accepting; it contrasted strongly with the segregated atmosphere of other parts of the South.²⁴ Although occasional problems did emerge between blacks and whites, documented conflicts were few and far between.²⁵ Blacks were commonplace in the sponge industry of the Bahamas and Key West before sponging became popular in Tarpon Springs. Those blacks who worked with white spongers in the Caribbean followed the spongers to Tarpon Springs, where they continued to work alongside each other in relative peace.²⁶ Blacks had important jobs on the sponge boats working as deckhands, and many spoke Greek because their coworkers were Greek.²⁷ It was not unusual to see a sponge boat with a black owner.²⁸

Much of the growth in the 1880s and the following decades can be credited to Hamilton Disston.²⁹ In the 1880s, Florida was going bankrupt because the state had given so much land to veterans. Because Florida needed to raise money, the state began selling land at a cost of \$0.25 per acre. A large buyer of land was Hamilton Disston, an investor from Pennsylvania, who worked through his development company, Lake Butler Villa Company. Disston bought land all over central Florida and Pinellas County in 1881, including the area where Disney World is now

²¹ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 25.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁷ Robert McPhee Interview; Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 42.

²⁸ Robert McPhee Interview.

²⁹ Eileen Rozee and Lou Rozee, *Sponge Docks, Tarpon Springs, Florida, "America's Sponge Diving Birthplace"* (Tarpon Springs: St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 1973), p. 4.

located. Disston, in turn, resold the plots of land for \$1.25 per acre.³⁰ Disston took part in developing and selling land in Tarpon Springs as it increased in popularity. While Tarpon Springs was growing into a strong community, a new sponging business was about to turn Tarpon Springs' development in a whole new direction.

John Cheyney, a wealthy landowner in Tarpon Springs, came to Tarpon Springs a few years before 1890 to take advantage of profits from winter visitors.³¹ Cheyney felt income relying mostly on the winter season from visitors was not enough and decided to invest in something else.³² Wanting a change, he looked for a different industry to pursue in Florida and came across the sponging industry down in Key West. Cheyney was careful to keep note of the whole sponging process, from gathering to processing and selling, and he felt that sponging was a good industry for investment.³³

Cheyney knew there were sponges in the Gulf around Tarpon Springs. The sponges were accidentally found in 1873 by turtle fishermen whose nets were frequently caught in the sponges. To begin his business, Cheyney set up a warehouse in Tarpon Springs. This was the beginning of commercial sponging in the area.³⁴ Before long, sponge boats based out of Tarpon Springs were going out along the Gulf waters, harvesting sponges.³⁵

Gathering sponges was done in a rather inefficient process (compared to the harvesting process used in the sponge-laden Dodecanese Islands in Greece at the time). From a dinghy, one man used a glass bottomed bucket to see underwater in search for sponges. When he found a sponge, he would put a long twenty or thirty foot pole with a hook on the end into the water to, essentially, pull the sponge from the Gulf floor. This is called the 'hook method', and the pace for retrieving sponges was rather slow.³⁶

³⁰ Robert McPhee Interview.

³¹ George Frantzis. *Strangers at Ithaca* (Saint Petersburg: Great Outdoors Publishing Co., 1962), p. 38; Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 45.

³² Ibid., p. 46; Rozee and Rozee, *Sponge Docks*, p. 4.

³³ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 46.

³⁴ "Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society" website.

³⁵ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 47.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 46.

To get expert opinions of sponging in hopes of improving his business, Cheyney employed the young but experienced John Cocoris. Cocoris was born in Greece in 1878 and after moving to the United States in 1895, worked for a sponge company in the Northeast. The New York-based Lembesis Sponge Company had Cocoris go to Tarpon Springs to buy sponges, which is how he met Cheyney. Some say Corcoris was the first Greek to go to Tarpon Springs.³⁷

Corcoris decided to work on the Tarpon Springs sponge business with Cheyney 1896³⁸. As sponging was starting in Tarpon Springs, the hook method was used to harvest sponges—that is until Corcoris had an associate purchase a sponging boat with diving equipment from Greece. Corcoris received approval from Cheyney to bring his brothers from Greece to Tarpon Springs to help with the sponge diving and teach the more efficient machine method of harvesting sponges. This diving method, new to Tarpon Springs, used a brass helmet and an air hose connected to a pump, into which air was pumped at the water's surface by a man on the sponging boat.³⁹

The machine diving method had already been used by Greek spongers in the Dodecanese Islands since its introduction in 1886.⁴⁰ The method allowed spongers to go farther out into the sea where waters were deep compared to the depth closer to land.⁴¹

The year 1904 marked when spongers from Greece began coming to Tarpon Springs to work. From deck hands to divers to boat helpers, Greeks from all the different parts of the sponge business came to work for Cheyney and Corcoris.⁴²

Either February or June of 1905 marked the first sailing to the Gulf sponge beds to get sponges—using the new sponge diving equipment. The first diver, Demo Kavasilos, dove underwater for ten minutes. Supposedly, Kavasilos's first words upon resurfacing were,

³⁷ Rozee and Rozee, *Sponge Docks*, p. 4.

³⁸ "Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society" website.

³⁹ Robert McPhee Interview.

⁴⁰ Frantzis, *Strangers at Ithaca*, p. 140.

⁴¹ Robert McPhee Interview.

⁴² Rozee and Rozee, *Sponge Docks*, p. 5.

“There’s enough sponges in these beds to supply the whole world.” His sponge boat was filled with sponges by the end of the night.⁴³

Excitement over the machine diving method was not limited to Tarpon Springs. The *Pensacola Journal* from April 15th, 1906, had an article in its Sunday journal describing a regatta that celebrated the new diving method. A fifteen-year sponging veteran and “expert Mediterranean diver” from Greece, George Sesticki, showed off seven new boats that had been outfitted with diving gear in Pensacola before they were to be sailed down to Tarpon Springs. Sesticki, the journal described, came from Greece to continue sponging in the Gulf of Mexico.⁴⁴

The *Pensacola Journal* characterized in detail some of the important diving tools that were to be used on the sloops. In a three-foot by four-foot oak box located in the cockpit was a “triple-cylinder air pump” that was arranged so air continuously flowed into the rubber air tube to the underwater diver. The double hand-cranked apparatus, operated by the diver's assistants, had a gauge showing the pressure inside the diver's suit. While underwater, the diver signaled to the assistants to increase or decrease pressure by signaling with the life line attached to the waist.⁴⁵

The heavy diving suit consisted of two thick, heavy canvasses with a waterproof rubber sheet in between the layers. Riveted to the suite around the shoulders was a copper plate with screws for attaching the one-piece collar that slid on over the head. The collar was where the helmet attached. A copper helmet placed over the head secured in a half-turn onto the collar and was secured with screws. Complete with three windows, two on each side and one ahead, the diver had a wide range of vision.⁴⁶

The air hose connected at the top rear of the helmet and evenly distributed air pressure throughout the whole suite. “Foul air escaped” from a spring-regulated valve on the helmet’s right side. This allowed for equal pressure inside the suit. A life line going from the boat to the diver connected at the diver's waist and was tied so that it went up in front of the diver for easy access. The life line was used to pull the diver up from the water when he was ready to resurface or in case of emergency. Also connected to the suit was the air pump, which was tied under the

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Thomas, Ben H. “The Deep Sea Diver.” *The Pensacola Journal*, April 15, 1906.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

arm to prevent it from getting caught while gathering sponges. To weigh down the diver, lead weights were strapped onto the diver's waist and brass-soled shoes. After diving into the water backwards, bubbles showed where the moderately-slow walking man was on the sea floor.⁴⁷

The article also pointed out how spongers must "forgo many of the pleasures in life." Spongers could not use tobacco products or eat before sponging. When they awoke in the morning, they could have one cup of coffee, and they did not eat until they were done sponging for the day. The divers associated with the Pensacola spongers were rather well paid, earning an income of \$400 to \$500 per month, plus living expenses. Half of the profits made from the sponge catches went to the divers, and "the balance [was] distributed to the owners of the vessels, captains and crews in accordance with previous agreement."⁴⁸

One detail not to be overlooked is the fact that numerous non-Greeks came to Tarpon Springs to sponge. Some, for example, came from other parts of Florida during their off-season for local fishing. The Daily Miami *Metropolis* had under its April 17th, 1906, "Local News Notes" an abbreviated story about the "fishing smack Annie" from Miami's "South Florida Fish Co." The item points out that *Annie* is leaving for Tarpon Springs on "the West Coast, where her crew will operate this season." More boats from the fish company were fitted for sponging and were to "get away during the next few days."⁴⁹ The attraction of sponging was not limited to Greeks and local spongers, and as sponging quickly evolving into a big industry, an organized system of trade was imminent.

The year 1906 marked the opening of the Sponge Exchange bank and, two years later, was the founding of the Sponge Exchange.⁵⁰ At the Sponge Exchange, which is still active today, people bid for sponges that are taken directly from the Gulf—that is, the sponges are unprocessed. Bids are written on paper and given to a co-operative association; the highest bidder gets the sponges. It is the one buying the sponges who cleans off the sponges, dries them,

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "Local News Notes." The Daily Miami *Metropolis*, April 17, 1906.

⁵⁰ The City of Tarpon Springs. "History of the Sponging Industry." <http://www.ci.tarpon-springs.fl.us/tourism/history.htm> (accessed March 20, 2009).

and processes them to sell. If the seller does not think the highest bid is enough for his sponges, he can keep the sponges and have them auctioned another time.⁵¹

With the Tarpon Springs sponges increasing in demand and a new, more efficient machine method of harvesting the product coming into play, business naturally boomed. Cheyney's business was shipping sponges throughout the United States.⁵²

By the end of 1905, nearly 1,500 Greeks from various Dodecanese Islands had come to Tarpon Springs, some as spongers and others just to live. Also by that time, five more sponge boats had been built by the Corcoris brothers. Once 1907 came, there were about fifty old hook boats as well as fifty machine diving boats.⁵³

The Greek influence began to expand in Tarpon Springs. To the sponging business, the Greek divers brought with them plans of sponging boats used in Greece and knowledge of how to use machine diving gear. To the city of Tarpon Springs, all the Greeks brought their Greek traditions, culture, religion, and lifestyles.⁵⁴ All the while in the background, Cheyney continued to invest in his sponging business and constantly worked toward improvement.⁵⁵ By 1939, Tarpon Springs had over 1,000 divers and two-hundred diving boats.⁵⁶ The great sponge diver men came with the goal of starting new lives in the United States, as they arrived to Tarpon Springs by themselves.⁵⁷

The first influx of Greeks did not consist of Greek families. Instead, only young Greek males came, most of who were spongers from the Dodecanese Islands, or Twelve Islands, of the Greek Mediterranean. The first Greek bachelors who began arriving in 1904 lived mostly in bachelor bunkhouses. The men worked hard and saved money for investing in sponging and/or getting financially secure so they could begin establishing themselves in their new country. Young Greek men felt the United States would be a great country in which to make their lives. Many Greeks looked at the United States education system favorably, which, to them, translated

⁵¹ City of Tarpon Springs. "Tarpon Springs Sponge Industry." Flyer, Tarpon Springs, 2009.

⁵² Rozee and Rozee, *Sponge Docks*, p. 5.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Stoughton, *Tarpon Springs Florida*, p. 47.

⁵⁶ Rozee and Rozee, *Sponge Docks*, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Robert McPhee Interview.

to a solid education for their children. Spongers also noticed a difference between the silk sponges they harvested in Greece and the wool sponges from Tarpon Springs. The Tarpon Springs wool sponges (which were less smooth compared to the silk sponges) seemed superior to the silk sponges, giving the Greek men more reason to go to Tarpon Springs. Better quality sponges meant potential for a better and more successful world market for Gulf sponges.⁵⁸ Not only were the sponges better in America, but the geographic situation of Tarpon Springs was better than in Greece, too.

The islands the Greeks called home in Greece were generally small and hilly or mountainous, leaving little room for expansion. Tarpon Springs had virtually unlimited room for development into the rest of west-central Florida. Less area for sprawl was a shortcoming of living on a small Greek island.⁵⁹ Growth was just one more reason why so many Greeks were willing to establish themselves in Tarpon Springs. Possibly the biggest reason for spongers to leave Greece and continue their occupation in Florida was because of safety. As the sponges were becoming scarce in the shallow Greek waters, divers had to go into deeper waters for a good supply of marketable sponges. The great risks associated with diving deep caused hundreds of divers to die yearly in Greek waters.⁶⁰

Once the sponger men began establishing themselves financially in Tarpon Springs, they began saving money so they could start their own families. When a man was ready to start looking for a wife, he most likely used the mail order bride method. He would write a letter home to his family in Greece with details of what he was looking for in a woman, asking for help. The family would search for a woman whom they thought would be of interest to their son back in Tarpon Springs.⁶¹

The idea of marrying a sponger was not alien to the women who were approached by the searching family. Many of the women had familial connections to spongers on the islands. The inquiring family members explained to the women what their son's business was in Tarpon Springs. After the family found potential brides, descriptions would be mailed to the son in

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The Pensacola *Journal*, April 15, 1906.

⁶¹ Robert McPhee Interview.

Tarpon Springs. After the son decided which woman he wanted, he would send his decision to his family along with money to ship the future wife to the United States.⁶²

One may think that women would feel uneasy marrying a man sight unseen, but in their culture at the time, family oftentimes had influence over marital decisions. Also, women were just as concerned about their children's futures as men were and the thought of beginning a new life in America, where her children could be educated under the American education system, was enticing. After marrying the mail order brides, the men usually saved money to afford for his family to move from Greece to be with him and his growing family in Tarpon Springs.⁶³

Many non-sponger Greeks came to Tarpon Springs because their extended families from Greece had moved there. Greeks generally looked at America in a positive light. After all, the United States was the free world. Family is highly valued in the Greek culture. Young sponging Greeks sometimes saved money to pay for their parents or other family members to move to Tarpon Springs so family could again be together as one. As years went by and more Greeks, as well as other nationalities, moved into Tarpon Springs, intermarriage of different races and nationalities occurred, although there are still many full-blooded Greeks in Tarpon Springs today.⁶⁴

The Greeks often intertwined culture from their mother country with American society. At first, Sponging boats first had either Greek names or names reflecting Greek heritage. Yet before long, Greek-owned boats began exhibiting names that relating to America. For example, some boats were named after presidents or other significant figures in American history.⁶⁵

The major religion of Greece is Greek Orthodox, and every part of the Greek Orthodox Church was brought over by the Greeks to Tarpon Springs. Construction of the city's Greek Orthodox Church, Saint Nicholas Cathedral, was completed in 1943. It was built with marble imported from Greece; in fact, it was the same marble which had originally been used to build the Greek pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939.⁶⁶ Saint Nicholas Cathedral is built on

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Rozee and Rozee, *Sponge Docks*, p. 5.

