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# SUNLAND TRIBUNE.

Journal of the Tampa Historical Society

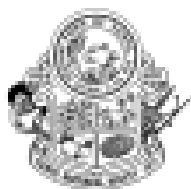
VOL. XX

November, 1994



Tony Pizzo





# THE SUNLAND TRIBUNE

Volume XX November, 1994

Journal of the  
**TAMPA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Tampa, Florida

**KYLE S. VanLANDINGHAM**  
*Editor in Chief*

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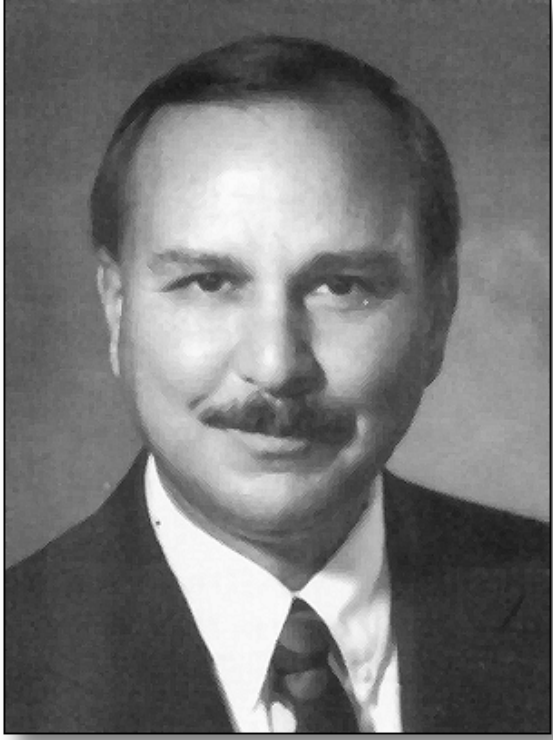
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The 1994 *Sunland Tribune* is dedicated to the memory of Tony Pizzo, founder and first president of The Tampa Historical Society.

The *Sunland Tribune* is the official annual publication of Tampa Historical Society, distributed to members each year. Non-members may receive limited edition issues by contacting the Society at 259-1111.

Individuals interested in contributing manuscripts for consideration should send them to the headquarters no later than July 1 of each calendar year. The *Sunland Tribune* Committee will review, accept or reject articles and will return all photographs and materials not selected for publication. All manuscripts should be no more than twelve double-spaced typed pages in length and should include footnotes, lists of sources as well as captions for all photographs submitted.

## The President's Report



**CHARLES A. BROWN**  
President

The Tampa Historical Society has experienced a banner year in 1994. With the dedicated support of our members and friends, our accomplishments have been many. The renovation of our headquarters is complete, our membership has increased by over 100, and through the efforts of Kyle VanLandingham, you are receiving the finest issue of *The Sunland Tribune* ever produced.

The Board of Directors has made significant progress in providing a bright and stable future for this society. There are numerous individuals and families to thank for the support they have provided this year. The

Ferman family and Michael Kilgore, Marketing Director for the Tampa Tribune have given generous financial support to further develop the mission of this society. Scott Peeler put forth a fine effort on our historical marker book. Richard Sessums worked extremely hard to ensure the success of our Annual Spring Sale. Jeff Gordon, JoAnn Cimino, and Arsenio Sanchez spent countless hours of their time with the Oaklawn Cemetery project. Frank North is producing our splendid newsletter, and Frank Smith continues to donate his time on our taxes.

Our house volunteers, Lu Dovi, Olga Henriquez, Marguerite Marunda, have been invaluable. Barbara Reeves and George Howell continue to provide me with their advice and support. Leland Hawes and Hampton Dunn have given generously of themselves throughout the year. Mary Brown continues to do an excellent job as our Recording Secretary. I'd like to offer my personal thanks to the other members of the Board of Directors for their involvement in so many projects throughout this year.

And Lois Latimer, whom I've been privileged to have the pleasure of working with for two years, continues to be an inspiration to us all. Her love, dedication, and many hours of hard work have been a major factor in our success.

The future of The Tampa Historical Society looks bright and your continued support and encouragement will make our society one of the finest in the state of Florida.

In closing, I want you to know that it has been a great honor to serve as president of this society, and I look forward to 1995. Thank you for the unending support and generosity that you, as members, have given to the society. Together, we will continue the very important process of preserving and promoting Tampa's history.

Respectfully,

Charles A. Brown

# TONY PIZZO 1912 - 1994

By LELAND M. HAWES, JR.



Tony Pizzo at age two

Nobody remembers the exact date, but a small group got together in Tony Pizzo's home one day in the spring of 1971 to talk about forming the Tampa Historical Society.

Nonita Cuesta Henson recalls that the initial gathering of a few organizers took place in Tony's Florida room, overlooking his beloved garden. It was there that her late husband, William E. Henson, offered to draw up incorporation papers for the new society.

In a later recollection, Tony wrote: "The formation of the Tampa Historical Society emerges as a strange episode in our cultural

progress. It took 89 years to formally organize a society.

He was referring to the fact that the initial call for such a group had come back in 1882, when Judge J. G. Knapp urged its formation. He wrote in the weekly *Sunland Tribune*: "Tampa should have a historical society."

When it finally did happen, it was entirely appropriate that Tony Pizzo should become the first president of the long-overdue society.

For Tony Pizzo provided the spark that ignited the torch of history carried on today by his successors. And all of us agree that his passing in January 1994 dealt a sharp loss to the Tampa Historical Society.

For the exuberant enthusiasm of the proud native of Ybor City for Tampa history was evident almost until his last breath. "There is still so much more to do," he told those who gathered around his bedside at Memorial Hospital.

Tony had in mind another book -- an illustrated album depicting life in Ybor City, based on the hundreds of photographs he had collected over the years. The pictures were assembled, but Tony hadn't been able to squeeze in the time to write the captions.

His own generosity of spirit and willingness to help others intruded on his time to such an extent that the Ybor book became an unfinished project. With his papers and pictures going to the University of South



**Fifteen-year-old Tony Pizzo with a "Jenny Plane" at Drew Field**

Florida Library, it will fall to other researchers to give the photographs new life.

But they face a formidable task. For only Tony knew the significance, the background and the nuances of many of the scenes he saved in his files. Tony's lifetime aptitude of assimilating sights, sounds and memories was incomparable.

Born in 1912, the son of Rosalia Pizzolato and Paolo Pizzo, he grew up on Eighth Avenue in a section almost exclusively Italian. He explained his family background in an interview with Tom McEwen: "My paternal grandfather, Anthony Pizzo, came to New Orleans first from Sicily by what was called the Lemon Route, coming on board a sailing vessel that was then bringing lemons.

"My father was born in New Orleans in 1889 and came to Ybor City in 1901, instead



**Tony Pizzo in 1942 during World War II**

of going back to Sicily with my grandfather. My father was married to Rosalia Pizzolato, and, by the way, she lives today.

"My mother's father was Peter Pizzolato. He opened a grocery store at Eighth Avenue and 18th Street in Ybor City. It was called Pizzolato Market, then Pizzo Grocery [then Castellano and Pizzo]. The Little Sicily Market is located on that corner today.

"It's in our blood. When we owned the store in Ybor City, my mother worked right alongside my dad, and they specialized in Cuban, Italian and Spanish food. My father was a learned man. He was an impresario at the clubs of Ybor City, and he formed the Sons of Italy Club here."

Pictures preserve some of Tony's own childhood of discovery: selling newspapers on the streets and in the clubs of Ybor City; watching patriotic parades in World War I;





**Mr. and Mrs. Tony Pizzo on their 10th Wedding Anniversary - July 14, 1951**

gulping spaghetti on a Boy Scout camping trip.

"I've always had a spirit of adventure," he said. "I just wanted to discover my environment. I'd go to the railroad tracks and walk as far as Six Mile Creek. It was all wilderness in those days."

He added: "I was very gregarious. I played in the streets a lot."

Tony related with relish the story of his Lindbergh-era enthusiasm for aviation. As a teenager he rushed to Tampa's just-developing Drew Field to greet some French fliers who landed. No one else was there to greet them -- so Tony took them home to have dinner with his family.

Tony attended Philip Shore Elementary School in Ybor City, then went on to George Washington junior High and Hillsborough High School. As a high schooler, he joined the debate team, the Italian Club and the all-male cheer-leading squad.

"I was having more fun," he remembered. "I really wasn't a good Student -- C's and B's,



**Tony Pizzo as first "Mayor" of Ybor City -- 1952-53**

once in a while an "A" would fall in. But I took all the history courses I could find in high school."

And he acted in student plays.

At Hillsborough he met his future wife, Josephine Acosta. "We were in the same class," he said. "We started going together, off and on. In those days, you had to go out with chaperones.

"A big event was the club dances. You'd wear white linen suits. The girls would dress up so gorgeously."

But marriage would come later (in 1941), for both Tony and Josephine had college in mind. She attended Florida State College for Women -- today's Florida State University --



**Anthony P. "Tony" Pizzo**

in Tallahassee, and he wanted to attend Stetson University in DeLand.

"I wanted to go to college," he said. "Don't know what possessed me, but I wanted to. Not many kids went in those days."

But the tuition at Stetson was \$600 a semester, too steep for him at the time. He decided instead to go to the University of Florida, with much lower tuition. And he landed a part-time job at the Black Cat, a restaurant that catered to students.

After two years on the Gainesville campus, Tony hitchhiked to DeLand and asked for an appointment with the president of Stetson. "It took some gumption," he said, because "it was a Baptist school and I'm a Catholic boy."

But the president saw him - and was impressed with Tony's eagerness to become a student there. He arranged a working scholarship for him, with Tony working as a busboy in the cafeteria and managing a dormitory.

Tutoring students in Spanish was another sideline for the young Tampan of Italian descent (he had been fluent in three languages since childhood -- Italian, Spanish and English). At Gainesville, he had tutored future U.S. Sen. George Smathers.

At Stetson, Pizzo was asked to tutor a young student with poor eyesight named Grafton Pyne, who happened to be a cousin of Franklin D. Roosevelt, then president of the United States.

That contact brought him \$25 a month ("big money" for that time) and a trip to Europe in 1939 with Pyne and a Stetson professor. "It was a real education," he said. "The first morning I had breakfast in Berlin, I had eggs with a swastika stamped on the shells."

In that interval just before the outbreak of World War II, Tony even saw Adolph Hitler while he was in Munich. Following his return, he gave talks to Tampa civic clubs on his experiences.

By then, he had a bachelor's degree from Stetson in education, with four majors: English, history, sociology and Spanish.

He had given up his earlier ambition to become a lawyer, after seeing too many Depression-era attorneys idle on street corners. Although he had been offered a job overseas with Pan-American Airways, he wanted to work in Tampa.

Tony started a general insurance business as the war clouds gathered. Not drafted after

Pearl Harbor took the country into the war, he volunteered for the Army and was assigned to the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland.

After a year, he was discharged because of a bout with undulant fever. Returning to Tampa, Tony decided to sell beer and wine, not insurance. He started his own firm, International Brands.

In that post-war period, Pizzo's personality -- and plenty of hard work -- helped establish the business. But he felt it was an uphill struggle as an independent. "I couldn't get a name brand," he said.

Yet he was making a name in the community. In 1948, when the Tampa Rotary Club launched its first new Rotary unit -- in Ybor City, Tony Pizzo was tapped as its first president.

The young go-getter had a knack for making friends and Pushing the Ybor City Rotary Club into progressive projects that attracted news stories. *Tampa Morning Tribune* managing editor V. M. "Red" Newton offered full support to change Ybor's then-tainted image as a haven of illegal gambling and political corruption.

Tony Pizzo and Ybor Rotary became identified with civic improvement.

One day in 1950, Joe Midulla of Tampa Wholesale Liquor walked into Tony's business and asked, "Why don't you work with me?" Tony, took his nine employees and "the few good lines I had - Manischewitz and Lancer's" to Midulla and became manager of the wine department.

Within two years, Tony was managing the whole sales force for liquor and wines. And he spent the rest of his business career

working for Midulla, in 1973 leading a new venture in the company, Fruit Wines of Florida, Inc.

Fortunately, his association with the wine and liquor wholesaler gave him a latitude he probably never would have achieved as an independent businessman. He found it possible to work in the civic ventures that led to his becoming a preeminent figure in preserving Tampa's history.

A trip to Havana in 1950 on a Pan-American Commission good-will trip set off the fuse for Tony Pizzo. A chance conversation with a government official made him realize anew Ybor City's importance as "the cradle of Cuban independence."

And a chance conversation with an aged man in Ybor City confirmed that connection -- with the identification of the house where Paulina and Ruperto Pedrosa had sheltered the "George Washington of Cuba" -- Jose Marti.

From then on, Tony became a zealot in learning as much as he could about Tampa's colorful past. The decades of the Fifties and Sixties began the solidification of Tony Pizzo, the historian. He started interviewing and collecting.

Through his Rotary connections, he was able to ensure the saving of the Marti house property, today the site of the memorial to the Cuban liberator.

And he began interviewing Ybor City old-timers and collecting pictures.

Most importantly for that period, Tony began the first concentrated efforts to place historical markers on the sites of significant events. Initially, the Ybor City Rotary Club lent its sponsorship.

And sometime in the early '60s, he realized the importance of preserving facts in printed form in addition to the green plaques that he planted around town. He decided to write a book.

Publisher Harris Mullen urged him to go ahead. And the book took a twist few could have forecast. For *Tampa Town* deals with the Latin's who came to Tampa *before* the founding of Ybor City.

Because of Tony's roots in the cigar-oriented community, the assumption would have been that he'd write about the Ybor City he grew up in. But he performed a valuable historical service by telling of the numerous citizens of Hispanic and Italian descent who made a mark in the community between 1824 and 1886.

His sub-title, "Cracker Village With a Latin Accent," spelled out the theme.

Meanwhile, he started collecting material in earnest to fill in the gaps on Ybor City and Tampa history generally. He solicited and copied rare family photographs as well as scenes of significance from the past.

Tony pursued information from the Library of Congress and the National Archives in this country. In Spain he researched early Spanish activities in Florida at the Archives of the Indies in Seville and at the Navy Museum in Madrid. It was there he discovered the Celli map of Tampa Bay -- the earliest, and had prints made. And in Sicily he learned more about the families who left in the 1880s to settle in Ybor City.

*Tampa Town* met popular acclaim in 1968. It proved to be a prelude to Tony's next big project -- forming the Tampa Historical Society in 1971.

His year as president started the momentum rolling, with regular speakers and an annual banquet -- the first at the University of Tampa's Fletcher Lounge with Dr. James M. Ingram giving a paper on Dr. John P Wall.

In 1980, when WUSF, the University of South Florida's educational TV channel, pondered a local history series, it turned to Tony. "Tony Pizzo's Tampa" ran in 10 parts, providing a colorful look at the past, with Tony as narrator.

This was a natural lead-in to his next big venture: coauthoring *Tampa: The Treasure City* with Dr. Gary Mormino of the University of South Florida in 1983. Tony's extensive files of pictures and background on almost every phase of Tampa's history, added to his own personal knowledge accumulated over the years, made him the perfect collaborator.

A "popular history," beautifully illustrated, the book filled a long-overdue niche in telling the city's story in an appealing way. Now, with copies no longer available in bookstores, it is difficult to find.

As early as 1952, Tony Pizzo was gaining accolades for his efforts in history and preservation. That year, he received the Order of Carlos Manuel de Cespedes in Havana for his efforts in promoting Cuban history.

That was followed in 1956 by the prestigious Tampa Civitan award as "Tampa's Outstanding Citizen."

In 1974 the Italian government recognized his "lifelong contributions" in preserving Italian tradition in Tampa with its Knight Officer of the Order of Merit.

Also that year, the *Tampa Tribune* singled him out for its "People Plus" award as "Mr. Ybor City -- giving more of himself to his native city than could be expected of a successful businessman."

In 1980, the Tampa Historical Society recognized its founder by conferring upon him the D. B. McKay Award for his contributions to local and state history.

And in 1990, the Hillsborough County Bar Association awarded him its Liberty Bell Award on Law Day.

The curious youngster from Ybor City had come a long way in history as well, serving as chairman of the Hillsborough County Historical Commission from 1968 to 1980.

Then he was appointed County Historian by the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners, serving for the rest of his life in that capacity.

In his "retirement" years, Tony found himself unable to slow down. He became a virtual consultant on questions of Tampa history, answering questions by telephone and in person from media reporters and university students.

He never tired of proposing new historical markers for events, places and people, then following up by finding the sponsors and financial backers to make them reality. He had a hand in seeing that more than 80 markers were placed around the city and county, usually with the Historical Society as sponsor. And Tony made speeches -- delightful, often humorous, always well-prepared -- for groups ranging from garden clubs to "junior lawyers" seeking background on Tampa.

He went into real anguish ("I didn't get any sleep last night thinking about it") when vandals wrecked memorials in Oaklawn Cemetery. And he badgered officials to try to stop the damage.

And he kept writing. *Sunland Tribune* editors could usually count on an annual essay from Tony, and the Italian-American Golf Association relied upon his pictorial features for its annual fund-raising golf tournament program.

In the midst of all this, Tony never neglected his family. He and Josephine brought up two successful sons Paul, a Tampa attorney who married Sharon Smith; and Tony, a plastic surgeon who married Julie Flom.

"Life's been busy and life's been good, but there is more to do," he told Tom McEwen several months before his passing. It frustrated him that time to complete the photographic history of Ybor City kept eluding him.

But Tony Pizzo's passing hasn't brought an end to Tony Pizzo's recognition. For all the organizations with which he was affiliated -- and both the city and county governments -- have sought special ways to honor him.

He will be remembered.

# **JAMES T. MAGBEE**

## ***"Union Man, Undoubted Secessionist and High Priest in the Radical Synagogue"***

**By KYLE S. VANLANDINGHAM**

The Florida frontier of the 1840s offered an excellent opportunity for a bright, ambitious young man. He could leave his old home and start a new life, wiping the slate clean. In an isolated outpost of civilization, he could make his presence felt and soon rise to a position of leadership and prominence. Such a young man was James T Magbee.<sup>1</sup>

He was born in Butts County, Georgia in 1820, the son of Hiram and Susan (Wooten) Magbee. After receiving a "frontier education" in rural Georgia he studied law, probably under the supervision of a practicing attorney, which was the standard of the time. In the winter of 1845-46, soon after Florida became a state, James Magbee appeared at Fort Brooke, where he was immediately embroiled in the long standing controversy between the settlers on the military reservation and the army commanders. Capt. John H. Winder assumed command at Fort Brooke in November, 1845. He soon ran into trouble with Indian agent Thomas P. Kennedy and decided to close the local trading post. Hogs owned by the settlers were "run [ning] at large" on the military post and if they were killed by the soldiers the settlers would prosecute the guilty parties. Winder considered building a fence to keep out the hogs but preferred "to kick out Thomas P. Kennedy, M. C. Brown, J. T. Magbee, and such others as from time to time may prove troublesome."<sup>2</sup>

The frontier community that James T. Magbee had chosen to settle was described by a soldier in 1846:

Tampa Bay is a neat little village of wooden houses, situated at the mouth of the river Hillsborough, and close to the garrison. There is a small traffic carried on between it and the few scattered settlers of the neighborhood, who bring in their surplus produce and exchange it here for goods or money.

Its situation is reckoned to be one of the most healthy and salubrious in Florida; but as the land in the vicinity is mostly of a poor quality, and as the bay is difficult of approach for shipping, it does not seem destined to rise very rapidly in importance.<sup>3</sup>

Magbee quickly assumed a leadership role in Hillsborough County politics. Writing to Gov. William D. Moseley in July 1846, he complained that local officials had not received "the acts of the last legislature" which was required by law. This made it difficult to properly conduct county elections.<sup>4</sup>

Within two years, Magbee had established himself sufficiently to run for the House of Representatives of the General Assembly. He defeated the incumbent William Hancock by a vote of 114 to 27. Hancock's unpopularity was further confirmed by the

fact that Henry S. Clark of Manatee received 47 votes. After the October 1846 election the 28 year old Democratic Assemblyman traveled to Tallahassee for his first legislative session. The Whigs controlled the Assembly but Magbee was successful in getting legislation passed that would "keep the Indians" within the borders set by Col. Worth in 1842. Two Whigs, George T. Ward and Jackson Morton were candidates for the United States Senate. Magbee joined with his fellow Democrats and a minority of the Whigs to elect Morton. In an election for Solicitor of the Southern Judicial Circuit, he was in the minority which voted against Ossian B. Hart of Monroe County.<sup>5</sup>

The Indian situation threatened to erupt into open warfare in the summer of 1849 when a raiding party attacked the settlement near Fort Pierce on the Indian River and the Kennedy and Darling store on Peas Creek. The crisis was defused by the surrender of the guilty parties and establishment of a line of forts across the state. But the 1849 incidents increased the demand for complete Indian removal. Shortly after the July 1849 raids, Magbee made a "hurried trip to Tallahassee and a personal appeal to officials there" for protection of the pioneer settlements.<sup>6</sup>

The year 1850 was an eventful one in the life of James T. Magbee. On January 17, 1850, in Leon County, he married Susan A. Tatum. Returning with his bride to Tampa, he joined other Freemasons in creating Hillsborough Lodge No. 25, F. & A. M. Charter members included, among others, Magbee, Joseph Moore, Jesse Carter and M. L. Shannahan. He was also a charter member of the Tampa Odd Fellows Lodge. The 1850 census recorded James T. Magbee with \$1200 worth of real estate, with his wife the owner of three slaves. Magbee reported \$295 income from his law practice.<sup>7</sup>

Slavery and the future of the Federal Union were much on the minds of Hillsborough Countians in 1850. On April 8 and 11 citizens met at the Courthouse to support the Nashville Convention, a proposed gathering of delegates from the Southern states which would enunciate the position of the slave holding states and their relationship with the Union. Magbee played an active role in these local meetings.<sup>8</sup>

In the fall of 1850, James T. Magbee stood for reelection. It was a very close race. Running as a "Union man,"<sup>9</sup> he defeated fellow Democrat Lucius D. Rogers by a vote of 93 to 91. Elias J. Hart received 60 votes. Magbee had hardly received a mandate from the voters. An angry Dr. Rogers followed Magbee to Tallahassee to contest the election. In spite of some "slight irregularities," the Assembly declared Magbee, the winner by a vote of 92 to 88. Rogers received "thirty-three dollars for eleven days attendance, and seventy dollars for his traveling expenses from Hillsborough County to this place, a distance of three hundred and fifty miles." Soon afterward, Magbee, exhibiting a vindictive streak in his personality attempted to have legislation passed which would prohibit "the allowance of pay and mileage for contestants" to seats in the General Assembly. He lost, 21 to 15.<sup>10</sup>

Though considered a "Union man" by his constituents, Magbee voted along with those attempting to postpone consideration of a strong pro-Union resolution. But his most important vote at the 1850-51 session was to elect Stephen R. Mallory to the United States Senate over incumbent David Levy Yulee. On the first ballot Magbee and his Democratic colleague, Sen. Micajah C. Brown of Hillsborough, voted for Yulee, who failed election by one vote. On the fourth ballot Mallory was nominated and

elected by a vote of 31 to 23, Magbee and Brown voting for Mallory. The traditional view has been that Yulee's radical stance against the 1850 Compromise resulted in his defeat by the more "moderate" Mallory. Actually, Mallory had endorsed Yulee's reelection and expressed his support for the Incumbent's views. Arthur W. Thompson has stated that the South Floridian Magbee "felt personally aggrieved because the Senator [Yulee] had not given adequate attention to, or obtained Sufficient favor for [his] district."<sup>11</sup> But Magbee had been elected in 1850 as a "Union man," which would assume support for the 1850 Compromise which Yulee, had opposed. Magbee's repudiation of Yulee can be interpreted as being based upon both national and local issues.

The two most important local issues of interest to Hillsborough County during the decade of the 1850s were the railroad and the removal of the Indians. At a meeting at the Courthouse in Tampa on December 15, 1851, community leaders John Darling, Jesse Carter, M. C. Brown, James Gettis, Thomas P. Kennedy, S. B. Todd and others addressed both matters. A cross-state, railroad with its Southern terminus at "Ballast Point" on Tampa Bay was endorsed and a resolution was adopted calling for removal of the Seminoles from the State of Florida. There is no indication that Assemblyman Magbee was present at this public meeting.<sup>12</sup>

Magbee continued his legal practice and in March 1852 the Florida Supreme Court met at Tampa for the first time. In this brief term, in which four cases were decided, Magbee represented his first client before the High Court, and won. Before the Justices took their leave of Tampa, a gala dinner was held at the home of Dr. Samuel B. Todd. Lawyers and laymen feasted "on Turkeys,

Ducks, Ham, Pies, etc." and then the endless rounds of toasts began. "[S]parkling vintage" and cake were served, and Magbee and others took turns hoisting their glasses until several hours later, when the festivities finally adjourned.<sup>13</sup>

In the fall of 1852 Magbee ran for his third term in the Assembly, once again as a "Union man". Out of a total of 302 votes cast, he received 120 with 99 for John McNeal and 83 for William Hancock. Magbee's plurality was about 40%. The legislative session was marked by action on the railroad and Indian questions. A bill to incorporate David L. Yulee's Florida Railroad Company was adopted by the unanimous vote of the House of Representatives. The railroad was to run from Fernandina to "some point, bay, arm, or tributary of the Gulf of Mexico in South Florida."<sup>14</sup> Legislation to provide for the "final removal of the Indians from this State" was also approved. During the floor debate a bizarre amendment was proposed which would have provided a four hundred dollar bounty "for each scalp of all Indian Warriors, presented to the Commanding Officer."<sup>15</sup> This proved to be too extreme for Magbee and a majority of the House, which voted it down by a margin of 22 to 5.<sup>16</sup>

Returning to Tampa, Magbee got into trouble with his Masonic brethren. Charges of an undisclosed nature were filed against him on March 5 by M. L. Shannahan and on March 19, 1853, Magbee was "suspended for an indefinite period of time."<sup>17</sup>

In 1853, railroad meetings were held in Tampa but Magbee apparently was not actively involved, although he did speak out on the Indian question.<sup>18</sup> He was reported to have been willing to be the "candidate of the Whig party" for reelection in 1854, but he eventually decided not to run.<sup>19</sup>



Hillsborough Democrats met at Alafia, August 1, 1854, and nominated Gen. Jesse Carter, boarding house proprietor and mail contractor, and "intimate personal and political friend" of David L. Yulee.<sup>20</sup> Carter assured the voters that the Florida Railroad was indeed going to be built to Tampa but not everyone believed him. County Commissioner Christopher Q. Crawford, an "anti-Yulee Democrat," was brought forward in opposition.<sup>21</sup> Carter complained that he was canvassing against a "*corrupt faction* claiming to be 'democrats' in coalition with a portion of the Whig party, aided by a rotten contemptible press." He identified his opponents as the "[Tampa] *Herald, Magbee, Gettis, Darling* and several other kindred spirits."<sup>22</sup> A "Know Nothing Society" was organized and actively opposed Carter upon the grounds of his friendship with the foreign-born Yulee.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Carter won by an impressive margin and went on to the Assembly session in 1854. With Carter's "vote and influence" Yulee was returned to the Senate.<sup>24</sup> The legislature approved the Internal Improvement Act which included support for a rail line "from Amelia Island, on the Atlantic, to the waters of Tampa Bay in South Florida, with an extension to Cedar Key."<sup>25</sup>

By early 1855, Magbee' flirtation with the Whigs and later the Know Nothings had ended. He had secured appointment to the lucrative position of Deputy Collector of Customs and Inspector of the Port of Tampa. With a salary of \$1095 per year, Magbee greatly supplemented his income. The position was political and had been granted under President Franklin Pierce's Democratic administration.<sup>26</sup> Magbee's immediate superior, Col. Hugh Archer, the Collector at St. Marks, directed Magbee in March 1855 to "proceed to have the

serpentine course of the channel from Hillsborough River to the Bay, properly defined by permanent stakes and the navigable courses of the Bay made clearly intelligible by the fixture of Iron Buoys".<sup>27</sup>

In 1855 Magbee, whose law office was on the corner of Lafayette and Franklin streets, reported an income from his practice of \$500. His competitors, James Gems and Hardy D. Kendrick had incomes of \$800 and \$100 respectively.<sup>28</sup> Magbee continued to speak out on the railroad question. On April 4, he was chairman of a "Railroad Meeting" at Tampa which asserted that the building of the railroad to any "point short of Tampa Bay" would defeat the intent of the Internal Improvement Act. South Florida's interests would be "sacrificed" if the Florida Railroad Company could construct the line to Cedar Key and still obtain state aid. Hillsborough County might be interested in investing in the railroad but only if it came to Tampa.<sup>29</sup>

In April 1855, a non-partisan assemblage nominated John Darling to fill out the term of Assemblyman Jesse Carter, who had abruptly resigned at the end of the 1854-55 session. Darling was elected in May without opposition. The non-partisan spirit soon vanished and throughout the summer and fall of 1855 the County experienced political warfare between Democrats and Know Nothings. The latter were led by Darling, ex-newspaper editor Henry A. Crane, Sheriff Edward T. Kendrick, Dr. D. A. Branch, Methodist ministers Leroy G. Lesley and J. K. Glover, and County Commissioners John Givens and J. P. McMullen. The Know Nothing or American Party as it became known, preached a nativist policy with hostility toward Roman Catholics and persons of foreign birth. The Jacksonville and Tallahassee papers printed lengthy letters from Tampan, usually written under pseudonyms, which hurled

charges and countercharges against each other. Magbee, now firmly back in the Democratic camp, was occasionally targeted for criticism by Know Nothing advocates.<sup>30</sup> One such writer, calling himself "Laureta," condemned Magbee:

*He, Col. M., at present holds office under President Pierce, but do not understand me, that his doing so, is the cause of his advocating in his feeble manner the sentiments of the foreign party, for I really believe he does so, from principle alone -- being born in America with no other, than Foreign sentiments and feelings.*<sup>31</sup>

The Know Nothings reached their peak of power in Hillsborough in 1855 but failed to elect their slate of candidates to county-wide office in the October elections.<sup>32</sup>

Political bickering was put on the back-burner in December 1855, when Tampa received news that Lt. Hartsuff's surveying party had been attacked in the Big Cypress. On December 23, "the court house bell was rung," to announce a meeting of the citizens. It was called to order just after 2 p.m. with a committee appointed to draft resolutions expressing the feeling of the meeting. A traveler in Tampa at the time wrote in his diary:

When the committee retired, Col. Magby, a lawyer of the town, having his energies all stimulated by an over quantity of whiskey, rose and addressed the meeting in the most patriotic language he could use and with such zeal ... caused everyone to feel like fighting for the county, for their homes, the wives of their houses, and their little children. He decanted at length on the duties of

man, on the horrors of savage warfare, and upon the treacherous character of the Indian.<sup>33</sup>

Simon Turman, Jr., editor of the local newspaper, the *Florida Peninsular*, described the meeting as "very enthusiastic," stating that "our fellow-townsmen, Col. J. T. Magbee, entertained the meeting very feelingly and eloquently. As war sentiments dropped from the speaker's lips, he was heartily cheered by the assemblage." Volunteer militia companies were soon organized and the Third Seminole War was underway.<sup>34</sup>

James T. Magbee continued a leadership role in local Democratic politics in 1856 and 1857. His law practice continued to prosper and he took on a law partner, John L. Tatum. But the following year Magbee was to experience political defeat and humiliation. 1858 was one of the strangest years in Tampa's history. After over three years of fighting, the Indian war was winding down in early 1858. In March, Billy Bowlegs agreed to leave Florida and many of the volunteer companies which had fought the Seminoles were mustered out and discharged at Fort Brooke.<sup>35</sup> One soldier, writing years later, said:

When we went to Tampa to be mustered out we found ten other companies there for the same purpose. The paymaster was off somewhere and there was unusual growling because he didn't show up. He got delayed somewhere and a great many of the men had to sell their discharge certificates to get funds to reach home. These discharge papers had a transfer blank attached and could be readily made payable to any one. The merchants of Tampa had a regular picnic. The

soldiers were at their mercy and the discharges were bartered at big discounts. Many, however, concluded to wait until the paymaster came and among them was myself. The worst element of these volunteers took the town by storm and made a veritable hell of it. There was no law and no order. They traveled in marauding bands at night and didn't even stop at highway robbery and murder. After awhile they got to be so desperate that it wasn't safe for a lady to be on the streets either day or night.