⁶⁶ Robert McPhee Interview.

the site of Tarpon Springs' first hotel, The Tropical. The resort was built in 1892 but burned down in 1896.⁶⁷ Long before the church was erected, however, the Greeks were practicing and celebrating their religion on their own.

Greeks observed the Epiphany, or "Sanctification of the Waters," on January 6th each year in Greece and continued doing so in Tarpon Springs. The Epiphany is still celebrated today, but now the entire community is involved, as opposed to being limited to only Greek spongers as it once was. The tradition entails a Cross being thrown into Spring Bayou, and the young men dive into the water in hopes of being the first to retrieve the Cross. The one who comes to the bayou's surface holding the Cross receives a blessing from the Orthodox bishop for good luck in the upcoming year. The bishop also blesses the sponge boats in hopes of the boats also receiving good luck for the upcoming year. When the Epiphany was first celebrated in Tarpon Springs, only young men with fathers who owned a sponge boat could participate in retrieving the cross. The one who retrieved the cross had his family and his father's sponge boat blessed.⁶⁸

While taking a dive into the beautiful Gulf of Mexico may not sound too difficult, there were many dangers associated with sponging that one may not normally consider. Sponge divers had to be careful not to come up out of the water too quickly, for dire things might occur.⁶⁹

When a diver stays in deep water for any extended amount of time, he can easily get the bends, especially if he does not come up to the water's surface slowly and carefully. While underwater, nitrogen breathed in from the air source begins dissolving the water of the human body. This occurs because gases put under high pressure dissolve into the water it contacts. If pressure on the human body decreases too quickly as the diver moves from high pressure in the deep water to normal pressure at sea level, nitrogen will bubble out of the body's water, and the person can get seriously sick or die if he is not treated.⁷⁰

Today, treatments of the bends typically involves placement of the person in a hyperbaric chamber or an environment with pressure like that of the deep water so as to get the nitrogen

⁶⁷ Frantzis, *Strangers at Ithaca*, p. 36.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 154.

⁶⁹ Robert McPhee Interview.

⁷⁰ How Stuff Works. "What Causes 'The Bends'?" <http://adventure.howstuffworks.com/question101.htm> (accessed March 20, 2009).

bubbles back to a smaller size. Hopefully, the divers in the early 1900s learned to understand the warning signs of rashes and achy joints and would take action before it would be too late.⁷¹

Also of danger to the spongers were sharks and eels. Sharks are common in shallow and deep, sunlit waters and are attracted to shininess (like brass), which resembles fish scales.⁷² Eels, on the other hand, are frequently found in rocky, shallow waters. Both sharks and eels could bite through the sponge diving suits and were not only injurious, but could be deadly as well. Originally, the sponging helmets had one glass window, and that was in the front of the helmet. Spongers could only see what was immediately in front of them. To fix this problem with constrained vision, two windows were added to the helmet—one on the left and one on the right, so the spongers could see to their sides as well what was ahead.⁷³

While there are many different varieties of sponges in the Gulf of Mexico and around the world, the wool sponge was the premier sponge harvested from the Gulf. The Gulf sponges were preferred by many people over the ones harvested in the Bahamas and Greece. Interestingly, the Tarpon Springs sponging industry did not suffer during the Great Depression and World War II. Europe was highly industrialized, and Tarpon Springs sponges developed a reputation as the best for cleaning metal. They left no lint and were very durable. Unfortunately for Tarpon Springs, the booming sponge industry took a big hit in 1948 when a severe red tide dramatically weakened the sponge population.⁷⁴

The bacteria blight was unavoidable—sponges began dissolving once they were exposed to air. The sponges were unmarketable, and the shortages drove spongers and their families permanently away from Tarpon Springs. Many sponge divers were second-generation spongers, but they could no longer provide for themselves and their families once they could not sell sponges. Men were forced to take jobs elsewhere, bringing their families with them to places

⁷¹ eMedicineHealth. "The Practical Guide to Health: The Bends—Decompression Syndromes." http://www.emedicinehealth.com/decompression_syndromes_the_bends/article_em.htm#The%20Bends%20Overview (accessed March 20, 2009).

⁷² Robert McPhee Interview; Ichthyology at the Florida Museum of Natural History. "Reducing the Risk of a Shark Encounter: Advice to Aquatic Recreationalists." <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/Sharks/attacks/relriskreduce.htm> (accessed March 20, 2009).

⁷³ Robert McPhee Interview.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

such as Youngstown, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These towns attracted the jobseekers because of their thriving steel mill industries. Most of the families never returned to Tarpon Springs. They had forged new lives elsewhere. Some of those who did not leave Tarpon Springs converted many of the building in the sponge docks to shops, much like it is today.⁷⁵

Tarpon Springs' hurting sponge industry of the late 1940s benefitted the Mediterranean sponge industry since they no longer had as much competition. Over time, the Tarpon Springs industry has recovered and gone back to producing sponges that are once more distributed all around the world.⁷⁶ It is estimated sponges bring about two million dollars into the local economy each year, with the tourism industry adding about twenty million dollars annually to the local economy as well.⁷⁷

Today, one can walk by the Sponge Exchange on Dodecanese Boulevard in Tarpon Springs and get lost in the excitement of the sponge industry that still remains. Shops hang sponges of all shapes and sizes outside their doors. Cafés and Greek restaurants are scattered in between the small Greco-themed stores that sell goods typically found in Greece, such as olive-oil bar soap and jewelry with the Greek key. Tourists walk along the street that parallels the docks of the Anclote River. Sponge boats are docked among private boats and tour boats. Over a century of Tarpon Springs history can be found in a mere bronze-colored, life-sized statue of a sponger in sponging gear. While the fascinating details of Tarpon Spring's history can easily be overlooked, the impacts of the Greeks and the sponging industry surely have made an original, everlasting mark on Tarpon Springs.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ City of Tarpon Springs. "Tarpon Springs Sponge Industry." Flyer, Tarpon Springs, 2009.

“Rocks Beneath the Water,” Camp Cassadaga: 1900-1910

By Emily Canterbury

About twenty-five miles north of Orlando, Florida, just far enough from the roller-coasters and water slides, lies the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp, “the oldest religious community of its kind in the southeastern United States.”¹ The drive over the seven hills of Cassadaga Road is a trip into another world. One Sunday afternoon, this author found that her curiosity had gotten the best of her as she went with a couple of friends to visit the Spiritualist Camp of Cassadaga. The subject of interest for the day was a message service. A sense of calm clearly radiated through the air. The atmosphere surrounding the camp was one of such tranquility that it was almost impossible not to whisper, even when taking a walk down the street. The sound of the gentle breeze flowing through the trees and the quiet conversations of people outdoors gave a sense of peace and momentarily removed the realities of the world.

As the author and her friends made their way into the back of the Andrew Jackson Davis Building, they found themselves transfixed on the speaker before them. For the next hour, members of the audience, both Spiritualists and visitors alike, were called upon by both certified and student mediums and asked if they would like to receive messages from the spirit world. Each medium chose two different audience members to whom they publicly gave messages. While a message was being given, all the people in the room focused their attention on the medium and the message receiver. All the messages seemed well received; people nodded their heads in agreement and understanding as they were given advice from mothers, grandfathers, and friends who had passed on. The Cassadaga camp provided an afternoon to remember for the visitors, just as it had for people at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The simple town of Cassadaga, a settlement located on fifty-seven acres of land, is home to a community of Spiritualists.² Spiritualists are practitioners of Spiritualism, the origins of which can be traced back to March 31, 1848. On that day, in a small town near Rochester, New York, Kate and Margaret Fox, first made contact with a spirit in their home. It was said that the

¹ John J. Guthrie, Jr., Phillip Charles Lucas, Gary Monroe, eds., *Cassadaga: The South's Oldest Spiritualist Community* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), p. xv.

² Ibid.

girls heard “strange knockings that responded intelligibly to their questions.”³ The spirit was believed to be that of a man who was murdered and buried in the girls’ basement. The Fox sisters became known as “mediums,” because they were the tools through which spirits communicated. In 1849, the sisters began to charge admission for curious persons to view such happenings.⁴

Andrew Jackson Davis began laying the framework for Spiritualism even before the Fox sisters. Davis was mystically inclined and while hypnotized “experienced clairvoyant visions and suggested unorthodox medical remedies.”⁵ He published his trance lectures, *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a voice to Mankind* (1847), which included his ideology called “harmonialism.” Davis claimed to speak to the spirit of Emmanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish scientist and mystic from the eighteenth century. Swedenborg claimed to have clairvoyant visions and trances where spirits would tell him about the afterlife. In his book *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell* (1758), he described seven spheres, three in heaven, three in hell, and an earthly sphere. The spheres were arranged in a hierarchy and consisted of like minded spirits. He said spirits were drawn to the most appropriate sphere, depending on the spiritual state of the person at the time of his death. Spiritualism incorporated some of Swedenborg’s ideas, specifically the notion that spirits were the go-between for God and humans. Spiritualists made this principle the central practice of their religion. However, instead of accepting the spherical idea of heaven and hell as an eternal resting place, Spiritualists believed that it was possible to advance through the different spheres to an eventual perfect state.⁶

The Spiritualists who have the ability to communicate with spirits are called mediums.⁷ Though both men and women can be mediums, the majority tend to be women. Many Spiritualists believe that women are more sensitive to the vibrations of spirits than men.

³ Bret E. Carroll, “The Context of Cassadaga: A Historical Overview of American Spiritualism” in John J. Guthrie, Lucas, and Monroe, eds., *Cassadaga*, p. 3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

⁷ Janet Karcher, *This Way To Cassadaga* (Deltona: John Hutchinson Productions, 1980), p. 14.

Mediums need to protect themselves from dangers, such as being possessed by spirits. They also have to be able to discern the difference between those spirits that are trying to communicate in a helpful manner and those that are vengeful. Mediums tend to have a collection of spirits known as “spirit guides” who stay with them to protect, teach and help the medium recognize when communication with the other world is possible. Traditionally, mediums had four spirit guides: a Native American, a philosopher, a physician, and a joy guide, the later of which brought a child-like, playful aspect to the life of the medium.⁸

All mediums in Cassadaga are required to be certified, a process which takes between four and six years. There are three classes of certification. The A class certifies mediums to give both public and private messages. The B class limits mediums to private messages and séances, while the C class specializes in physical mediumship. Physical mediumship involves events such as moving objects, light balls, voices, as well as the actual appearance of a spirit in a physical manner, all of which can be seen or heard by people in attendance of a message or séance. Many mediums are also certified healers. There are two types of healing, absent and magnetic. Absent healing takes place through mental prayer while magnetic healing needs physical contact or “laying on of hands”, which heals through energy and vibrations.⁹

When Cassadaga first came into existence in 1894, its founders based the community’s ideals on *The National Spiritualist Association of Churches Declaration of Principles*. Many of the values the community upheld are somewhat comparable to basic Judeo-Christian beliefs. The first affirmation is “We believe in Infinite Intelligence,” an idea similar to that of God. The second states “We believe that the phenomena of nature, both physical and spiritual, are the expression of Infinite Intelligence,” meaning that Infinite Intelligence is the creator of all that exists in the physical and spiritual worlds and can be found in everything and everyone. The third principle says “We affirm that a correct understanding of such expression and living in accordance therewith constitute true religion.”

Death as a continuation of life in another plane is the subject of the fourth principle, “We affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continue after the change called

⁸ Phillip Charles Lucas, “On the Threshold of a New Age: Cassadaga as a Contemporary Therapeutic Community” in Guthrie, Lucas, and Monroe, eds., *Cassadaga*, pp. 66-73.

⁹ Ibid.

death.”¹⁰ It states that even after death, a person’s identity as a being carries on. In response to the passing of one of the camp’s ex-presidents, it was said that “His many friends feel to congratulate him on his release at the ripe age of 89, and extend sympathy to all who mourn his loss.”¹¹ The people had a positive attitude toward death rather than a fear of it. The fifth belief is “We affirm that communication with the so-called dead is a fact, scientifically proven by the phenomena of Spiritualism.” The eighth principle affirms “the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul here or hereafter.” Spiritualist beliefs teach that there is no such thing as “eternal damnation,” however “wrong-doing will necessarily bring remorse and suffering...which can only be relieved by the individual’s own efforts if not here, then in the hereafter.” This principle suggests that even after death there is still the possibility of spiritual growth of the soul.¹²

Personal responsibility and accountability are the prevailing themes of additional principles. The sixth principle, “We believe that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule: ‘Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them,’” may be one of the easiest concepts with which non-Spiritualists can relate. The seventh affirmation is “We affirm the moral responsibility of the individual and that he makes his own happiness or unhappiness as he obeys or disobeys Nature’s physical and spiritual laws.” This affirmation gives every man and woman personal responsibility for their happiness in life through their own free will. There is no savior; or as Joseph P. Whitwell, the third President of the National Spiritualists Association, would say “Each one must carry his own cross to Calvary’s Heights in the overcoming of wrong-doing and replacing them with the right.”¹³

The final principle states, “We affirm that the Precepts of Prophecy contained in the Bible are a divine attribute proven through Mediumship.” The Bible is valued for its truths. Validation of early mediumship can be exemplified by the prophecies of the Bible. To the spiritualists, the Biblical prophesies prove that mediumship can be traced back through time.¹⁴

¹⁰ *Spiritualist Manual* (Lily Dale, New York: National Spiritualist Association of Churches of the United States of America, 1991). pp. 34-36.

¹¹ *DeLand News*, February 26, 1909.