It was thought that the arrival of the paymaster and the paying off of those to whom anything was due would rid the town, but it did not. In fact, lawlessness filled the very air. The citizens, coming to the conclusion that something must be done, organized themselves into a vigilance committee resolved to do desperate things if necessary.<sup>36</sup>

Active in the vigilante or regulator organization were some of Tampa's leading citizens. Henry Crane, who had served in the Indian War and was now acting editor of the *Florida Peninsular* was a leader as well as Mayor Madison Post, Dr. Franklin Branch and a young future lawyer, John A. Henderson.<sup>37</sup> The Regulators were active "from Tampa to Fort Meade and LIP to Brooksville in Hernando County."<sup>38</sup> By early April, the Tampa contingent was making itself known. Whipping and banishment were utilized and eventually, lynching. The situation was so bad that the County Commission decided on April 6 not to make "any arrangements for public schools this year" because "of the unsettled condition of our county."<sup>39</sup> On May 15, Edward T. Kendrick was excused from charges of

drunkenness brought by the local Masonic Lodge "on the grounds of the peculiar condition of the country."<sup>40</sup> These references to local conditions reveal how thoroughly life was disrupted by violence in the spring of 1858.

Col. James T. Magbee now entered the fray. The hard drinking, outspoken but successful lawyer and Federal office holder was a formidable target for the ascendant Regulators but he began to feel their wrath in April 18, 58. Almost from the time of his arrival at Tampa, twelve years earlier, Magbee had been the leading political figure in Hillsborough County. With the disintegration of the American or Know Nothing Party in 1857, many of its members shifted to the Democratic Party. With no organized opposition the Democrats were factionalized and divided. There was a political meeting held at the Tampa Town Hall on the evening of April 26, for the purpose of appointing delegates to the Democratic State Convention. Mayor, Regulator and former Know Nothing Madison Post, was chosen along with Jesse Carter, James Gettis, James McKay and others. Magbee was not chosen and apparently was not present.<sup>41</sup> On that evening, he got drunk and became involved in an altercation with a young man named James Hayes. According to Hays, Magbee,

being stupidly drunk, became incensed at my declining the *honor-honor*, forsooth!! --of walking him to his residence. After many threats of personal violence, holding a cane over my head in a menacing manner, accompanied by the vilest epithets, he struck at me and brandished his knife, then, and not till then was he assaulted.<sup>42</sup>

Magbee claimed that "during some business transaction" Hayes had been "Insulted without just cause." Later that evening, Magbee, reportedly "came to the store of Capt. James McKay with the avowed intention of taking [Hayes'] life."<sup>43</sup> Magbee unsuccessfully attempted to enter the store but was refused by the City Patrol and sent away. On the following morning, on his way to a steamer at the port, Magbee was assaulted by Hayes.<sup>44</sup> But it was Magbee, not Hayes, who was brought before the Mayor's Court. He pleaded "not guilty," and upon the hearing of the evidence, was adjudged guilty and fined \$25 and costs. He was also ordered to be placed in "prison" under the custody of the Marshal until the fine was paid.<sup>45</sup> On the same day, the Regulators lynched one James Haywood.<sup>46</sup>

The campaign against Magbee had begun. On May 11, the City Council denied his application for a "remittance of a portion of the City Tax upon his property".<sup>47</sup> Magbee began to speak out against the Regulators. He blamed "the violent opposition to him... to his steady condemnation of the acts of a secret sworn band of men who had recently taken the law into their own hands."<sup>48</sup> Henry Crane, Madison Post and their friends wanted James T. Magbee removed from his position as Deputy Collector at the port. Magbee's frequent drunken behavior and his recent conviction in the Mayor's Court were the basis of their charges. Petitions were gotten up by Magbee and his opponents and sent to Sen. Mallory. Former State Senator Hamlin V Snell and Postmaster Alfonso DeLaunay were put forward as replacements for Magbee. The legal system was attacked in the Peninsular and lawyers like Magbee were charged with misleading juries. On June 5, 1858, the embattled official set forth his case in a four-page letter to the Peninsular He denied that he had "neglected any of our official or professional business

on account of drink" and also attacked the Regulators.<sup>49</sup> The following week Henry Crane responded:

He [Magbee] is undeniably a blackguard. Yet his chances of success at the outset of his career in this County were great and manifold. Our delegation in Congress took him by the hand, bestowing upon him an office, the duties of which he did not understand, and would not perform. Fortune favored him, a frontier education and society-expanded and polished by his natural love of liquor, and improved his manner into the insinuating and irresistible address of the drunken loafer. --He early became popular with that class, and might have erected a laudable reputation in their midst, had he possessed ordinary meanness. ...Aside from his gross intemperance, his character is jealous, irritable and weak, altogether wanting in honesty of purpose in all that is frank, manly and generous.<sup>50</sup>

Crane finished his diatribe by reading Magbee out of the Democratic Party: "We are done with Col. Magbee, -- so has the party!"<sup>51</sup> On June 15, Magbee again appeared before the Mayor's Court on a charge of violating the "5th Ordinance." He was convicted of assault and battery and fined \$10 by Mayor Protem William B. Hooker.<sup>52</sup> But it was already over. On June 19, the newspaper announced the appointment of Hamlin V Snell as Deputy Collector at the port.<sup>53</sup> Magbee retired to nurse his wounds and prepared to fight another day.

A yellow fever epidemic arrived in the fall and wreaked havoc upon the population for the remainder of the year.<sup>54</sup>

It has been asserted that James McKay and his cattlemen associates were behind the effort to oust Magbee from his position as Collector and Inspector at the port. The cattle trade to Cuba was being initiated and McKay intended to bring back certain items such as rum and sugar. In order to avoid the national tariff laws, Magbee would have to be removed and replaced by a "more amenable collector."<sup>55</sup> But no proof has been offered to substantiate this theory. Whatever his motives, however, McKay was one of those instrumental in Magbee's removal.<sup>56</sup>

James T. Magbee's return from the political wilderness began in May 1860. Sen. John Eubanks of the 20th District died May 30, at his home near Brooksville. His four-year term was due to expire in 1860 and had he lived, he no doubt would have been reelected. Eubanks' death opened the door for Magbee to revive his political career. It would take all of his political skills to be elected and Magbee was ready to do what was necessary. He first met with Simon Turman, who had returned to the *Florida Peninsular* as Editor although the paper was now owned by William J. Spencer. Magbee not only wanted to be state Senator but in the process he wanted to remove Madison Post from his position as Receiver of Public Moneys at the Tampa Land Office, a job he had held since 1855. For good measure, Hamlin V Snell was to be removed as Deputy Collector and Inspector at the Tampa port. Thereby, Magbee would have his revenge for the humiliation of 1858. Turman was more than willing to cooperate. He despised Post, whom he considered a "rank Democrat."<sup>57</sup> Post had been a Know Nothing in 1855 but left the party when he

received his land office position. By 1860, he was a leader in the Democratic Party in Tampa and Hillsborough County. Turman considered him corrupt and had unsuccessfully urged regular Democrats such as James McKay, Alfonso DeLaunay, Henry L. Mitchell and James Gettis to disown and disavow Post. Magbee offered Turman the Federal position held by Post and the two became allies. If the upcoming Senatorial convention was irregular in Turman's view, he would occupy a neutral position in the race, thus benefiting Magbee.<sup>58</sup>

The Hillsborough County Democratic convention met July 7 but broke up without nominating a candidate for Assemblyman. Before this occurred, delegates were selected for the District senatorial convention. Due to a disagreement over proportional voting, the rural delegates from eastern Hillsborough walked out of the convention. The delegates chosen from Tampa to represent the county at the senatorial convention met at Brooksville on August 10. With only one precinct from Hillsborough present, the meeting also included "the full delegation from Hernando County, presumably the representative from Manatee, . . . and no representation from Levy County."<sup>59</sup> H. V Snell nominated 27-year-old Samuel E. Hope of Brooksville who was approved unanimously. Hope was the son of a wealthy Hernando County family and had only three months earlier, married the daughter of Capt. William B. Hooker, the leading cattleman in the State of Florida. Simon Turman had already met with Hope before the convention and on Magbee's behalf, had offered him the position of Collector at Bayport. Consequently, it was believed that Hope would not accept the nomination. However, just before the convention, suspecting double-dealing on Magbee's part, Hope

changed his mind and went on to accept the nomination. The stage was set for a bitter race.<sup>60</sup>

Turman initially provided Hope with positive coverage in the *Peninsular*, although opposing the manner in which Hope was nominated. By the first week of September, however, the situation had changed. Hope now threatened to disclose the fact that Magbee had offered Turman the Federal position held by Post, and therefore Turman had sold his influence for a promise of office. There was a terse private exchange of letters between Turman and Hope, followed by a statement by Turman in the September 22 issue of the paper that the candidates for Senator were "outside the Democratic organization" and the voters should make up their own minds since the choice was "between men--not principles."<sup>61</sup> The Publisher, William J. Spencer, an opponent of Magbee's, overruled the editor and continued the "name of Capt. Hope ... at the masthead of the *Peninsular*; as the DEMOCRATIC, NOMINEE".<sup>62</sup>

During the campaign, Magbee and Hope traveled throughout the district seeking Support. No great issues appear to have been prominent in the race. The division of Hillsborough County was not an issue because Magbee, favored the move while Hope's top backers, Snell and Post, were both on record a year earlier supporting the formation of a new County from eastern Hillsborough. Turman was right when he said the election was about personalities. Post and Snell, who had overthrown Magbee two years earlier, attempted to consolidate their power by using the disorganized party apparatus to defeat Magbee. But with the help of Turman, Magbee prevailed. When the election was held, October 1, Magbee received 568 votes to Hope's 421 and carried all four Counties in the district. After the

election, Post, anxious to hold on to his Job, went public on the charge against Turman. Turman defended himself in the newspaper and condemned Post in articles published as late as December 8. Ironically, Turman and Hope had become brothers-in-law on September 20, 1860, when Turman married Meroba, the daughter of William B. Hooker.<sup>63</sup>

In the late fall of 1860, Hillsborough Countians turned their attention to the monumental Issue of the continuation of the Federal Union. In the November election, the Southern Democratic nominee John C. Breckenridge received 303 votes to 60 for Constitutional Unionist John Bell. The regular Democrat, Stephen Douglas received no votes in Hillsborough and Abraham Lincoln wasn't even on the ballot.<sup>64</sup> When the election of Lincoln became apparent, secession fever caught on in Tampa and the surrounding countryside. At the Alafia, on November 24, citizens "irrespective of party," met in convention to consider recent national developments. Those present at the meeting took the position that Lincoln's election "determines the fact the powers of the government have passed into the hands of a section only of this Union, and of a section implicitly hostile to our interests and institutions." The General Assembly was urged to "promptly call a convention to sever our connection with the present government."<sup>65</sup> Signing the petition were 76 men and 26 women. Among the signers were: H. L. Mitchell, John Darling, H. A. Crane, J. T. Lesley, J. A. Henderson, Wm. B. Hooker, Simon Turman, James Gettis and Wm. I. Turner. Among the women were Matilda McKay, wife of James McKay and Mrs. Catherine S. Hart, the wife of Tampa's most prominent Unionist, Ossian B. Hart. Federal officeholders H. V. Snell, Madison Post, Alfonso DeLaunay, and Jesse Carter also pledged their Support. Another such

Tampa July 12<sup>th</sup> 1870  
His Excellency the Gov  
of Florida

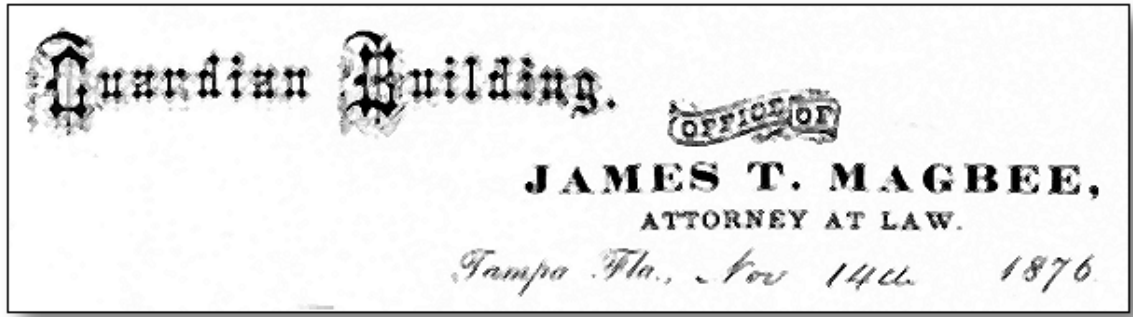
Dr. Sir  
I most respectfully  
recommend Henry Albany, Estward P Grant,  
Henry Procius, Wesley Manuel and Henry Evans  
as suitable persons for Port Wardens for the  
Port of Tampa Bay.

I do not think persons interested to a great  
extent in shipping should act as P/W.  
I see that W. G. Ferris is making application or  
has made up a slate. he is interested in  
shipping & from a remnant he made yesterday  
about the Gov's neglect to make these appts &  
the manner that he spoke I think his name  
should be left out as a P/W.

Yours truly  
James T. Magbee

Letter from James T. Magbee to Governor Harrison Reed

- Florida State Archives



#### Magbee Letterhead

meeting was held at Tampa with about 400 present.<sup>66</sup>

James T Magbee had already left for Tallahassee by November 24, for the following Monday, November 26, the State Senate convened. He was appointed to the Judiciary, Elections, Corporations, Engrossed Bills and Constitutional Revisions committees.<sup>67</sup> Writing home to Simon Turman in Tampa on December 2, Magbee informed the public that a state convention had been called for January 3, 1861. He went on to say:

From present indications there is no doubt the State will promptly secede. There is no dodging the question--the South must promptly act, or she is gone forever. I hope that every voter in South Florida will forget old party ties and old prejudices and differences and rally around the altar of our Southern Institutions, and go to the polls on the 22nd of December, and there cast their votes for no man who is not unmistakably sound on the Southern question.<sup>68</sup>

Magbee, added that he had "Introduced and got through the Senate a Resolution not to go into the election of a U.S. Senator."<sup>69</sup> So this was James T. Magbee in December

1860, before Florida seceded and before the war broke out. He was a secessionist and not a Unionist. At the end of 1860, James T. Magbee was a wealthy man. He had 760 acres of land and improvements valued at \$3,000 and 14 slaves worth \$8,500. The census reported the value of his personal property, including slaves, at \$13,700. He had a Successful law practice and had represented such prominent clients as William B. Hooker, James McKay and Francis A. Hendry before the State Supreme Court. Occasionally, he worked with fellow attorneys James Gettis or Ossian B. Hart to Jointly represent a client. Magbee and Hart had become good friends. In the fall of 1857, they and their wives took a vacation to "the north." And after almost eleven year of marriage, the Magbees had no children.<sup>70</sup>

When the Senate reconvened in January, 1861, Magbee shepherded the bill through the Senate that created Polk County. Meanwhile, the Convention met and approved secession by a vote of 62-7. In the majority were Hillsborough's delegates, Simon Turman and James Gettis. Magbee returned home after the session and arrived in Tampa in time to speak at the Washington Birthday celebration on February 22.<sup>71</sup>

When the summer arrived, Magbee once again entered the political arena in a highly





controversial case. James McKay had been shipping cattle to Cuba since 1858-59 and although the war had broken out April 12, he continued the trading, not only selling cattle in Cuba but also to U. S. troops in Union-controlled Key West. His ship, the *Salvor*; was seized by Federal officials, but McKay was allowed to return to Tampa. Upon his arrival, he was charged with petty treason against the State of Florida. A trial was held before two justices of the peace and McKay was represented by James Gems and Ossian B. Hart. The volunteer prosecutor was none other than Senator James T. Magbee.<sup>72</sup> McKay believed that "the whole matter originated through malice of two or three dishonest Govt. officials, who, a few years before, I was instrumental in having removed from office for their bad acts"<sup>73</sup> McKay's allies were prepared to "break up [the] Justice Court" but he would not allow it.<sup>74</sup> At the trial, which was described as "long and acrimonious," Magbee called for the death penalty, demanding that McKay be hanged.<sup>75</sup> However, the justices, after the intercession of Gen. Joseph M. Taylor, commander at Fort Brooke, bound McKay over to the next Circuit Court. He was required to post a bond of \$10,000. Soon after, McKay was allowed to leave Tampa and resume his business activities.<sup>76</sup> Before that occurred, however, Magbee responded to McKay in a letter to the *Florida Peninsular*, July 19, 1861. After comparing McKay to Benedict Arnold, Magbee wrote:

Former differences I burn upon the altar of my country and will to the last moment stand side by side with any one in the cause of the South. She is now entered into a Just and holy war, in which every man, woman and child is and should feel interested and we have not the right to cater to the views and interests of friend or foe, whose conduct cannot meet the smiles and plaudits of our country, the land of the "stars and bars," the home of the patriot where the only temple of true fealty has been preserved.

I am a Southern man by birth, was reared and educated in Georgia, was born a slave owner and have owned slaves all my life and am also an undoubted secessionist.<sup>77</sup>

In November 1861, Sen. Magbee returned to Tallahassee for the upcoming, legislative session. There, he came close to being elected to the Senate of the Confederate States of America. When the joint session of the General Assembly convened, Magbee's name was placed in nomination by Hillsborough County Assemblyman, Joseph Howell. Among the others nominated were G. T. Ward, Jason B. Owens, former Gov. Madison S. Perry and former U. S. Senator Jackson Morton. By the third ballot, Magbee had 29 votes, the largest number cast, but nowhere near a majority. Balloting continued for days. On December 14, Magbee was down to eight votes and his



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name was withdrawn by Howell. Soon thereafter, with Magbee voting in the majority, J. M. Baker was elected. Several ballots later, A. E. Maxwell was chosen the second Confederate Senator. Magbee served on the Judiciary and Engrossed Bills committees and succeeded in having his former law partner, John L. Tatum, chosen as Engrossing Clerk. However, he was unsuccessful in sponsoring Simon Turman for the position of Senate Secretary. Turman lost by a vote of 9 to 5. The previous month,

Turman had been defeated in his reelection bid for Hillsborough County Judge of Probate.<sup>77</sup>

On April 13 and June 30-July 1, 1862, Tampa was bombarded by Union ships. In mid-May, Capt. James McKay returned after several months as a Union prisoner and quickly returned to blockade running. The Confederate Congress enacted a conscription law on April 16, 1862 and soon thereafter, Capt. John Pearson's troops stationed at Fort Brooke began "scouring the woods, looking after deserters and conscripts."<sup>79</sup> Tampa was nearly deserted, many of its residents having moved into the "country."<sup>80</sup>

James T. Magbee suffered a personal blow during the summer of 1862. At Gov. Milton's request, Attorney General Galbraith issued an opinion construing the 1861 constitution approved by that year's convention. According to Galbraith, all senators, even those elected like Magbee to four-year terms in 1860, would have their terms expire in October 1862. Soon after the word arrived in South Florida, James D. Green of Manatee County announced his candidacy. Samuel B. Todd of Tampa entered the contest along with Gen. Joseph M. Taylor of Hernando County. Magbee decided not to run, but to contest the results of the election.<sup>81</sup> Green, who was "a particular friend and correspondent" of Magbee, soon withdrew, possibly at Magbee's urging.<sup>82</sup> On October 6, Todd out-pollled Taylor in Hillsborough but Taylor prevailed in the rest of the district and won the election.<sup>83</sup>

When the Grand jury met at Tampa during the fall of 1862, James McKay was exonerated from his treason charge of the previous year. The presentment stated that "the prosecution was instigated by private malice or some not more laudable motive."<sup>84</sup>

McKay's ally, Joseph Taylor, was acting solicitor during the proceedings and Madison Post was foreman of the grand jury. Magbee, who had prosecuted McKay in 1861, was on very shaky ground when he answered the roll call at Tallahassee on the first day of the Senate session. The following day Taylor was sworn in. Magbee, along with Sen. P. B. Brokaw, whose situation was identical, protested, contending that their terms did not expire until two years later. A Select Committee endorsed the Attorney General's July opinion and Taylor was seated. Magbee was furious. He returned to Tampa, sold his property and moved to Wakulla County. In the eyes of some, he had retired in "disgrace." Magbee waited out the war at this new home, living the life of a planter with his seven slaves. He also had a new wife, Julia A. Henderson, a native of Alabama. Some 25 years his junior, she had married Magbee September 7, 1862, in Leon County.<sup>85</sup>

When the war ended in 1865, James T. Magbee was elected by Wakulla County voters as their delegate to the Constitutional Convention at Tallahassee. The convention convened October 25 and Magbee was joined by former secessionist James Gettis of Hillsborough, Unionist James D. Green of Manatee and former Confederate officers Francis A. Hendry of Polk and Samuel E. Hope of Hernando. The convention "annulled" the Ordinance of Secession but Magbee and the majority rejected radical language that would have declared secession "null and void from the beginning." On the subject of slavery, conservative language that the institution had been destroyed "by the Government of the United States" was approved 20 to 14, with Magbee and Gettis in the majority. Additional conservative language was supported by Magbee and Gettis but was defeated by a 30 to 7 vote.



**Magbee family monument in Tampa's Oaklawn Cemetery**

-Photo courtesy of Richard Sessums

Interestingly, Magbee, attempted to have wording removed that limited testimony by blacks only to cases involving them, unless "made competent by future legislation." Voting against Magbee were Gems, Hendry, Hope and Green. On the Issue of repudiating, the state debt, Magbee proposed and got passed a provision which would have allowed voters to decide whether to "pay" or "repudiate" the state treasury notes.<sup>86</sup> Near the end of the session, the convention reversed itself and repudiated the debt upon learning that "President Johnson required total and unequivocal repudiation of the state debt as a condition precedent to readmission."<sup>87</sup> The convention limited suffrage, political office and jury service to white males. On the last day of the session, November 7, Magbee unsuccessfully moved

to have the constitution submitted for ratification by the voters.<sup>88</sup>

On November 29, Magbee received 583 votes against B. E Allen's 2,729 in the race for Secretary of State. When the State Senate met in December, Magbee was appointed Engrossing Clerk, a position he also held in the 1866 session. He reentered the legal profession and opened a law office in Tallahassee in February 1866. Radical Reconstruction began in Florida in 1867 and by April 1868, Magbee was a committed Republican. He befriended Harrison Reed and when Reed became governor under the new 1868 constitution, Magbee was appointed to an eight year term as judge of the 6th Circuit, comprising the counties of Hernando, Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee and Monroe. State Sen. Claiborne R. Mobley of Tampa, an ally of James D. Green, also wanted the judgeship, but was forced to settle for the position of State Attorney for the 6th Circuit."<sup>89</sup> After Senate confirmation, Magbee's appointment was announced in the August 15, 1868 edition of the Tampa *Florida Peninsular*: Editor Henry L. Mitchell stated that he

would have preferred many others to Magbee, yet under the circumstances we are satisfied and have sonic cause to rejoice. The contest for the appointment had been between Magbee and Mobley, and of the two, we a thousand times prefer Magbee . . . Magbee is a lawyer of much experience and we doubt not will make, a fair judge.<sup>90</sup>

When the newly appointed judge arrived in Tampa he faced opposition from two quarters. First, the local Republicans were led by C. R. Mobley and Matthew P Lyons. Mobley, a former Kansas "border ruffian," had arrived in Tampa during the early part

of Civil War and professed allegiance to the Confederacy. He was captured by Union troops in October 1863 during the Spanishtown Creek-*Scottish Chief* incident and imprisoned at Key West. After the war, Mobley returned to Tampa where he operated a drug store and practiced law. By now a "Unionist," he received the appointment of Freedman's Bureau agent at Tampa. Lyons, a resident of Fort Green during the 18-50s, had become an ally of Manatee County; farmer-politician, James D. Green. Lyons was noted for his whining letters to the *Florida Peninsular* during the Third Seminole War. Late in the Civil War, returning from a visit to Union-controlled Fort Myers, he, along with Andrew Garner and David E. Waldron, were captured by Confederate troops and taken prisoner. Lyons was now Clerk of the Circuit Court, appointed by Gov. Reed. Mobley and Lyons were suspicious of Magbee, and resented having to share power with him. On the other end of the political spectrum were the Democrats, or Conservatives as they now were often called. Former secessionists, Whigs, - all those opposed to radical rule were now identified with the Democratic party. Magbee's "honeymoon" lasted about two months.<sup>91</sup>

On October 10, 1868, Magbee declared the newly established Republican newspaper, the *True Southerner*; "official newspaper of the Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida" and ordered that all legal advertisements and notices be published therein.<sup>92</sup> The paper's editor was Edward O. Plumbe, soon to be County Judge and the publisher was listed as Charles L. Newhall. Eventually, Magbee was identified as the paper's owner.<sup>93</sup>

A "Republican Mass Meeting" was held in Tampa on October 21. Capt. James D. Green spoke in the afternoon session, which was followed that evening by a "torch-light

procession" to the Courthouse. Speeches were offered by E. O. Plumbe, C. R. Mobley and Judge James T Magbee. Magbee "took the stand and delivered a most eloquent and patriotic speech, literally a feast of fat things, full of the soundest logic and argument."<sup>94</sup> William B. Henderson, a correspondent of the Democratic *Florida Peninsular*; took a different view of the events. In an October 24 article, he reminded his readers that Magbee was "holding his regular term of the Court in this county," and he was "surprised that a high Judicial officer of the State, . . . should enter the political arena as a stump speaker". According to Henderson, Magbee held the Democrats "responsible" for the Civil War "and that their hands were dyed in the blood of more than half a million loyal men." This angered Henderson who remembered that Magbee had been the most active, Ultra, red-hot secessionist in the whole county." His efforts to hang James McKay in 1861 and his description of himself as an "undoubted secessionist" at that time were fully aired in the article. Henderson signed the piece, "A Looker in Venice."<sup>95</sup> Magbee was so angry that he threatened to "strike from the roll of attorneys [Henry L. Mitchell] the editor of the *Peninsular*; unless he gave up the author of the piece." The judge then became very ill with fever" and was unable to preside at Court. Sam C. Craft, an attorney in the Circuit and friend of Magbee's, met with him after his illness and attempted to calm him down. Magbee believed

that this was but the first development in a widespread and deeply laid plot to destroy [his] judicial influence, and thereby to defeat the ends of Justice and consequently was such a contempt of court that [he] could not permit it to pass; that if this act was permitted to

go unpunished, it would soon be followed by others; and that [he] had to meet it, or else the country Would have to go back tinder military rule.<sup>96</sup>

Craft urged the judge to "loose[n the] rein[s]" for awhile but Magbee replied that "[he] was not sent on the circuit to gain popularity but to execute the Laws, and the surest way to *prevent* fruit was to clip the *bud*."<sup>97</sup> Henderson was brought before the judge at the end of the term. He was represented by counsel who argued that the article was a "legitimate exercise of the liberty of speech," and the remarks were not directed against the Court but against the judge politically, a "reply of a Democrat to a Republican". The judge was unmoved and fined Henderson \$100 for contempt of court.<sup>98</sup>

As judge of a five-county-circuit which included most of west central and southwest Florida, Magbee did a great deal of traveling. He was required to hold spring and fall terms Of Court in all five counties. Travel in the back country could be difficult and hazardous. In the spring of 1869, John B. Stickney, a Young lawyer accompanying Magbee, remarked on the swollen streams and heavy rains and the discomfort of riding in an open buggy tinder unpredictable weather conditions. All in all, Stickney found the trip pleasant and enjoyed the company of the judge and the friendliness of the people on the route.<sup>99</sup> Magbee's enemies, however, began to subject him to a series of practical jokes. On one occasion in mid-1869 at the Brandon residence east of Tampa, his buggy traces were cut. In Brooksville, he entered the courtroom to find "an old grey jackass tied in the judge's chair, tied so tight that he was sitting upright on his rump." Magbee defused the incident with humor when he remarked, "That's Sam

Hope's old ass. Leave him there. He's about the kind of judge to suit this situation."<sup>100</sup>

Florida politics were in turmoil in January 1870. James D. Green and others in the Assembly brought forward a report calling for Gov. Reed's impeachment. The report eventually was defeated but it was asserted by African American State Sen. John Wallace that "if Magbee was replaced as circuit Judge with C. R. Mobley, the Green committee would issue a report absolving the governor."<sup>101</sup> It was also rumored that Green had demanded a bribe. Soon afterwards, Green and Reed reconciled. Now it was James Magbee's turn to face the loss of his office. On February 18, 1870, James T. Magbee was impeached by the Assembly of the State of Florida for "high crimes, misdemeanors, malfeasance in office and incompetency." The vote was 29 to 4. A committee headed by James D. Green presented Articles of Impeachment which were approved 24 to 3. The Senate was duly notified and responded that trial would be held at "its next regular session."<sup>102</sup> The following is a Summary of the Articles:

I. That Magbee, in 1868, unlawfully declared one William Henderson to be in contempt of his court for having written and published an article attacking and criticizing a speech made by Magbee; when, as a matter of fact, the article was published while the court was out of session, and could not, therefore, have been contemptuous; and that Magbee caused the imprisonment of said Henderson in lieu of the latter's payment of a fine of one hundred dollars assessed against him for the said illegal contempt;

II. That he, in 1869, struck from the panel of grand jurors the names of

two men which had been legally drawn, and inserted in place thereof the names of two men which had been drawn on the regular panel of petit Jurors;

III. That he, in 1869, endeavored to cause the clerk of his court to commit a fraud, by urging him not to record the names of certain persons on the jury list in case they should be drawn in the jury drawing;

IV. That he, in 1869, bought for his own use certain pipes, tobacco, envelopes, and stamps and caused the same to be charged against the state under the title "stationery;"

V. That he, in 1869, persuaded one Irene Jenkins to plead guilty to an indictment charging adultery, promising her a mitigation of the penalty; but after she, as induced, pleaded guilty to such charge he assessed against her the extreme penalty of imprisonment for twenty-one months at hard labor; all of which he did, despite the fact that he had sentenced one Louis Jenkins, indicted on a similar offense, to pay a fine of seventy-five dollars upon a plea of guilty.<sup>103</sup>

The legislature adjourned February 19, 1870. As an impeached official, Magbee was now under suspension, pending the Senate trial. Gov. Reed called the Legislature into extra session" on May 23. Magbee entered a plea of not guilty and demanded a speedy trial during the special session. He submitted an impressive collection of letters and affidavits attesting to his innocence. The Assembly managers requested a continuance and trial was postponed to the next regular session in

January 1871. Green and Mobley lambasted Magbee at a Republican meeting on May 26, 1870. Magbee traveled the state soliciting support from friends and legislators. He played an active role in the 1870 Republican state convention as a member of the Reed faction and joined in the unsuccessful efforts to re-nominate Congressman Hamilton. Later, in Gainesville, he was involved in a drunken brawl, beaten up and fined by the mayor. When the Legislature reconvened on January 3, 1871, the previous enthusiasm for his impeachment had vanished. Assembly managers appeared before the Senate and recommended that the case be dismissed, which was accomplished by a vote of 19 to 0. Magbee's counsel asked the "court" to declare the Judge "honorably discharged." There was no objection and Chief Justice Randall obliged, after which he adjourned the "high court of Impeachment."<sup>104</sup> The charges against Magbee have been described as "flimsy" and "superficial" and indeed they were. His impeachment, "the first in Florida politics,"

. . . contributed little to the body of American impeachment precedents. It is unusual only in that it was under consideration, in one form or another, in three separate and distinct sessions of the legislature. However, the time factor was not great, far less than twelve months intervened between original investigation and abandonment of the charges. In essence, the whole episode was no more than an attempt to embarrass Governor Reed.<sup>105</sup>

Judge Magbee was involved in "farming ... on a large scale" in eastern Hillsborough County.<sup>106</sup> The 1870 census reported Magbee, as residing at present-day Brandon, where he described himself as a

"Farmer and Lawyer." He and his wife Julia had no children, but living in their household were the Judge's elderly mother and other close relatives. The next door neighbor was James Brandon.<sup>107</sup>

The war with the *Florida Peninsular* - continued:

This self-important individual has, by untiring exertions, by pleading with, praying with and appealing to the lowest passions of corrupt politicians, induced the Assembly of Florida to withdraw the charges preferred against him by a former Republican Assembly, and is to-day free to carry out against the people of this Circuit his long pent up wrath, and those whom his honor hath "marked" may prepare to receive their full share of that pent up wrath. Yes, Magbee is free to again act. ... Magbee stands in the same position that does the thief or murderer against whom an indictment was once preferred by a Grand Jury and subsequently quashed or withdrawn.... But that is enough for him. He retains his salary, the apple of his eye, and he retains the power, in his own language, to make himself felt. Well, we feel like the boy who cat[s] the cheese with the maggots in it: 'if the maggots can stand it, so can we.'<sup>108</sup>

Magbee's *True Southerner*- was now dead, but his new journal, the *Key West Guardian*, edited by R. E. Neeld was appointed in early 1871 as a legal paper of the circuit. The *Peninsular*; since November 1869, had also enjoyed that designation. As Circuit judge and ally of Gov. Reed, Magbee exercised control over Hillsborough county politics

and to a lesser extent, the other counties in the circuit. The *Peninsular* took a negative view of developments in February 1871:

Reed, assisted by Magbee, has again been at work reconstructing Hillsborough County. Daniel Gillet, the only man of sense, honesty and social standing, has been removed and Bob Johnson, colored, appointed in this stead. Cyrus Charles, colored, removed and Negro preacher John Thomas, appointed. Watrous removed and N. M. Moody appointed in his stead. So the board now stands, Joseph Brownlow Bob Johnson, John Thomas, Mills Hollyman, N. M. Moody, three colored and two white, and now the question arises, what has the county gained by these changes [on the County Commission]?<sup>109</sup>

One of the most embarrassing incidents in James T Magbee's life Occurred in the fall of 1871. On October 16, having returned from Court at Brooksville, "he fell dead drunk in the sandy street at Franklin and Washington."<sup>110</sup> The *Peninsular* reported that he "lay wallowing in the grime, the slime, the odor of - nature. By chance additional!!! indignities were added."<sup>111</sup> A group of his enemies "poured molasses and corn over him. The delectable mixture was soon discovered by roaming hogs. They rooted him around until they ripped off nearly all his clothes."<sup>112</sup>

He snored and he arose upright. On the 17th, drunkenly reminded of his own (suffered) indignities, and in a terrible plight, revolver in hand, wanted satisfaction. He encountered several, he demanded satisfaction and he succumbed. He drank anew, and drank again anew. He imbibed to

inhibition, and he, lay despoiled of his arms, such an object whereas Tampa never saw before. Half clothed without countenance, witless of self, fortune and fame, he lay prone in as clean a place as a stable.<sup>113</sup>

The term "scalawag" was frequently applied to Magbee. Scalawags were defined as "false recreant Southern [men], who in the chrysalis state, were the most bitter rebels, and now with gaudy wings--red, white and blue--soar as loyal butterflies."<sup>114</sup> The Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, in September 1871, described Magbee as a "once bitter rebel" and now "a High Priest in the Radical Synagogue [who] prates of his 'loyalty.'"<sup>115</sup>

Magbee was criticized by local Democrats for "compelling white men to serve on juries with Negroes. He was repeatedly charged with showing rank favoritism while hearing cases."<sup>116</sup> Yet, the Manatee County Grand Jury, in its Fall 1871 presentment "took great pleasure in tendering to the Hon. James T. Magbee our regards and good wishes for his able and impartial manner in expounding and enforcing the law, and for the good order, quiet and decency which characterize his courts."<sup>117</sup>

During the fall 1873 term of court in Manatee County, Magbee was the victim of an assassination attempt. As he was sitting in the parlor of his Pine Level boarding house some person fired through a window at him."<sup>118</sup> The pressure began to show on the judge and his heavy drinking increased. On New Year's Eve, 1873, in Tampa, he over-imbibed and "became involved in a street row, was arrested by the marshal and hauled before the mayor"<sup>119</sup> Magbee was fined for drunk and disorderly conduct by Mayor James E. Lipscomb but refused to pay. He was ordered locked up in the town



jail until morning. The next day Magbee issued a writ of habeas corpus "commanding the mayor to bring the body of James T. Magbee before His Honor James T. Magbee to show by what authority the mayor was depriving him of his liberty."<sup>120</sup> The writ "utterly failed" and the officials "paid no attention" to it. Magbee reportedly "paid his fine and apologized".<sup>121</sup> But he did not forget the incident and Mayor Lipscomb and Marshal Dishong were summoned to appear before the spring term of the 1874 court on a charge of contempt. The culprits were fined \$100 each and ordered jailed for ten days. Henry L. Mitchell and John A. Henderson, representing the defendants, asked the court to stay the ruling but Magbee refused. Lipscomb reportedly "snatched" a shotgun from a man standing nearby and threatened to shoot the judge. He was disarmed and walked out, but before leaving the courtroom issued a vicious diatribe against Magbee. D. B. McKay remembered that Lipscomb brought his own gun to the courthouse, shot at Magbee, but the barrel was deflected, the buckshot hitting the ceiling. Reportedly, Magbee attempted to form a posse to carry out the court's sentence but no one responded.<sup>122</sup>

Magbee was reported publicly drunk in Jacksonville on May 15, 1874 and in Bartow on June 1. Enroute to Tallahassee, and stopping at Cedar Key on January 3, 1875, he was arrested for "drunkenness and ... riotous and disorderly conduct" and was confined in the town "calaboose."<sup>123</sup> In Tallahassee, he appeared drunk at the Assembly Hall of the State Capitol "in the presence of both Houses of the Legislature ... and in the presence of the Governor," cabinet and other high officials on the occasion the Governor's "annual address."<sup>124</sup> This was the last straw. Dade County Assemblyman William Watson Hicks demanded an investigation which resulted in

new Articles of Impeachment against Magbee. Six specifications were presented, all involving his drunken behavior during the past year. On February 16, the Assembly voted 29 to 19 in favor of impeachment, less than the two-thirds required. Then a resolution was offered by a Magbee supporter calling for an investigation into Assembly members who had been "Intoxicated" during the present session and declaring those seats vacant. The maneuver backfired when Hicks offered a substitute calling for an investigation of drunkenness by members. Another vote was taken on the impeachment articles and this time they were approved, 34 to 11. There was to be no trial. Fearing conviction by the Senate, Magbee tendered his resignation to Gov. Stearns the following day, February 17, 1875.<sup>125</sup>

Magbee came back to Tampa, resumed his law practice and acquired the *Tampa Guardian*. As editor of a newspaper, Magbee now had a forum to expound his views to the public. The "Guarding Building" was located on the north west corner of Polk and Franklin streets. His residence was adjacent to the office, on Franklin Street, and Magbee owned the entire block. His wife Julia became assistant editor and the childless couple adopted a son, Archie, who also learned the printing trade. Magbee attempted to address and resolve his drinking problem by becoming a charter member of the Order of Good Templars, a temperance organization. His wife joined him in membership but controversy followed. Worthy Chief Templar was Dr. John P Wall, also noted for his drinking habits. When Wall's half brother, Joseph, a local attorney, was proposed for membership, Magbee, objected. "Shortly after, Magbee was charged with violating his pledge by becoming intoxicated and was expelled. His wife was also expelled on the

charge that she had cast two blackballs against the admission of Wall.”<sup>126</sup>

With the end of Reconstruction, emboldened Democrats often sought revenge against their former enemies. Magbee was indicted April 13, 1877, by the Polk County grand jury for "maliciously threatening an injury to the person of another with intent thereby to extort pecuniary advantages." A year later, on April 10, 1878, he was convicted but Magbee succeeded in having the verdict set aside with an order for a new trial. Another year passed and the charges were dismissed, May 19, 1879.<sup>127</sup>

In August 1878, shortly after he had returned from Tallahassee where he had been under a physician's care for five weeks, Magbee was caned on the streets of Tampa.<sup>128</sup> James E. Lipscomb, the former mayor who had tried to kill Magbee in 1874, accosted him about an article in the *Guardian* he considered offensive to the late William W. Wall, Lipscomb's former employer and the uncle of his wife. According to the Democratic *Sunland Tribune*, Lipscomb asked for the author of the article and Magbee "drew a pistol." Lipscomb "collared and jerked the old sinner out of his buggy and caned him to his entire satisfaction."<sup>129</sup> Joseph B. Wall, who was involved in the incident, justified the caning by saying that "Magbee is sufficiently young and strong to be vicious and therefore by all social laws is amenable to chastisement".<sup>130</sup> He claimed he hadn't touched Magbee but all three involved in the affair were fined \$10 in the Mayor's Court.<sup>131</sup>

It was in this climate that Magbee reentered the political arena as a candidate for the State Senate. His opponent was John T. Lesley and the *Sunland Tribune* poured vitriol upon N1agbCC until election day.

Editor Wall Pulled out all the stops in the October 26, 1878 issue. Readers were reminded of Magbee's second impeachment for "drunkenness and incompetency," his attempt to hang James McKay in 1861, and his fining of William B. Henderson for contempt in 1868. He was accused of bringing his "90 year old" mother into town on an "ox cart" from her home six teen miles east of Tampa to complain about articles against her son. When the election was held the following month, Lesley defeated Magbee, 555 to 143.<sup>132</sup>

The following year Magbee announced that the "*Guardian* in the future will be published as a Republican journal."<sup>133</sup> By early 1880 the former judge was prospering. He entered into a partnership with A. S. Mann of Brooksville for the practice of law in Hernando County. He established an orange grove on Florida Avenue, about a mile north of town, on the "brow of the rising ground overlooking Tampa", and also furnished the paint for the Nebraska Avenue school.<sup>134</sup> When additional land was needed for the expansion of the town cemetery, Magbee "deeded as a gift land adjoining the burial ground to the east. This was immediately divided into lots and offered for sale."<sup>135</sup> He playfully attacked rival editor John P. Wall in May 1880:

Dr. Wall, editor of the *Tribune*, admits that the scent of bad whiskey is the true Democratic password and wants to prove that we are Democrat because we used to drink whiskey. Now Dr. when we drank whiskey it was not the Democratic stuff, for we drank nothing but the very best. As neither of us now drinks whiskey, and for that reason and for no other, we ought to be Republicans--We will leave it to the community in which

we live, as to which of us has drunk the oftener.

There's an old adage--a veritable fact  
That kettle should ne'er call pot  
black

And another that says none but  
drones

In glass houses living will throw  
stones.<sup>136</sup>

One of Magbee's major interests was the growth of the Florida Republican party. He was angered that President Rutherford B. Hayes' conciliatory policy had harmed the interests of the party in Florida.

... Magbee resented having to share the federal patronage with his political enemies. In a letter to [Secretary of the Treasury] John Sherman in January 1880, he complained that a Democratic member of the legislature was keeping the lighthouse at Egmont Key at the mouth of Tampa Bay, that the inspector of customs at Manatee was highly critical of Hayes's administration, that custom officials at Key West, Cedar Key, and St. Marks were Democrats, and that except in Cedar Key, Tampa, and Key West, the west coast postmasters were also Democrats. Magbee informed Sherman that he had been born and raised in the South and that Hayes did not understand Southerners. On the basis of this complaint, Sherman ordered an investigation, later writing to Magbee concerning the sending of an agent to probe the charges. The editor's wife replied in his absence that with proper management, Florida could be carried by the

Republican party in the next election.<sup>137</sup>

Magbee believed that for the party to prosper it had to attract white voters. The *Guardian* editorialized that the "Republican party is no more the Negro party than the Democratic party is".

The greatest difference between the two parties is, the democrats are a band of aristocrats, and the republicans are banded together for the good of the whole people... The colored man does right when he votes the republican ticket; for he votes for a party that protects white men and black men, whether they be poor or rich, while the democratic party protects the rich only.<sup>138</sup>

Referring to the Democratic party as that "old enemy of human rights," Magbee asserted that it deceived and stole from the "poor white man" by telling him that if he voted Republican he belonged to the "Negro party." It "prey[ed] upon his prejudices to make him steal from himself, by his vote, his own and his children's liberty."<sup>139</sup> In the 1880 elections, the *Guardian* endorsed Republican James A. Garfield for President and Democrat William D. Bloxham for Governor.<sup>140</sup>

In South Florida, James T. Magbee was up in arms over the nomination of Conover [for Governor] and [African American George Washington] Witherspoon [for Congress]. Still hoping that the Republican national ticket could carry Florida, the *Guardian's* editor complained to John Sherman that the antics of the Black Belt carpetbaggers had driven the Southern Republicans and the better

class of Northern settlers into a state of political neutrality, with many of those formerly active party members believing that Republicanism in the South meant Negro domination. Castigating Witherspoon's nomination, the ex-judge thought that Conover would make the most ignorant colored man think himself fit for Congress.<sup>141</sup>

When the election was over and Garfield and Bloxham had won, the Tallahassee *Floridian* declared that James T. Magbee must be the "happiest man, politically," in the State of Florida.<sup>142</sup>

With the election of Garfield, Magbee sought a suitable political reward. He traveled to Washington in July 1881, but the President's assassination required another trip the following year. There was speculation that Magbee was next in line for Collector of Customs at Key West or Postmaster at Tampa. He received his reward in February 1883, with the appointment of Deputy Collector of Customs at the Port of Tampa. After almost twenty-five years, Magbee had gotten his old job back. He also lived to see the completion of the railroad to Tampa, January 22, 1884. It is fitting that Magbee, who had fought for almost thirty-five years to achieve this goal, was present at the gala celebration at the Orange Grove Hotel that evening.<sup>143</sup> Tragedy struck on January 27, 1885, when his wife Julia Ann, died. The death of this "brilliant and pungent writer," who had been assistant editor of the *Guardian*, was a heavy blow to the aging lawyer and newspaperman.<sup>144</sup> He retired as editor but remained active in civic affairs, helping to organize the Tampa Board of Trade the following May. On September 17, 1885, he married a young woman named Carrie Burr Fisher, of Philadelphia. A pre-nuptial agreement was signed providing

that the survivor would receive nothing upon the death of the other party. On the night of their wedding, the couple were subjected to the old Southern tradition of charivari or chivaree:

The crowd of several hundred-nearly every white man in town-assembled shortly after dark and pandemonium reigned until near daylight. Among the noisiest of the musical instruments was a huge bull fiddle. It was made of a large dry goods box with one side open. Across the opening was tautly stretched a broad strip of rawhide. The bow was also made of rawhide and it was operated by two men, one at each end. The sounds it gave forth were hideous and unearthly beyond description.

The party was described as the "wildest [and] noisiest of all the chivaree parties in Tampa's history".<sup>145</sup>

Less than two months later, Magbee was dead. He passed away in Tampa, "suddenly" on December 12, 1885. There were rumors that he had been poisoned. But even in death, he remained controversial. He left an estate valued at from \$50,000 to \$75,000. The widow claimed she was pregnant and demanded monthly support payments. She continued to live for awhile in the Franklin Street residence and was reported ill there the following June. There is no evidence that she ever had a baby. Magbee had executed a will before Julia's death, leaving his estate to her, his mother, sister and Archie, the adopted son. Magbee later wrote "cancelled" over the "portion of the will referring to Archie D. Magbee, . . . but did not destroy the document which was found among his papers after his death." An administrator was appointed and the case dragged on until 1888. In spite of the ante-nuptial agreement,

the widow declared that she was "sole heir."<sup>146</sup> An order was finally entered which gave Carrie Magbee a one-third share of the estate with the remaining two-thirds going to a sister, Penelope A. Magbee and a brother, Samuel B. Magbee.<sup>147</sup>

James T. Magbee has not been treated kindly by history. As a boy, D. B. McKay worked for several months as an apprentice in the *Tampa Guardian* office. He described Magbee as "kindly and generous" and went on to relate the following story:

A pioneer family had lost their home and its contents by fire and a group of citizens were raising a fund to provide a new home for them. It was during the time I was working in the *Guardian* office.

Judge Magbee called me into his private office, opened his safe and took out what appeared to be about a peck of gold coins. He scooped up a handful of the gold, gave it to me and said, "Fake this to those damn rascals and tell them if more is needed there is plenty more where that came from."<sup>148</sup>

Yet, in his later years, McKay seemed to delight in printing derogatory accounts of Magbee's career in his weekly "Pioneer Florida" page which ran in the *Tampa Tribune* from 1946 to 1960. Magbee's alcoholism and his role in Radical Reconstruction made him an easy target. McKay once described Magbee as "probably the most widely and intensely hated man who ever lived in Tampa."<sup>149</sup> Karl Grismer's *Tampa*, published in 1950, negatively portrays Magbee but even Grismer admitted that the *Tampa Guardian* was "well edited and most readable."<sup>150</sup> Theodore Lesley's writings during the 1950's

also followed the same negative line. As late as 1983 in *Tampa: The Treasure City*, Gary Mormino and Tony Pizzo once again accepted the traditional view. In *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, published in 1991, Canter Brown, Jr., offered a revisionist version of Magbee, portraying him in a far more favorable light. Julius J. Gordon of Tampa has spent many hours researching Magbee's life and is convinced that this lawyer, politician, and editor played a positive role in the development of Hillsborough County and west central Florida.<sup>151</sup>

Magbee was clearly an opportunist, but a look at his enemies reveals the same trait. Before the Civil War, his main detractors, Henry A. Crane, Madison Post and James McKay were all ambitious men who did not hesitate to vilify Magbee to further their own personal objectives. In the post-war period, James D. Green, Henry L. Mitchell and John P Wall were advancing their own agendas when they attacked him.

Circumstances seemed to govern Magbee's life. Greed and hysteria prompted his removal from the customs position in 1858. An unfortunate Attorney General's opinion led to his removal from the Senate in 1862, probably embittering him toward the Confederacy. The rise of the Radical Republicans in 1867 prompted his move to the Republican Party and launched his judicial career. Later, the resurgent Democrats made his downfall inevitable.

In spite of his weaknesses, Magbee should be remembered for his accomplishments. Although revenge and opportunism often motivated his actions, he eventually came down on the side of equal rights for all citizens, regardless of race. Always the partisan, he fought for his causes, and never surrendered.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> D. B. McKay, ed., *Pioneer Florida*, 3 vols. (Tampa, 1959), II, 377

<sup>2</sup> Julius J. Gordon, "A Collection of Research Materials on the Life of James T. Magbee, Hillsborough County, Florida, 1820-1885," 1990, typescript in Hillsborough County Historical Commission Library and Museum, Hillsborough County Courthouse, Tampa, FL. Mr. Gordon's collection has proven invaluable in the research phase of this paper. The author also wishes to express his appreciation to Mr. Gordon for his comments and insights on the life of James T. Magbee. Tampa *Florida Peninsular*; June 12, 1858; Arch Fredric Blakey, "Military Duty in Antebellum Florida: The Experiences of John Henry Winder," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 63 (October 1984), 159-160.

<sup>3</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, March 20, 1955.

<sup>4</sup> James T. Magbee to Wm. D. Moseley, July 12, 1846, folder 7, box 1, Gov. Moseley's Correspondence, 1845-49, Territorial and State Governors, record group 101, series 679, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, (hereafter FSA)

<sup>5</sup> Returns of election of October 6, 1848, Hillsborough County, Elections Returns, Territorial and State Election Returns (1824-1870) box 18, record group 156, series 21, FSA (hereafter Hillsborough County Election Return); *Laws of Florida* (1849), 71-71; *Florida House Journal* (1848), 127-128, 133; J. E. Dovell, *Florida: Historic, Dramatic, Contemporary*, 4 vols. (New York, 1952), I, 302.

<sup>6</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 80-90. The author wishes to thank Canter Brown, Jr., for his assistance in providing research information for this paper. Without his assistance, this paper would not be nearly as complete.

<sup>7</sup> Leon County, Marriage Book X, 147; *Hillsborough Lodge No. 25, F. & A.M.* (no date), 3-5; *Tampa*

*Times*, June 4, 1955; t I.S. Original Census Schedules, 7th Census, 1850, Hillsborough County Florida (Population and Slave Schedules); Hillsborough County, Tax Book, 1850, Florida State Library.

<sup>8</sup> *Jacksonville Florida Republican*, May 9, 1850.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, August 30, 1855.

<sup>10</sup> Hillsborough County Election Returns, October 1850; *Tallahassee Floridian & Journal*, October 26, 1850; *Florida House Journal* (1850), 30,53, 119.

<sup>11</sup> *Jacksonville Florida Republican*, August 30, 1855; *Florida House Journal* (1850), 318, 391; *Tallahassee Floridian & Journal*, January 18, 1851; Arthur NA. Thompson, "The Railroad Background of the Florida Senatorial Election of 1851," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 31 (January 1953), 181-182, 189-190.

<sup>12</sup> *Jacksonville Florida Republican*, January 2, 1852.

<sup>13</sup> 4 *Florida Reports* (1852), 45 7; *Tallahassee Floridian & Journal*, April 3, 1852.

<sup>14</sup> *Jacksonville Florida Republican*, August 30, 1855; Hillsborough County Election Returns, October 4, 1852; *Florida House Journal* (1852), 331; *Laws of Florida* (1852-53), 31-38.

<sup>15</sup> *Florida House Journal* (1852), 318. *Laws of Florida* (1852-53), 133-136.

<sup>16</sup> *Florida House Journal* (1852), 318.

<sup>17</sup> "Minute Book 1852-1857," 19 (?), Hillsborough Lodge No. 25, Masonic Temple, Tampa.

<sup>18</sup> *Jacksonville Florida Republican*, May 5, July 21, 1853.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, September 27, 1855.

<sup>20</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, 1950), 116, 120; *Tampa Tribune*, June 3, 1951; *Tampa Florida Peninsular* January 8, 1859.

<sup>21</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular* January 8, 1859; Historical Records Survey, *Roster of State and County Officers Commissioned by the Governor of Florida 1845-68* (Jacksonville, 1941), 142.

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<sup>22</sup> Jesse Carter to David L. Yulee, September 17, 1854, David L. Yulee Papers, P K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, October 6, 1854.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Tampa *Florida Peninsular* January 8, 1859.

<sup>25</sup> *Laws of Florida* (1854), 9-19.

<sup>26</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, March 24, 1855; Secretary of State, Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military and Naval, in the Service of the United States on the thirtieth September 1855 (Washington, 1855), 66.

<sup>27</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular* March 24, 1855.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, February 10, 1855; Hillsborough County, Tax Book, 1855, Florida State Library.

<sup>29</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular* April 7, 1855.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, February 24, April 28, 1855; Tallahassee *Floridian & Journal*, June 2, 1855; Spessard Stone, "The Know-Nothings of Hillsborough County," *Sunland Tribune* 19 (November 1993), 3-8.

<sup>31</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, September 27, 1855.

<sup>32</sup> Stone, "The Know-Nothings of Hillsborough County," 6.

<sup>33</sup> Gary Mormino, ed., "The Firing Of Guns and Crackers Continued Till Light: A Diary of the Billy Bowlegs War," *Tequesta* 45 (1985), 56. Oaky Mansfield recruited a company for the local defense of Tampa; only "James Magby" refused to join, 61.

<sup>34</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular* December 29, 1855.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, August 30, 1856, March 21, June 13, 1857; James W. Covington, *The Billy Bowlegs War, 1855-1858.- The Final Stand of the Seminoles Against the Whites* (Chuluota, FL, 1982), 78; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, September 28, 1891.

<sup>36</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, September 28, 1891.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*; Brown, Florida's Peace River Frontier, 127.

<sup>38</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, October 26, 1958.

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<sup>39</sup> Hillsborough County, Commission Minute Book A, 1846-1863, 83. 40

<sup>40</sup> "Minute Book, 1857-1864," 38, Hillsborough Lodge No. 25.

<sup>41</sup> Stone, "The Know-Nothings of Hillsborough County," 7; Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, May 1, 1858.

<sup>42</sup> Newport *Wakulla Times*, June 23, 1858.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> City Council Minutes (August 21, 1857-May 1882), 16, City of Tampa Archives, Tampa.

<sup>46</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular* May 1, 1858.

<sup>47</sup> City Council Minutes (August 21, 1857-May 1882), 17.

<sup>48</sup> Newport *Wakulla Times*, June 12, 1858.

<sup>49</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular* May 1, June 12, 1858.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, June 12, 1858.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> City Council Minutes (August 21, 1857-May 1882), 21, Tampa

<sup>53</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular* June 19, 1858. In the June 12, 1858 issue Crane published an exposé of a supposed "Mystic Circle of Alchemy," which lie claimed was now in Hillsborough County. This was part of the campaign against Magbee. Crane, in the June 26, 1858 Issue, is quoted as referring to Magbee as a T-R-I-U-Q-S, or squirt.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, October 2, 17, November 27, December 25, 1858.

<sup>55</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., "Politics, Greed, Regulator Violence, and Race in Tampa, 1858-1859," *Sunland Tribune* 20 (November 1994), 26.

<sup>56</sup> James McKay to William Seward, February 11, 1862, General Records of the Department of State, Civil War Papers, Corr. Regarding Prisoners of War, 1861-62, box 7, record group 59, entry 491, National Archives (hereafter NA).

<sup>57</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular* June 9, December 8, 1860; *Tampa Tribune*, July 29, 1956.