¹² *Spiritualist Manual* pp. 34-36.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The history of the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association begins with George P. Colby. Colby was born on January 6, 1848 into a Baptist family.¹⁵ He began to recognize signs of mediumship around the age of twelve when he received a message from an uncle of his who had passed. It is said that the uncle affirmed George was a medium and predicted he would create a Spiritualist haven in the south.¹⁶ Due to poor health, thought to be tuberculosis by some sources, Colby moved to Florida to be in a warmer climate.¹⁷ Colby moved to Florida to be in a warmer climate. Seneca, his “spirit guide,” communicated with Colby and helped lead him to the exact spot for the southern camp. Colby’s health improved soon after he settled the area.¹⁸

A National Spiritual and Liberal Association convention held in DeLeon Springs, Florida in January, 1893, led to the establishment of The Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association (also known as SCSCMA). The convention organized a committee to search for a more permanent location; they wanted a site that could serve as a winter retreat for the camp in New York called Lily Dale. The people of DeLeon Springs, who had welcomed the economic boost that such a large gathering had brought to the community, tried to convince the association to settle there.¹⁹ In the end, however, the camp came to be permanently located on thirty-five acres of land that had been “deeded to the Spiritualists by the founder of Cassadaga, George P. Colby.”²⁰ The new camp was named after the Cassadaga Lakes located near Lily Dale. The word “Cassadaga” originated from the Seneca Indian word meaning “rocks beneath the water.”²¹

Cassadaga was a very active Spiritualist community from 1900-1910. Newspapers from this decade offer insight into the life of camp members and the surrounding communities. The articles hint at the inner workings of the town and the atmosphere surrounding the camp. The DeLand News, a weekly newspaper, featured a column in 1909 entitled “Camp Cassadaga”,

¹⁵ Karcher, *This Way To Cassadaga*, p. 66.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Owens, *Cassadaga, Florida Yesterday and Today* (Pisces Publishing, 2001), pp. 3-4.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁸ Karcher, *This Way to Cassadaga*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁹ John J. Guthrie, Jr., “Seeking the Sweet Spirit of Harmony”, pp. 29-43.

²⁰ Kratcher, *This Way To Cassadaga*, p. 15.

²¹ Elizabeth Owens, Cassadaga, Florida Yesterday and Today (Pisces Publishing, 2001), p. 11.

written by camp member Mrs. C.E.S. Twing. The article reviewed each passing week at the camp, and highlighted major events. In contrast, The DeLand Volusia County Record gives more insight into how Cassadaga was a part of the larger Volusia County area and also records how the surrounding community viewed Cassadaga.

The SCSCMA began its regular midwinter gathering in February. The session continued for six weeks before coming to a close in March.²² Elections for new officers of the camp Board and the Ladies Auxiliary were held the last week of the session.²³ The DeLand Volusia Country Record wrote in 1905 that for Cassadaga, “the season has been a most successful one.” In that three month period alone, seven cottages were built and about six more were “contracted for.”²⁴ In 1909, the “auxiliary society” took in more than \$600 at the close of camp. The camp treasury closed the 1908-1909 year with \$1,850.²⁵

The interaction between people in Cassadaga and those in surrounding towns was mutually accepting. One newspaper is quoted as saying, “We extend to all the right hand of fellowship and good will.”²⁶ Multiple newspapers reported that people from neighboring towns often traveled to Cassadaga on Sundays to attend services.²⁷ Camp members, such as founder George Colby, also traveled outside of the camp.²⁸ Mrs. Twing, accompanied by a group from the camp, made a trip to DeLeon Springs one Sunday to hold religious services. “Mrs. Twing’s sermon was highly appreciated by the large and intelligent audience who were present on that occasion.”²⁹ One newspaper announced that invitations were out for a Saturday night dance at the camp’s new pavilion.³⁰ The people of Cassadaga seemed to be accepting of everyone,

²² DeLand *Volusia County Record*, February 6, 1904; Ibid., January 15, 1909; Ibid., March 25, 1905; DeLand News, March 26, 1909.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ DeLand *Volusia County Record*, March 25, 1905.

²⁵ DeLand *News*, March 26, 1909.

²⁶ DeLand *Volusia County Record*, January 15, 1909.

²⁷ Ibid., March 5, 1904.

²⁸ DeLand *News*, January 23, 1903.

²⁹ DeLand *Volusia County Record*, April 8, 1905.

³⁰ Ibid., January 21, 1905.

regardless of race or ethnicity. Their parties and evening activities often included black artists or musicians.³¹

Each week at Cassadaga was full of different activities and entertainment. One article stated “Of amusements there are plenty; a progressive euchre party every Monday evening, and the regular Thursday evening dance, with the Bushnell orchestra in attendance. Other amusements fill in between. The bazaar is open every afternoon at two o’clock. The rose garden is full of bloom and not a day passes that some one is not made glad with a bunch of roses.”³² Almost every night featured either an activity or lecture. The weekly Monday night Euchre Party, which was a common card game of the time, began in 1900 and became a popular form of amusement for camp members.³³ Along with card games, the people of Cassadaga enjoyed theater. A play by the name “Mrs. Jarley’s Wax Works,” was performed one evening in 1909.³⁴ The play “reflected Spiritualist interest in reform politics.”³⁵ One newspaper described an evening of entertainment which consisted of singers dressing in old fashioned attire and putting on a concert.³⁶ Séance’s were regularly held on Wednesday afternoons.³⁷ Camp members could be found at the Bazaar selling aprons, handkerchiefs, beads, or character readings.³⁸

One of the many activities of the camp included an annual masquerade dance. In 1909 there were more than 200 people in attendance including visitors from Lake Helen, Orange City, and DeLand.³⁹ Thursday night dances were a regular occurrence. One week the dance was themed; it was “an apron and necktie party,” where participants with a necktie had to search for a partner whose apron would match.⁴⁰ These weekly dances were attended by older and younger

³¹ *DeLand News*, March 12, 1909.

³² *DeLand Volusia County Record*, January 15, 1909.

³³ *DeLand News*, March 5, 1909.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ John J. Guthrie, Jr., “Seeking the Sweet Spirit of Harmony”, p. 42.

³⁶ *DeLand News*, March 19, 1909.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, March 12, 1909.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, January 22, 1909.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, February 26, 1909.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, March 12, 1909.

camp members alike.⁴¹ Bushnell's orchestra often provided the musical entertainment during dances, such as the February 1905 "Grand Masquerade Ball."⁴² Many of the weekly affairs were "a source of revenue for the association."⁴³

In 1904, an Indian council fire was added as a new element of the camp. The events were "held around a lightwood fire under the trees at a distant part of the grounds." The location was said to be "where many ... aborigine friends were heard from." These meetings "attracted quite a large number of the cult."⁴⁴ Newspapers wrote about many other special events as well. The most exciting happening captured in the January 29, 1909 newspaper involved the 70th birthday reception of Dr. G.N. Hilligoss, who was the president of the camp in 1909. More than two hundred and fifty people attended the celebration, including Vice-President E.W. Bond. Hilligoss received a gold headed ebony cane and a rocking chair as gifts from the camp members. The occasion warranted multiple guest speakers and a performance by Bushnell's orchestra.⁴⁵

For an opening day celebration, the members decorated the camp auditorium. "The flags of all nations have a fair showing with 'old glory' as leader."⁴⁶ Patriotism ran strong among camp members. Grand Army Day was observed by many, including veterans from both the North and the South. To celebrate, members told stories of the war amidst music and chatter. The spiritualists even held a celebration in their pavilion for the Lincoln centenary, where a speaker reenacted the Gettysburg Address and the locals provided stirring music.⁴⁷

Camp members were continuously obtaining "new food for thought" through various lectures.⁴⁸ Speakers gave lectures on topics such as "Individual Responsibility" and "The Spirit

⁴¹ Ibid., February 19, 1909.

⁴² Deland *Volusia County Record*, February 11, 1905.

⁴³ DeLand *News*, March 26, 1909.

⁴⁴ Deland *Volusia County Record*, March 19, 1904.

⁴⁵ DeLand *News*, January 29, 22, 1909.

⁴⁶ Ibid., February 12, 1909.

⁴⁷ Ibid., February 19, 1909.

⁴⁸ Ibid., March 19, 1909.

World, the Instigator of the Present Progress of Humanity.”⁴⁹ Other popular subjects included “Spiritual Evolution as Related to the Happiness of Humanity” and “Karma, or Cause and Effect.”⁵⁰ Both the Lectures and the speakers themselves were held in the highest regard by the audience. Guests described the lectures as “soul-inspiring” and said that the speakers talked with “eloquence and power.”⁵¹

The camp oftentimes held two services were held on Sundays, one at 10:30 and a second at 2:30.⁵² Sometimes a 7:30 evening lecture would also have been included on Sundays. The *DeLand News* reported that there were large audiences at the services during the week.⁵³ Sometimes lectures were followed by mediums giving messages.⁵⁴ Music played a large part of the religious services as well; the camp had a choir and a pianist.⁵⁵ The *Spiritualist Manual* included readings and invocations for services. Readings could be found for specific services such as those for marriage, the anniversary of modern spiritualism, patriotic celebrations, and burials.⁵⁶

Cassadaga seemed to rely heavily on the generosity of its members and visitors for the growth of the community; the camp showed much appreciation to those who gave gifts and donations.⁵⁷ An irrigation system was installed by the husband of Mrs. Scott Burton, who had visited the camp for two weeks.⁵⁸ The camp had cottages built and purchased additional land.⁵⁹

⁴⁹ Ibid., February 26, 1909.

⁵⁰ Ibid., March 19, 1909.

⁵¹ Ibid., February 19, 1909.

⁵² Ibid., March 12, 1909.

⁵³ Ibid., March 19, 1909.

⁵⁴ Ibid., February 26, 1909.

⁵⁵ Ibid., January 22, 1909.

⁵⁶ *Spiritualist Manual*, pp. 34-36.

⁵⁷ *DeLand News*, February 26, 1909.

⁵⁸ Ibid., February 19, 1909.

⁵⁹ Ibid., March 19, 1909.

Even new brick sidewalks were laid.⁶⁰ A note was made in the Camp Cassadaga section of *The DeLand News* on March 19 1909, regarding the need for a post office for the camp for at least six months out of the year.⁶¹ In 1909, “Sanitary flush closets” were installed in the apartment house, the pavilion and the auditorium.⁶² In January of 1909, more than fifty houses had been built on Cassadaga’s grounds with about twenty more outside the gates. The camp had seen a steady growth since its establishment and many improvements were made to the property as the years went by.⁶³

Although it was not easily perceptible through the newspaper articles of the time, Spiritualist camps were faced with continual issues regarding the authenticity of mediums, financial stability, and bad press. Many camps similar to Cassadaga had to close due to financial debt or natural disasters. The camps that have carried on up to this point in time still face uncertainty and doubt by the general public.⁶⁴

The newspaper articles written during Cassadaga’s early years included many interesting pieces of information about the camp. However, one of the most intriguing aspects of the newspapers involved a certain lack of information; specifically, nothing in the newspapers made any mention of the Ku Klux Klan. One would think that the Spiritualists of Cassadaga would be ideal targets for KKK activity, but apparently the camp was able to live in peace at a time when intolerance ran rampant. No evidence of harassment from extremist groups was found in the any of the newspaper articles. The camp has stood for over a century years, with no sign of it shutting down any time soon. For both the curious and the scholarly, Camp Cassadaga is well worth a visit.

⁶⁰ Ibid., February 19, 1909.

⁶¹ Ibid., March 19, 1909.

⁶² Ibid., March 26, 1909.

⁶³ *DeLand Volusia County Record*, January 15, 1909.

⁶⁴ Carroll, “The Context of Cassadaga,” p. 17.



Camp Cassadaga's Spirit Pond



The Colby Memorial Temple

“Neath the Shadow of the Pine”: Woodmere, Venice’s Forgotten

Lumber Town

By Christine Simone

Buried deep among the pine and palm of coastal southwest Florida hides an incredible story of a thriving industry that is nearly undetectable throughout present-day Venice and Englewood. Those that stumbled across the historical site of the Manasota Lumber Company in the decades following its height of success were often confused by what they had discovered. In 1963, a newspaper described the remains of the once-powerful company. “Startled passersby stopped short at the sight of the building that is visible through the dense growth of vines completely enshrouding it, and massive pyramids marching with geometric precision around mysterious mounds of stone with flat plateaus that tower ten feet above the ground like the sacrificial alters of a lost civilization,” the article narrated. One might expect upon first impression that “here is the sight of an old Spanish mission or perhaps an even older Indian empire.” Yet these notions were “quickly dispelled by the presence of modern metal pipes protruding from the stone mounds, and examinations of the foundations reveals cement of fairly recent manufacture. And then the appearance of a railroad track wending its way amid the rubble provides a clue to the identity of the ruins where once a town of 1500 people flourished, engaged in one of this areas largest sawmill operations.”¹

The onset of World War I caused an extremely high increase in the demand for supplies, especially wood, to aid in the war effort, particularly for the construction of ships and other uses in France and Great Britain.² As early as 1914, the war prompted manufacturers to expand their production capabilities in order to meet the needs of the nations involved in the conflict. As the demand for lumber rose, prices increased accordingly and logging companies throughout the United States began searching for ways to expand their enterprise.

¹ Josephine Cortes. “Ghost Town Found,” *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*. August 25, 1963.

² Laura Fuller. “No Trace Now of Woodmere, Local Sawmill Town Bigger Than Venice After Founding 38 Years Ago.” *Venice Gondolier*. October 18, 1956.

Thus, the Lidgerwood Manufacturing Company of New York, New York and the Huddleston Hardware Company of Norfolk, New York sent Herman C. Kluge, a timber cruiser, to southwest Florida to determine whether the forests between Venice and Charlotte Harbor were appropriate for the establishment of a timbering operation. On his quest, he found that as much as fifty percent of the area was covered by longleaf yellow pine forests. The area was soon dubbed the “Pine Flats.”³

Not only did he approve of the area, but his wife, Anna Kluge, said that she remembers him calling it “heaven on Earth”.⁴ Kluge owned a Pierce-Arrow touring car that featured flanged wheels for driving on railways. Kluge and other officials often took their wives for rides to Sarasota in style.⁵ The couple even bought their own section of land along the Lemon Bay coast and they resided there for years before the economy and Kluge’s job forced him to travel to other areas of the world.⁶ He stayed in the area for only a few years to oversee the development of the lumber company before being sent to Argentina to scout out timber opportunities.⁷

The Manasota Lumber Company broke ground at their new site in Florida on October 19, 1918 and began full operation in 1919. Kluge supervised the construction of the lumber mill, laying of railroad, and the building of the logging machines.⁸

Though the original purpose of the mill had been to supply timber for the war effort, the Manasota Lumber Company in Southwest Florida continued to expand even after the conflict drew to a close in 1919.