<sup>58</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular* December 8, 1860. Magbee made a tentative effort to return to politics at a precinct meeting at Tampa in the summer of 1859. He was unsuccessful in calling for a vote on the delegates appointed by a committee to attend the upcoming County Convention. *Tampa Florida Peninsular* August 20, 1859.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, July 14, August 18, 1860; *Tampa Tribune*, July 29, 1956.

<sup>60</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular* May 12, August 18, December 8, 1860. Magbee announced his candidacy in the July, 28, 1860 issue of the *Peninsular*

<sup>61</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular* August 18, September 1, 8, 22, December 8, 1860.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, September 22, 1860.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, September 15, October 6, 27, December 1, 8, 1860; Petition of Citizens of Hillsborough County for creation of Perry County, 1859 General Assembly, 19th Century Florida Legislative Session Documents, Resolutions, Petitions and other Session Documents, folder 6, box 8, record group 915, series 887, FSA; Brown, *Florida Peace River Frontier*, 132-135; *Florida Senate Journal* (1862), 19.

<sup>64</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular* November 10, 1860.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, December 11 1860.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Florida Senate Journal* (1860), 3, 7-8.

<sup>68</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, December 8, 1860.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Hillsborough County, Tax Book, 1860, Florida State Library; U.S. Original Census Schedules, 8th Census, 1860, Hillsborough County, Florida (Population and Slaves Schedules); 8 Florida Reports

(1858-59), 21, 53, 453; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, October 2, 1857.

<sup>71</sup> *Florida Senate Journal* (1860), 231; *Tampa Florida Peninsular* December 8, 1860, January 19, February 23, 1861; *Tampa Tribune* July 10, 1955; William W. Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1964), 64; Janet S. Matthews, *Edge of Wilderness* (Tulsa, OK, 1983), 252.

<sup>72</sup> Zack C. Waters, "Tampa's Forgotten Defenders, the Confederate Commanders of Fort Brooke," *Sunland Tribune* 17 (November 1991), 5; Canter Brown, Jr., "Tampa's James McKay and the Frustration of Confederate Cattle-Supply Operations in South Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 70 (April 1992), 409-419.

<sup>73</sup> McKay to Seward, February 11, 1862.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, October 24, 1868.

<sup>76</sup> Brown, "Tampa's James McKay," 419.

<sup>77</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, October 24, 1868.

<sup>77</sup> *Florida Senate Journal* (1861), 4, 32-33, 110-114, 123-125, 136-137, 265-272; Hillsborough County Election Returns, October 7, 1861.

<sup>79</sup> Waters, "Tampa's Forgotten Defenders," 8-9; Brown, "Tampa's James McKay," 423-424.

<sup>80</sup> Kyle S. VanLandingham, "The Union Occupation of Tampa: May 6-7, 1864," *Sunland Tribune* 19 (November 1993), 9.

<sup>81</sup> *Florida Senate Journal* (1862), 8-14, 17-19; Tallahassee *Floridian & Journal*, September 20, 1862 in Richard K. Call Papers, Florida Historical Society Collection, Special Collections, University of South Florida, Tampa; Hillsborough County Election Returns, October 6, 1862.

<sup>82</sup> James McKay to Pleasant W. White, March 25, 1864, Pleasant Woodson White Papers, Florida Historical Society, University of South Florida, Tampa.

<sup>83</sup> Hillsborough County Election Returns, October 6, 1862; *Florida Senate Journal* (1862), 16-19.



<sup>84</sup> Brown, "Tampa's James McKay," 425, *Florida Senate Journal* (1862), 66-67.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*; *Florida Senate Journal* (1862), 8-19; Brown, *Florida Peace River Frontier*, 193; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, November 7, 1868; Wakulla County, Tax Book, 1863, Florida State Library; Leon County, Marriage Book A, 24.

<sup>86</sup> John Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida* (Jacksonville, 1888, facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1964), 11-12; Brown, *Florida Peace River Frontier* 193; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of Florida Begun and Held at the Capital of the State, at Tallahassee, Wednesday, October 25, 1865* (Tallahassee, 1865), 47-48, 56, 74-75, 77-78, 81, 83, 94-96, 102104.

<sup>87</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention ... 1865*, 108-109; Jerrell H. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet, Florida in the Era of Reconstruction* (Gainesville, 1974), 41.

<sup>88</sup> Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 42; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention ... 1865*, 113.

<sup>89</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Times*, January 11, 1866; *Florida Senate Journal* (1865), 12; *Florida Senate Journal* (1866), 55; *Tallahassee Floridian & Journal*, May 18, 1866; *Tampa Florida Peninsular* April 25, August 15, 22, 1868; Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 193; Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida*, 417, 429. Magbee was eligible for the judgeship because his political disabilities under the Fourteenth Amendment were removed, July 20, 1868, by an "Act for Removal of Certain Disabilities for the persons therein named," 15 *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 386-389.

<sup>90</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, August 15, 1868.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, September 29, 1866, March 20, 1867, August 15, 1868; C. R. Mobley to T W. Osborn, June 5, 9, 1866, U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Letters Received 1865-70, NA, microfilm of selected Florida Records at P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville; Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; I 10, 193; F. B. Hagan to Jefferson Bell, January 7, 1908, Florida Confederate Pension Applications, Pension Application File of David E. Waldron, FSA; *Florida House [Assembly] Journal* (1870), 48.

<sup>92</sup> Hillsborough County, Old Chancery Record, 1857-1885, 49-50, 52. The order was vacated March

7, 1869 and replaced by a new order adding the *Key West Dispatch* as an "official newspaper."

<sup>93</sup> *Tampa, True Southerner*; October 29, 1868; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, August 25, 1869.

<sup>94</sup> *Tampa True Southerner* October 29, 1868.

<sup>95</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, October 24, 1868. The *True Southerner* on October 29, 1868, defended Magbee's 1861 actions, saying "is he any worse than thousands of other men, native Southerners, who lent their influence during the war, but who like him have since joined the Republican Party?"

<sup>96</sup> *Florida House [Assembly] Journal*, extra. session (1870), 5 1.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular* November 7, 1868.

<sup>99</sup> Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida*, 417; John B. Stickney to "My dear Wife," April 5, 1869, John B. Stickney Papers, #69, J. I. Kislak Foundation, J. I. Kislak Mortgage Corp., Miami Lakes, FL.

<sup>100</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; August 11, 1869; McKay, *Pioneer Florida*, II, 379.

<sup>101</sup> Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida*, 124-125.

<sup>102</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; 201-202; Cortez A. M. Ewing, "Florida Reconstruction Impeachments," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 36 (April 1958), 315; *Florida House [Assembly] Journal* (1870), 317-327, 343, 350-355; *Florida Senate Journal* (1870), 316-317.

<sup>103</sup> Ewing, "Florida Reconstruction Impeachments," 316. The full text of the impeachment articles can be found in *Florida House [Assembly] Journal* (1870), 353-355.

<sup>104</sup> Ewing, "Florida Reconstruction Impeachments," 317-318; *Florida House [Assembly] Journal*, extra. session (1870), 47-72; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; April 6, June 1, September 7, November 9, 1870; *Tampa Tribune*, July 21, 1957; *Florida Senate Journal* (1871), 44-45; 55-57.

<sup>105</sup> Ewing; "Florida Reconstruction Impeachments," 316-318; Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet*, 212; Allen Morris, compiler, *The Florida Handbook, 1959-1960* (Tallahassee, 1960), 128.

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<sup>106</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, February 2, 1870.

<sup>107</sup> U.S. Original Census Schedules, 9th Census, 1870, Hillsborough County, Florida.

<sup>108</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular* January 25, 1871.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, August 25, December 1, 1869, February 15, March 1, 15, 1871; Walter C. Maloney, *A Sketch of the History of Key West, Florida* (Newark, NJ, 1876, facsimile ed. Gainesville, 1968), 46. Maloney states that the *Guardian*, after folding in Key West, was moved to Tampa. Jefferson B. Browne, *Key West: The Old and the New*, (St. Augustine, FL, 1912, facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1973), 142. *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, August 17, 1878.

<sup>110</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 156. Grismer mistakenly gives the date as November 16, 1871.

<sup>111</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; October 21, 1871.

<sup>112</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 156.

<sup>113</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, October 21, 1871.

<sup>114</sup> *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, September 19, 1871.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 155-156. There was also resentment because Magbee profited by having legal advertising placed in newspapers owned by him. "Notes of John T Lesley," copied by Theodore Lesley; copy in possession of author.

<sup>117</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; November 18, 1871.

<sup>118</sup> *Savannah Morning News*, December 12, 1873.

<sup>119</sup> *Bartow Courier-Informant*, August 1, 1912, quoting *Tampa Herald* of March 14, 1905.

<sup>120</sup> McKay, *Pioneer Florida*, II, 377.

<sup>121</sup> *Savannah Morning News*, April 9, 1874; *Bartow Courier-Informant*, August 1, 1912; Browne, *Key West*, 68-69. McKay reported that the writ was successful and Magbee was released. McKay, *Pioneer Florida*, II, 377; *Tampa Tribune*, November 23, 1952. Also, see Grismer, *Tampa*, 156.

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<sup>122</sup> *Savannah Morning News*, April 9, 1874; *Bartow Courier-Informant*, August 1, 1912; *Tampa Tribune*, November 23, 1952. Grismer confused the courtroom shooting incident with Lipscomb, placing it in 1871. Grismer *Tampa*, 156. The mistake was repeated in McKay, *Pioneer Florida*, II, 378-379.

<sup>123</sup> *Florida House [Assembly] Journal* (1875), 290-292.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 81, 265, 289-294, 296; Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 210.

<sup>126</sup> *Savannah Morning News*, April 28, 1875; McKay, *Pioneer Florida*, II, 379; *Tampa Guardian*, February 28, October 9, 1880; U.S. Original Census Schedules, 10th Census, 1880, Hillsborough County, Florida; *Tampa Tribune*, April 5, 1953.

<sup>127</sup> Brown, *Florida Peace River Frontier*, 293.

<sup>128</sup> *Tampa Guardian*, August 3, 1878; *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, August 17, 1878.

<sup>129</sup> *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, August 17, 1878; Grismer, *Tampa*, 321-322, 329-330, 334.

<sup>130</sup> *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, September 14, 1878.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, September 7, 1878.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, October 5, 26, November 9, 1878.

<sup>133</sup> *Tampa Guardian*, November 22, 1879.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, March 20, 1880; *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, April 29, July 22, 1880.

<sup>135</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, March 9, 1958; *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, August 18, 1877.

<sup>136</sup> *Tampa Guardian*, May 1, 1880.

<sup>137</sup> Edward C. Williamson, *Florida Politics in the Gilded Age* (Gainesville, 1976), 54.

<sup>138</sup> *Tampa Guardian*, April 17, 1880.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, April 24, 1880.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, October 9, 30, 1880.

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<sup>141</sup> Williamson, *Florida Politics in the Gilded Age*, 64-65.

<sup>142</sup> Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, December 14, 1880.

<sup>143</sup> *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, July 30, August 6, 1881, January 12, April 6, 13, 20, June 22, 1882; Wicker to Secretary of Treasury, February 6, 1883, Records Relating to Customhouse Nominations, 1849-1910, record group 46, Box 68, NA; Grismer, *Tampa*, 174.

<sup>144</sup> *Tampa Guardian*, October 9, 1880; Julius J. Gordon, John H. Baxley, and Diane M. Rodriguez, *Oaklawn Cemetery and St. Louis Catholic Cemetery, Biographical and Historical Gleanings*, 2 vols. (Tampa, 1992), 11, 577-578.

<sup>145</sup> Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, March 19, 1885; Grismer, *Tampa*, 1880-1881; Gordon "A Collection of Research Materials on the Life of James T Magbee," 17-18; *Tampa Weekly Journal*, July 27, 1888, January 23, 1890; Hillsborough County, Probate File #980; *Tampa Tribune*, February 4, 1951, May 22, 1960. The *Tampa Journal* of July 27, 1888 referred to Carrie Burr Fisher as Magbee's fourth wife. If that is the case, then he was married prior to Susan Tatum.

<sup>146</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, December 27, 1885; *Savannah Morning News*, December 24, 1885; Gordon, *Oaklawn Cemetery*, I, 577; Hillsborough County, Probate File #980; *Tampa Guardian*, June 30, 1886, *Tampa Weekly Journal*, July 27, 1888.

<sup>147</sup> Hillsborough County, Probate File #980.

<sup>148</sup> McKay, *Pioneer Florida*, II, 379.

<sup>149</sup> Many of McKay's historical articles from his long-running series were included in a three volume work, *Pioneer Florida*, published in 1959. A chapter on Magbee entitled "A Self-Made Scalawag," can be found in Volume 2, 376-383. *Tampa Tribune*, February 4, 1951.

<sup>150</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 155-156.

<sup>151</sup> Theodore Lesley, "Florida's First Impeachment was Brought Against 'Scalawag' Judge But he Wangled Out of It," *Tampa Tribune*, July 21, 1957; Gary R. Mormino and Anthony P. Pizzo, *Tampa: The Treasure City*, (Tulsa, OK, 1983), 72; Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 128-129, 133-135, 140, 147, 162, 191-193, 202-206, 209-210, 293,

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408-409, 422; Gordon, "A Collection of Research Materials on the Life of James T. Magbee," 19-20. Magby [Magbee] Springs, now the site of the Tampa Waterworks Park at the foot of Henderson Ave. and the Hillsborough River was named for the James T. Magbee, family. *Tampa Journal*, January 2, 1890.

# **POLITICS, GREED, REGULATOR VIOLENCE, AND RACE IN TAMPA, 1858-1859**

**By CANTER BROWN, JR.**

I

In the past few decades, the causes and implications of violence in our society increasingly have drawn the attention of scholars. Eminent historian John Hope Franklin, for one, has pointed to the institution of slavery as central to any understanding of Southern tendencies to violent behavior.<sup>1</sup> The University of Florida's Bertram Wyatt-Brown, somewhat to the contrary, has argued that Southern behavior was founded upon concepts of honor which, in his words, "established signposts of appropriate conduct."<sup>2</sup> As to more specific causation of Southern group violence, two schools of thought have emerged. One insists upon the importance of "social disintegration and the breakdown of social control that accompanies massive structural changes, such as industrialization and urbanization," while the other focuses upon group violence as representing an "organized response to the competition over power that occurs throughout society."<sup>3</sup>

Several respected Florida historians have engaged in this debate and considered Florida history in light of it. Two individuals particularly have inquired into nineteenth-century violence, James N. Denham's "A Rogue's Paradise: Violent Crime in Antebellum Florida," interwove, Franklin's and Wyatt-Brown's approaches to provide an excellent, comprehensive examination of Florida's experience.<sup>4</sup> Robert P. Ingalls concentrated on the city of Tampa which he found, by the 1930's, to be "so infamous for extralegal group violence that the American

Civil Liberties Union branded it as one of the worst 'centers of repression' in the United States.<sup>5</sup> Ingalls discovered, as far as Tampa's nineteenth-century experience was concerned, that collective violence was predicated upon a "belief in the ultimate right of local citizens to enforce order," which, in turn, "reflected a commitment to Southern republican ideology." Lynching, he noted, "has been commonly used as a deadly means of perpetuating the ascendancy of an entrenched group."<sup>6</sup>

This paper will argue, with respect to Tampa's experience during 1858 and 1859, that, while all of these approaches provide partial explanations of causation, none of them suffices in itself. Rather, a fear of the breakdown of law and order in the wake of Indian war and the subsequent actions of a vigilante-type Regulator organization were manipulated to the economic and political advantage of a small group of individuals. These men, though prominent, were not a part of the area's entrenched political establishment. The escalating needs of this economic and political offensive continued to exacerbate local tensions. Widespread violence and what can only be described as bizarre behavior resulted, a community situation which was compounded by extended natural catastrophe and economic frustration. Within this context human life came to count for far less and recourse to violence became far more easily accepted than had been the case even a few months before. Until the final act was played out in

December 1859, race played no part in the drama, nor was honor to be found in the actions of most of the principal players. Only when race entered the picture, though, was the community -- or, at least, its elite -- brought to its senses, and community efforts at atonement and adjustment undertaken.

Tampa's two-year flirtation with violence and tragedy began positively enough when, on March 27, 1858, Billy Bowlegs and many of his followers agreed to emigrate, thus effectively ending the Third Seminole War. At the time, Tampans faced stark economic uncertainty. "The village ...," a visitor had written two years previously, "has about eight hundred inhabitants. Lind contains a court house, a ten pin alley, two churches, two hotels, and any quantity of oyster houses and groceries. There is neither agriculture or manufactures to support the place and all the inhabitants derive their living either directly or indirectly from government appropriations."<sup>7</sup>

The main source of government support for Tampa was Fort Brooke, located immediately to the west of town and facing both the Hillsborough River and Tampa Bay. During 1856-1858, Tampa, as one military man, put it, "was the center to which all the officers . . . in Florida came."<sup>8</sup> With the Indian problem settled in 1858, though, the thousands of soldiers were to be withdrawn, and the post closed.

The end of the Billy Bowlegs War was significant for other reasons, as well. Foremost among them, the peace opened up the vast prairies between the Peace and Kissimmee rivers for cattle grazing. The army had cleared roads and built bridges that afforded access to the new ranges, and cattlemen quickly moved to take advantage of the opportunity. The opening of these new lands posed a problem, however, as to

how the increasing numbers of South Florida cattle could be marketed, the one hope of economic salvation for Tampa and the rest of southwest Florida. The nearest railhead affording access to urban markets was about 200 miles away, to the northeast of Gainesville. Driving cattle over such a distance was difficult under the best of circumstances and resulted in substantial weight losses for the beefs. Bringing rail transportation nearer to the new ranges thus became an urgent need and sparked renewed efforts to build a road to Tampa.<sup>9</sup>

As efforts to build a railroad waxed and waned, one man, Tampa's James McKay, offered a solution to the cattlemen's problem. McKay's action also was prompted by the conclusion of the Indian war, specifically the withdrawal of army forces from Fort Myers. Abandonment of the fort meant the cancellation of McKay's contract, leaving him temporarily unemployed. "[My] only alternative in business left to me after the troops leaving Florida..." he later explained, "was the transportation of cattle to Havana."<sup>10</sup> Consequently, McKay leased a steamer and, in cooperation with prominent cattlemen such as Jacob Summerlin, Francis Asbury Hendry, and William Brinton Hooker began shipping beef from Tampa to Cuba.<sup>11</sup>

One problem faced by McKay and his partners was what to do with their empty boat on the run back from Havana to Tampa. If they could invest some of their cattle profits in needed commodities, including rum and sugar, they stood to increase their gain substantially by importing the goods into Florida. They could make even more if they could avoid paying import duties charged on the goods by national tariff laws. At the time, James T. Magbee, a lawyer with no particular involvement in the cattle business, served as the federal collector of

revenues for the port of Tampa and was known to be serious about enforcement of the law. McKay and his friends thus needed to find a way to remove Magbee and substitute in his place a more amenable collector. The opportunity quickly arose, again as a consequence of the conclusion of the war.

Military operations during the Third Seminole War had required the services of volunteer units raised all over the state. When peace appeared imminent, army officials began discharging these companies before their men were paid. The Mustering out often Occurred at army headquarters in Tampa, leaving many armed men without financial resources and nothing to do but roam the streets. Some of them quickly turned to crime. "The close of the Indian war . . . " explained a settler, "liberated from military servitude a horde Of 'toughs' that no country would want, who were servants of the devil and put in a great deal of dirty work."<sup>12</sup>

These "servants of the devil" plagued Tampa for several months in the spring of 1858. Observed the town's newspaper, the *Florida Peninsular*: "The robbing of Fabian Barnet's jewelry shop; next night the Post Office broken open and nearly all the letters carried off, next, Capt. Cooley's store robbed; next C. L. Friebele's store broken open and robbed; then an attempt to force the store of Mr. Covacevich; again, the Post Office robbed a second time. All these burglaries and robberies, following each other in rapid Succession, without the interval of a night, caused our citizens to stand aghast. Vice was triumphant, riotous villainy was rampant -- aye, stalked forth boldly in broad-day."<sup>13</sup> Reported a visitor, "The merchants of Tampa had a regular panic."<sup>14</sup>

Absent effective law enforcement, the "better class" of people formed a vigilante organization-they were called Regulators-to make, as an onlooker remembered, "short work in ridding this country of that unwelcome element so ruinous to our peace and morals."<sup>15</sup> At Tampa, its leaders included Mayor Madison Post, law student John A. Henderson, the *Florida's Peninsular's* temporary editor Henry A. Crane, and Dr. Franklin Branch. By April 12, a Fort Brooke officer could record, "Tampa has become a 'fast' place-Has a vigilante committee & they have sent away some men & lewd women I understand & could hardly be persuaded not to hang some of them."<sup>16</sup> The temptation to lynch was not restrained for long. "Whipping with a rawhide was an everyday occurrence," recalled one man, "and there was no hesitancy in stringing up those caught red handed in robbery or ruffianism to the most convenient tree." He added, "I passed close by the bodies of three men swinging stark by their necks near the roadside."<sup>17</sup>

Regulator violence was effective against Tampa's malefactors. Its use, however, rapidly was turned to political and business ends with unintended consequences for the future. "Like everywhere else where unrestrained and unlimited power is enthroned," one Regulator later observed, "many wrongs were perpetrated and involved many of the best meaning people into unpleasant relations which for years rankled into the hearts."<sup>18</sup>

One of the persons wronged was James T. Magbee. Post Crane, and many of their allies in the Regulator movement had been Know Nothings until the party had collapsed the previous year. They then had drifted into the Democratic Party, the area's predominant political organization. In County politics the Democrats were

centered around Magbee, former state legislator and now federal official. If Magbee could be ousted from his government position, Post and his friends could assume party leadership. McKay and his associates, Of Course, also were looking for a way to secure a friendly revenue collector. At about the same time, Magbee began criticizing the Regulators.<sup>19</sup>

In the circumstances, the Regulators turned their furor upon Magbee. They cynically defended their earlier recourse to violence as a necessary response to a breakdown in the criminal justice system which was abetted by defense lawyers such as Magbee. As they began lynching suspected criminals in late April, the port collector was arrested under questionable circumstances and fined by Mayor Post for assault and battery. A smear campaign then commenced to demand his removal from office, based partly upon the city Court conviction and partly upon the lawyer's well-known drinking habits. By June 5, Magbee had decided to lash back and published an expose of the Regulator leadership -- what he called a "Secret Sworn Band" -- placing blame particularly upon Post and Crane. The next week, newspaperman Crane purported to read Magbee out of the Democratic Party. "We have done with Col. Magbee," his editorial cried, "so has the party!"<sup>20</sup>

The campaign against Magbee soon swirled into the realm of fantasy. In response to the collector's "Secret Sworn Band" allegations, Crane concocted the discovery of a ritualistic "society of villains," presumably affiliated with Magbee. The charge was preposterous, but, in the climate of affairs at Tampa that summer, it may have seemed plausible to some. Magbee also was again arrested for assault and battery by city authorities, and fined by Mayor Protem Hooker, the cattleman associate of McKay's.

By then, the campaign had succeeded. Magbee was removed from office, and, on June 19, the *Peninsular* reported his replacement to be Hamlin V. Snell, another close friend of McKay's.<sup>21</sup>

The fatal and sometimes bizarre events of early 1858 might have continued and intensified had not nature intervened to stop them. During the summer, nervous Tampanians had watched from a distance as yellow fever ravaged New Orleans. Then, on September 30, the "terrible plague" appeared in Hillsborough County. By the middle of October, cases were widespread and deaths were common. Many citizens fled to the countryside for protection, and at month's end the *Peninsular* reported, "Our city is almost depopulated."<sup>22</sup>

Some Tampanians remained behind to care for the sick, and, among them, the death rate was high. "Every dissipated person who took the fever died in the course of three days," a Baptist minister recalled. "In almost every family were the dead and dying; in one family of four, all died but one; that family consisted of a father, two sons, one about twelve years of age, the other fourteen years old, and the grandmother. I assisted in burying the sons and the grandmother."<sup>23</sup> The death toll reached twenty-nine out of 176 cases by November 8, striking mostly women and children. Three weeks later twenty-four more cases had been reported, although authorities announced "the restoration of the usual health of Tampa."<sup>24</sup> In mid-December the disease reappeared, and on Christmas Day the *Peninsular* lamented, "The health of Tampa, for the past two weeks, has not been such as we would desire to record."<sup>25</sup> At least one more death occurred in January 1859, and two individuals still were suffering at month's end. "We care not by what name the disease is called," a survivor lamented, "it has

wrecked the peace and quiet and rendered desolate many happy homes in our city.”<sup>26</sup>

As disease devastated their town, Tampans received another blow. They had been assured repeatedly that, under a program of state aid to railroads, United States Senator David Levy Yulee would build the desperately needed line to Tampa Bay. News arrived in the fall of 1858, though, that Yulee had decided to build to Cedar Key. Furious at his duplicity, local men burned the senator in effigy on the courthouse square. Attempts were initiated to charter the town's own road, but they bogged down in disputes and political tugs of war between Yulee and his legislative supporters and the Tampa men.<sup>27</sup>

Through 1859 the town and its surviving inhabitants struggled to overcome the combined legacies of Indian war, Regulator violence, political conflict, avarice, and disease. Just as some sense of relief was beginning to be felt in late summer, another set of circumstances was put into play that once again stirred community passions and exploded latent tensions.

The events began on September 8 with the discovery of the body of Luke Moore at his home four miles east of Tampa. Moore had been, according to report, "killed by a blow with the butt of a hatchet" that "took effect in the upper part of the forehead, literally mashing the skull, and penetrating the brain." A coroner's jury found no evidence of the Culprit, but, a contemporary account asserted, "[c]ircumstances ... were afterwards brought to light which caused the arrest of a Negro man named Adam."<sup>28</sup> The mulatto slave, as was not unusual in south Florida, had hired himself out to Moore, paying a portion of his earnings to his owner, J. C. Green. Adam was arraigned and bound over for trial at the fall term of court.

His culpability, however, was far from clear. "The evidence elicited on the examination was all circumstantial," admitted the *Pen-insular*, "but of such a nature as to leave but little room to doubt the guilt of the accused."<sup>29</sup>

Tampa lawyer Ossian Hart, a future founder of the state Republican Party and Reconstruction-era governor, and Joseph M. Taylor of Brooksville represented the defendant. Another future governor, recently-elected circuit Solicitor Henry L. Mitchell, prosecuted. Adam was arraigned on October 20. The trial then began immediately and lasted for four days. A witness described it as "long and acrimonious."<sup>30</sup> Hart and Taylor, an onlooker reported, were "untiring and zealous" on Adam's behalf.<sup>31</sup> Hart especially pressed his client's defense. "[W]e think," observed a spectator, "that, in the defense of Adam, [Col. O. B. Hart] exhibited an industry in bringing forward testimony, a tact in the examination of the witnesses, and a zeal in his eloquent and pathetic appeal to the jury, that, had it not been for 'damning proof, strong as holy writ,' must have procured an acquittal."<sup>32</sup>

Hart's exertions notwithstanding, Adam was convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged along with another convicted murderer -- a white man, George M. Buckley -- on Friday, December 16. Whether because Mitchell's "damning proof" was not so Substantial or because of a prejudicial environment for the trial, Hart sought and was granted a writ of error by the state supreme Court, and a new trial was ordered for the slave.<sup>33</sup>

While Hart was securing his writ, news arrived at Tampa of the October 16 attack by abolitionist John Brown upon the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia.



Brown's action stirred angry fires of passion throughout the South, including at Tampa, that were far from quenched by his execution on December 2. Perhaps not surprisingly then, when Buckley was taken from jail on December 16 and hanged, members of the crowd determined to mete out the same punishment for Adam. He was "violently taken" from the sheriff's Custody, dragged to the "Scrub" section of town, and lynched beside Buckley, whose body still was hanging from its noose.<sup>34</sup>

Adam's death was tragic, but what makes it even more interesting is community reaction to it. Many Tampanians were surprised and shocked by the lynching. Numerous of them, most particularly including defense attorney Hart, were profoundly affected by it. The question arises, why? Lynchings had become somewhat commonplace at the town during the previous eighteen months, and was not race a foundation upon which Southern violence was predicated? To find an answer, let us take a quick look at the nature of local race relations.

Although slavery was a part of mid-nineteenth-century South Florida life, it was slavery with a difference. Most area residents had been raised or lived for a considerable time in an East Florida environment in which rules of racial prejudice were not so firmly drawn and in which slavery -- while terrible in and of itself--was of a variety less harsh than existed in much of the Cotton South, particularly after the 1840's. Future Freedmen's Bureau director Oliver O. Howard had discovered that fact when stationed at Tampa in 1857. "Slavery here is a very mild form," he concluded. "You wouldn't know the negroes were slaves unless you were told."<sup>35</sup>

The validity of Howard's observations was reflected in the day-to-day lives of area

residents. Many blacks, including Adam, were free to hire out their own time, and even whites who opposed the institution thought nothing of employing bondsmen. "My father did not believe in slavery, "recalled Maria Louisa Archer, "but always kept a Negro hired by the year."<sup>36</sup> Whites and blacks often worked side by side and, at times, worshipped together. Prominent white men also were involved with black women. While the Sexual exploitation of unprotected female slaves cannot be excused, some relationships involved mutual feelings of affection. Cattleman John Parker, for example, raised a second family with slave Rachel Davis. At the same time Tampa city clerk William Ashley lived openly with a black woman. When they died in the 1870's, they were buried together beneath a tombstone that read: "Here Lie William Ashley and Nancy Ashley, Master and Servant; faithful to each other in that relationship in life, in death they are not separated. Strangers, consider and be wise -- in the grave all human distinctions of race or color mingle together in one common dust."<sup>37</sup>

William and Nancy Ashley's miscegenous relationship was not a typical one at Tampa, but it was tolerated by their fellow residents. Within the same Community, racial violence rarely occurred. The Regulator actions of 1858, for example, evinced no racial overtones. When criminal punishment of blacks was called for prior to Adam's lynching, the processes of law were respected. The principle incident that did occur happened in 1857, when a slave named George stabbed and killed another black man. George subsequently was indicted for Murder, tried by a white jury, and found guilty of manslaughter. The punishment was "fifty lashes on [his] bare back."<sup>38</sup>

Given this history of relatively peaceful relations between area whites and black slaves, Hart and other community leaders failed to understand how profoundly the Regulator violence and other events of the previous year and a half, coupled with news of John Brown's Harper's Ferry raid, had affected some of their fellow Tampans. Rather, they assumed that the law in Adam's case would proceed on its course. Hart's vigorous defense of the slave, for example, was lauded even by those who defended the sent lynching, and the lawyer seems to have felt no reluctance to approach the Supreme Court to overturn the verdict. When the writ of error was issued, the lynching occurred not in the passion of the moment of its local receipt, but rather days later when the hanging of a white man heightened tender emotions. The fact that many of the town's leading citizens spent their free time during the week of the tragedy forming a literary society supports the argument. Incidentally, they elected Hart as its president.<sup>39</sup>

Hart reacted to the death of his client by gathering his family and temporarily leaving Tampa. Passions had cooled several weeks later when he returned, and the treatment he received from the town's leading citizens illustrates that, once the immediate shock had passed, they were determined to put matters back into their proper perspective, in part by viewing the lynching as an aberration. They attempted, for example, to assuage Hart's and their own feelings. His conduct was praised, and he was elected to the town Council along with prosecutor Henry Mitchell. The town also soon rejected the leadership that had brought its residents to such a past. Mayor Post already was out of office and his successor, James McKay, lost the position at the time of Hart's election to the Council. Within another year the *Peninsular* had declared, "Post has been a rank Democrat, and has brought upon the party the well-merited charge of

corruption."<sup>40</sup> Earlier in 1860 the voters had further rejected the political manipulations of McKay and his cattlemen associates by electing James T. Magbee to the state senate over William Brinton Hooker's son-in-law.<sup>41</sup>

For the most part, though, Tampans preferred to believe that the events of the previous months had not occurred at all. Diversions became the order of the day in 1860 as the nation headed toward civil war. It was in that climate, for instance, that the musical academy and glee club of James Butterfield, a young English musician then living in Tampa, flourished. There he composed "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" and later, with Hart's law partner, "The South Our Country."<sup>42</sup>

Adam's murder occurred almost exactly on the fourth anniversary of the beginning of the Third Seminole War. During those four years war, crime, greed, violence, disease, and death had combined to shake local values and to undermine respect for law, the government, and its agents. And, the community -- or, at least, some of its citizens--had come to accept Popular violence as a Substitute for justice. The legacy would haunt the town for generations. Try as they might, Tampans would not be able to resist the changes that had been wrought within them and their community, and, within decades, their city would become the "center of repression" about which Bob Ingalls has written so well.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>2</sup> Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York, 1986), 62.

<sup>3</sup> Robert P. Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South: Tampa, 1882-1936* (Knoxville, 1988), xvii-xviii.

<sup>4</sup> James M. Denham, "'A Rogue's Paradise': 'Violent Crime in Antebellum Florida'" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes*, xvii.

<sup>6</sup> Robert P. Ingalls, "Lynching and Establishment Violence in Tampa, 1858-1935," *Journal of Southern History* 53 (November 1987), 615-16.

<sup>7</sup> James W. Covington, *The Billy Bowlegs War 1855-1858: The Final Stand of the Seminoles Against the Whites* (Chuluota, FL, 1982), 78; George W. Hazzard to John D. Howland, December 21, 1856, George W. Hazzard Papers, United States Military Academy Library, West Point, NY.

<sup>8</sup> Oliver Otis Howard, *Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard Major General United States Army*, 2 vols. (New York, 1907; reprinted., New York, 1971), 1, 87-88.

<sup>9</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 123-26; Canter Brown, Jr., "Tampa and the Corning of the Railroad, 1853-1884," *Sunland Tribune* 17 (November 1991), 13-14.

<sup>10</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., "Tampa's James McKay and the Frustration of Confederate Cattle-Supply Operations in South Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 70 (April 1992), 411-12; James McKay to Harvey Brown, June 10, 1861, US Army Continental Commands, Letters and Reports Received, 1861-66, entry 16,54, record group 393, National Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, "Tampa's James McKay," 412-13.

<sup>12</sup> Ingalls, "Lynching," 615; *Bartow Courier-Informant*, September 21, 1890.

<sup>13</sup> *Tampa Florida's Peninsular*; January 21, 1860.

<sup>14</sup> *Jacksonville Florida Times Union*, September 28, 1891.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; 126-68; *Bartow Courier Informant*, September 21, 1890.

<sup>16</sup> Gustavus Loomis to Oliver O. Howard, April 12, 18,58, O. O. Howard Papers, Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, ME.

<sup>17</sup> *Jacksonville Florida Times Union*, September 28, 1891; Ingalls "Lynching," 6 15.

<sup>18</sup> *Bartow Courier Informant*, September 21, 1890.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; 126-28.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 128; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; June 12, 18,58; *City Council Minutes* (August 21, 18,57-May 1882), 16, *City of Tampa Archives*, Tampa.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; 128-29; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, June 12, 19, 18,58; *Tampa City Council Minutes* (August 21, 1857MaN, 1882), 21.

<sup>22</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; October 2, 17, 1858; *Tallahassee Floridian & Journal*, November 6, 27, 1858.

<sup>23</sup> *A Memorial Sketch of the Life and Ministerial Labors of Rev. J. M. Hayman* (Nashville, TN, 1901), 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; November 27, 1858.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, December 25, 1858.

<sup>26</sup> *Fernandina Florida News*, January 20, 1859; *Tallahassee Floridian & Journal*, November 27, 18,58, February 22, 18,59.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, "Tampa and the Coming- of the Railroad," 13-14.

<sup>28</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; September 10, 1859.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, September 17, November 5, 1859.

<sup>30</sup> *Criminal Docket*, Fall Term 18,59, State of Florida vs. Adam, a slave, Hillsborough county I. *Wound Docket Book* ( 18,58-1861 ), Hillsborough County Courthouse, Tampa; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; October 29, 1859.

<sup>31</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; November 5, 1859.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, January 21, 1860.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, November 5, 18,59, January 21, 1860.

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<sup>34</sup> Carl N. Degler, *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1974; paper ed., New York, 1975), 88-89; Patricia L. Faust, ed., *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War* (New York, 1986,) 83; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; December 17, 1859, January 21, 1860; Ingalls, "Lynching," 616; *Tampa Tribune*, October 23, 1908.

<sup>35</sup> Oliver O. Howard to [Lizzie Howard], March 29, 1857, O. O. Howard Papers.

<sup>36</sup> Maria Louisa Daegenhardt Archer reminiscences, 2, Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami.

<sup>37</sup> Howard to Howard, March 29, 1857; Leland M. Hawes, "one-time slave sheds light on life in Tampa," *Tampa Tribune*, June 5, 1988; William E. Sherrill, *A Call to Greatness; A History of the First Baptist Church, Tampa, Florida, 1859-1984* (Orlando, 1984), 15-16; Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; 102, 140; Spessard Stone, "Profile of Lloyd Davis," *Sunland Tribune* 17 (November 1991), 25; Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg 1950), 162-163.

<sup>38</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*; June 13, 20, 1857; *State of Florida vs. Negro man slave George*, Hillsborough County Circuit Court Minutes (1854 – 1866), Fall Term 1857; Laura Lancaster to Thomas M. Vincent Family Papers, Special Collections, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

<sup>39</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, December 17, 1859, January, 21, 1860; Catherine S. Hart to Charlotte Campbell, February 8, 1860, Dena F. Snodgrass Collection, 1) K. Yonge Library, of Florida History, University, of Florida, Gainesville.

<sup>40</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, January, 21, February, 4, December 8, 1860; Hart to Campbell, February, 8, 1860, Snodgrass Collection.

<sup>41</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; 132-35.

<sup>42</sup> *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, February 4, 25, March 10, 17, 24, April 7, 1860; Hart to Campbell, February 8, 1860; Grismer, *Tampa*, 134, 313; James Austin Butterfield and E.M. Thompson, *The South our Country* (New Orleans, 186-?).

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# FORGING THE FLORIDA FRONTIER: The Life and Career of Captain Samuel E. Hope

By JOE KNETSCH



**Samuel E. Hope**

-Photo courtesy of Florida State Archives

The frontier is often defined as the area beyond the edge of civilization or settlement, the edge of the wilderness or some similar notation. It is much more than these definitions in that it also shapes the character of those who tame it. The frontier is also an area to be exploited and developed by those who claim it as their dominion. Fortunes and lives can be made or lost in the struggle the frontier demands before it gives up its riches. Life on the frontier is harsh,

sometimes barren, often lonely and frequently brutal. The only sugar-coating offered by the frontier comes with the cane the pioneer plants, nurtures, cultivates and grinds himself. Yet, by the acts of planting, nurturing, cultivating and refining the frontiersman brings forth the civilization and settlement, now redefined by the new circumstances, similar to that the frontiersman once left behind.

The biggest change in the circumstances of the new settlement and civilization is the frontiersmen who created it are now the new leadership. Men who once were counted on to follow or bow to the established order are now those making the rules which they, in turn, expect others to obey. The constant flux of the frontier situation brings with it more conflict between those who wish to stake their claim to roles of leadership. However, because the new settlement is on the edge of the new frontier, it is still open to the violence and danger lurking just beyond the line of sight. The question facing all such settlements is can the new leadership actually take the next step and create a more stable and less violent community? It is into such a situation that the father of Samuel E. Hope, William Hope, stepped in around the year 1842.<sup>1</sup>

William Hope was a man of great determination and stamina. Born in Liberty County, Georgia in 1808, William moved his family to Florida in 1833 and settled "near Paynes Prairie and lived there until the [Second Seminole] Indian war broke out[.]"<sup>2</sup>



**Mary (Hooker) Hope**

-Photo courtesy of  
Florida State Archives

After service in the Florida Militia and the drawing to an end of this tragic conflict, he moved his family to an area near Brooksville, on the edge of the Choocatchatee Hammock at a place to be named, "Hope Hill".<sup>3</sup> Richard J. Stanaback, in his *A History of Hernando County, 1840-1976*, rioted that Hope became a substantial rancher and regularly drove his cattle to the Tampa market where he sold his beef, "for a handsome profit." Citing the *Florida Census for 1850*, Stanaback quotes this work as detailing Hope's family and holdings. His family included his wife, Mary Jane (the second Mrs. William Hope) 22; Samuel 17 years of age and a "student" and born in Georgia; Virginia 10 years and born in Florida; Adela 3 years of age, also born in Florida; and, finally, baby Christian A. 4/12 (listed as a female). William Hope by 1850,

was listed as a "planter" by the census and owned 2240 acres of land, a substantial holding for a frontier farm.<sup>4</sup> According to an article written in 1919, William Hope owned one hundred and fifty-seven slaves by the time of the Civil War.<sup>5</sup> Given the frontier nature of the area, there can be no doubt that William Hope's determination to succeed in his newly acquired status brought him respect from his neighbors and made his one of the "most influential families" in the area.<sup>6</sup>

Samuel Edward Hope, the only male child born to and survive, from the marriage of William Hope and his first wife, Susan Mitchell Harville, was born on September 17, 1833 and was only two months old when he moved with his family to Florida. The Second Seminole War brought hardships to nearly every Floridian, Indian and white alike. Food shortages were common and the Federal government instituted a program to feed those who suffered at the hands of Indian attacks. It is difficult to believe that Sam Hope had the opportunity to carry on "normal" studies to prepare himself for the next recorded step of his life, study at the Alexandria Boarding School, in Alexandria, Virginia. At the Alexandria Boarding School, Sam Hope did very well in "Plane Trigonometry and Surveying" and "Davis' Algebra" but did not fare so well in reading, grammar and spelling for the term ending July 1, 1854. His overall marks were, however, high enough to earn him his certificate of proficiency, an equivalent to the diploma by today's standards.<sup>7</sup> The fact that his highest scores were in the field of surveying gives an indication of his future direction and interests.

Sam Hope returned to Florida to find it again preparing for war with the Indian population. By 18,56, the war had begun in earnest and Sam Hope was called upon to serve. His first appointment was none too

glorious, that of First Lieutenant on the staff of General Jesse Carter assigned as "Special Agent to the Independent Companies of Volunteers." His specific assignment was as Assistant Quartermaster and Coroner for all frontier troops. This duty lasted from October 22, 1856, to February 22, 1857.<sup>8</sup> His second tour of duty brought him into contact with one of the more energetic men on the South Florida frontier, Hamlin V Snell. Hope served a First Lieutenant under Snell's company of Mounted Volunteers from December 15, 1857, until this unit was mustered out on May 22, 1858, at the end of active hostilities. The muster roll for this unit shows young Hope to be 24 years of age with a horse worth \$200 and equipment worth \$15, a relatively expensive outfit for time and vicinity.<sup>9</sup> Snell recognized the character that had grown in his young First Lieutenant for when Sam Hope applied for his first job as a U.S. Deputy Surveyor, Hamlin V Snell wrote to Surveyor General E L. Dancy the following: "I take this method to commend to your favourable consideration Mr. Samuel E. Hope of Hernando County who wishes an appointment as Deputy Surveyor. Mr. Hope is a staunch Democrat and connected with the most influential families of this County his qualifications are of the best order and his habits are unexceptionable his appointment will confer a favour upon your obt servant."<sup>10</sup> Dancy, a West Point trained engineer, staunch Democrat and fellow officer in the Florida Militia, in which he held the rank of Colonel, understood the importance of appointing someone with Sam Hope's connections.

On December 27, 1858, Sam Hope began the professional career that was to last through most of his active life in one form or another. With the receipt of a letter from Dancy dated December 16th, he accepted the obligations for the contract he soon

signed and presented in person in early January of 1859. At that point in his life, Sam Hope had never done a survey on his own, however, he wrote Dancy: "I have never had much practice in surveying, but I have studied the theory and feel confident that I can give satisfaction as to my work."<sup>11</sup> Sam Hope received his instructions on January 15, 18-59, and headed south to his appointed rounds in the area near the Kissimmee River and Lake Istokpoga. The land he surveyed was swampy, filled with creeks and ponds and subject to inundation during the rainy season. On April 2, 1859, he wrote confidently to the surveyor general from Fort Meade: "... I found the country very dry and I got along better than I anticipated. I have finished all in Tp 34 & 35 Range 30 & 31 S. & E. I am now on my way down Peas Creek [River] in Tp 38 & 39 Range 24 & 25 where I am expecting to find better country than I have been through." He also noted for Dancy's benefit: "Some think that the Indians will be apt to trouble me while on this work, but I intend to give them the trial of it. I wont quit until I am made, until I get through."<sup>12</sup> He had no worries about the Indians and saw none during his survey. Yet, confident though he may have been in early April, by May 16th he was reporting that he had returned home and had not completed the contract, because one township remained to be finished.<sup>13</sup>

Hope has good reason for not finishing his survey and it was one which Dancy, as a leader of the State militia, would easily understand and forgive. "The cause of my not finishing was this," he wrote, "I was Liut. in Capt. Snells Co. Mt. Vol. and in making Lip the company I had to become responsible for several thousand dollars for horses in the company. I was ready to commence work on my last Tp when my father sent for me, that the Paymaster was in Tampa and paying off the troops. I had then



**Sam Hope joined other Confederate veterans at the Olustee battleground monument dedication, October 23, 1912.**

-Photo courtesy of Florida State Archives

to quit to go there and my provisions being only enough to last me the time it would have taken me to finish and get to where I could get some - which was Tampa - I found in getting to Tampa that my mules would never hold out to get back to my work, and I concluded that I would fix up my work that I have and ask for time to finish the other, if nothing else but finishing it will give Satisfaction. I wish to give satisfaction to my work if I dont make any thing on my contract." Dancy, as expected, gave Hope an extension of time to finish this difficult contract. The four townships in the area of Lake Istokpoga were very difficult. As he explained: "I dont think that any one man ever had four Townships like the four I had on Lake Istokpoga. I dont think there ever could be that number together again or before so bad as they were." With his usual expression of dogged determination, Sam Hope continued: "I never like to take hold of

any thing and fall. If I take a contract and make a hard bargain I always Stick the *tightest* to it."<sup>14</sup> Hope finished his surveying contract the following season: "Can you give me the subdividing of Townships 37 & 38 or 39 S, Ranges 26 & 27, with the other Townships & Ranges given in the Bond leaving out the Ranges 29 & 30 in Township 36, *anywhere in the whole country but on Lake Istokpoga.*"<sup>15</sup> The tough, wet sawgrass prairie of that region was simply too much, even for a tough frontiersman like Sam Hope.

Hope's inexperience in surveying was soon overcome by actual field work and he became aware enough to spot errors in his own work. "I have finished Township 39 S Range 24 E, Tp 40 Range 23, 24 & 25." He reported to Dancy on February 21, 1860: "I have found out the error in Tp 39 S R 25 East of my last year work, it was an error of



my own and a large one at that, but I am more than willing to correct my error in my work. I thought that I was correct but I was not. I am now at work on that Township and will give you new set of field notes for the whole township when I get through."<sup>16</sup> This extra work was done at his own expense, which meant paying the crew's wages, the cost of food, transportation and instruments and all other costs associated with drawing up the revised field notes and plats. The profession of surveying, even in the earliest years, had substantial up-front overhead costs which had to be borne by the surveyor. This meant that most of the early surveyors had to have some wealth to perform their contracts or be backed by those who did, most often indicated by those who backed the surveyor's personal bond. In Sam Hope's particular case, his bondsmen were William and David Hope and William Wall, more evidence of the success of William Hope in shaping the frontier situation into personal benefit.<sup>17</sup> The family characteristics of stamina and determination showed in Sam's attitude toward his surveying career and the recognition of his own error and the willingness to correct it.

The year 1860 brought change to the life of Samuel E. Hope. After finishing his second surveying season, he married Mary Henrietta Hooker, the daughter of William B. Hooker, one of the most prominent men in Florida. A woman of refinement and above average musical talent, Mary Hope was educated at the Southern Masonic Female College in Covington, Georgia. The fact that Sam Hope was also a member of the Masonic Lodge did not hurt his chances of winning Mary's father's approval of the match. This blessed union produced eight children and many years of communal happiness for the Hope family, a tradition that lives on in their descendants.<sup>18</sup> However, the newlyweds nearly had a very

short marriage when, on April 25, 1860, they were reported as injured in a train-wreck near Lake City, Florida. Sam dislocated his shoulder and Mary suffered foot lacerations, both, luckily, short lived injuries.<sup>19</sup>

This same year also saw Sam Hope enter the field of politics. The Tampa-based *Florida Peninsular* for September 1, 1860, published the first announcement of his entry into the race for the 20th District seat in the State Senate. His opponent was not, like Sam, a political novice but the highly experienced local politician James T. Magbee. Because the Democratic party was highly fractionalized at this point in time, primarily by the brief but colorful "Know-Nothing" (American) party, the field for the office appeared to be wide open. Some of those wanting county division, a splitting off of Hillsborough with the creation of a new county [later called Polk], backed Magbee, who was the first to announce his candidacy. Many others, such as Hope's old commander H. V. Snell and Madison Post, the former mayor of Tampa, both bitter enemies of Magbee, who engineered his removal from the post of collector of customs with Snell as his replacement, wanted a more friendly alternative to Magbee. Post, to use historian Canter Brown, Jr.'s phrase: "attempted to pull together and manipulate against Magbee the Hillsborough County Democratic party." The result, as Brown notes, was a shallow attempt at a party convention where Hope was nominated by Snell, the "convention" being poorly attended and many communities were not represented.<sup>20</sup>

The *Florida Peninsular's* publisher endorsed Hope, but the editor, Judge Simon Turman, Jr., took a "neutral" position while actually supporting Magbee. Charges and countercharges of office bartering,

hypocrisy and political manipulation literally covered the pages of the *Florida Peninsular*. Although some have viewed this as a relatively gentlemanly affair, and by frontier standards it may have been, it was still an old fashioned "mud-slinging" campaign by all accounts. With the help of Turman, Magbee won by a substantial margin.<sup>21</sup> Hope's year had started in a prosperous fashion but came to an end in an unsuccessful election bid, but he had learned much, gained political support and married his life-long companion which had to ease the brief pain of the election loss.

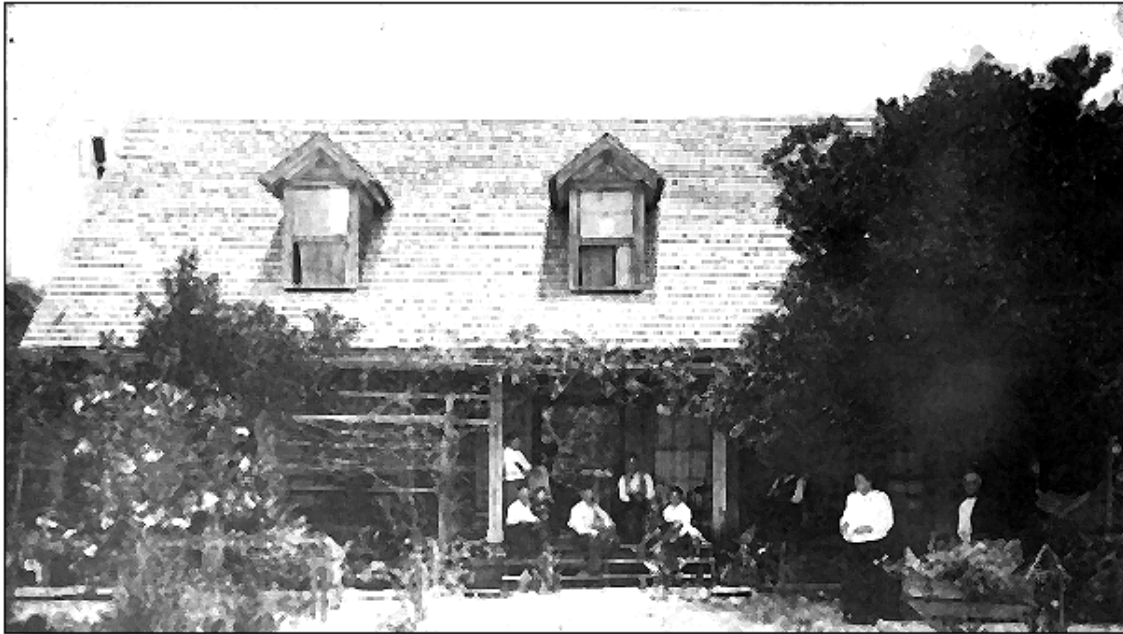
Sam Hope did not have long to relive the lost election for other, far more important matters, were to enter into the lives of all Floridians. Florida, in December 1860, elected members to a convention that was to decide the fate of the State early in the following year. The decision to secede from the Union was not easy and left much of Florida divided. Recent studies have indicated a great deal of Unionist sentiment at the time of the convention. Former leaders, like Territorial governor Richard K. Call and former governor Thomas Brown, openly opposed any break with the Union and local leaders, such as E. A. Hendry, Jacob Summerlin and Ossian Hart, were all supporters of keeping Florida's ties to the Union.<sup>22</sup> Although Hope may not have wanted war, he certainly supported the principles upon which the Confederacy was founded and did not shy away from his duty to defend his home state.

Sam Hope's Civil War duty extended from early 1862 until the very end of the war. His first assignment was with the local unit named the "Brooksville Guards" which organized on February 22, 1862, and was mustered into Confederate service on March 15, 1862, with Samuel Hope elected as its Captain, for a term of "3 years or during the War."<sup>23</sup> The duty called for the unit to

defend the area around Bayport, Florida. The assignment, except for scouting the coast and peering at the ever-tightening Union blockade, was dull and tedious. The company was assigned to Bayport for about one year when it was transferred to Tampa for nearly one year. The only break in this dreary duty was a brief sojourn to Crystal River in August 1863. In the spring of 1864, Sam Hope's company was ordered to Camp Finegan, about seven miles west of Jacksonville. Here, for the first time the records admit, Hope's company came face to face with enemy troops.<sup>24</sup>

This affair, brief as it was, did not end gloriously for the 6th Florida Battalion, of which Hope's company was now a part. Although Sam's men were willing to fight the enemy as they approached the camp, it was soon discovered that the Federal troops had taken two roads to reach the area and threatened to cut off other units of the 6th Battalion. With the threat of being surrounded by the enemy staring him in the face and being greatly outnumbered, Hope relied on soldier, W. L. Eubanks, who was from the immediate area, to guide them to safety and tie up with other units, most notably John W. Pearson's "Ocklawaha Rangers". After successfully evading the raiding Federals, Hope's company and the remainder of the 6th Battalion headed for Lake City, arriving one day before Florida's largest battle was to commence.<sup>25</sup>

The battle to commence on the following day is known as the Battle of Olustee. According to historian Mark Boyd, in his memorable, "The Federal Campaign of 1864 in East Florida," the battle was part of a "nebulous" plan to disassociate Florida from the rest of the Confederacy by invading along the line of the Florida Railroad and attracting disaffected southerners and contraband blacks. By taking this line, it was



**Hope residence, on Anclote River, near Tarpon Springs, ca. 1890s. Sam and Mary Hope are on the right.**

-Photo courtesy of Florida State Archives

hoped that the numbers would swell the ranks of the Union forces and force Florida into submitting to a vague plan of readmittance into the Union. The exact nature of the plan has never been fully explained and remains a subject of debate. However, the Union forces under Major General Q. A. Gilmore began the invasion of Florida in February of 1864 and moved out of Jacksonville on the 8th of that month. After a few minor skirmishes with Confederate forces, like the one described above involving Sam Hope, the stage was set for the largest battle to take place on Florida's soil during the entire Civil War.

The Battle of Olustee (or Ocean Pond) took place on February 20, 1864, on grounds not intended by either commander. The 6th Battalion was stationed on the extreme right of the battlefield near the railroad tracks. "There it opened a deadly enfilade on the 8th Colored Troops," states historian Gary

Loderhose, "Inflicting such severe damage as to compel them to fall back in mass confusion, abandoning five pieces of artillery in the process." Then, as so often happened in this war, the ammunition ran low and a halt had to be called until supplies were brought forward. By this time, the battle had been, in essence, won and the Union invasion of Florida ended.<sup>26</sup> Sam Hope's Company "C" was in the thick of the fighting, suffering heavy casualties and recording the highest death rate of all the companies.<sup>27</sup> Hope, himself described the fight and aftermath as follows:

I went on the battlefield on the day of the fight with 30 men all told in my company. We were the Color Company of the Battalion and in that fight at Olustee lost 15 men Killed and wounded 5 killed dead and 10 wounded. The night after the Olustee fight I was ordered forward to St.

Mary's River to take care of a tressel after the Union Army had retreated to Jacksonville.<sup>28</sup>

The total for the entire battle has been given as 1,861 killed, wounded or missing for the Union forces, while Confederate losses totaled 946. The over 2,800 casualties of this battle make it more than a minor skirmish, though it does pale in comparison to Gettysburg, Shiloh or many of the Virginia battles with which most are familiar.<sup>29</sup>

Sam Hope's time in Florida, effectively, came to an end with the battle of Olustee, however, two "events" that took place during his Florida service made him a minor legend in the history of his home state. The first incident took place, allegedly, in the late summer of 1864 when some Union deserters, along with some escaping slaves, attempted to send a signal to a passing blockading ship from the mouth of the Anclote River. According to local historical writer, Glen Dill: "However, a tough Confederate captain was hot on their heels with a small detachment of soldiers. Waiting for low tide, they crossed the river at night, surprised the fugitives, and hanged them all on the spot."<sup>30</sup> According to Wilfred T Neill, in an article published in the *St. Petersburg Times*, on February 19, 1978, the deserters were "dissatisfied Confederates" who were attempting to flee service at Fort Brooke. Again, the date is given at mid-1864.<sup>31</sup> To this day, the story of Sam Hope and the hanging of the deserters on Deserter's Hill persists. There is only one catch to the story, Sam Hope's only leave in 1864 came in February of that year and lasted only twenty-eight days.<sup>32</sup> He did not return to the area until he was elected to the Legislature in October, therefore, he could not have been around when the accounts allege that he hanged the fleeing deserters. If the incident did happen, as local tradition

insists, it had to have occurred during this February leave, not in "late summer" as Dill's account has it. Until further documents surface definitely linking Hope to the hanging of the deserters, there is no present reason to believe that Hope was the commander of the unit that perpetrated the hanging.

The other incident involved Hope in the alleged disappearance of one Henry M. Stanley, the famed explorer of Africa, from the Confederate forces on the verge of the Battle of Olustee. According to an article published in Pensacola on May 31, 1913, Hope reportedly told reporter Frank Huffaker: "The last time I saw Stanley he was gathering his belongings preparatory to decamping, and I think he stayed behind just long enough to get captured and sent north." Hope told Huffaker that Stanley had joined his command at Tampa in late 1863 or early 1864 and that he was so, "awkward and English in his ways that the other boys dubbed him 'Darby Gallikins,' and that name stuck to him until he disappeared." Hope noted that he was a "rawboned fellow" with the makings of a good soldier, however he was either captured or deserted to Union forces when Seymour's troops captured Camp Finegan. When asked whether he was sure this was the same Henry M. Stanley of exploration fame, Hope replied: "Sure, do you think a fellow could ever forget that Englishman after looking at him once?" Sam Hope speculated that things were just too slow in Florida and that Stanley wanted to get up north, to Virginia, where the fighting was hotter. M. N. Hill, another Anclote resident who served with Hope, was also interviewed about Stanley and declared he was a member of his "mess" during the campaign. He agreed with Hope's assessment and believed he submitted to capture so as to be sent north, where the real action was.<sup>33</sup> Whether true or not, the story

made for entertaining reading in 1913 and still fascinates the curious today.