The property holdings of the lumber company were part of a grant of 753,000 acres of land given in 1888 by the state of Florida to the Tampa Peace Creek and St. John’s River Railroad, which later changed its name to the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railway Company. The state deeded to any railroad company 10,000 acres of land for each mile of railroad that was built. A total of 551,115 acres of this grant were in Manatee County and

³ Marge Stolte, "A Local Town Forgotten." *Venice Gulf Coast Living Magazine*, (January 2007).

⁴ Fuller, “No Trace Now of Woodmere.”

⁵ Diana Harris, “The Ghost Town of Woodmere.” *Englewood Sun Times* September 2, 1992.

⁶ Fuller, “No Trace Now of Woodmere.”

⁷ Marge Stolte, "A Local Town Forgotten."

⁸ Cortes, “Ghost Town Found.”

extended almost to Charlotte harbor, and the remainder was in Desoto County.⁹ At the time, present-day Manatee and Sarasota Counties were combined. Sarasota did not become its own county until 1921.

The Seaboard Airline Railroad only extended as far south as Venice because, prior to the lumber company, there were only twenty-five to fifty families in the area.¹⁰ In fact, the 1910 census reported that only 173 people were in the vicinity.¹¹ Bertha Palmer, a prominent businesswoman in Manatee County played a major role in bringing the railroad to Venice. When Palmer first moved to the Sarasota region in 1910, she found the area promising and bought more than 80,000 acres of land in present-day Sarasota County. At one point before her death in 1918, she owned more than one third of the land within what is now Sarasota County.¹² Her property ownership and business skills quickly made her a respected figure in the community. As a prerequisite to her large purchase of land, Palmer required that the railroad be extended from Sarasota to Venice and she even personally specified where the railway was to run and where the extension would end.¹³ Those few residents that were already in Venice were overjoyed at the thought of bringing the railroad further south. The extension of the railroad to Sarasota in 1903 had stimulated growth in that area, and it seemed like a reasonable assumption that the same would occur with Venice. Until the Seaboard built the sixteen mile extension in 1911, residents of Venice had been driving mules to Sarasota to stock up on needed supplies or else they had taken the trip by boat up the coastline.¹⁴

The Seaboard Airline Railroad saw its opportunity to extend further south with the opening of the Manasota Lumber Company. The site for the company was located just slightly more than five miles south of the pre-existing southern terminal for the railroad. The mill was

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Marge Stolte, "Historic Venice Train Depot." *Venice Gulf Coast Living Magazine* (January 2007).

¹¹ George E. Youngberg, Sr., and Earl W. Aumann. *Venice and Venice Area* (Venice: Feather Fables Publishing, 1995), pp. 22-23.

¹² "Bertha Honore Palmer 1849-1948: A Businesswoman in a Man's World." *Sarasota's Finest Properties*. <<http://www.buysarasota.com/bertha-honore-palmer.html>>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gregg Turner, *Venice in the 1920s* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), pp. 11; Youngberg and Aumann. *Venice and Venice Area*, pp. 22-23.

far enough away from Venice so as not to risk interference with the developing Venice area, but close enough to be of benefit to the railroad.¹⁵ The Venice terminal remained the southernmost point of the Seaboard railroad until the mid-1920s.¹⁶

In order to establish and staff the new lumber company, “lyrical lingo” advertisements were placed by the company from 1918 to 1920 to attract workers to the new operation. The ads ran in newspapers throughout the southern and southeastern United States.¹⁷ One such ad pronounced, “Manasota ‘Neath the Shadows of the Pines’ offers skilled and unskilled labor in their various lines, a most attractive inducement in the way of pleasant homes, adequate salaries, excellent climate and an all around beautiful place in which to live.”¹⁸

Another “lyrical lingo” ad read: “Manasota is located in the southwestern part of Manatee County on the great Tamiami Trail, which connects the East Coast with the West Coast, in the fragrant pine woods of the land of Manatee where opportunity is knocking at every door.” Workers responded extremely well to these advertisements and came from all over the nation to get a piece of the Florida lifestyle and to increase their job security.¹⁹ The new employees listed a number of reasons for choosing to take up the offer for employment at Manasota such as to escape the colder climate, to make their mark on citrus, to gain real estate, to seek prospects for commercial fishing, and to conquer a land that seemed to be filled with promise and opportunity.²⁰ By the end of 1919, the sawmill was fully functional and employed approximately 1,500 workers and the population of Manasota was between 4,000 and 5,000.²¹ That number was roughly nine times the population of Venice at that time.²² White workers held jobs as carpenters, supervisors, clerks, electricians, saw filers, bookkeepers, superintendents,

¹⁵ Youngberg and Aumann, *Venice and Venice Area*, p. 25.

¹⁶ Gregg M. Turner, *Venice in the 1920s*, p. 10.

¹⁷ Diana Harris, “‘A Grand and Remarkable Future’ for Woodmere.” *Englewood Sun-Herald*. April 4, 2009.

¹⁸ Diana Harris. “Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company,” *Englewood Sun Times* August 22, 1992.

¹⁹ Harris, “A Grand and Remarkable Future.”

²⁰ “Manasota: The Saw Mill Town of Yesterday.” *Englewood Sun Times*, August 29, 1990.

²¹ Harris, “A Grand and Remarkable Future.”

²² Janet S. Matthews, *Venice: Journey from Horse and Chaise* (Sarasota: Pine Level Press, 1989), p. 161.

foremen, engineers, drivers, postmasters, and timekeepers, while Negro workers worked as log sawyers, laborers, mechanics, and firemen.²³

The Manasota Lumber Company dominated the timber industry in southwest Florida despite competition from other companies. In the area from the Manatee County line, east to Lake Okeechobee, south to Collier County, and west to the Gulf of Mexico, there were believed to be 16 large sawmills that operated from 1915 to 1929.²⁴ Swamps near the site were filled with valuable cypress and there was an abundance of long leaf pine throughout the region.²⁵ An article in a 1919 newspaper read, “A grand and remarkable future” for the Manasota Lumber Company would “set a high standard of development for the industrial expansion of south Florida.”²⁶ Manasota was supposedly the largest lumber company in the state of Florida during that time.²⁷ A June 27, 1918 edition of the *Sarasota Times* even ventured to call it the “largest and best equipped mill in the country.”²⁸

Logging was a complex task and there was a specific flow of operation that had to take place. First, the trees were cut and dragged to the ‘big wheels’ and the mules that would transport the lumber to the nearest extension of the railroad.²⁹ There was a large machine shop, a railroad yard, and huge corrals for the mules.³⁰

Even though the Seaboard Airline Railroad ended about 5 miles north of the lumber company, the company built its own set of tracks that they could relay lumber from the sawmill. The Gulf Coast Railroad constructed the extension of the rail that connected Manasota to the Seaboard Line. Once the cars owned by the company reached Venice, they linked with the Seaboard Airline Railroad to be brought to Tampa for shipment.³¹

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "The Short Lived Life of a Huge Sawmill - Woodmere." *Englewood Sun-Herald*. July 21, 1999.

²⁵ Cortes, “Ghost Town Found.”

²⁶ Harris, “A Grand and Remarkable Future.”

²⁷ Harris, “Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company.”

²⁸ Matthews, *Venice: Journey from Horse and Chaise*, p. 161.

²⁹ Harris, “The Ghost Town of Woodmere.”

³⁰ Harris, “Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company.”

³¹ Matthews, *Venice*, p. 161.

Narrow gauge railroad spurs were built through the woods to wherever the company was currently working. A large crane, driven by steam, put the logs on the cars, which would then return to the mill. If it was not necessary to use the logs immediately, they were stored in “mill ponds” on the property. When the workers were ready to use the logs, they were hauled up to the mill, where the lumber was cut and then sent to dry in a “drying shed”.³² Initially, it was extremely arduous to transport the logs throughout the camp since there were no paved roads anywhere on entire property, but later crushed oyster shells were brought in to line the main streets at Manasota.³³

Mill ponds proved to be a common asset to lumber companies. The ponds not only supplied water for the mill, but were also used to store logs so that the timber would not get dried out before it could be used. The water was a very energy efficient way to store and transport lumber from the pond to the mill.

The sawmill itself was a wooden structure that was four stories tall and stretched to about the size of a city block.³⁴ Not only did the Manasota Lumber Company manufacture the timber that was exported to other regions of Florida, the United States, and Europe, but it also produced other, more specialized items at the mill such as factory flooring, roofing, siding, shingles, railroad material, and boat lumber.³⁵ The company was capable of turning out more than 42,000 feet of milled lumber per day. Nearly all of the lumber used by the engineers in the development of Venice came from Minnesota’s sawmill.³⁶

Just before the beginning of 1923, the Gulf Coast Railway was sold to the Nocatee-Manatee Freight Company along with all of the other properties of the Manasota Lumber Company. In 1922, a local newspaper headline read “Manasota is No More: Woodmere is New Name.” The short blurb continued, “Effective October 18, the name of Manasota, Sarasota

³² Harris, “The Ghost Town of Woodmere.”

³³ “Manasota: The Saw Mill Town of Yesterday.”

³⁴ Stolte, “A Local Town Forgotten.”

³⁵ Harris, “Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company.”

³⁶ James Curtis, Pamela Lesemann, and Stewart Woolley. *Venice: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Sarasota, FL: Lindsay Curtis Publishing Company, 1984), pp. 10.

County, Florida, was discontinued by the post office department and the name Woodmere substituted therefor.”³⁷

New technology continued to develop during the years of Woodmere. In 1923, Woodmere held a demonstration of a Ford tractor with twenty-two horse power that operated with a locomotive attachment that coincided with the gauge tracks that ran through the lumber company. To the surprise of the workers, the new machine only required gasoline for fuel and needed just one man to operate it instead of two. It reached speeds of eighteen miles per hour and was able to control a train of seven cars. The new invention would do away with the costs of hiring a foreman as well as coal, wood, and water. Laborers and distinguished guests alike came from as far as Sarasota to witness the demonstration of the new technology.³⁸

Being associated with the Woodmere was much more than simply an opportunity for employment, it was a way of life. The workers at the company lived on land associated with Woodmere and were provided with housing. The settlement covered more than 10 acres.³⁹ More than 1,500 homes were constructed for officials and employees. All housing units were laid out in streets that ran east to west. Different housing was available for the officers of the company. Houses for the officials were built in a frame construction with two stories. Foremen also received frame houses, but theirs were only one story. Houses, for the laborers, were a one-story frame with simpler construction.⁴⁰ Their amenities included indoor plumbing, screened porches, and electric lights.⁴¹ The mill provided electricity for the mill and the homes. Each night, a whistle would sound at 6 P.M. signaling the close of the mill for the day. After 6 P.M., residents were required to provide their own means of lighting their homes, usually by kerosene lamp.⁴² For many of the workers though, this was the first time that they had been presented with an opportunity to have any electric lighting in their living quarters.⁴³

³⁷ "Manasota is No More: Woodmere is New Name." *Sarasota County Times*. October 26, 1922.

³⁸ "Woodmere Has Demonstration of New Device." *Sarasota County Times*. September 13, 1923.

³⁹ Stolte, "A Local Town Forgotten."

⁴⁰ Fuller, "No Trace Now of Woodmere."

⁴¹ Harris, "Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company."

⁴² "Manasota: The Saw Mill Town of Yesterday."

⁴³ Harris, "A Grand and Remarkable Future."

At this time, segregation was still raging, especially in the South. Separate housing was provided for the white and black workers. Josephine Raftery, who was nine when her family moved to Manasota in 1921, explained, “The whites lived on the left side of the road, while the blacks lived on the right side of the road, which was referred to as Tamiami Trail. Rather than being provided with individual housing units, the Negroes resided in dormitories.”⁴⁴ The colored had their own building, which we referred to as a ‘jug joint.’ They’d spend their time there, usually on the weekends, when they weren’t working in the mill.”⁴⁵

The entire mill was self-sustaining and it was this high standard of living that attracted so many workers to come to Manasota. In addition to the availability of housing, the mill constructed a commissary store, butcher shop, dining room, movie theater, post office, a Catholic Church, a Protestant Church, and even its own hotel.

The commissary was located in one of the larger frame buildings within Woodmere. Initially it was overseen by a Mr. Baker and then later by Floyd Zeigler.⁴⁶ Items that the commissary had popularly sold included dried and canned goods, flour, and sugar. Fresh produce was not often for sale, instead, most families kept their own vegetable garden, which provided a constant supply of fresh fruits and vegetables for the workers. For those that did not choose to eat in their homes, there was a dining hall that was capable of seating 1,200 people at once.⁴⁷

The dining hall was not reserved solely for meals. It was often transformed into a building that was used for parties and holiday festivities. Although the building was designed for 1,200 people, on various occasions the entire community of more than 1,500 managed to cram themselves into the hall. Mrs. Kluge commented, “Many good times were had there.”⁴⁸

Boys in their early teens were allowed to work for the company, primarily in the commissary. Jack D. Tate was thirteen years old when he began working for the commissary in 1926. He told the Englewood *Sun Times* that he had almost quit working on his first day after

⁴⁴ Cortes. “Ghost Town Found.”

⁴⁵ “Manasota: The Saw Mill Town of Yesterday.”

⁴⁶ Fuller, “No Trace Now of Woodmere.”

⁴⁷ Harris, “Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company.”

⁴⁸ Fuller, “No Trace Now of Woodmere.”

being asked to clean up spilled oats and corn in the store. The chore was difficult because he was in an un-air-conditioned room with no windows, even so he stayed with the job and eventually found that he really enjoyed his time there.⁴⁹

One of the most popular items for sale with the employees and the outside community was ice. Every ten days or so, trips were arranged to the Punta Gorda ice house via a steel bridge that crossed the Myakka River. The ice house was built in the 1890s and was primarily used to provide ice for the fishing industry.⁵⁰ Once there, employees would fetch eight to ten, 300-pound pieces of ice and load them onto a Model T Ford that had been rebuilt as a flatbed truck. They then parked behind the commissary and used chains to hoist the ice into a huge cooler located at the back of the store.⁵¹

The butcher shop employed two butchers, Ralph Ilampton and another man simply known as Mr. Wilder. They made sure that there was constantly a supply of fresh meat available, particularly beef and pork. The people of Woodmere supplemented their diets with a variety of meats that they hunted that were not sold at the store such as turkey, quail, deer, rabbit, and squirrel. Occasionally, fishermen would even bring their catches to Woodmere to sell at the store.⁵² A bull, a herd of cows, and flocks of chickens were kept on-site to provide the workers with meat and dairy products. Even members of the community outside of Manasota were welcome to come to the shop to purchase the meat.⁵³

Workers and their families had their health tended to by the company physician, who was referred to as Dr. Cribbin. Josephine Raftery recalled, "Every saw mill in those days had its own doctor to tend to the sick and deliver the babies. Dr. Cribbing had this little building and all the medicine we needed was in this little building."⁵⁴ Aside from the obvious benefits to the quality of life that were provided by the sawmill, Peter Warwick, the plant's manager, adopted a plan

⁴⁹ Harris, "Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company."

⁵⁰ Nicole Oliverio, "Punta Gorda's Ice House Gets Makeover." WINK News- Southwest Florida, <<http://www.winknews.com/news/local/10322032.html>>.

⁵¹ Harris, "Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company."

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Stolte, "A Local Town Forgotten."

⁵⁴ "Manasota: The Saw Mill Town of Yesterday."

that withheld a portion of each worker's salary that was, in turn, set aside for that employee in the event that he was suddenly unable to work or laid off.⁵⁵

When the Manasota Lumber Company initially opened, there was no school, but rather a tutor by the name of Jefferson Stone. He was hired by Peter Warwick, the manager of the plant, to teach children that lived in the town. Classes were originally held in the main dining hall before the program expanded in the following years.⁵⁶

Eventually, a small schoolhouse was erected on the property so the children could obtain an education. The small school featured a teacher for each room and there were three grades per room. After the sixth grade, all students were put together with one teacher. Schooling was not always taken seriously. As a matter of fact, Vida Davis Hoffacker recalls this situation, "I was told that in one year seven teachers left one after the other because of the undisciplined children. One incident in particular I heard about was how one boy pulled a butcher knife and stabbed a boy in front of him." Vida continued, "The wound was superficial and the victim retaliated by chasing his attacker with a gun, firing several shots at him."⁵⁷

Eula Whitehead Davis was about seven years old when she attended the school for a year in 1924. The Englewood *Sun Times* reported,

Eula can still remember an event that shows that total control by the teacher was not always obtained. Miss Lott, her teacher, gave Eula a 'good whipping' because she refused to sit next to a little boy who was 'filthy, dirty and stank to high heavens.' The whipping didn't take, so Miss Lott gave strong-minded Eula another one. was too much for one of her protective older brothers who got up and threw a book hard and straight at the teacher.

Eula's mother was called to take her daughter out of the classroom, but she was allowed to return the next day and was never seated next to the boy again.⁵⁸ This account exemplifies the lack of discipline that the teachers had over the students.

For those that were interested in an opportunity to leave Woodmere for an outing or shopping, there were train rides available to Sarasota or Venice. Two of the train cars were

⁵⁵ Fuller, "No Trace Now of Woodmere."

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Vida Hoffacker, *Our Little Corner of Florida* (Venice, FL: West Coast Printing, 1990).

⁵⁸ Harris, Diana D. "Some Memories of Woodmere Still Remain." *Englewood Sun Times*, August 29, 1992.

modified with wooden seats to transport passengers.⁵⁹ Employees and their families could ride the Gulf Coast Railway, which would connect with the Seaboard Airline Railroad to Sarasota. Each day, the train left Woodmere at 8 A.M. and 5 P.M. and arrived in Venice forty minutes later. The route that the railway took was fairly indirect from Venice to Woodmere. The track led east for two-and-a-half miles, then south for three-and-a-half miles, then finally southwest toward the coastline.⁶⁰ Additionally, there was a Saturday night train that not only offered shopping for items that were not available at the commissary, but also provided social entertainment and the right to remain outside of the settlement past the 9 P.M. curfew, something that many looked forward to. All workers and residents were permitted to take part in the train rides. There were two passenger cars- one for whites and one for blacks. The train left Woodmere at 6:30 p.m. and returned around 11 P.M.⁶¹

In 1919, the same year that Manasota opened, Congress ratified the Eighteenth Amendment and passed the Volstead Act to actively impose prohibition.⁶² Much like the rest of the nation, Manasota experienced problems with the legitimacy of the law and its enforcement. All ten acres of the settlement were enclosed within an electrified fence. No one was to leave or enter the area after 9 p.m., except Saturdays.⁶³

Several natives in the area outside of Manasota, primarily along Lemon Bay and throughout Venice, were extremely successful in building a lucrative business by selling bootleg whiskey to the workers. The South Venice woods were a perfect place to hide whiskey stills that were used to distill the alcohol. As a result of the workers inebriation, many knife and gun fights began to break out, leading to the addition of a nine-foot-high electric fence. Once the fence was up, there was no drinking allowed on the grounds and managers began to see a decrease in conflicts.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Stolte, Marge. "A Local Town Forgotten."

⁶⁰ "Manasota: The Saw Mill Town of Yesterday."

⁶¹ Harris, "Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company."

⁶² Newman, John J., and John M. Schmalbach. *United States History*. (New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc, 1998), pp. 479.

⁶³ Fuller, Laura. "No Trace Now of Woodmere."

⁶⁴ Fuller, Laura. "No Trace Now of Woodmere."

Woodmere was at its full, working capacity from 1919 to 1923.⁶⁵ At the height of its productivity, the area contained a larger population than either Venice or Englewood could take credit for until the 1950s.⁶⁶ Around 1923, full production of the mill ceased due to a drastic decrease in the demand for wood and wood-related products. Although out of work at the company, many people remained living at Woodmere while working at a variety of other jobs in Venice or learning to become fishermen by trade. Some were still employed to help disband the mill. By 1926, almost all of the salvageable equipment had been sold and hauled away, leaving the once-powerful company looking weak, empty, and abandoned.⁶⁷ The onset of the Great Depression lowered the demand for lumber even more, forcing the remaining property and railways to be abandoned.⁶⁸ The poorly maintained Negro dormitories were some of the first buildings to fall apart.⁶⁹

By that time, the lumber company had already cut down virtually all of the timber in the area. At the time, there were no reforestation practices and the company had harvested all of the natural resources closest to Woodmere. In the company's five years of operation, the vast majority of the useable timber had been cleared. Thousands of acres were cut down.⁷⁰

The first of two fires that would destroy the remains of Woodmere occurred in January 1929. The *Sarasota Herald* reported,

The rain came as a blessed relief to Englewood, lessening as it did the constant danger from wood and grass fires around the district. Fortunately, we have escaped material damage but Woodmere, to the north came close to being wiped out entirely. Twenty-one houses of the abandoned town were burned to the ground and the remainder of the houses barely saved. Most of those burned were in the Negro quarters of the old lumber town.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Harris, "Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company."

⁶⁶ Fuller, Laura. "No Trace Now of Woodmere."

⁶⁷ Harris, Diana D. "Some Memories of Woodmere Still Remain."

⁶⁸ "Manasota: The Saw Mill Town of Yesterday."

⁶⁹ Cortes, Josephine. "Ghost Town Found."

⁷⁰ Stolte, Marge. "A Local Town Forgotten."

⁷¹ Ibid.

The four-story mill building burned down in 1930, marking the final end to the Woodmere legacy.⁷² The fire could be contained to the section of the company that was east of State Road 776, leaving only about 30 buildings remaining on the western side of the development, which was the residential side.⁷³ Some reports asserted that the light and smoke from the massive blaze could be seen from as far away as Arcadia, which is over fifty miles away.⁷⁴

The Nocatee Crate Company hired Harold Sjoblom, for \$35 dollars a month, to remain at Woodmere as its caretaker. He had a history of employment at sawmills, but had never worked at Woodmere during its normal operation. Sjoblom moved to Woodmere in May of 1932 with his wife, Lillian, and children, Harry and Jackie. During the time that they lived there, they were the only residents of the entire Woodmere area. When the sawmill had been in operation, there had been three large generators that were used to supply the electricity to Woodmere. FPL already had power lines that ran to Englewood, but none that actually reached into Woodmere. To increase quality of life, Sjoblom had FPL run a line to his house, which cost only \$5 in 1937.⁷⁵

The buildings that were left at Woodmere were sold, ranging from an average of \$25 to \$125. The structures were torn down and the lumber was moved to different locations to construct new homes. One of the two-story boarding houses was purchased by Dr. Rudolph Bernie Watson and moved to the north end of Captive (Captiva) Island off the coast of Placida. The materials were used to build numerous cottages, some of which are believed to still be standing.⁷⁶ The home that had been the residence of the Kluge family was remodeled and relocated to the northern end of Casey Key.⁷⁷ The final three houses that remained were moved to Siesta Key.⁷⁸ The stones that had formed the foundation of the site at Woodmere were recycled and used to construct the Venice jetty in 1937.⁷⁹

⁷² Harris, Diana D. "Some Memories of Woodmere Still Remain."

⁷³ "The Short Lived Life of a Huge Sawmill - Woodmere."

⁷⁴ Harris, Diana. "'A Grand and Remarkable Future' for Woodmere."

⁷⁵ "The Short Lived Life of a Huge Sawmill - Woodmere."

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Stolte, Marge. "A Local Town Forgotten."

⁷⁸ "The Short Lived Life of a Huge Sawmill - Woodmere."

In 1933, Mr. H.T. Davis, the owner of the Nocatee Crate Company, sent a crew of six to eight men to Woodmere to dig up the valuable cast iron pipes that had been part of the water system there. The task took several months. No water had been through the pipes for several years. When complete, the pipes were taken back to Arcadia where they were sold to the city. In turn, the city used them to extend a water line to a nearby golf course.⁸⁰

The current site of Woodmere shows no sign that any establishment was ever present where Englewood Disposal, a branch of Waste Management, and The Dome Flea Market are located today. Only a small, easily overlooked marker tells the story of the dominant lumber company that once reigned over the region. It is hard to believe that where more than 1,500 people lived and worked leaves no visible sight to tell its tale.⁸¹ Only a handful of people that were associated with the plant are still alive to tell its story. Eighty years after the beginning of a thriving community was born, all that remains are the memories and the ruins of one small, roofless stone building.

⁷⁹ Stolte, Marge. "History of the Venice Area." Venice Area Chamber of Commerce.

⁸⁰ "The Short Lived Life of a Huge Sawmill - Woodmere."

⁸¹ Harris, "Good Days Recalled at the Manasota Lumber Company."

Bolita in Florida: Charlie Wall and the Trafficantes Take a Gamble,

1895-1965

By Michael Saco

For thirty years, Charles Wall was the underworld brains of Tampa's extremely profitable illegal gambling game of bolita. His empire was accomplished through political graft and violence. In 1950, Charlie Wall, at age seventy and still dapper, stood in front of the Kefauver Committee, also known as the Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime.¹ When asked whether he felt safe having committed such nefarious acts, he calmly responded, "the devil protects me."²

Charles Wall, with his crafty mind and amazing organizational skills, had been born into the lap of luxury. His relatives included the wealthy Lykes and McKay families. His father was a mayor of Tampa and a renowned physician. Both parents passed away by the time Wall was

¹ The Kefauver hearings were Senator Estes Kefauver's attempts to spearhead the exposure of corruption in the political and judicial systems due to organized crime throughout the United States. The hearings directed a light on the shady under-the-table dealings of the Mafia. For more general information concerning the Kefauver hearings in Tampa and Estes Kefauver's other pursuits, see Paul G. Ashdown, "WTVJ's Miami Crime War: A Television Crusade," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58 (April 1980), pp. 427-37; Estes Kefauver, *Crime in America* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 69-73; Estes Kefauver, *In a Few Hands: Monopoly Power in America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); U.S. Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Kefauver Committee Interim Report #1, August 18, 1950, The American Mafia - The Kefauver Reports Website, <<http://www.onewal.com/kef/kef1.html>>; U.S. Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Kefauver Committee Interim Report #2, February 28, 1951, The American Mafia - The Kefauver Reports Website, <<http://www.onewal.com/kef/kef2.html>>; U.S. Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Kefauver Committee Interim Report #3, May 1, 1951, The American Mafia - The Kefauver Reports Website <<http://www.onewal.com/kef/kef3.html>>; U.S. Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Kefauver Committee Final Report, August 31, 1951, The American Mafia - The Kefauver Reports Website, <<http://www.onewal.com/kef/kef4.html>>; U.S. Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Virgil Peterson Testimony to Kefauver Committee, July 6, 1950, The American Mafia - The Kefauver Reports Website, <<http://www.onewal.com/kef/kefp.html>>; U.S. Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Virgil Peterson Testimony to Kefauver Committee, July 7, 1950, The American Mafia - The Kefauver Reports Website, <<http://www.onewal.com/kef/kefp2.html>>; Harold B. Hinton, "Police Chief Links Mafia to Murders," *New York Times*, December 30, 1950.

² John Fleming, "Ybor City's past, present: 'Why the Y?'" *St. Petersburg Times*, October 27, 1994.

fifteen.³ He landed in jail at age seventeen after having purposefully shot and wounded his stepmother. Placed in a military college by his uncle, he was soon expelled.⁴

Back in Tampa, Wall became mesmerized by gambling. He worked as a courier for horse race bets, which were often placed by the wealthy of Tampa. Wall began studying bolita, an illegal Cuban game of chance, realizing it could produce a fortune for him if he went about his business the right way.⁵

With his family ties to other prominent families and to politicians, Wall knew how to work the system. Tampa's wealthy businessmen seemed, indeed, to be in favor of keeping bolita earnings in Tampa instead of losing them to Cuba.⁶ Tampa politics was already a corrupt system of special deals, and therefore, perfect for Wall's endeavors.⁷ The chronicling of bolita, from its initial development in Ybor City, Florida to a multimillion dollar operation, first under the control of Charlie Wall and ending with its operation under the Mafia, represents a turbulent and corrupt period in Florida's history.⁸

Bolita originated in Paris casinos following the French Revolution. This game of chance was a variation of a lottery where one hundred balls were placed in a pouch and shaken until one ball popped out as the winner. The game was later played in Spain, where it became known as bolita. Eventually, bolita reached Cuba. The Spanish-born Manuel Suarez, affectionately called "El Gallego," brought bolita to Tampa when he followed the Cuban cigar manufacturing community. This community was largely made up of refugees who had left Cuba when their country's Ten Year War started. El Gallego grew rich from bolita and eventually passed the

³ Frank Alduino, "The Damnedest Town This Side of Hell: Tampa, 1920-29, (Part I)," *Sunland Tribune* 16 (1990), p. 15.