In early March, 1864, Major General Patton Anderson, the new commander of the districts of East and West Florida, received a call for more troops to be sent to the Virginia theater of the war. Grant's strategy of wearing down the armies of Lee was having success and men were desperately needed at the major front. At this time, Sam Hope's men had become part of the newly formed 9th Florida Regiment of Infantry. On the 18th of May the new regiment pulled up stakes and marched into Georgia to catch the trains that would take them to their new destination, Virginia. The trip was anything but plush and rations were shorter than the men's patience. After many stops and little food, the 9th Florida Regiment arrived at Petersburg, Virginia, on the 24th of May, 1864.<sup>34</sup> The fortunes of the troops were to now take a decidedly different and deadly turn.

The new arrivals were immediately assigned to the division commanded by Major General Anderson, however, as he was absent, the command passed to General William Mahone, of Virginia. In the first week of June, the 9th Regiment, now part of the unit called "Finegan's Brigade," was involved with Union forces under General Philip Henry Sheridan, and Hope's company suffered two casualties, both of whom died from the wounds suffered.<sup>35</sup> Finegan's Brigade, on June 3, 1864, distinguished itself in the so-called "2nd Battle of Cold Harbor" when, just as General Breckenridge's lines were broken, they charged and recaptured the position and inflicted heavy casualties on the Federal troops. Luckily for Hope's company, they suffered no casualties in this heavy battle, although the Brigade lost fifty men to Union fire.<sup>36</sup> The Brigade was stationed along the

far right of the defenses and established entrenchments along the ridges near Chickahominy River. Constantly under cannon and sniper fire the troops suffered greatly from the enforced inactivity and hot, dry Virginia summer. According to historian Gary Loderhose's history of the 9th Florida Regiment, the morale of the troops throughout June and July of 1864 was very low and desertion was openly talked about in camp. Many of the men believed that they should be back in Florida defending homes and family. Moved to Petersburg by June 19, 1864, the troops from the Brigade suffered greatly from disease and boredom. For men of action, trench warfare was tough duty.<sup>37</sup>

According to an unnamed source in the files of the Pinellas Historical Museum, Heritage Park, which was taken from the *Soldiers of Florida*, Hope was wounded on August 25, 1864, at Petersburg, Virginia. The wound must not have been serious, as there appears to be no break in his active duty until October of 1864, when he was elected to the legislature. This brief respite from the fighting did not last longer than a month before he returned to Virginia. He remained there until the last day of the war, surrendering his arms, like the rest of the Florida troops with General Lee, at Appomattox Court House. His discharge from the Confederate service reads April 9, 1865, under Special Order Number 260.<sup>38</sup>

Sam Hope's election to the legislature, during the middle of the fighting around Petersburg, which included such noted skirmishes as Weldon Railroad, Cold Harbor, Reams Station and Hatcher Run, was not an uncommon occurrence during this war. Many of the legislators with whom Sam Hope served, also were on leave from active duty. Sam's assignments in this extra-ordinary session of the war-time

legislature included chairman of the Internal Improvements Committee and as a member of the Committee on Corporations.<sup>39</sup> During his stay, he introduced only one bill, for the relief of Benjamin Hagler. He does not appear as a speaker during the debates or as an active introducer of motions, acts or resolutions. However, his voting record is very consistent, constantly opposing any granting of discretionary powers to the Governor or County Commissioners. He also voted against any attempt to require local troops to serve anywhere other than their immediate neighborhoods. He consistently opposed any attempt to limit what might or might not be grown by individuals on their own land.<sup>40</sup> Late in the session, he was added to the Committee on Elections, after serving on a special committee formed to investigate the accounts of former Governor M. S. Perry and Quartermaster General of Florida, H. V. Snell, his former commander and friend.<sup>41</sup> His attendance was excellent, not missing a single day of the term, and he missed very few floor votes. Like every other member, he did not vote against anything that might adversely affect the soldiers in the field or their families at home, such as limitations on what could be grown, pensions and widow's benefits. Upon completion of his term, he immediately reported back to service.

His return home did not mean the beginning of inactivity. In 1865, he was elected to represent Hernando County in the Constitutional Convention. At this futile convention, Hope served on the Committee on Militia and the Committee on Public Domain and Property and Internal Improvements, both natural assignments for a frontiersman who had served in the militia and as Deputy Surveyor.<sup>42</sup> His voting record is not exceptional and reflected the feelings of the majority at this ill-starred meeting. The constitution passed by this

assembly of men, deprived blacks of the right to vote, petitioned the Federal Government for the removal of black troops stationed in Florida and deprived anyone employed by the Federal Government (such as soldiers, sailors or tax collectors), unless they were qualified voters and residents of Florida, from voting or running for office. It also gave to the governor powers similar to those given to the president and presaged a strong centralized state government. It was exactly this type of document that drove many "Radical Republicans" to the brink and brought about the strongest measures of Reconstruction. Significantly for our subject, Sam Hope did not sign the final document.<sup>43</sup>

Immediately after his return from the front, Sam Hope also participated, in a small way, in the escape of Judah P. Benjamin. According to Hope's account, published in the *Confederate Veteran* in June of 1910, Benjamin came to Hernando County and stopped at the residence of Leroy G. Lesley. Hope states that he talked with the fleeing former cabinet officer while he hid out at Lesley's home. He does not, however, disclose the topic of discussion. From there, Hope relates: "Captain Lesley took him in his buggy to Braidentown, Manatee [sic] County, to an old friend, Capt. Fred Treska, an experienced seaman. Captain Treska took charge of Mr. Benjamin and landed him safely in Bahama with a small sailboat."<sup>44</sup>

The years after the return from the war brought Hope some additional family responsibilities, namely the birth of six additional children. The first two daughters, Susan Mary and Grace May, were born prior to the end of the war, but on September 30, 1865, the first son, Samuel E. Hope, Jr. was born. After this blessed event, two more daughters and three sons were born, making a total of eight children. Sadly, when Sam

Hope passed away, in June of 1919, just three months after the death of his daughter Grace May, he outlived all but two of his children, Clara Hope Baggett and John James Hope. His lovely and talented wife, Mary, lived until August 14, 1926.<sup>45</sup>

Sam Hope returned to an economy that was devastated by the war and offered few new avenues to wealth and security. However, Sam was always resourceful and soon entered the land business, both as a broker and surveyor of private properties. His relatively frequent letters to Hugh A. Corley, the mainstay of the land office in Tallahassee for nearly four decades, show a number of entries for lands in his and members of his family's name. The object in some cases was to secure homesteads for these members, however, because of their locations, some of these entries were probably for speculation.<sup>46</sup> The most notable case of the latter type were those sections entered in the swamps of northwestern Hernando County, near the Chassahowitzka River. As these lands are too swampy for any useful homesteading, the speculation theme can be the only answer for their entry.

Hope, like many other men of means during this era of Florida's history, was speculating in lands rich with white cedar, the type used by the Eberhard-Faber, Eagle Pencil and Dixon Crucible firms for the making of writing pencils. The fabled boom in this industry, centered at Cedar Key, Florida, is well known to most Floridians and need not be repeated here, except to note that the rapid growth of the industry and the heavy harvesting of these trees led to many charges of harvesting on State-owned lands. Hope was not immune from such charges. On June 20, 1877, Sheriff D. L. Hedrik, of Hernando County, wrote to Corley:

I written you Some time past in relation to H T Lykes and S E Hope. How much Land they had entered your reply was that Lykes has only Entered fourty acres: I wish to ascertain exactly how much H T Lykes has Entered and all also S E Hope and William Hope. My object for making this enquirey is that they are cutting Cedar and I wish to do my duty in behalf of the State the maps I am in possession of Says all is State lands Where they have been cutting pleas answer deffinatly as soon as covenant as the Cedar has not bin Shiped yet.<sup>47</sup>

Hope, and neighbor and friend Dr. Howell T. Lykes, had invested in lands in this area specifically for the purpose of harvesting the cedar available there. Lykes' case became so bitter that he refused to negotiate a settlement with the local timber agent at Crystal River, C. T. Jenkins and, with many others who operated out of that cedar port, brought charges against Jenkins himself. Whether Hope was involved in this latter incident, has not been discovered at this time, though it would be difficult to see how he was not as the lands he did own were in juxtaposition with those Lykes was accused of abusing.<sup>48</sup>

For many years, Sam Hope had been looking for a new place to call his own. His family was growing, his business interests took him farther away from Brooksville and communication was difficult. On August 12, 1877, he wrote the following to his friend, Hugh Corley:

Dear Hugh - I don't often think you make mistakes, but I think you did in regard to last letter you wrote me, you say the N. W. 1/4 of N.W. 1/4 of Sec. 28 Tp 22 R 19 was entered by

Thos. H. Parsons there was such a man in this country long time ago but he is dead, and I have examined the Tax Books and his Exacutors does not give it in and it never has been claimed for him. Examine closely for me and be sure of it, ... Is the N.E. 1/4 of S.E. 1/4 of sec 34, Tp. 26. R 15. and N.W. 1/4 of S.W. 1/4 of sec 35 Tp 26 R 15 subject to Entry or not. By letting me know, you much oblige.<sup>49</sup>

This land is at the mouth of the Anclote River, on the north shore, and indicates that he was very much interested in entering it in his name. This land was later included in the S. E. Hope Subdivision at Anclote, Florida. The next year, 1878, Sam Hope moved his family to their new home by the river, where he was to remain until 1906.<sup>50</sup>

Throughout the remainder of his life, Sam Hope worked in the real estate business and occasionally did some private surveying. His pursuit of a comfortable life paid off very well and his home on the Anclote River attracted a number of people by the turn of the century. For many years prior to the founding of Tarpon Springs, the mail was delivered to the home of one of the Hope's neighbors. Hope continued to write the Trustees' staff on behalf of his community and was frequently asking for clarification of new laws that had an impact on the settlers' lives.

Before and immediately after his move to Anclote, Hope served two terms in the State Legislature. The first term, that of 1874, found him on the Committee on Fisheries, chaired by the notorious William Gleason. His other assignment was on the Committee on Legislative Expenses.<sup>51</sup> This could not have been a pleasant session for Hope in that it was one of the Reconstruction

Legislatures and was filled with those who sympathized with the Radical program. Hope was always the self-declared conservative Democrat and never hid this fact from anyone. He hated the "carpet-bag supremacy" which he felt controlled State politics, yet, in 1874, he attempted to get some legislation through that would lessen its impact. On January 13, 1874, he introduced "an act to prevent Attorneys-at-Law from acting as Clerks of Sheriffs or Deputies of either."<sup>52</sup> This obviously aroused a great deal of opposition and he was probably told it had no chance of passage. The reason he took on the legal profession was that many of these gentlemen, almost all northerners, or like his old enemy James T Magbee, turncoat "scalawags," were acting as assistant sheriffs to newly enfranchised blacks, many of whom never had the opportunity to learn to read and were being led, in the eyes of those like Hope, down the wrong path by these intruders. He later had the bill withdrawn from consideration.<sup>53</sup> His only other attempt at legislation was the passage of a resolution to establish a mail route in Hernando County, which passed on a voice vote.<sup>54</sup> In line with his conservative philosophy of government, he voted against a bill requiring parents and guardians to educate their children and against a bill entitled: "an act to prevent and punish Trespass upon the Public Lands of this State." In both cases he was in the minority and the bills became law.<sup>55</sup> He did not run again the following term, but, did submit his name for the session in 1879 and was elected.

In a campaign speech, following the Brooksville convention of the Democratic Party of Hernando County, he stated the following:

It is not I as an individual that claims your votes, but as an exponent of



Democratic and liberal principles, and the representative of that class of Citizens who further opposes tyranny, oppression, high tariff and Carpet bag supremacy. I have no political reputation which is tarnished, no accusations of turn coat to clear up, but as you all know my political principals have been purely conservative, and I now stand upon the broad platform, which was accepted at Cincinattis convention and Endorced at Baltimore. ... To the Colored voters I have to say in addition to what I have already said, I am your friend, Have I not shown by my actions, I challenge anyone to say otherwise. If I am elected I cannot legislate for any laws for myself and not for you. The same laws that govern me will govern you and he that says to the contrary is both an enemy to you as well as myself. ...<sup>56</sup>

Hope is here the conservative Democrat he has always been. The Cincinnati platform he alludes to, stressed a return to democratic principles and strongly urged: "Opposition to centralization and to that dangerous spirit of encroachment which tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism." It also emphasized "Home rule" and a tariff "for revenue only," things obviously dear to the heart of Sam Hope.<sup>57</sup>

The 1879 session was much more congenial to Sam Hope than that of 1874 and he landed a key assignment on the Committee on Railroads and Canals. This committee was chaired by John Westcott, another former surveyor and a Major in the Florida 10th Infantry during the war. On the question of the expansion of internal

improvements, such as railroads and canals, these gentleman saw eye-to-eye. Hope's first attempt at legislation was to get a resolution passed asking for a lighthouse at Anclote Key, which was passed unanimously by the House on January 16, 1879, early in the session.<sup>58</sup> Four days later, he pushed for a joint resolution to establish a mail route from Anclote to Tampa, via "Stevison's bridge".<sup>59</sup> Feeling that these resolutions would bring results, Hope next asked for another mail route, this one from Troy, Florida to Anclote. This was passed with only one vote of opposition.<sup>60</sup> The remainder of this remarkable session, from Hope's point of view, was spent getting approval of numerous proposals for canals and railroads passed on for the governor's signature. The only other action requested by Hope during this term was Resolution No. 42 which was, "an act authorizing the Governor to appoint a commissioner to adjust certain Indian war claims against the U. S. Government." This action was not taken In the form proposed by Sam Hope, but in a more refined and improved act to examine and resolve these claims, passed as Assembly Bill No. 251.<sup>61</sup> These claims were one of the more important concerns of Hope's later life and something he felt deeply about.

Sam Hope had one more political function to perform before his active office-seeking days were over, and that was the election to the Constitutional Convention of 1885, where he again sat with Westcott, then the oldest member of this august body.<sup>62</sup> Representing Hillsborough County, Hope sat on the Committee for the Legislative Department and on the Committee on Enrollment and Engrossment.<sup>63</sup> A reading of the entire Journal shows that Sam Hope was not one to introduce, at least from the floor, amendments or amendments to amendments. He is noted only once in the Journal, aside from voting, and that on a

motion to kill any new amendments that had not first gone through the committee process. It was "laid over under the rule."<sup>64</sup> His voting record on this important document shows, again, his conservative values and resistance to such things as high salaries for the Governor. Because of the lack of letters home from this period and the form of the Journal, it is impossible, at this time, to delineate Sam Hope's exact role in the convention. As with most frontiersmen, in the stereotypical Gary Cooper mold, he probably took his colleagues aside and quietly persuaded them in his own fashion. But this is mere speculation and is undocumented.

Sam Hope had one other passion in his life which took many years and much of his personal time to track, though he never lived to see the final result. Sam Hope was consumed by the drive to get the last of the Seminole War veterans paid their just pensions and other obligations promised in the year 1858. The struggle lasted throughout the remainder of his life and took him, many times, to Tallahassee to personally lobby the Legislature for the money. The first hurdle he did overcome, however, was the acknowledgment from the Federal Government that money was owed to the State of Florida for the volunteer units' service. By the end of the 1870s, these claims were adjusted and paid by the Secretary of the Treasury to the State of Florida. The real struggle came with the payment by the State to the veterans of the Indian Wars. First the State had to pay the agents who procured the funds from the government in Washington. S. I. Wailes, a powerful lobbyist and land agent, and W. K. Beard, of Tallahassee, in the end received \$25,000 from the account for the Indian War Claims as compensation for their activities. An additional amount of \$132,000 which had been deducted from the Indian Trust

Fund, was paid back from funds meant for the Indian War veterans, or their heirs. Although the two funds did not relate, the total amount, according to a typescript signed by Sam Hope, was deducted from the veteran's money.<sup>65</sup> Hope was frustrated by the constant deduction of funds from the monies owed to the deserving veterans or their heirs.

In the early part of the new century, Sam Hope privately printed a pamphlet on the topic showing the amount of funds, without adding any interest, due to the veterans or their families. Exhibit I of this pamphlet showed the total amount allowed to the troops after an auditor's report to be \$163,645.79. Under an act of 1861, the State of Florida obligated itself to pay these claims, yet, by 1902, when Hope and a select few received payments from the Legislature, most of the money had not been disbursed to those deserving it. As Hope declared: "The state has held this money about long enough to turn it over to the proper owners. Most of these old soldiers are dead, but they have children and grand children and should be paid from the Muster as paid by the U. S. Government."<sup>66</sup> Sam Hope tried nearly every avenue open to private citizens to get the old soldiers paid.

One of the more interesting collections is the correspondence between Hope and his old friend and colleague, John T. Lesley. During the time of the correspondence presently available, the two men discussed various strategies to use on Governors Broward and Gilchrist. Hope noted that Broward had listened closely to what he had said and acknowledged the recommendations for appointments on the claims commission wanted by the veterans. Hope then wrote: "Now if you and Perry G. Wall will write to the Gov. and ask the necessity of having good men appointed on the commission you

may help it along."<sup>67</sup> Later in April of 1909, the claims still not paid, he again wrote Lesley informing him that: "I wrote to Gilchrist a long letter he opened the way. And I give it to him right & left."<sup>68</sup> But, alas, to no avail, the pensions were still not paid at the time of Sam Hope's death in 1919.

It was on the frontier that Sam Hope made his name as an Indian fighter and officer. He pioneered a new settlement on the Anclote River and made it a permanent home for his family and many friends. His determination never showed more true than in the pursuit of the Indian War pensions which lasted well beyond his lifetime. His high conservative principles remained with him throughout his life and reflect the lessons of that life on the wild frontier. He always resisted too much power in the hands of governors or county officials and opposed being forced to yield to Radical Reconstruction's view of Florida and the South. His principles dictated to him that every man should be treated fairly and that each had an opportunity to make the land do what it could for the benefit of family and home. In the traditions of frontier democracy, Sam Hope best exemplifies what these meant on the Florida frontier. The traditions of self-reliance, strong family bonds and the willingness to fight for principles deemed fitting to all were the hallmarks of the life of Sam Hope - Surveyor, soldier, frontiersman and Floridian.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Biographical Sketch of Samuel E. Hope," printed in 1919. Clara Hope Baggett Collection. A copy can be seen in the Hope Family file at the Hillsborough County Historical Commission, Library and Museum, Tampa, Florida. A copy was provided to the author by Kyle VanLandingham, to whom the author is deeply indebted. Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Vinson,

of Tarpon Springs, descendants of Captain Samuel Hope, have also provided this sketch, along with countless other documents which are used in this short biography. Without the aid of the Vinsons, this article would not be possible. Donald Ivey, Curator of the Heritage Park Museum in Largo, Florida, has also provided much useful and informative data from the files of the Museum. And, finally, the generous staff and fine collection found at the Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, was of great benefit to this article.

<sup>2</sup> "Florida Fifty Years Ago, A Christmas Dinner Talk by William Hope of Hernando," Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, January 4, 1891. William Hope was interviewed on Christmas Day, 1890, at his Brooksville home. He said that on Christmas Day 1833 he was on his way South from "Liberty County, Georgia to Newnansville, Alachua County in this state, and I camped Christmas Day on the banks of what was then called Brandy Creek, on the outskirts of Jacksonville."

<sup>3</sup> William Hope appears on the muster roll of Captain J. G. Black's Company of Florida Mounted Volunteers. This group was mustered into service on May 9, 1839, and mustered out, in the usual six months time, on November 9, 1839, at Fort Harlee. He served as a private. Also appearing on the roll are John C. Hope, 1st Lieutenant and privates William Hope, Jr. and David Hope. Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication Number 68: "Volume 2, Florida Militia Muster Rolls Seminole Indian Wars," State Arsenal, St. Francis Barracks, St. Augustine, Florida. 34-35 [No date of publication]

<sup>4</sup> Richard A. Stanaback, *A History of Hernando County*, 1840-1976. (Orlando, 1976), 13-19.

<sup>5</sup> "Biographical Sketch of Samuel E. Hope," 1.

<sup>6</sup> Applications for Employment, Volume 3: 1858-1860. Letter of June 22, 1858. H. V Snell to E. L. Dancy, 79. Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of State Lands, Land Records and Title Section, Tallahassee, Florida.

<sup>7</sup> Copy of Samuel E. Hope's Certificate from the Alexandria Boarding School, Thirtieth Annual Session - Ending 7th mo 1st 1854. Copy in the possession of the L. E. Vinson family and used with their permission.

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<sup>8</sup> Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication Number 67. "Florida Militia Muster Rolls, Seminole Indian Wars, Volume 1." 1.

<sup>9</sup> Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication Number 75. "Florida Militia Muster Rolls, Seminole Indian Wars, Volume 9." 96-99.

<sup>10</sup> Applications for Employment, Volume 3: 1858-1860. Letter of June 22, 1858. H. V Snell to E. L. Dancy. 79. Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of State Lands, Land Records and Title Section, Tallahassee, Florida.

<sup>11</sup> Letters and Reports to Surveyor General, Volume 3: 1857-1861. Letter of December 27, 1858. Hope to Dancy. 47. Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of State Lands, Land Records and Title Section, Tallahassee, Florida. Hereafter Letters and Reports, date and page number.

<sup>12</sup> Letters and Reports. Letter of April 2, 1859. Hope to Dancy. 66.

<sup>13</sup> Letters and Reports. Letter of May 16, 1859. Hope to Dancy. 71-72

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Letters and Reports. Letter of November 3, 1859. Hope to Dancy. 99-100.

<sup>16</sup> Letters and Reports. Letter of February 2t, 1860. Hope to Dancy. 112-13

<sup>17</sup> Drawer, "U. S. Surveyors A-H"; File, "U. S. Deputy Surveyor Samuel E. Hope." Contracts and Bonds. Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of State Lands, Land Records and Title Section, Tallahassee, Florida.

<sup>18</sup> "Biographical Sketch of Samuel E. Hope," 2. Memory Book of Mary H. Hooker (Mrs. Samuel Hope). In possession of Mr. & Mrs. L. E. Vinson, Tarpon Springs, Florida.

<sup>19</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular* May 26, 1860, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 13 1 -34. Brown's award-winning history loosely demonstrates the volatile nature of Magbee's career with its many political swings, including a switch to the Republican party after being, at first, a Union Democrat and changing to a

staunch backer of the Confederacy even serving in the 1865 Constitutional Convention along side of Sam Hope. Unlike Magbee, Hope, the "staunch Democrat", remained one until he died.

<sup>21</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, September 8 through December 8, 1860. The issue for December 8, 1860, carried a number of important letters and editorial comments concerning this election, which had been decided in early October. The fact that the recriminations carried on for so long after the election gives a clue to the bitterness of the race.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, *Florida Peace River Frontier*, 140.

<sup>23</sup> Letter of January 22, 1910. Sam Hope to Mrs. J. C. Davaut, "United Daughters of the Confederacy: Florida Division (Papers), Volume 1." Mrs. Townes R. H. Leigh, compiler. 1926-27. State Library of Florida, Florida Room (Dodd Room). Tallahassee, Florida. Hope's Confederate Record list him as a Captain of Company C and the date of Entry or Muster into the Confederate service as March 15, 1862. I have accepted Sam Hope's personal dating because it probably reflects the fact that the unit was organized and equipped prior to being mustered into the official service. Therefore, Hope's own date may be more accurate.

<sup>24</sup> Gary Loderhose, "A History of the 9th Florida Regiment," M. A. Thesis. University of Richmond, May 1988. 30-32. Loderhose does not mention any return to Tampa after the Crystal River service and has the unit immediately going to Camp Finegan. Hope states that his company was not transferred to the camp until spring of 1864. The records, thus, show an unaccounted for gap as to where the company, reduced to 36 men at Crystal River, was stationed between August-September 1863 and February 8, 1864, the date Hope states that they lost equipment in the evacuation of Camp Finegan. See Records of Samuel E. Hope, Company C, 6th Battalion Florida Volunteers. Military Records of the 9th Florida Regiment. Records of the U. S War Department. Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington D. C. Copies of these records were supplied to the author by the generosity of Kyle VanLandingham.

<sup>25</sup> Zack C. Waters, "Florida's Confederate Guerrillas: John W. Pearson and the Oklawaha Rangers," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. 70 (October 1991): 143-44. Mr. Waters has a typescript of a "Reminiscence of Captain Samuel E. Hope" in his personal possession, but has been generous in

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providing a copy to the Pinellas County Historical Museum at Heritage Park, Largo, Florida. Donald Ivey, curator of the museum, was kind enough to lend me a copy of Mr. Waters' typescript for this article.

<sup>26</sup> Loderhose, 53-55. The best account of the entire battle can be had by reading David J. Coles' "A Fight, a Licking, and a Footrace: The 1864 Florida Campaign." M. A. Thesis. Florida State University, 1985. The author has benefited by his discussions with David Coles whose expertise in Civil War matters is widely recognized.

<sup>27</sup> Loderhose, 55.

<sup>28</sup> Letter of January 22, 1910. Hope to Davaut. UDC Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Loderhose, 54-55.

<sup>30</sup> Glen Dill, "Sorting Through the Stories Behind Deserter's Hill." Copy obtained from the clippings file at the Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, Tarpon Springs, Florida. No date.

<sup>31</sup> Wilfred T Neill, *St. Petersburg Times*, February 19, 1978. Also from the clippings file at the Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, Tarpon Springs, Florida.

<sup>32</sup> Letter dated January 25, 1864. Leave was granted from February to 28, 1864. Record Division: Rebel Archives, War Department (stamped): Record Group 109, Military Records of the 9th Florida Regiment. National Archives: Washington, D. C.

<sup>33</sup> *Pensacola Morning News*, May 31, 1913. Copy from the clippings file at the Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, Tarpon Springs, Florida. Name of the newspaper is unclear.

<sup>34</sup> Loderhose, 60-64.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 72-73.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-105. Loderhose has aptly entitled his sixth chapter, "Glory Fading". A recent account of the actions involving the Brigade can be found in Zack C. Waters', "Tell Them I Died Like a Confederate Soldier," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69 (October 1990), 156-77.

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<sup>38</sup> Department of Military Affairs: Special Archives Publication 93. "Florida Soldiers: CSA 9th, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11th Florida Infantry," 21t. State Arsenal, St. Francis Barracks, St. Augustine, Florida. This source lists Sam Hope's service as: Muster In (June 21, '62); Mustered Out (April 9 '65); Remarks (Wounded at Petersburg August 25, '64; resigned November 1, '64.) The resignation was caused by his election to the legislature. Upon return to duty, he was restored to his previous rank.

<sup>39</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, 13th Session. 1864.* (Tallahassee, 1864), 33.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-107. During the debates covered by these pages, Hope shows his consistent voting against discretionary powers of the executives, state or local. This pattern, which is very clear, indicated his belief in the things that most southerners were fighting for when opposing the enforcement of National laws on certain issues believed to belong solely to the State.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 107 and 55-56. The special committee did not find any wrong doing on the part of Perry or Snell.

<sup>42</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of Florida.* (Tallahassee, 1865), 25-26.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 117. No document has surfaced to explain why Sam Hope did not sign this constitution, however, it would be within the realm of reason, given his strong dislike of centralized government, that it was the provisions giving the executive branch so much power that may have persuaded him to withhold his signature.

<sup>44</sup> *Confederate Veteran*, 8 (June 1910), 263.

<sup>45</sup> File "Samuel Edward Hope," Pinellas County Historical Museum, Heritage Park, Largo, Florida. The file lists all of the birth dates, marriage dates and death dates of Sam Hope's family.

<sup>46</sup> Florida Department of State, Division of Archives and Records Management. Series 914, Carton 14. Hereafter, Florida State Archives, Record Group and Carton Number. Box 14 contains a number of Hope's letters to Corley from January 30, 1866 to December 22, 1872. The lands noted in these letters are acreage due east of Brooksville, a section just west of Pasco (in Pasco County) and some very wet acreage in western Hernando County in today's Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge.

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<sup>47</sup> Florida State Archives. Series 914, Carton 19. Letter of June 20, 1877. Hedrik to Corley.

<sup>48</sup> See letters of December 16 and 29, 1879, Florida State Archives Series 914, Carton 21, and Letters of February 3 and March 4, 1880, in Florida State Archives Series 914, Carton 22. Letters found in the correspondence of Timber Agent E. T. Berry, also from these cartons, also tell part of this story. The letters cited above are all from C. T Jenkins to Hugh A. Corley.

<sup>49</sup> Florida State Archives, Series 914, Carton 19. Letter of August 12, 1877. Hope to Corley.

<sup>50</sup> From copies of Subdivision plats in possession of Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Vinson of Tarpon Springs, Florida. Used with permission of the Vinsons.

<sup>51</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of the State of Florida, Seventh Session. 1874.* (Tallahassee, 1874).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 320-21.

<sup>56</sup> Handwritten copy of Speech. From the files of Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Vinson, Tarpon Springs, Florida. Used with their kind permission.

<sup>57</sup> Frank R. Kent, *The Democratic Party: A History* (New York, 1928), 269-71.

<sup>58</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of the State of Florida, Tenth Session. 1879.* (Tallahassee, 1879), 71.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 227. (which is his first proposal) and 423 (which is the refined version).

<sup>62</sup> For more on John Westcott, see Joe Knetsch, "Finder of Many Paths: John Westcott and the Internal Development of Florida," *Florida Pathfinders*. Ed. Lewis N. Wynne and James J. Horgan. (St. Leo, Florida, 1994), 81-104.

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<sup>63</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Florida.* 1885. (Tallahassee, 1885), 53-56. The author would like to express his appreciation here to the staff of the State Library of Florida, Tallahassee, Florida, for allowing checkouts of the House and Convention Journals. Without this cooperation, this work would be far less complete.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>65</sup> Typescript of the letter sent to the Editor of the *Florida Times-Union*, Jacksonville, Florida. No date. Typescript from Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Vinson, Tarpon Springs, Florida. Used with their permission.