⁴ Pam Iorio, "Political Excess Shaped by a Game of Chance: Tampa, Bolita, and the First Half of the Twentieth Century," *The Sunland Tribune* 26 (2000), p. 28.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Alduino, "The Damnedest Town, (Part I)," p. 16.

⁷ Iorio, "Political Excess," p. 28.

⁸ For general information about Tampa, Florida, during these years, see Bentley Orrick and Harry L. Crumpacker, *The Tampa Tribune: A Century of Florida Journalism* (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 1998); Gary R. Mormino and George E. Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa* (St. Petersburg: The St. Petersburg Printing Company, 1950); Michael Gannon, *Florida: A Short History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), pp. 67-131; William Warren Rogers and James M. Denham, *Florida Sheriffs: A History 1821-1945* (Tallahassee: Sentry Press, 2001).

reigns to three men, Serafin, Pote, and Reina. Reina owned the well-known El Dorado Café in Tampa. These bolita operators were protected from the law by Charlie Wall. Tampa citizens originally thought bolita was a fun, harmless game, but, little did they know it would later be labeled “a social monster -- a multimillion dollar dragon.”⁹

Bolita infiltrated everyday life in Tampa. Chances were sold everywhere. Gas stations were typical locations for buying tickets. Even children spent their money on bolita, as did many poor blacks and whites.¹⁰ Many bars and pool halls sold bolita tickets and even displayed winning picks on blackboards.¹¹ People bought small pieces of paper with their specified numbers on them. The numbers available were from one to one hundred. Often, buyers purchased many slips with the same number on them to increase their winnings. All one hundred ivory or wooden balls were placed in a bag made of cloth, and the bag was then thrown to pass it around. When it came to an appointed “catcher,” he would grab one ball in the closed bag. The catcher would tie off the piece of the bag surrounding the ball. Then that area of the cloth was then cut open to remove the ball and reveal the winning number.¹² Throwings took place every night in hundreds of fancy gambling parlors. These events were well attended all over Tampa.¹³

Husbands sold their wives’ Octagon soap in order to have the money to play bolita. Bolita was known as a “nickel and dime game.” Daily, over a thousand sellers of bolita tickets prowled inside offices and cigar factories, and even visited homes.¹⁴ Not only did the cigar factory workers and urban poor play bolita, but the game was also popular among the wealthy, who could easily purchase tickets in the chic Tampa area of Hyde Park.¹⁵

⁹ Tony Pizzo, “El Gallego: Tampa’s First Bolitero,” *Sunland Tribune* 9 (1983), pp. 33-35.

¹⁰ “Florida’s Jobless Turn to Gambling,” *New York Times*, August 14, 1932.

¹¹ Harris G. Simms, “Tampa in War on Gambling,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1938.

¹² Cinnamon Bair, “Bolita Was Quite a Racket in Polk,” *Lakeland Ledger*, May 13, 2007.

¹³ Alduino, “The Damnedest Town, (Part I),” p. 15.

¹⁴ Pizzo, “El Gallego,” p. 35.

¹⁵ Iorio, “Political Excess,” p. 28.

A winning number could pay seventy to one. The desperate felt bolita could be the answer to their prayers.¹⁶ Sadly, cheating was rampant. Designated catchers could switch the chosen ball with one with a number that was never sold. If a particular number was purchased in large amounts, that ball would not even be placed in the bag. The house often chose a house ball and added lead to it to make it fall to the bottom. Also, a ball could be frozen and the coldness of the iced ball could be felt by the catchers.¹⁷

Charles Wall had seen from the beginning that he could accumulate a fortune by protecting the bolita game operators from the law. The operators paid Wall handsomely for this protection. Wall bought elections for political leaders who turned a blind eye to the illegal game.¹⁸ He controlled Tampa's entire bolita trade for thirty years and was the true kingpin of crime in Tampa. Without question, his real fortune was due almost entirely to bolita gambling.¹⁹ One of Wall's main gambling houses in the 1930s was the fashionable and classy El Dorado in Tampa. It had once been a high class brothel but now bolita was its main vice.²⁰

Bolita became a multimillion dollar pastime in the 1930's. Wall made sure that political figures and police were paid off to look the other way as bolita spread from Ybor City to the rest of Tampa.²¹ Unbelievably, bolita's profits were higher than every industry's earnings in the city, with the exception being Ybor City's multimillion dollar business of handmade Cuban cigars.²²

Everyday life became a frenzied trigger to play bolita. People began counting the number of steps of homes and of buildings and the number of everyday objects to come up with their lucky bolita numbers. They also used numbers on car license plates and on movie tickets.²³ Amidst the frenzy, Wall became famous. He was known by many names: the "Big Boss," the

¹⁶ New York *Times*, July 24, 1938.

¹⁷ Lakeland *Ledger*, May 13, 2007.

¹⁸ Iorio, "Political Excess," p. 28.

¹⁹ Alduino, "The Damnedest Town, (Part I)," p. 15.

²⁰ Michael Van Sickler, "Mob Haunts, Then and Now," St. Petersburg *Times*, August 11, 2008.

²¹ Mary Jo Melone, "Dark Days, and Crime Paid," St. Petersburg *Times*, June 21, 1987. For additional information about bolita in Tampa, see Mormino and Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World*, pp. 280-286.

²² Pizzo, "El Gallego," p. 35.

²³ John D. McKinnon, "The Stuff Legends Are Made of // Depression-Era Guidebook Tells of the Real Florida," St. Petersburg *Times*, October 22, 1989.

“Bolita King,” the “Dapper Dean,” and “Ybor’s Underworld King.”²⁴ As a youth, he had frequented opium dens in Tampa and had become a morphine addict. He kicked his addiction and went on to grasp his brand of success.²⁵ Wall claimed his title as the clear-thinking “brains” behind a gambling empire.²⁶

Wall’s success stemmed from his ability to control politics in Tampa. One way Wall manipulated elections was by buying votes in Ybor City, which was in Tampa’s Fourth Ward. In 1910, while cigar workers were on strike, Wall gave the strikers money to survive, and he also provided food to 900 cigar makers’ families at that time.²⁷ The Cuban community never forgot his help. They repaid him by voting for Wall’s favorite candidates in elections (he had already given the Cubans extra money to pay their poll taxes). Therefore, almost every single one of Wall’s preferred picks was assured an automatic voting block. As if that was not enough, Wall also secured votes by stuffing ballot boxes. Then, just to make certain his preferred candidate would win, he employed individuals to go to multiple precincts and vote again. Politics was virtually ruled by Wall for three decades. Most observers felt that during Wall’s reign, not one election escaped his tampering.²⁸ All the political leaders knew that Wall’s votes could bring victory. The political price candidates paid to gain Wall’s support was to guarantee a “hands off” policy regarding his bolita operations.²⁹

Isidro Stassi, whose father ran a profitable Ybor City bolita house, stated that his father was able to bring in up to \$57,000 a night. Charlie Wall raked in fifty percent of these earnings. The Latinos did not mind paying for the protection Wall provided through public official and police payoffs.³⁰ Wall never hesitated to order violence and even death upon his rivals in order

²⁴ Iorio, “Political Excess,” p. 28.

²⁵ Alduino, “The Damnedest Town, (Part I),” p. 16.

²⁶ Iorio, “Political Excess,” p. 28.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁸ Alduino, “The Damnedest Town, (Part I),” p. 16.

²⁹ Iorio, “Political Excess,” p. 30.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

to protect his turf. In essence, he was a cold-blooded murderer who spoke softly and gave large, charitable donations to churches and the needy.³¹

Bolita was not isolated to Tampa. The game spread to Polk County in the 1930s. Charlie Wall and Polk County's Harlan Blackburn were labeled the "cracker mafia."³² Bolita and wealth were again linked to politics. Central Florida had developed into a powerful bolita operation.³³ In 1937, Governor Fred Cone received a complaint from a citizen in Lakeland regarding the effects of the bolita racket. It stated, "Lakeland and the entire county is a cesspool of dives, joints, bars and gambling dens, etc., and any [police] officer who does not know this is blind and dumb." The Lakeland resident succinctly added, "They know."³⁴

Very few stood up to Tampa's criminal activities. Judge Leo Stalnaker stirred the pot and fought against Tampa's illegal activities, including bolita. He wound up disbarred and jobless and had to resort to writing detective novels for a living. He was basically punished for the loss of bolita earnings that occurred during his investigations.³⁵

In 1937, the poll tax was repealed and the voting system changed from paper ballots to a lever system in Hillsborough County. These two modifications sent Wall into a tailspin. It was no longer so simple to sway elections. Votes were no longer easily bought and ballot boxes could no longer be stuffed.³⁶

At the same time, the tide of Tampa's crime operations was slowly beginning to change. In the early 1930s, Italian mobsters were not satisfied with just bootlegging profits. They wanted to take over bolita.³⁷ From 1937 to 1945, a period known as the "era of blood," Santo Trafficante, Sr. allegedly played a key role in a power struggle to achieve Italian Mafia control

³¹ Alduino, "The Damnedest Town, (Part I)," p. 16.

³² Lakeland *Ledger*, May 13, 2007.

³³ "'Policy' Game Ties Sought By Inquiry," New York *Times*, June 19, 1950.

³⁴ Lakeland *Ledger*, May 13, 2007.

³⁵ Frank Alduino, "The Damnedest Town This Side of Hell: Tampa, 1920-29, (Part II)," *Sunland Tribune* 17 (1991), p. 44.

³⁶ Iorio, "Political Excess," p. 32.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

over bolita rackets in Florida.³⁸ While factions controlled by WASP kingpin Charlie Wall and major Tampa narcotics boss Ignacio Antinori were busy tearing each other down in a bloody power struggle, Santo Trafficante, Sr. had mapped out his plan for success.³⁹ He built a power base for himself by greasing the palms of politicians and law enforcement officials.⁴⁰ The conflict ended on October 22, 1940, when Ignacio Antinori received a bullet in the back of the head from a sawed-off shotgun.⁴¹ When all the chaos of the First Tampa Mob War subsided, Charlie Wall emerged as the weakened victor.⁴²

Santo Trafficante, Sr. slowly set his successful strategy in motion to dethrone Wall and seize control of the Tampa Mafia.⁴³ Attempts were made on Wall's life by the Italians. Wall's confidante, Tito Rubio, was murdered by the Italian Mafia in 1938. Afraid, Wall admitted his crimes to a grand jury and was in the end released, though he refused to testify against his cohorts. Terrorized, Wall moved to Miami, leaving bolita to the Italian mob.⁴⁴

Years later, to avoid being tried in the Kefauver hearings, the then reigning Tampa mob boss Salvatore Italiano appointed James Lumia, one of his close associates, as the head of the Italiano empire. After James Lumia was murdered on June 5, 1950, the Second Tampa Mob War ensued between Salvatore Italiano and Santo Trafficante, Sr. At the time of James Lumia's death, Santo Trafficante, Sr. was seeking treatment for stomach cancer in Florida hospitals outside of Tampa. In his absence, the ruthless Santo Trafficante, Jr. took the reins of the Trafficante empire.⁴⁵ Over the years, both sides experienced casualties, but after eliminating Joe Antinori, one of Salvatore Italiano's top men, on November 4, 1953, the Trafficantes became the Tampa Mafia's dominant family. Santo Trafficante, Sr. was the boss of the outfit until his death

³⁸ "Santo Trafficante, Reputed Mafia Chief, Dies at 72," *New York Times*, March 19, 1987.

³⁹ Carl Sifakis, *The Mafia Encyclopedia* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2005), p. 21.

⁴⁰ Scott M. Deitche, *The Silent Don* (Fort Lee: Barricade Books, 2007), p. 23.

⁴¹ Sifakis, *The Mafia Encyclopedia*, p. 21.

⁴² Deitche, *The Silent Don*, p. 23.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Iorio, "Political Excess," p. 33.

⁴⁵ Deitche, *The Silent Don*, pp. 30-39.

on August 10, 1954 from stomach cancer. Santo Trafficante, Jr. immediately assumed long-term Mafia control and became even more notorious than his father.⁴⁶

Unlike most adolescents, Santo Trafficante, Jr. had been trained by his father in the art of illegal activity. After ending his educational pursuits at fifteen years of age, Trafficante, Jr. was sent around the United States by his father to study racketeering under powerful mobsters. As Trafficante, Jr. progressed into his twenties, his father taught him how to earn money from bolita and drug trafficking. During this period of Trafficante, Jr.'s unorthodox education, Tampa's First Mob War was brewing. While violent conflicts ensued between other Tampa Mafia factions, Trafficante, Jr. spent time honing his skills.⁴⁷

In 1946, at age 32, Santo Trafficante, Jr. was sent by his father to open casinos in Havana, Cuba.⁴⁸ Santo Trafficante, Jr. started to see real profit from his Cuban casinos in 1952, when Fulgencio Batista became the dictator of Cuba. Trafficante's Mafia casinos in Cuba proved to be lucrative investments. To keep the gravy train rolling, Trafficante bribed Batista and his relatives with a share of the casino profits.⁴⁹ Trafficante, Jr.'s years of training had prepared him to become one of the United States' most formidable Mafia bosses.⁵⁰ He had been traveling to and from Havana, Cuba, and Tampa, Florida, since 1946. After his father's passing, he continued to frequently visit Cuba, which allowed him to gain support and admiration from various mob bosses.⁵¹

In 1959, Fidel Castro's rise to power signaled the end of the Mafia's cash flow from their casinos in Cuba.⁵² Fearing the loss of a substantial source of income, Trafficante attempted to persuade Castro into allowing the casinos to remain operational. Trafficante took a gamble that

⁴⁶ Scott M. Deitche, *Cigar City Mafia* (Fort Lee: Barricade Books, 2004), pp. 270-280.

⁴⁷ Deitche, *The Silent Don*, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁸ Sifakis, *The Mafia Encyclopedia*, p. 450.

⁴⁹ Jerry Capeci, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Mafia* (New York: Alpha Books, 2004), p. 139. For Fulgencio Batista's view of Cuba, see Fulgencio Batista, *The Growth and Decline of the Cuban Republic* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1964).

⁵⁰ Sifakis, *The Mafia Encyclopedia*, p. 450.

⁵¹ Capeci, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Mafia*, p. 112.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

generous bribes would loosen Castro's death grip on Trafficante's casino profits and lost.⁵³ In contrast to other mob bosses, Santo Trafficante, Jr. stood his ground. He believed that Castro, like Batista, could be persuaded with money. Castro's regime was not swayed and, needless to say, Trafficante paid for his mistake. He was imprisoned in Cuba, stripped of his holdings, and faced the possibility of execution. Trafficante's release or escape from Cuba and return to Tampa are not clearly documented, but two prevailing theories are that he was forced to leave empty-handed or that a bribed prison official allowed him to walk away a free man.⁵⁴ Trafficante had been held in a minimum security Cuban prison that he described as "sort of a concentration camp" for two months.⁵⁵ After his release or escape, the welcome mat was pulled out from underneath his feet and he was forced to leave Cuba.⁵⁶ Trafficante returned to Florida and proceeded to continue his booming illegal bolita racket and therefore to continue to test his luck against the United States government.⁵⁷

According to Tampa Police Chief Neil G. Brown, Santo Trafficante, Jr. "controlled illegal gambling 'throughout the state of Florida.'" Brown added that Trafficante had homes in both that city and Miami and Tampa and that his main crime headquarters was in the Tampa area. Orlando Police Sergeant William Branch reported that authorities had discovered that Trafficante earned \$250,000 a week from one of his bolita rackets in Sanford, Florida.⁵⁸ A weekly cash flow of \$250,000 in 1963 would be equivalent to earning approximately \$1,735,000.00 a week in 2008.⁵⁹ Trafficante's chief source of gambling profits came from bolita.⁶⁰

⁵³ Selwyn Raab, *Five Families* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005), pp. 143-144.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Capeci, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Mafia*, p. 113; *New York Times*, March 19, 1987.

⁵⁶ Lucy Morgan, "On the Trail of...Santo Trafficante Jr.," *St. Petersburg Times*, October 26, 1992. For general information about Cuba, see Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Wayne S. Smith, *The Closest of Enemies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987).

⁵⁷ Raab, *Five Families*, p. 144.

⁵⁸ Emanuel Perlmuter, "U.S. Gangsters Who Fled Cuba Said to 'Take Over' in Florida," *New York Times*, October 16, 1963.

⁵⁹ HBrothers, Inflation Calculator, 2009, DollarTimes Website, <<http://www.dollartimes.com/calculators/inflation.htm>>.

⁶⁰ *New York Times*, October 16, 1963.

Even though he was still able to turn an enormous profit from his illegal bolita ventures in Florida, Santo Trafficante's thirst for revenge was left unquenched. He still had a score to settle with Fidel Castro, an intimidating foe to say the least. Trafficante's hatred toward Castro was shared by the United States government. While carrying on his regular underworld enterprises in Florida, Trafficante was also involved with the CIA in a plot to assassinate Fidel Castro. The CIA's plan, reportedly involving poisonous capsules, never materialized.⁶¹ In 1975, Trafficante stated, as he stood in front of a congressional committee, that he had rounded up some Mafia members to help the CIA in their attempt to kill Fidel Castro. After testifying, he was given immunity from prosecution.⁶²

The Italians had used different means than Charlie Wall to influence politics. In the 1940s, they would spend up to \$100,000 on each local election. Money talked. Citizens received money to register and to vote. Money was delivered to big families and to corporations to vote in blocs. Newly elected officials, in turn, took payoffs. Under Sheriff Hugh Culbreath, the Italian mob took in millions from bolita.⁶³

In the late 1940s, the Tampa *Morning Tribune* publisher "Red" Newton assigned writer Jock Murray to investigate ties between public officials and bolita and to write a series of articles on the subject. Murray basically asked officials to comment on crime in Tampa and whether syndicates influenced voting. All denied mob control of elections. Sheriff Culbreath firmly stated, "There is no organized gambling or bolita in Tampa."⁶⁴

The truth came out in 1948 with the murder of Jimmy Velasco, who was the middleman between the mob and the dirty politicians. His records revealed payoffs to political figures and bolita information. These records were examined in the Kefauver Senate Committee hearings on organized crime when they were held in Tampa in the early 1950s. Sheriff Culbreath could not refute receiving \$1000 payoffs each week from bolita. One of Velasco's men stated Culbreath was referred to as "cabeza de melón," or "melon head," by the mob and verified payoffs to the

⁶¹ Raab, *Five Families*, p. 144.

⁶² Sifakis, *The Mafia Encyclopedia*, p. 451.

⁶³ Iorio, "Political Excess," p. 34.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

sheriff. Eventually, Culbreath was convicted in 1958 of tax evasion. During the Kefauver hearings, many public officials were exposed for taking Mafia bribes.⁶⁵

The Tampa *Tribune* published an editorial at the beginning of the Kefauver hearings. It mentioned that the hearings showed that Tampa voters should clean up their city's crime by not electing crooked politicians and law enforcement officials. It also stated that Tampa was the root of its own problems and that blame "rests primarily upon the faithless law enforcement officers who have failed to shut down the gambling racket, the well-spring of crime. It also rests partly upon the hypocritical citizens who go to church on Sunday and buy bolita on Monday."⁶⁶

Years earlier, after three attempts had been made on Charlie Wall's life by Santo Trafficante, Sr.'s men, Wall had been coerced into joint ventures with Trafficante, Sr. Wall had kept a detailed record of all his partnerships with Trafficante, Sr. This record became a kind of "insurance document" for Wall. Trafficante, Sr. did not wish this written record to be revealed to the authorities. To protect himself, Trafficante, Sr. kept Wall alive until Trafficante, Sr.'s death in 1954. When Trafficante, Sr. died, Wall's "insurance document" against Mafia reprisal was useless. This document was eventually found too late by the police in 1960, all those implicated were already deceased.⁶⁷

A dramatic end came to the Bolita King, Charlie Wall, at his stronghold home in Ybor City. On April 18, 1955, his throat was slashed and his head bashed in with a blackjack, which is a lethal homemade sack filled with birdseed and "bird-shot lead pellets."⁶⁸ Unfortunately for Wall, he had developed a habit of becoming drunk and announcing at bars around Tampa that he had dirt on everyone. The Trafficante family got wind of this and was not happy.⁶⁹ The "Dapper Dean" had died in gangland style, heralding the beginning of the end of bolita and its chokehold on politics in Tampa, the "Hell Hole of the Gulf Coast."⁷⁰ It seemed the devil had finally taken

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ New York *Times*, December 30, 1950.

⁶⁷ Sifakis, *The Mafia Encyclopedia*, p. 450.

⁶⁸ Orrick and Crumpacker, *The Tampa Tribune*, pp. 312-313; Pete Franks and O. C. Beynon, The Incident Report, April 20, 1955, Ace Atkins Website, <http://www.aceatkins.com/Extras/WhiteShadow/files/incident_report.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Orrick and Crumpacker, *The Tampa Tribune*, pp. 312-313.

⁷⁰ Iorio, "Political Excess," p. 35; St. Petersburg *Times*, June 21, 1987.

Charlie Wall home. Ironically, Charlie Wall died with *Crime in America*, a book by Estes Kefauver, sitting close by on a bedside table.⁷¹

Even after fifty years, interest in Charlie Wall, the Trafficantes, and their connection to bolita in Tampa has not waned. Ace Atkins' 2006 best-seller, *White Shadow*, a work of historical fiction, vividly brings to life the era of gangsters, violence, and organized crime in Tampa. He recreates the criminal activity, basing his information on actual police reports, autopsy records, and newspaper articles written by various reporters from the 1950s through the 1970s, such as Bill Boyd from the *Tampa Tribune* and Bob Turner from the *Tampa Daily Times*.⁷²

Some of the topics discussed could be more extensively covered through future research. Much information concerning Santo Trafficante, Jr.'s role in the CIA's plot to murder Fidel Castro is mostly based on conjecture. CIA reports concerning the attempted assassination of Fidel Castro were eventually released, but some of the details remain unexplained. The reports that were declassified could possibly provide interesting information related to Santo Trafficante, Jr. Transcripts of the Kefauver hearings held in Tampa and of the testimonies Charlie Wall gave at the Kefauver hearings in Tampa could provide pertinent information that may prove useful at a later date. Charlie Wall's relatives, the Lykes and the McKay families, could be further researched to show how far Charlie Wall's life choices deviated from the rest of his family. The gruesome slaying of Charlie Wall has remained an unsolved crime that has haunted Tampa for

⁷¹ Tom Inglis, "Assailant Killed Wall with Knife," *Tampa Daily Times*, August 7, 1971, Ace Atkins Website, <<http://www.aceatkins.com/Extras/WhiteShadow/HuntForTruth.htm>>.

⁷² Ace Atkins is a former reporter for the *Tampa Tribune*. For more information on Ace Atkins' work on Charlie Wall's murder, see: Ace Atkins, *White Shadow*, (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 2006). For various sources that Ace Atkins used when he wrote *White Shadow*, see Franks and Beynon, The Incident Report, April 20, 1955; Bob Turner, "Wall Widow's Story 'Satisfies' Probers," *Tampa Daily Times*, April 27, 1955, Ace Atkins Website, <<http://www.aceatkins.com/Extras/WhiteShadow/HuntForTruth.htm>>; Bob Turner, "The death of Charlie Wall," *Tampa Daily Times*, December 2, 1968, Ace Atkins Website, <<http://www.aceatkins.com/Extras/WhiteShadow/HuntForTruth.htm>>; *Tampa Daily Times*, August 7, 1971; Bill Boyd, "Simplicity Marks Funeral Of Wall, Murdered Gambler," *Tampa Tribune*, Undated Newspaper Clipping, Ace Atkins Website, <<http://www.aceatkins.com/Extras/WhiteShadow/HuntForTruth.htm>>; Wray D. Storey, Autopsy, April 19, 1955, Ace Atkins Website, <<http://www.aceatkins.com/Extras/WhiteShadow/files/Autopsy.pdf>>; Ed Blackburn, Supplementary Offense Report, April 21, 1955, Ace Atkins Website, <http://www.aceatkins.com/Extras/WhiteShadow/files/incident_report.pdf>; Pete Franks, Supplementary Offense Report: Additional Details of Offense, September 24, 1955, Ace Atkins Website, <http://www.aceatkins.com/Extras/WhiteShadow/files/wildcard_hitman.pdf>. For a book review of *White Shadow*, see Kevin Walker, "Realistic Touches Of 1950s Tampa Fill Gangland Murder Mystery," *Tampa Tribune*, May 7, 2006.

more than half a century; there were no witnesses to this brutal scene. A majority of the information about bolita in Florida focuses on the Tampa area, but facts about bolita rackets in other areas of Florida may display how far beyond Tampa the power of the Mafia extended. Overall, additional evidence may become more readily available in time, but until then, some burning questions will remain a mystery.

Historic Henley: Lakeland's Field of Legends

By Eddie Sipple

The clay that cakes onto the cleats of players today at Henley Field could quite possibly have been blessed by the footsteps of the great players in the history of baseball, players such as Babe Ruth, Ted Williams and Al Kaline. Countless other legends have dove for hard line drives, swatted hanging breaking balls, and blew fastballs by hitters on the diamond at Henley. The ballpark has been in a mainstay in Lakeland, for over sixty-five years and the park itself has stood for almost ninety. Henley is also on the National Register of Historic Places, no small accomplishment. Currently, Henley is the home field of nine-time national champion Florida Southern College, but its history may boast even more prowess.

Clare "Doc" Henley was a local pharmacist in Lakeland, Florida whose passion for baseball was surpassed by few. Perhaps the most puzzling part to Clare Henley's life was the correct spelling of his first name. Historians have pointed out the inconsistencies in his given name; a controversy exists over whether the spelling is "Clare" or "Claire".¹ Born in Apopka, Florida, Clare Henley often found himself in Lakeland as his father was a practicing physician on the outskirts of the city. His baseball passion brought him to Atlanta College of Pharmacy, where he studied to become a pharmacist as well as play collegiate baseball for Georgia Institute of Technology.² After graduating, he returned to Lakeland and took an interest in youth sports. One of his first jobs in town was coaching the football team at Lakeland High School, where he proudly dressed out the only eleven players he had. Henley was quoted as "I wasn't too much of a football coach."³ His true passions were in another sport, America's past time. His death in 1955 at the age of sixty-nine was an unfortunate day for the city of Lakeland. A man who dedicated his life for the entertainment of the city had passed on, but his legacy lasts as long as the stadium stands.

¹ "Clare Henley Honored Today," *Lakeland Ledger* 15 Aug. 1952, sec. E.

² Ibid.

³ "Clare Henley: Baseball Man," *Lakeland Ledger*, August 18, 1952.