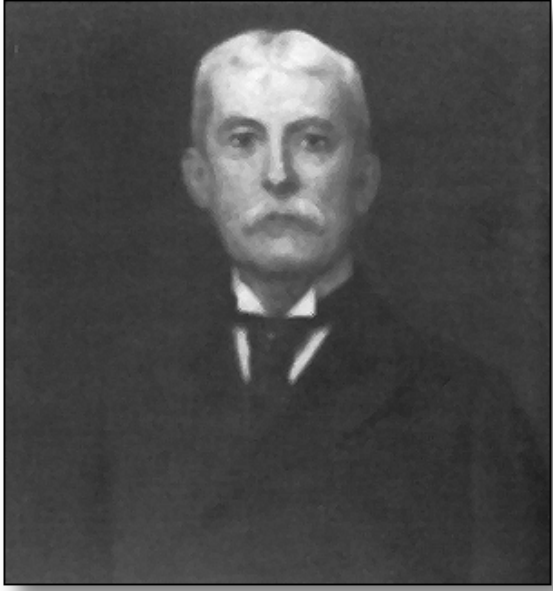
<sup>66</sup> Samuel E. Hope, "Those Indian War Claims: A Full Truthful History." Privately Published. No date. Exhibit 1, no page number.

<sup>67</sup> Letter of June 18, 1907. Hope to John T Lesley. In private collection of Lesley family at present time. My thanks to Kyle VanLandingham, who has examined this collection, for his working copy of the manuscript letter and the loan of it for use in this article.

<sup>68</sup> Letter of April 12, 1909. Hope to John T Lesley. Private collection of Lesley family. See note 67.

# FLORIDA: JEWEL OF THE GILDED AGE

By Hampton Dunn



Henry Morrison Flagler

Florida's first tourist, Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon, discovered the great jewel of the Gilded Age in 1513, and he named it "Florida."<sup>1</sup> Over 370 years were to pass, however, before the peninsula would be rediscovered as a Florida for Tourists, Invalids and Settlers.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon coincided with "The Gilded Age," which other areas of the United States were enjoying.<sup>3</sup>

Florida's development as a tourist haven was retarded for a long time by the lack of inland transportation and suitable tourist accommodations. With the advent of flat-bottomed steamboats, the northern portion of the peninsula was opened to exploration and settlement. Coastal vessels brought visitors from New York and Boston

to Jacksonville, the gateway city, after stopovers in Charleston and Savannah. From Jacksonville, they took riverboats up the St. Johns River to Palatka, and from there, the more adventuresome made their way up the crooked Ocklawaha River to delightful Silver Springs. Silver Springs was Florida's first big tourist attraction, and welcomed such prominent 19th century writers as Harriet Beecher Stowe, William Cullen Bryant, and Sidney Lanier.<sup>4</sup> Even today, Silver Springs plays host to hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

Edward A. Mueller, a well-known engineer and nautical historian from Jacksonville, has noted the impact of steamboats on the development of Florida's tourist industry and on its economic evolution as well. Steamboating, he said, "was a prime example of private enterprise, of winner take all, [and] of keen competition." Mueller's description of steamboat operation as a "winner-take-all" competition was appropriate, and, within a few years, could be used to describe the activities of virtually all forms of transportation.<sup>5</sup>

Immediately on the heels of the steamboat came the development of the railroads, and Florida was viewed as prime railroad country by a host of promoters, entrepreneurs, and visionaries. The first all-steam railroad in the state was the Florida Railroad, which extended across the peninsula from Amelia Island on the Atlantic to Cedar Keys on the Gulf. Completed in 1860, the railroad was less than a rip-roaring success because of the



**Belleview Biltmore Hotel, Clearwater**

chaos of the Civil War. Within weeks after the end of the conflict, David Levy Yulee, president of the Florida Railroad and a prisoner in a Union fort, was directing his subordinates to move forward with restoring service. Pushed by this dynamic force, the Florida Railroad was soon back in business.

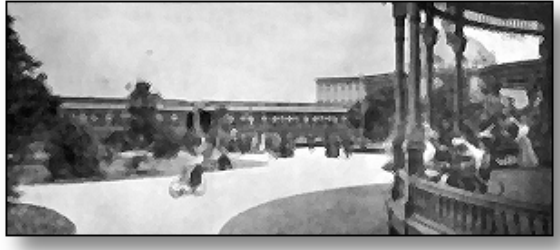
The success of the Florida Railroad attracted the attention of the American business community, while the economic potential of the peninsula provided the perfect opportunity for postwar investors with an eye to the future and an ear to the ground. The "Iron Horse" was the perfect vehicle for these men to ride on, and soon they were at home exploiting the Florida frontier. The Sun Belt, with its promise of huge profits, was calling, and these visionary risk-takers were ready to answer the call!

Just who the "rediscovered" of post-Civil War Florida was is a highly debatable topic, but few historians would disagree with the notion that Henry Morrison Flagler was a prime mover in the revolution that carved a vibrant, appealing, bustling resort state from a jungle infested with, as the title of Judge E. C. May's autobiography suggests, *Gators, Skeeters & Malary*.<sup>6</sup>

Henry Flagler has been called many names, and some are not so kind, but all recognize his leadership abilities and pioneering spirit. Author David Leon Chandler labeled him "the visionary robber baron who founded Florida" in his biography of Flagler.<sup>7</sup> Edward N. Akin, another biographer, merely describes him as the "Florida baron,"<sup>8</sup> while Sidney Walter Martin refers to him as the "promoter of Florida." Robber baron, simple baron, or promoter, Flagler's name remains synonymous with modern Florida.<sup>9</sup>

Born in New York State, Flagler started his business career as a grain dealer in Ohio at an early age. Later he ventured into salt manufacturing in Michigan, lost his shirt, then entered the grain business again in Cleveland.<sup>10</sup> There he met his old friend, John D. Rockefeller, and invested borrowed money in Rockefeller's oil-refining company. This bold venture into the unknown field of petroleum production was known as Rockefeller, Andrew and Flagler. Meeting with almost instant success, Rockefeller, Andrew and Flagler, quickly changed from a limited partnership to a corporation-Standard Oil Company-in 1870. Flagler was a top executive and Rockefeller's closest colleague in Standard





**Departure of train, Tampa Bay Hotel**

Oil, and, by virtue of his early association with Rockefeller, accumulated a large fortune.

A trip to Florida in 1883 inspired him to realize the vast recreational potential of the state's east coast. Flagler immediately seized on the tremendous appeal the exotic state would have for the nation's wealthy as a diversion from then-popular Europe. Seeing what a good railroad system would do to open up the state, he began buying and improving small railroad lines in the region, eventually combining these into the Florida East Coast Railway.<sup>11</sup> Soon he was off on a new venture, extending the rails southward

to Key West, the southernmost city within the continental limits of the United States. It was a dream he realized in 1912, a year before his death.<sup>12</sup>

Hotel accommodations in Florida were inadequate and rather primitive when compared to facilities Flagler's potential customers were used to in Europe. Aware of the need for elegant hotels, with all the amenities and luxuries, Flagler proved to be up to the task of providing them. Beginning with the palatial Ponce de Leon in 1888, he quickly built or purchased hotels to fit the financial status of the tourists he attracted south.<sup>13</sup> As a less expensive accommodation for the less wealthy, Flagler constructed the Alcazar immediately across the street from the Ponce, and in 1889 purchased the Casa Monica from Franklin Smith. Renamed the Cordova, this third hotel provided resort living for virtually any pocketbook.

Today all three buildings still exist, but none are used as hotels. The Ponce de Leon now



**Henry B. Plant strikes a golfing stance for some of his guests. The large woman in black (center) is Mrs. Plant.**



**Bertha Palmer**

houses Flagler College; the Alcazar is home to city offices and the Lightner Museum; and, the Cordova functions as the St. Johns County Courthouse.

Wherever Flagler pushed his railroad down the East Coast, tourists followed. When the road reached Daytona Beach, Flagler immediately purchased the Ormond Hotel, across the street from friend Rockefeller's winter home, the "Casements." In 1894, he opened the Poinciana, the world's largest hotel and wooden structure at the time.<sup>14</sup>

Southward the Flagler juggernaut rolled, adding more and more domains to the Flagler empire. In Palm Beach, he built the majestic Royal Poinciana and The Breakers. Palm Beach also became the site for "Whitehall," the residence Flagler built for his third wife, Mary Lily Kenan. He married

Miss Kenan in 1901 after his divorce from Ida Alice Shourds, who had been judged insane.<sup>15</sup> Scandal arose over reports that Flagler had used his political influence and a considerable amount of his fortune to get the Florida legislature to pass a law making insanity a legal ground for divorce. Despite rumors circulating that Flagler had bribed members of the legislature, Governor William Sherman Jennings signed the law, and the developer got his divorce and quickly married Mary Lily.<sup>16</sup>

Flagler's ambitions pushed him ever southward to Fort Lauderdale and Miami. He arrived at the latter in 1896, heeding a plea from pioneer Julia Tuttle to help her develop the city.<sup>17</sup> Not content with the length of the Florida peninsula, Flagler pulled off one of the greatest engineering feats of all times when he extended his railroad across 1-50 miles of treacherous waters to Key West.<sup>18</sup>

Flagler also established steamship lines from Key West to Nassau. In the Bahamas, he erected the Royal Victorian and Colonial hotels to house his passengers.<sup>19</sup>

After working and "doing" all his life, this entrepreneur *par excellence* died at the age of 83, in the Florida that he had brought to life. He is entombed in a crypt in the magnificent Flagler Memorial Church in St. Augustine, an edifice, he constructed many years before as a memorial to his daughter, Jennie Louise Flagler Benedict, and which was so elaborate it was described as being "so beautiful it would make an atheist pray."<sup>20</sup>

On the other side of the state, another Henry was doing for the West Coast what Flagler had done for the East Coast. Henry Bradley Plant, who was described by writer Charles E. Harner as "the worst kind of

Yankee-Connecticut born and bred," was an entrepreneur who could match Flagler's accomplishments.<sup>21</sup> Before the Civil War, Plant had been an officer of the Adams Express Company and tended to its southern routes. With the outbreak of war, the Adams company had sold their southern operations to Plant, who consolidated them into a new company, The Southern Express Company. Although a Yankee, Plant was entrusted by Confederate President Jefferson Davis with transporting the express shipments of the Confederacy, including Army payrolls and confidential dispatches.<sup>22</sup>

Smart enough to see a bright future for the South after the war, Plant invested his money in bankrupt railroads and consolidated their operations into a single company, which eventually became the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. Like his colleague, Flagler, Plant looked southward and directed his operations toward the Gulf of Mexico. He first looked at Cedar Key as a possible terminus, but there he ran into opposition-town leaders didn't want any competition for a fellow townsman. Former U.S. Senator David Yulee had built a railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Key just prior to the Civil War. When Cedar Key real estate people tried to gouge Plant, he put a curse on the little community, predicting the hogs would wallow in their streets and owls would roost in their attic. Plant then turned his attention to Tampa Bay.

Plant was heartily welcomed when he brought his railroad to Tampa in 1884. His decision to build a hotel that would "out-Flagler Flagler" in opulence and grandeur created a magnet to the wealthy tourist trade. Later he constructed the elegant Belleview Biltmore at Belleair, near Clearwater, as well as other hostelrys. The Belleview has continuously operated since 1897. It is now owned by Japanese interests

who changed the name to the Belleview Mido and built a pagoda type entrance to the grand Victorian structure.

A real monument of the Gilded Age was Plant's magnificent Tampa Bay Hotel in frontier Tampa, which opened in 1891. Legend has it that when Plant planned his grand opening, he sent his friendly rival, Henry Flagler, an invitation to come. Flagler, smug over the success of his Plush Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine, sent this response: "Where's Tampa?" The unflappable Plant shot back, "Follow the crowds!" And indeed the crowds did come.<sup>23</sup> It became the Mecca for presidents, cabinet members, legislators, European royalty, millionaires, multi-millionaires, and many others from the international set.

The Tampa Bay Hotel became the "In" place for rich fun seekers from the Eastern seaboard. It received rave reviews from the Northern press. The Boston Saturday *Evening Gazette* praised Plant for "erecting in tropical Florida the most attractive, most original, and most beautiful hotel in the south, if not the whole country . . ."<sup>24</sup> New York's *Journal of Commerce* declared: "It is not to be denied that this Tampa Bay Hotel is one of the modern wonders of the world. It is a product of the times. It illustrates the age, the demands of the people, what they enjoy, and what they are willing to pay for."<sup>25</sup>

The advent of electricity added bright light and glitter to the Gilded Age. Plant's luxury trains brought guests right to the door of the hotel and to the glamour of the brightly lit gardens. The *Journal* reporter described it: "The scene suddenly changed. The train emerged into a blaze of electric light. By this blaze of light, you could see, high in the air and stretching a thousand feet to the right and left, bright domes and minarets,

appearing and disappearing with all the swiftness of magic. It was bewildering. A few steps lead into the blinding light of the grand hall of the new hotel, a wilderness of all that is gorgeous in works of modern art."<sup>26</sup>

The Tampa Bay Hotel was Plant's hobby and expensive toy. He spent \$3 million building it and nearly another half million on its lavish furnishings. The red brick structure, modeled somewhat after the Alhambra in Granada, Spain, is of Moorish design and is two blocks long, four stories high, has 500 rooms, and spread over an area of six acres. It is now designated a National Landmark.<sup>27</sup>

So well known was the hotel among the nation's elites, it became the headquarters of the U. S. Army in the Spanish-American War of 1898. Teddy Roosevelt camped nearby with his Rough Riders, while Mrs. Roosevelt enjoyed the niceties of the hotel. With Plant's death in 1899, however, the fortunes of the Tampa Bay Hotel began to wane. Though it continued to function as a hotel, the new operators had neither Plant's money nor his marketing abilities. In 1929, all hotel operations were suspended.<sup>28</sup>

In 1933, the Tampa Bay Hotel became the home of the new University of Tampa. Leased from the City of Tampa for a mere \$1 a year, the hotel building is now called Plant Hall. Since 1933, the University has added a number of buildings on the campus. The interior of Plant Hall has been upgraded from time to time. When Bob Martinez, a University alumnus, was governor of Florida, he was influential in getting grants to reconstruct and shine up the silver minarets and domes.

Henry Plant, with his ambitious entrepreneurial designs and conspicuous

consumption, truly reflected the spirit and enterprise of the Gilded Age in Florida.

In the opinion of this writer, the real heroes of Florida history are the two Henrys, Flagler and Plant. Not much had happened in the development of this frontier state until the railroads came, opened tip the southern and central parts of the state to settlement, and brought tourism to the forefront as a major industry. While the riverboat excursions before and after the Civil War had had some impact in publicizing the Sun Belt as a playground and health resort for the wealthy and not-so-wealthy, it took the visions and energies of the two Henrys to make Florida the tourist haven it has become.

As the Gilded Age began to decline, Florida continued its fast-paced march into the 20th century. Flagler's march down the East Coast, mirrored by Plant's forays down the West Coast, opened new ports and stimulated commerce and industry. Florida's rich soil and mild climate encouraged the development of citrus and vegetable farming, and although the "Big Freeze" of 1894-95 temporarily hurt the citrus industry, it quickly recovered. The "freeze line" established by this catastrophic event pushed citrus further southward, and now big groves of the "golden apples" thrive as far south as Alligator Alley between Fort Lauderdale and Naples.

Women, however, were not excluded from involvement in the "rediscovery" of Florida in the Gilded Age, and the two Henrys had female rivals like Julia Tuttle of Miami and Bertha Palmer of Chicago and Sarasota. While Tuttle worked closely with Flagler in the development of Miami, Bertha Palmer led the movement to open up the Florida Peninsula south of Tampa Bay.

The wife of Potter Palmer, one of the largest property owners in Chicago and proprietor of the world famous Palmer House hotel, Bertha Palmer was a socialite whose interests in public causes made her a national and international personality. In 1893, she served as president of the Board of Lady Managers of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, and through this position, she gained experience in advertising and promoting. In 1900, Mrs. Palmer was appointed by President William McKinley as the only woman member of the national commission which represented the United States at the Paris Exposition. Her involvement brought her a number of important contacts. Indeed, she became a friend of the King of England who was a frequent guest at her London home.<sup>29</sup>

"Mrs. Palmer was noted not only for her unusual grace of manner and social attainments," wrote a biographer, "but as a business woman of the highest order."<sup>30</sup> And, it was her abilities in both of these areas that made her an important addition to the ranks of Florida promoters.

Real estate developers in Florida believed in the liberal use of newspaper advertisements as a means of luring potential investors to the state. And so it was, on a bitter cold Sunday in 1910, Mrs. Palmer sat reading the *Chicago Tribune* and spied an ad promoting the wonders of the Florida West Coast town of Sarasota. Her husband, who had died in 1902, had left her a fortune of around \$8,000,000 in cash, bonds, stocks, and real estate holdings (a fortune she would increase to \$20,000,000 by her death in 1918),<sup>31</sup> and the Sarasota ad piqued her interest enough to make her want to venture south.<sup>32</sup>

It was love at first sight when the "Queen of Chicago" arrived in the little coastal village. A person with less vision might have been

appalled by the run-down, jungle-like area, populated by poor fishermen and struggling farmers. Bertha Palmer saw it and fell in love. A Chicago newspaperman interviewed her after her first visit to Sarasota and reported, "Her heart is in tropical Sarasota Bay."<sup>33</sup>

What tugged at Mrs. Palmer's heart was not the Sarasota she saw but the Sarasota she thought could be. To this lady of culture, social standing, and worldwide travel, Sarasota Bay was even more beautiful than the Bay of Naples.<sup>34</sup> She saw rich lands that could be developed into vast agricultural empires--a veritable paradise, a land of milk and honey, far lovelier than the French Riviera, up until then the ultimate playground for the rich and famous.

Mrs. Palmer made a decision to move to Sarasota. She selected a home site on Little Sarasota Bay in the community of Osprey. There she built her dream mansion, the "Oaks," under the shady trees on the property, and furnished it lavishly. Soon, the Palmer residence in Sarasota became a center for transplanted socialites as the social world beat a path to her door.

Bertha Palmer did not intend to recreate Chicago society in Sarasota, however, and she immediately became involved in farming and ranching activities, particularly around the Myakka Lake area. She started a 1,000 acre hog farm, which she later expanded to include cattle and poultry. She named her ranch "Meadow Sweet Pasture."<sup>35</sup> She soon purchased a 6,000 acre ranch and 3,000 head of cattle. She embarked on an experiment to improve Florida cattle stock and imported 17 Brahma bulls to breed with the local scrub cattle. This innovative practice was quickly adopted by other ranchers and continues today.<sup>36</sup> She also showed old-time

"Cracker" ranchers how to fight the scourge of the cattle business, the pesky tick, by dipping her animals in vats of chemicals.

Not content with her livestock operations, this energetic lady moved into citrus farming, acquiring a large grapefruit grove of 1,300 acres. And it was she who demonstrated to local farmers that celery could be raised as a profitable commercial cash crop. She continued her land purchases, eventually buying up 80,000 acres in the Sarasota area and added additional large tracts in Hillsborough County to her holdings.<sup>37</sup>

Her non-stop activities were suddenly brought to a halt when she developed cancer.<sup>38</sup> Even so, she continued to work until a few weeks before her death on May 15, 1918, at "The Oaks." She was 69.

Gilded Age Florida had benefited from the interest and investments of three prominent northern entrepreneurs during the late 1800s and early 1900s. In addition, the state had received tremendous notoriety as the staging area for the American invasion of Cuba in 1898. Florida had changed rapidly from a raw frontier state of the 1860s to a cosmopolitan tourist destination by 1900. Plant, Flagler, and Palmer led the march of rediscovery that placed Florida on the path to greatness. The momentum created by these visionaries continues today as Florida marches steadily toward its destiny as the third largest state in the Union.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>3</sup> J. E. Dovell, Ph.D., *Florida: Historic, Dramatic, Contemporary*, (New York, 1952), Vol. 11, 608-609.

<sup>4</sup> Richard A. Martin, *Eternal Spring: Mans 10,000 Years of History at Florida's Silver Springs* (St. Petersburg, 1966), 130-137.

<sup>5</sup> Edward A. Mueller, *Steamboating on the St. Johns, 1830-85* (Melbourne, FL) 115.

<sup>6</sup> Judge E. C. May, *'Gaters, Skeeters & Malaria: Recollections of a Pioneer Florida Judge* (New York, 1953).

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<sup>8</sup> Edward N. Akin, *Flagler: Rockefeller Partner & Florida Baron* (Kent, OH, 1988).

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>23</sup> Hampton Dunn, *Re-Discover Florida* (Miami, 1969), 55.

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<sup>27</sup> Dunn, *Re-Discover Florida* 55.

<sup>28</sup> James W. Covington, *Under the Minarets* (Tampa, 1981).

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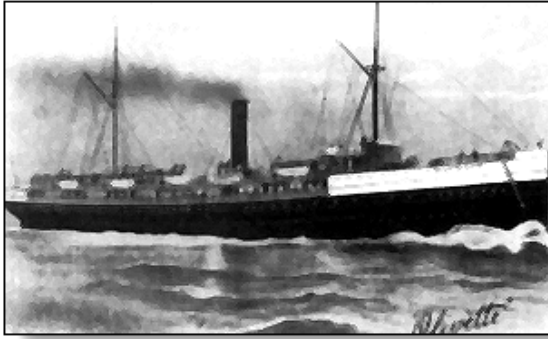
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*This article has been/will be printed in the Gulf Coast Historical Review.*

*The photographs in this article are from the Hampton Dunn Collection.*

# The *Olivette* and *Mascotte* of the Plant Steamship Line

By ARSENIO M. SANCHEZ



**Olivette**

A rise in population in Tampa from 750 in 1880 to 5,000 in 1887 was caused by two breakthroughs -- the arrival of Henry B. Plant's railroad in 1884, providing a cross-state link to the North, and the coming of the cigar industry in 1886, that initiated a tremendous economic development which totally transformed Tampa from a sleeping fishing village to a thriving industrial port city.<sup>1</sup>

The Plant Steamship Company's steamers *Mascotte* and *Olivette* began docking at Port Tampa in June, 1888. Prior to that time they had to anchor in Hillsborough Bay, cargoes and passengers being carried to and from the ship on smaller steamers. The *Olivette* was a 250-foot ship built under the supervision of Capt. James McKay, Jr., in Philadelphia and launched February 16, 1887. Captain McKay brought the vessel in April 29, 1887 [to Tampa] and thereafter served as her master. Incidentally the *Olivette* and

*Mascotte* were reportedly named by Plant after operas he liked.<sup>2</sup>

The Plant Investment Co. began its marvelous development of the West Coast with Henry Bradley Plant determined to outdo Flagler on the East Coast, and of course, the rivalry was beneficial for Florida.

To meet the growing demand for steamer accommodations between Port Tampa and Havana, Henry Plant in March, 1892 put both the *Olivette* and *Mascotte* on the run for full time, each making two trips per week.<sup>3</sup>

During the war for Cuban independence from Spain, there was an embargo imposed by Gen. Weyler on exportation of goods, mainly tobacco on Cuban ships. "In an attempt to stop the flow of money and munitions from Tampa, the Spanish General "Butcher" Weyler early in 1896 declared an embargo on tobacco exports from Cuba to the United States, hoping to force the cigar factories to shut down."<sup>4</sup> Ten days were granted in which to get supplies, and every available ship chartered immediately.

... Vincent Martinez Ybor and other leading manufacturers rose to the emergency and persuaded H. B. Plant to send the *Olivette* and *Mascotte* to Havana before the embargo deadline and bring back enough tobacco to keep their factories running. The ships brought in tremendous cargoes, with even their staterooms being piled high with Havana leaf. The cigar industry was saved.<sup>5</sup>





**Mascotte**

Survivors from the *Maine* were brought home on the *Olivette* on March 28, 1898. A large crowd went to Port Tampa to greet them. On April 17th, the *Mascotte* brought more than 900 refugees from Cuba. She also brought back wounded soldiers after the Spanish-American War started.<sup>6</sup>

The steamships *Olivette* and *Mascotte* covered the run between Port Tampa and Havana for twenty-five years, before the *Olivette* was wrecked and went ashore near Havana on Friday, January 7, 1918 during a storm. It was a complete loss.<sup>7</sup>

The cigar manufacturers experienced difficulties in the transportation line, after the loss of the *Olivette*. Her place had been

taken by an older and much smaller ship between Tampa and Key West only, making it necessary to transfer all freight and passengers at Key West to the steamer *Miami*, which made the run between Key West and Havana. This caused much delay and annoyance.<sup>8</sup>

In October 1927, the Plant Steamship Co. was making only one tobacco shipment a week from Cuba arriving in Tampa on Wednesday. The cigar factories were seriously inconvenienced by the lack of service, for they not only had to wait a whole week between shipments, but when it all came on one ship, the government tobacco examiners, the customs house and the customs house brokers were all rushed in



Tampa City Seal, reprinted by permission of the City of Tampa

an effort to take care of this supply of tobacco. The best they could do was to get through within three to four days after the ship arrived.

As a result of a protest made by Val M. Antuono, maker of C. H. S. Cigars, through the traffic department of the Tampa Board of Trade, cigar manufacturers of Tampa were able to receive two shipments of tobacco a week from Havana instead of one.

In March 1927, the picture of a ship with the name *Mascotte* on the seal of the City of Tampa was questioned. The seal of the City of Tampa, was considered the most widely known municipal seal in the world. City Clerk William E. Duncan said the seal was wrong and should be changed. Every cigar box made in Tampa since 1895 had borne an imprint of Tampa's seal, and Duncan said it must be admitted there was an awful lot of erroneous information spread over the world.

The *Mascotte* once was a ship of some importance plying between Port Tampa and

Havana. Tampa as a port was of no importance at that time, but the citizens of the community had dreams of the day when Tampa would have a port, and especially of the day when the *Mascotte* would steam up the channel to dock in Tampa.

That time never came. Time passed, and with the succeeding years Tampa became a port, but the *Mascotte* became old and worm-eaten, roach-ridden and green with age. She gave way to more pretentious ships, and all City Clerk Duncan knew, had ended her existence on unfriendly rocks. What he objected to was that the ship depicted on the bottom of every cigar box made in the City of Tampa -- and that meant about 10,000,000 boxes every year -- was a ship that never had anything to do with the City of Tampa.

Moreover, the ship on the seal of Tampa is pictured as a sailing ship, when in reality the *Mascotte* was a steamship.

Although the old city clerk whose name appeared on the cigar boxes had gone to his maker, the man who was responsible for the idea was still the most active leader in Tampa's cigar industry. He was Henry L. Leiman, of the Tampa Box Co. In Mr. Leiman's office hung the letter of authority to use the seal, obtained from the Tampa City Council in 1895.<sup>9</sup>

Following the death of Henry Plant, the holdings of the Plant Investment Co. at Port Tampa were purchased by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and affiliates.

The steamship lines started by Plant were acquired by the P & O Steamship Company which operated the steamers *Cuba* and *Governor Cobb* between Port Tampa and Havana until World War II.<sup>10</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, July 2, 1987

<sup>2</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, 1950), 186-187

<sup>3</sup> *The Tobacco Leaf*, March 9, 1892

<sup>4</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 206.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>7</sup> *U. S. Tobacco Journal*, January 10, 1918

<sup>8</sup> *The Tobacco Leaf*, March 7, 1918

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, March 19, 1927

<sup>10</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 302.

*All photographs are from the Arsenio M. Sanchez Collection.*

# BAYSHORE BOULEVARD: A BRIEF LOOK AT ITS HISTORIC PAST

By CHARLES A. BROWN



**Heavy traffic on Bayshore Boulevard at South Dakota Avenue, 1922**

Photo courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough  
County Public Library System

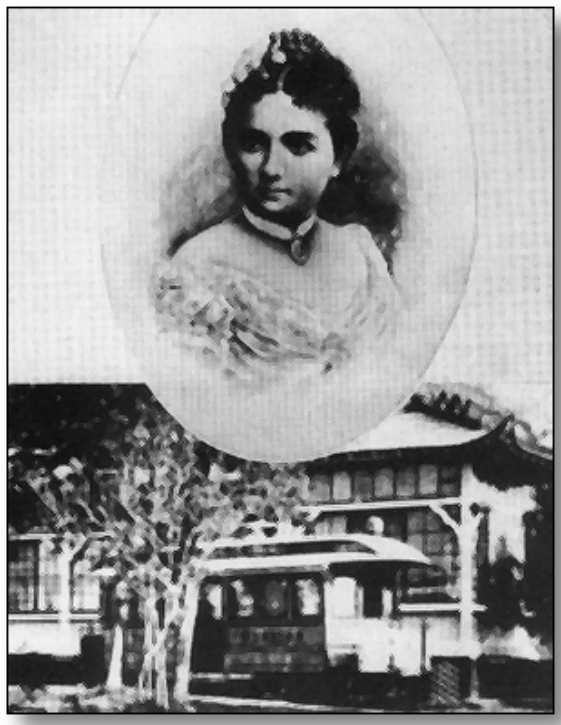
In the early 1800's Cuban fishermen reaped bountiful catches of fish on a seasonal basis in the waters adjacent to what we know as Bayshore Boulevard.<sup>1</sup> They were the first known inhabitants of this area for they camped out overnight on the shores after their long days of strenuous labor. In 1824 the U.S. Army founded Fort Brooke. This founding eventually led to the incorporation of Tampa in 1855. In 1890, the population of our city was slightly over 5000 people. During this time period Mr. and Mrs. Chester W. Chapin, who were a wealthy family originating from New York, were looking for a winter home in the south. They purchased 110 acres of property three miles south of the city limits of Tampa. This parcel of land included, what we know as today, a part of Bayshore Boulevard. Below

is an excerpt from a May 21, 1891 interview with Mrs. Chapin published in the *Tampa Journal*.

Mrs. Chester W. Chapin of New York returned here Saturday night to look after the work on her beautiful bay place. Just off the point of her property an old Spanish fishing boat was wrecked several years ago and has crumbled to the waters edge. About its hull the oysters have bedded themselves until now there are great beds of them. There is no better fishing than around the point. Mrs. Chapin was seen recently by a *Journal* reporter who was pleased to find her a great enthusiast about Tampa.