Henley's involvement in baseball began decades before Henley Field truly became "Henley Field" in 1944. Between 1908 and 1926, Henley piloted a local baseball team, the Lakeland Highlanders. During a nine year stretch, Henley's team won three pennants and sent ten baseball players to the professional level. The most notable included Paul Erhard to the Brooklyn Dodgers, Tom Gully to the Cleveland Indians and Ken Smith to the Boston Red Sox.¹ Players from the greater Central Florida area flocked to Lakeland with the news that the "Florida State Loop's" best baseball was played off of Florida Avenue. As the "loop" received more notoriety, several professional clubs, such as the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Cleveland Indians, sent scouts to sift through the average ball players and pounce on the diamonds in the rough. With word-of-mouth tales of professional ball clubs searching for players, an influx of fans started to come and watch the semi-professionals play ball. With scouts frequenting the South and as the concept of spring training beginning to popularize, professional teams began to search throughout Florida for places to play in the early parts of February and March. The concept was introduced by the Brooklyn Dodgers, who got a leg up on the competition by starting practice earlier in the warmth of Vero Beach, Florida. In 1934, the Detroit Tigers would find themselves officially kicking off spring training in Lakeland, Florida at soon-to-be Henley Field.⁴

On March 4th, 1942, The City Commission met to discuss the renaming of Adair Park. The Resolution states:

WHEREAS Clair Henley is a citizen of Lakeland with an outstanding record for assisting in all movements looking toward civic betterment over a long period of years, and

WHEREAS the said Claire Henley has especially interested himself in the promotion of clean athletics in the City of Lakeland and during the early years gave a large portion of his time to this activity, and

WHEREAS it is the desire of both the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Lakeland to give some small recognition to Mr. Henley for all of such services,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKE LAND, FLORIDA:

⁴ "A Tour of Lakeland's Industrial and Engineering Sites," *Preservation '89- In Search of Florida's Heritage*, 30 Sept. 1989: 12.

That the Municipal Ball Park now used as a spring training field for the Detroit Tigers Baseball Club be and it is hereby officially dedicated and named CLAIRE HENLEY FIELD BALL PARK.

Passed and approved as to passage this, the 4th day of March, 1942.⁵

The Commission minutes made it official that the Municipal Ball Park finally had a true name. Oddly, the document had Henley's first name spelled irregularly. After the news was passed along to Clare Henley, he agreed happily with the initial terms. Further scrutiny over the wording, however, brought up the grammatical error. The confusion surrounding Henley's birth-name caused a significant delay in an official dedication. Not until 1944 was the ball park officially titled Clare Henley Field Ball Park.⁶ (See image below)



Henley Field: Dedicated in 1944

Henley implemented vast improvement once he took control of the park. In 1945, the City Commission of Lakeland met again to discuss a major aesthetic upgrade. The minutes stated

⁵ Gibson, Tolson, Kelley, "Resolution- Naming of Henley Field," *Regular Session of the City Commission*, 4 Mar. 1942.

⁶ "Clare Honored Today," *Lakeland Ledger*, 15 Aug. 1952: sec. E.

WHEREAS the Coca-Cola Bottling Company through its manager, Mr. Young, has submitted to the City of Lakeland, Florida, a design for a score board, said design being in the form of a picture of the purported score board which he desires to erect [...]

WHEREAS it appears to the Commissioners from said design and picture, that said score board would be attractive and would be to the best interest of said city of Lakeland to have such a score board at said stadium.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKE LAND, FLORIDA:

That the said Mr. Young of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company is hereby allowed to erect said score board according to the designed picture submitted to the said City Commissioners, it being understood and agreed how-ever, by the said commission of the City of Lakeland, Florida, that the said score board shall be erected with-out cost to the said city.

PASSED AND APPROVED AS TO PASSAGE this, 20th day of March, 1945.⁷

The scoreboard was the spark that Henley needed to push the City Commission to continue to improve the park. Ten days later, The Commission met again, this time to discuss the grandstand seats. Through the monetary gifts of four gentlemen, Fred Thompson, C.B. Bowden, R.R. Phillips, and a Mr. Thomason, \$2,500 was donated to the repainting of Henley's grandstand.⁸ As fate would have it, during that very same meeting, the Commission authorized the "expenditure of \$63 for advertisement in the Lakeland Ledger," congratulating Florida Southern College on its 60th anniversary.⁹ At the time, no one surmised that the revamping of Henley Field would ultimately benefit the college that would soon use the field as its home for baseball. On September 26, 1945, \$970 of state money was granted towards improvements of Henley Field.¹⁰ That money went to refurbishing the dugouts, fixing the press-box on top of the grandstand, and giving an increase in pay to the groundskeepers. On January 30, 1946, a major

⁷ Gay, "Resolution- Authorizing the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of the City of Lakeland, Florida," *Regular Session of the City Commission*, March 20, 1942.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

advance in technology was brought to Lakeland. The City Commission decided to install an exterior lighting system that was donated in large part by the Lakeland military base.¹¹ Very few parks in Florida were equipped with lights at the time, making Henley Field stand out among the others. The City Commission saw the lights benefitting two-fold. First, studies had shown that night games allowed people who were getting off work to have time for dinner and then venture to the ballpark, giving the games a more family-oriented feel. Secondly, the lights were visible from all parts of Lakeland, and people knew if the lights were on, the Detroit Tigers were at it again.

During this time of expansion of Henley Field, the United States as a whole was under fire. The early 1940s brought along World War II, which consequently struck fear in the hearts of Americans. For Lakeland and other central Florida cities, military training grounds began to appear as the war swung into high gear. In 1940, Lodwick School of Aeronautics was established as a primary pilot training school in Lakeland.¹² By 1945, Lakeland had reached a population total of 31,461.¹³ The number in the census report was the highest total in Lakeland's history up to that point. With the establishment of Drane Field as a base for the U.S. Air Force, the city hosted thousands of airmen.¹⁴ Even though the minds of many people were constantly on the war, the ball park was a place of refuge. Spectators could come to the park to ease their minds and let the professional ball players distract them from their troubles.

Population growth alone was not enough to keep Henley Field afloat. Military reinforcement brought along many socio-economic problems. To the dismay of school unions, a significant portion of city money continued to flow towards Henley Field. The money that went to Henley Field was well spent. Attendance was always high and the passion for the game was palpable in the city of Lakeland. To further verify the strong support of Lakeland natives, even after the population dropped to 30,851 people in 1950, baseball remained arguably the most popular choice of entertainment in Lakeland.¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Lisa L. Parks, "Henley Field Ball Park Survey," *Lakeland: Historic Preservation Board*: 1995.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Although Doc Henley was a public figure, he never wanted to boast about his accomplishments. Considered by many to be a very humble man, it took over ten years for him to agree to a ceremonial dedication at Henley Field. On August 15, 1952 the park was officially dedicated as Henley Field, with a ceremonial plaque bearing Henley's likeness and accomplishments at the entrance to Henley Field.¹⁶ To this day, the plaque hangs proudly as spectators file in to watch Florida Southern College baseball games. Fans and players alike are forever in debt to Clare "Doc" Henley.

The Detroit Tigers would continue to hold their spring training at Henley Field until 1966, when Joker Marchant Stadium was constructed on the northeast side of Lakeland. During the thirty-two years the Tigers played at Henley, they were blessed with baseball immortality for one season, 1935. The 1935 Detroit Tigers World Series Title run began in the humid days of a Florida spring, where fans poured in to watch a team that had potential for greatness. The Tigers finished the year with a record of 93-58, winning the World Series in six games over the Chicago Cubs. Led by "Hammerin'" Hank Greenberg, The Tigers slugged their way into the annals of baseball. But as every great sport cliché states, "a team is only as good as their next game." For the Tigers, the new season would start up at Henley Field for over the next thirty years. With "Doc" Henley's passing and the continued push of management to upgrade to a newer stadium, the Tigers decided to relocate as soon as Marchant Stadium was erected. The Tigers move over to Marchant appeared to be the final goodbye between the Detroit Tigers and Henley Field. Fans of the Tigers had to relocate to Lakeland Hills Boulevard to watch spring training action for the next thirty-six years.

During the time that the Tigers played at Marchant Stadium, Florida Southern College would play at Henley Field and enjoy much collegiate-level success. The Moccasins of Florida Southern would win four national championships in the 1970s, a feat that has not been accomplished by any collegiate team in any division since. In total, the Mocs would go on to win nine national championships, the last coming in 2005. Perhaps the most intriguing tie-in between the Tigers and the Mocs is the annual exhibition game between the two. Every year, the Tigers open up their spring training schedule against the Florida Southern Mocs. To the Mocs

¹⁶ Cinnamon Bair, "The City's 'Other' Baseball Field," *Lakeland Ledger*, March 4, 2002.

credit, they have statistically kept every game close, but only one team has found themselves on the winning side, the Detroit Tigers.

In 2002 The Mocs and Tigers shared Henley Field as a home site while Joker Marchant was being renovated.¹⁷ With the Tigers returning to Henley, \$245,000 was put into renovating the ballpark, including repainting the outside façade and upgrading the irrigation system.¹⁸ News of the Tigers return brought nostalgia to many a “seasoned” Tigers fan. These fans, who had had the privilege of seeing two completely different generations of ball players at the field, were able to watch the Tigers from the very same seats they cheered Al Kaline and other greats of the 1950s and 1960s. Henley has stood for almost a hundred years, yet the field continues to serve as a local icon for generations of baseball players and fans alike.



Henley Field Today

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸ “A Tour of Lakeland’s Industrial and Engineering Sites,” *Preservation ’89- In Search of Florida’s Heritage*, 30 (September. 1989), 12.

Contributors

Jennifer Bruno was born and raised in Saratoga Springs, New York. She is currently a Biochemistry and Molecular Biology major at Florida Southern College and plans to pursue a career in clinical medicine as a surgeon. Jen is a member and leader in several science organizations on campus, including Gamma Sigma Epsilon and the student affiliates chapter of the American Chemical Society, where she holds the position of Co-President. Jen has received several honors in her time at Florida Southern, ranging from the Spencer Award in chemistry, the Herman and Theresa Teiser Baum award in biology, and a Reuter scholarship. In "A Decimating Sneeze: the Role of Infectious Disease in Destroying Native Americans Societies in Post-Columbian Florida," Jen employed her passion of science and medical knowledge to analyze one of history's greatest tragedies of circumstance.

Emily Canterbury is an Accounting major from South Florida and is also working towards a minor in Music. She plays the piano and has been a member of the Florida Southern College Chorale for two years. She has a variety of interests, including that of lesser known religious sects. Consequently, she chose to focus her paper on the town of Cassadaga and its growth from 1900-1910 as a result of the Spiritualist movement.

Levis George is a Biology major going Pre-med. He was born and in Muscat, Oman and lived there for part of his childhood before moving to America in 1997. He is generally interested in the biological sciences and chemistry but wanted a change of pace, so he took on the task of examining black churches during Reconstruction.

Michael Politis was born in Danvers, Massachusetts, in 1989. He has lived in North Wales, PA and now lives in Rhode Island. He was interested in researching Tarpon Springs because he is half Greek and was curious how Tarpon Springs became so notoriously Greek. At Florida Southern College, he is a Biology major and is involved with the American Chemical Society. In his free time, he likes waterskiing, running, going to the beach, and exploring places he has never before been.

Michael Saco is eighteen years of age and was born and raised in Lakeland, Florida. He is presently a premedical Biology major at Florida Southern College. He has always been interested in crime, especially the Mafia. The criminal mind intrigues him and was a central theme in his research paper on bolita in Florida. He has recently been inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa, the national honors leadership society for his various leadership roles at Florida Southern College. He has enjoyed his studies in the Florida Southern College Honors Program and is a recipient of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.

Christine Simone is a Communications major with concentrations in print and broadcast journalism, minoring in business administration. Her inspiration to write her paper about Woodmere came from her time working at the *Englewood Review* newspaper. While there, she edited several columns that were submitted about the history of her hometown, Englewood, Florida, and came across one that gave some background knowledge about the Woodmere Lumber Company. Since reading that article two years ago, she has wanted an opportunity to further research the topic and was finally provided the perfect outlet for her interest in the

Honors Social Heritage Course. At Florida Southern College, Christine is an editor of *The Southern* newspaper, a resident advisor, member of the Resident Advisor Council, a Southern Ambassador, a member of campus ministries, and a participant in all intramural sports.

Eddie Sipple grew up in Lutz, Florida. He is majoring in Business Administration and is a starting pitcher for the Florida Southern Moccasins. In high school, he was selected for All-County and was his team's MVP for his Junior and Senior year. Considering the amount of time he has spent on the diamond of Henley field, it seemed natural for him to investigate the history of this local landmark for his paper.

Richard Soash is majoring in History with a minor in Economics. He is the President of the Association of Honors Students and was the Salutatorian of his high school class in New Port Richey, Florida. Richard is also a member of the national honor society of Phi Kappa Phi. He has always enjoyed military history, particularly in the nineteenth century. For this paper, Richard combined two of his interests, the Mexican American War and Florida History, to explore William Worth's actions in the Second Seminole War. As the student-editor of this publication, he would like to specifically thank Tom Brennan, who gave up hours of his own time to help format this book. Richard also greatly appreciates his fellow Honors students; he could not have asked to be with a better group of people during these past two years in the Honors Program.

Tanja Speaker is a Sport Management and Spanish double major within the Honors Program. She is also a member of the Sport Management club and Women's Basketball team, for which she received the scholar-athlete award. Tanja chose her topic because she has always been intrigued by race relations and specifically wanted to focus on the different psychologies of Northerners and Southerners when dealing with the institution of slavery. The climax of opposing ideas right before the Civil War was ideal for her paper. The St. Augustine *Ancient City* provided the perfect lens for examining how many southern Floridians reacted to national issues.

Jillian Swartz is a Biology major from Hernando, FL. She is a member of Florida Southern's Cross Country and Track teams and is also an active member of the honor societies Phi Eta Sigma and Tri-Beta. She is also secretary for the Student Athletic Advisory Committee. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her four younger siblings. For this paper, Jillian chose her topic based on her desire to learn more about post Civil War era race relations in Florida and the changes that were instituted as a result of Emancipation.

Brent Willobee is a native of Mio, Michigan but decided to come down to Florida for college. He is majoring in Biology with a minor in Business Economics. Brent is a brother in the fraternity of Lambda Kai Alpha and plays multiple intramural sports, including football, soccer, softball, and Ultimate Frisbee. In addition, he is a member of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at Florida Southern College and is a member of the Southern Ambassadors. Brent's paper focuses on the First Seminole War, specifically, the role Andrew Jackson played in the conflict. Brent enjoyed researching an intriguing phase in the career of one of America's most fascinating Presidents.

Ashleah Zigmund is a History and Secondary Education major from Orlando, Florida. She is a member of the History Club and the Honor Societies of Phi Beta Zigma and Kappa Delta Pi. For her paper, Ashleah transcribed and analyzed the handwritten letters of Dr. George R. Clarke, and plans to do even more in-depth research on him at a later date. She appreciates that the Honors paper gave her an opportunity to work directly with primary sources and do original research.