If the Tampa people will only take hold and work, this will be the health resort of the world. I have traveled all through the states and Europe but I have never seen a climate to compare with it.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Chapin played a major part in the development of Bayshore and Tampa in the 1890's. They formed the Consumers Electric Light and Power Company in 1892. This company developed a trolley car system that provided service from downtown Tampa to Ballast Point Park. They also helped build the Ballast Point Pavilion which became the place for Tampa residents to be on Sunday afternoons. As the 1890's progressed the Chapins started a new project to generate additional electricity for their company. Mr. Chapin began construction of a dam on the Hillsborough River in 1896. He enlisted his nephew, Fred



**Mrs. Chapin and her private streetcar *Fair Florida***

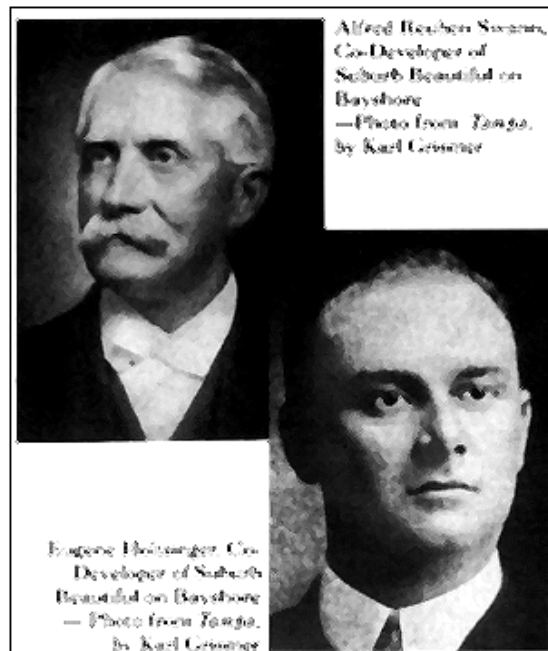
- Photo from *Tampa: The Treasure City*, by Gary Mormino and Tony Pizzo

E. Fletcher, to be the superintendent of this project.<sup>3</sup> It was completed in 1897. In 1898 tragedy struck. Local cattle barons, who did not want their properties along the Hillsborough River flooded, blew up the entire dam. After the destruction of this major investment, the Chapins became disenchanted with Tampa. In 1899 their holdings in this company were sold to the Tampa Electric Light and Power Company.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after this transaction, the Chapins left Tampa and never returned.

The next major project that helped in the development of Bayshore Boulevard was the dream of Colonel Alfred Swann and Eugene Holtsinger. Col. Swann was a wealthy Tennessean and Civil War hero. Eugene Holtsinger also was a native of Tennessee and a very brilliant young attorney. Together, they formed the Swann and

**Alfred Reuben Swann, Co-Developer of Suburb Beautiful on Bayshore**

-Photo from *Tampa*, by Karl Grismer



**Eugene Holtsinger, Co-Developer of Suburb Beautiful on Bayshore**

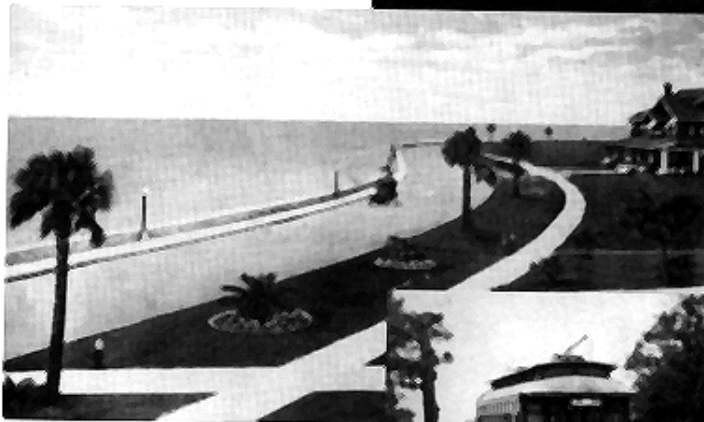
- Photo from *Tampa*, by Karl Grismer

Holtsinger Company in 1906.<sup>5</sup> They purchased a large tract of land along Bayshore to Hyde Park Avenue which became known as Suburb Beautiful. Swann and Holtsinger began to fill in their swampy property that once was a paradise for fiddler crabs. Their first dredge, nicknamed *Holtsinger* pumped sand 24 hours a day out of Tampa Bay so that new construction of their project could continue at a rapid pace. The main contribution that these two investors gave to the history of Bayshore was a picturesque street with lighting along the seawall which helped connect downtown Tampa to the county road along Bayshore. Other prominent pioneers who helped further develop this historic boulevard were the Biglow and Trousdale families.



Tampa Electric trolley car on Bayshore Boulevard, 1920  
 - Photo courtesy of Tampa Hillsborough County Public Library System

Boat racers by Bayshore at the corner of South Dakota, 1920  
 - Photo courtesy of Tampa Hillsborough County Public Library System



Bayshore in the 1920s. Notice the low seawall and street lights  
 - Photo courtesy of University of South Florida Special Collections

Damage on Bayshore after October 25, 1921 hurricane  
 - Photo courtesy of Tampa Hillsborough County Public Library System



**Tampa Electric trolley car on Bayshore Boulevard, 1920**

- Photo courtesy of Tampa Hillsborough County Public Library System

**Boat racers by Bayshore at the corner of South Dakota, 1920**

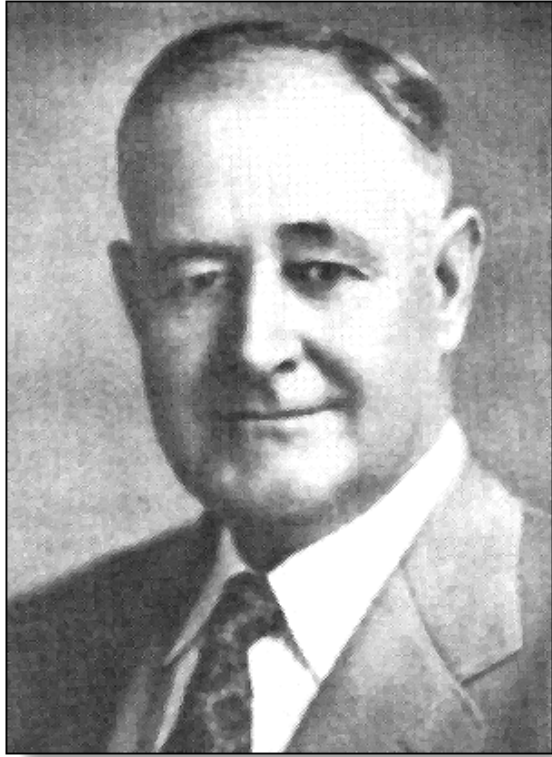
- Photo courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

**Bayshore in the 1920s. Notice the low seawall and street lights.**

- Photo courtesy of University of South Florida Special Collections

**Damage on Bayshore after October 25, 1921 hurricane.**

- Photo courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System



**Mayor R. E. L. Chancey was instrumental in procuring WPA funds which helped development of the City.**

- Photo from For Tampa's 100,000, Tampa Historical Society Collection

In 1908 Mr. Biglow purchased a large tract of land that today is located at the corner of Bayshore and Gandy Boulevards. He built a spacious mansion and lived there until his death in 1917. His widow sold this property to Dr. John Helms. For a brief period of time this home was not only a doctor's office, but also a hosp Ital. Mr. Trousdale, who was the general manager of the Florida Brewery purchased and built a home Just north of the Biglow mansion on Bayshore Boulevard shortly after the Biglow family finished their home. Surrounded by 18 acres of property, it was known as one of the most unique properties on the Bayshore.<sup>6</sup>

In 1914, all the roads and unoccupied property south of Howard Avenue were a



**Aerial view of Bayshore and the Municipal Hospital, 1938**

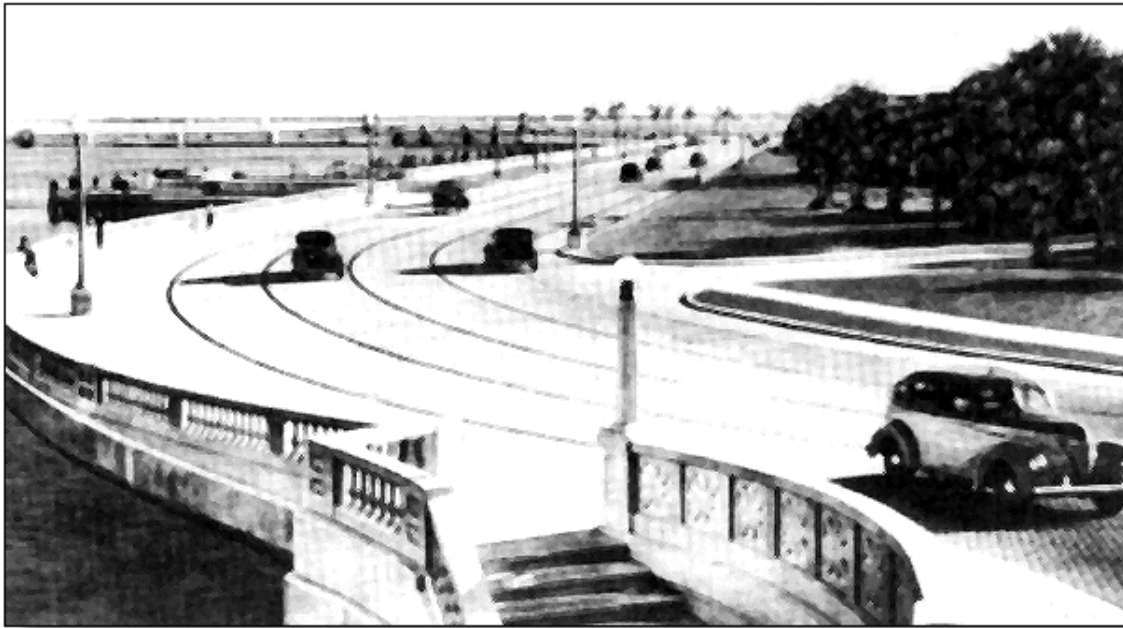
- Photo from For Tampa's 100,000, Tampa Historical Society Collection



**Workers putting the finishing touches on the landscape after major restoration of Bayshore, 1938.**

- Photo from For Tampa's 100,000, Tampa Historical Society Collection

part of Hillsborough County. The County added to the development of Bayshore by building a two-lane brick road that was 3.12 miles long. In this same time period, the mayor of Tampa, D.B. McKay, helped push through a bond issue that created additional improvements to the Bayshore.



**East entrance to Bayshore Boulevard at the Platt Street Bridge.**

- Photo from University of South Florida Special Collections

A major setback occurred to Bayshore Boulevard on October 25, 1921. A hurricane, packed with devastating winds and rain, proceeded into the mouth of Tampa Bay and struck directly into the heart of downtown Tampa. This hurricane damaged many homes along Bayshore, and destroyed most of the seawall, and the trolley car track that connected with downtown Tampa. It took more than four years to rebuild the area damaged by this storm.

In the 1930's, the Works Progress Administration created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt helped promote jobs in local communities and develop projects in cities that enhanced the quality of life. Our Mayor at that time, Robert E.L. Chancey, enlisted the help of the managing editor of two Tampa newspapers, Mr. Jerry McCleod, to go to Jacksonville, Florida, (the headquarters for the WTA. in Florida) to solicit funds to help our community. Thanks

to his efforts many important projects were funded.<sup>7</sup> The development of Peter O. Knight Airport, the construction of the first black hospital, restoration on the H.B. Plant Hotel, and a major renovation to Bayshore Boulevard were just a few of the projects that were completed with these funds. Mr. G.B. Philpott was the construction foreman for the Bayshore project. The major renovation of Bayshore Boulevard began in 1935 and was completed in 1938. A major celebration occurred to commemorate the completion of this project.

In 1946 the trolley car system that had provided service along the Bayshore since the 1890s was eliminated. As you travel down Bayshore Boulevard today, you can still see the remnants of the trolley car track in the center median.

In 1953, the city annexed all of the property south of Howard Avenue from Hillsborough County.<sup>8</sup> The appearance of Bayshore



began to change in the 1960s with high rise developments replacing many of the single family residential homes. There are still approximately 90 single residential homes located on Bayshore Boulevard from the Platt Street Bridge to Gandy Boulevard.

In October 1989, Mayor Sandra Freedman approved a contract to replace the balustrade, create a bicycle path, a jogging and running course, a physical fitness area, and additional improvements to the road, landscape, lighting, and sidewalks adjacent to this beautiful scenic highway.<sup>9</sup> These improvements are currently being enjoyed by our entire community. As you travel today down this historic boulevard, you have the unique opportunity to view the longest continuous sidewalk in the world, and enjoy the many scenes of this panoramic Boulevard's past.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, August 12, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> *Tampa Journal*, May 21, 1891.

<sup>3</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, 1950), 309, 357. The company's full name was The Consumers Electric Light and Street Railway Company.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 214, 309, 357.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 235, 381.

<sup>6</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, March 7, 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Jerry McCleod by author, 1993.

<sup>8</sup> City of Tampa Archives, 1953 collection.

<sup>9</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, October 1989.

# OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS ONCE: A Conversation with Manuel "Curly" Onis

Cafe Creole, Ybor City, Tampa, Florida July 20, 1993

By WES SINGLETARY

When discussing Tampa's exceptional baseball heritage the names Al Lopez, "Sweet Lou" Piniella, Steve Garvey, Wade Boggs, Doc Gooden, and Tony LaRussa readily spring to mind. Yet others, less remembered in the national consciousness but etched as local icons nonetheless, have made the arduous trek from Hillsborough County sandlots to the big leagues. Such players came from the neighborhoods of Ybor City, West Tampa, South Tampa, Interbay, Wellswood, Forest Hills, Belmont Heights, Seminole Heights and points both in between and beyond. Their skills were fashioned at the local high school and amateur league level and are still discussed locally with pride and reverence. Charlie Cuellar, Alan Brice, Ken Suarez, Rich Puig, Manny Seone, John Tamargo, Nardi Contreras, and Lenny Faedo are among those Tampa ballplayers whose names may not ring a familiar bell but once graced the back of big league uniforms. As former major leaguers, all have claimed their piece of "America's Game" and each has his own unique set of memories to share.

Perhaps the most "Intriguing" of such baseball tales to be shared is told by Ybor City native and former Brooklyn Dodger, Manuel "Curly" Onis. With a lifetime major league batting average of 1.000, one might think that Onis could have enjoyed a more prolific stay in the major leagues than he actually did. However, longevity was not to be the case. Onis' baseball career, a saga really, that took him from the sandlots of

Ybor City to the glory that was Ebbets Field, provides a clear example of the old adage that "opportunity knocks once."

In *The Glory of Their Times*, Lawrence Ritter illustrated that the best source from which to gather information regarding a particular baseball life is from the mouth of the person who lived it. In his prologue Ritter asked that the reader "listen" to the stories of those whom he had interviewed. The following transcript is the story of Manuel "Curly" Onis, the state of Florida's sixteenth big leaguer and the city of Tampa's second. While reading Onis' tale, *listen* to it and recall with him the memories that "can't be taken away."

## Interview begins:

Q: Mr. Onis, were you born here? Did you grow up in Tampa?

Onis: Yes

Q: What was it like for you as a child then; did you play a lot of baseball?

Onis: Yes, that's all we had to do. We didn't have a radio or TV or anything so what we did was play sandlot.

Q: Were you raised in Ybor city or West Tampa?

Onis: I was raised in Ybor City about 17th Avenue and Columbus Drive. We had a

sand street and it had a street car that ran down the middle of it, right in front of the house.

Q: So, there weren't many paved roads in Tampa then?

Onis: No, no, not then. You know I had an incident when I was about six years old. We had a streetcar switch in front of the house and I used to take my little seat, rocker, and I used to put it on the track and then sit on the porch and wait for the streetcar to come. The streetcar would stop and there was this one fellow who used to pick it up and bring it back over to the porch. I was about six years old and I was trying to derail it.

Q: Where were your parents from?

Onis: From Spain; one was from Asturias and the other was from Galicia.

Q: Did they stop in Cuba on the way?

Onis: Yes, Yes. they stopped in Cuba and came on in here and went to work in the Cigar factory.

Q: Which factory?

Onis: Regensburg. That was on Columbus Drive and 16th Street. That's where they worked and we lived just a block or so from there.

Q: When did you start playing organized type baseball, high school or junior high?

Onis: No, I started in what they called the city league here in Tampa.

Q: Something like the Inter-Social League later on?

Onis: Right. In 1929 I went to work for Tampa Electric Company. They gave me a job if I would catch for them. So, I went to catch because there weren't no jobs. They gave me a job running the streetcars. You know, I met the guy who used to pick up the rocker and put in on my porch. He was still running the streetcars. Name was Ross, he was a big German fellow, about six feet tall.

Q: How long did you play in the City League?

Onis: I played in 1929 and 1930 in the City League with the Tampa Electric Company. 1931 is when Al Lopez recommended me to a friend of his that was manager in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and he took me with him.

Q: What were they, class B ball or something similar?

Onis: It was a minor league team but I have forgotten what level it was.

Q: How long did you stay there?

Onis: I stayed there one year, and then they released me and I came back home and played with a team they called the Cuban Stars. We went to New York barnstorming in 1933.

Q: Who else was on that team, anybody that played in the big leagues?

Onis: No. There was a couple of guys on there that could have played in the big leagues. We stayed up there for two months and we played the black teams. They had some good ballplayers. Yeah, they had good ballplayers.

Q: In pro ball, you have said that you were signed by this minor league club, how did you get up to the big leagues?

Onis: The following year I went into what they called the Florida-Georgia League. I was catching at the time, which was 1934, for Jacksonville. I got a call from Al Lopez and he says, "Can you come up here?" I said, "Sure." Man, I was excited. He said, "They want to look at you, because I recommended you." Casey Stengel was the manager at the time in Brooklyn. So I said, "Well Al, I don't have no fare. I got no money for the ticket." I didn't have it either so Al sent me a ticket. So I got on the train to New York and Al met me at the railroad station. I had told Al to meet me at the station and he did and he took me in. Boy, I was really excited. The next day he took me to the ballpark. I can still close my eyes and see Ebbets Field; I felt on top of the world.

Q: How long were you there?

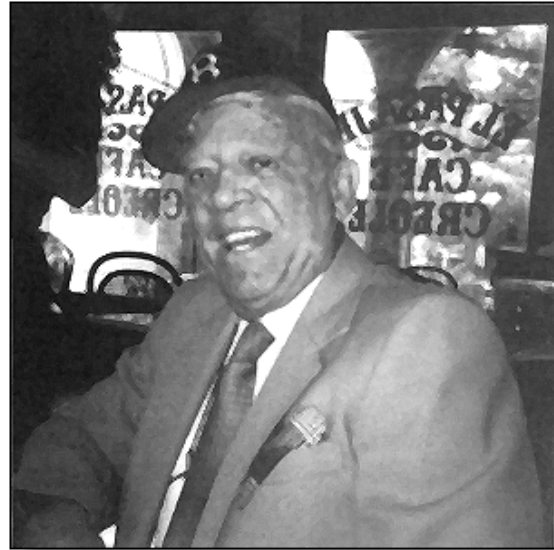
Onis: I was there two months in 1934, no, a month in 1934 and they sent me to Allentown, Pennsylvania, to play. I played out the season there and went to Brooklyn. Al had a little automobile and we used it to ride home.

Q: You drove it all the way down to Tampa?

Onis: Yes. I am telling you that was some experience. The roads were all dirt, rocky and what have you. But, we got home.

Q: How did everybody around here feel about you after playing with the Dodgers? Were you kind of a celebrity?

Onis: Yeah, I had friends you know and they all wanted to know how it was. Most of them hadn't been out of here either so we talked about everything. Al and I spent the



Manuel "Curly" Onis, 1993

winter playing golf at Macfarlane Park, in West Tampa. The city had a nine hole golf course there. We used to have the clubs. You only needed to use a driver, a putter and a pitching wedge. That's all it took.

Q: The next year you went up?

Onis: Well, after 1934, when we came home, I got a telephone call from one of the directors in the office and he said, "Manuel, I'm sorry but I forgot to sign you up. We are going to take you down to Spring Training." So, he sent me the contract, I signed it and sent it back. Of course when the time for camp started, we went to Orlando to train. I had a nice training session there. I hit .359 in 16 ballgames and I caught most of them; I was ready.

Q: What was Lopez doing if you were catching most of the ballgames?

Onis: Messing around; he wasn't worrying about his job or anything and I was working, I was working hard. One game I caught was against the New York Yankees. Of course, they had some ballplayers. During the game,

Lou Gehrig hit a screamer right back to the mound and the pitcher had to fall flat to avoid it. Gehrig hit it so hard, our centerfielder caught it on the fly. Well, anyway, the club liked me, so when camp ended they carried me right on up to Brooklyn with them. Once there, we were Lopez, Babe Phelps and myself at catcher. The season started and we were sitting on the bench during one game, in about the seventh or eighth inning, and Casey leaned over and he looked at me and says, "You wanna catch?" Of course, I told him that is what I am here for. He said, "Well go on in there." I went in and put my stuff on and man, I was shaking. I can't explain the feeling and you can't realize the feeling that I had at that time, when he told me to get in there.

Q: Who was pitching?

Onis: For us, Johnny Babich, and we were playing Boston, then the Boston Braves. So I went in there to catch and do you know the ground was still frozen when we started to play? There was ice on the ground. We went ahead and played the inning out and went back to the dugout and my time came to bat. I went up there and I couldn't stand at the plate; I was so nervous. George Magerkurth was the umpire, stood about 6'2", a big, huge man. Lefty Brandt was pitching. Ed Brandt, a left-hander, one of the best that Boston had. He threw me a pitch and it was a strike. So I stepped out of the batters' box, stopped over to get some sand in my hands and Magerkurth stepped by me and he said, "Get up there and hit son." Then he walked off, didn't even look at me or nothing, but I heard him. So that kind of gave me a little strength, you know? I turned back on the plate and this guy Ed Brandt threw me a curveball and I hit it right over the third baseman. Jeez, I ran to first base and I got there and couldn't get off the base. I didn't

want to get picked off; I didn't know what to do. I stayed right there at first base because nobody could move me over. Later, Al told me that when I got the hit, Casey had turned to him and said, "Where did you get this guy?" (laughter) Well, the inning ended, then I caught the ninth Inning and that was it. I guess I thought there would be plenty of other chances.

Q: How much longer did you stay up with the Dodgers?

Onis: I stayed there until cutting. That is the only year that the major leagues cut the roster to 24. It had always been 25, and I was the 25th. So, when the cutting date came they sent me to Dayton in the Mid-Atlantic League. Brooklyn had me on a ten hour recall so I could come back if they needed me. But before I got back to Brooklyn, an incident occurred. We were playing in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and we had lost four games in a row. Everybody was upset and so was I. We started the game and I stooped down to catch. Late in the game the first baseman for Wilkes-Barre came up to bat and we had him 2 strikes and 2 balls. Then my pitcher threw a pitch that was right down the middle. I swear today that it was right down there and the ump called it a ball! Oh boy, that started it right then; I was steamed up about it. The next pitch, the guy hits a home run. Well, you know how I felt and so I raised hell with the umpire. "I'm going to charge this ballgame to you," I kept arguing. He said, "Get down there and catch or I'm going to throw you out." I said, "If you throw me out I'm going to hit you in the head!" So he threw me out and I hit him in the head. I hit him with my catcher's mask and it cracked open his head and he was bleeding there at home plate. I started pounding him with my fists, but they separated us and I was out of the game.

Q: You know, a lot of people want to do that to umpires but very few actually do.

Onis: The umpire was all right but I got suspended without pay for thirty days and fined \$25. You can imagine, I was only making \$150 a month to begin with and now on top of the fine I was suspended. The team sent me back to Brooklyn because the umpires wouldn't even let me stay on the field. Then after that, Brooklyn released me; I think they feared trouble with the umpires. My temper cost me a lot. The next year or so I played in Fort Worth, Texas, and Sioux City, Iowa. Then in 1937 and 1938 I played for Leesburg, Florida, and after that my contract was bought by Washington, in 1939. Washington made me the player-manager of the Charlotte, North Carolina, club.

Q: How did your baseball career wind down?

Onis: What happened was at the end of the season in Charlotte, I got a broken ligament in my knee. When I broke my knee I couldn't squat down anymore and I didn't have it repaired at the time as I should have. I told Washington that since I couldn't play I wasn't coming back. They tried to get me to come back. They said, "We'll fix your knee." I wasn't going back. By the way, it was Lou Klein who broke it. He ran into me at home plate; I had him about ten feet and he ran into me with his legs up and hit me right on the knee.

Q: And it never really healed up for you?

Onis: No. It broke a ligament in the knee. So I came back home and I had a good friend at Tampa Electric who was the operator of the street cars. I told him, "Mr. Sheridan, I can't play ball no more and I need a job;" and they were hard to get. He said, "O.K., I'll put

you on the street cars." I said, "Fine," and got 22 cents an hour.

Q: How long did you work there?

Onis: I worked there a year; less than a year. I understood from a guy that the street cars were going to be taken off the line soon. They were going to be removed. Then the President of the Italian Club, a guy who was the operator of a ball team, asked me to be the manager of his club. I said that if he wanted me to manage then he was going to have to get me a Job in the Fire Department. He was well-liked, you know?

Q: Is this the city fire department we are talking about?

Onis: Yes, the city. He said O.K., just give him some time. So after I had worked for Tampa Electric about nine months, he called me and said that they wanted me to report to the fire department. So I went and the fire chief was Mr. White and he was a rough customer. He carried a pistol right on his hip. I tell you, those were rough times then. So he says, "Go to Number I." the next morning I got my boots and went to Number I and I stayed there twenty years.

Q: Did you retire from the Department?

Onis: Yes, I retired from the Fire Department and that was it.

Q: At this point in your life, are there any regrets?

Onis: Yes, there are regrets. Sometimes, I wake up and wonder what I could've done with another chance in the majors. I was good. I could throw and hit; there is no telling. Man, I am sorry for hitting that umpire. I was such a hothead. Now I tell people, don't argue with umpires, you can't win.

# "MY NATIONAL TROUBLES" The Civil War Papers of William McCullough

Introduction and Notes By **KYLE S. VANLANDINGHAM**

*This valuable manuscript provides excellent source material on the Civil War in Florida. The Tampa Historical Society expresses its deep appreciation to Mrs. Colleen C. Uhl of Bountiful, Utah, for allowing the publication his document in the **Sunland Tribune**. Mrs. Uhl reserves all rights to any future publication of the McCullough papers. The exhaustive research of Canter Brown, Jr, uncovered the existence of this document. We also express our appreciation to Spessard Stone for his research on the McCullough family, Virginia Jackson of the Brooksville Heritage Museum, and David Coles of the Florida State Archives.*

## Introduction

William McCullough's life was one of high adventure on the Florida frontier. Born in 1821 in Kentucky, he was left an orphan and spent his early years in New York and Ohio.<sup>1</sup> In 1839, William enlisted in the United States Army for a period of five years, arriving with his company at Tampa Bay on October 22, 1840. He was present at the establishment of Fort Carroll and was involved in forays as far south as Big Cypress and the Everglades.<sup>2</sup> He "participated in numerous scouting expeditions and was involved in the burning of many Indian villages and their plantations, but only a limited number of skirmishes with the Seminoles as they generally chose to avoid direct battles."<sup>3</sup>

After completing his service, William was married to Nancy Whidden, November 14, 1844, the daughter of Peace River pioneers James W. and Mary (Altman) Whidden. Due to "some irregularity" they were remarried on March 11, 1852.<sup>4</sup> William and Nancy had a total of fourteen children, nine of whom lived to maturity.<sup>5</sup>

William was employed at the Kennedy and Darling Indian trading post located at Hatse



**William and Nancy McCullough**

--Photo courtesy of Colleen C. Uhl

Lotka (later renamed Payne Creek), a tributary of the Peace River, about ten miles south of present day Fort Meade. On July 17, 1849, the post was attacked by a renegade band of Seminoles which resulted in the deaths of store operator, George Payne, and Nancy McCullough's brother, Dempsey Whidden. William, Nancy and their infant child managed to escape. Ida McCullough Walker, a daughter of the McCulloughs, left this account in 1939:

My Father fought his way out with my mother and baby. They were badly wounded. There was a creek

with a log to cross on so Father took the baby and made my mother get down and crall across the log. They were lost in the woods and it rained on them. My Father tore bark from down pine logs and made a shelter for mother and the Baby. Mother tore up her skirt and bound up their wounds. The next morning they found their way out of the timber by going out the way mother had dreamed. They found every thing as she had dreamed. Grandfathers house [was] burned down and his cattle drove off. They headed for the fort.<sup>6</sup>

The family eventually settled southwest of Fort Meade at what became known as McCullough Creek.<sup>7</sup> During the Third Seminole War, William served as a private in Captain William B. Hooker's company of Florida Mounted Volunteers from January to August 1856. He was present at the Willoughby Tillis battle of June 14, 1856. Lt. Alderman Carlton, William Parker and Lott Whidden (Nancy McCullough's brother), were killed and Daniel W. Carlton, John Henry Hollingsworth and John C. Oats were wounded. James D. Tillis, a son of Willoughby, recorded McCullough's role in the battle:

McCullough, infuriated at the death of his comrades, dismounted and ran towards an Indian whom he spied secreted behind a pine tree. Pulling him out, he grappled with him, man to man. Daniel Carlton ran to his aid. Between them, they beat the Indian to the ground and cut his throat with his own hunting knife. Oats and McCullough then dragged the wounded Hollingsworth back to our house.<sup>8</sup>

The McCulloughs lived in that portion of Hillsborough County that became Polk in 1861. According to the 1860 census, William owned no slaves.<sup>9</sup> McCullough remained loyal to the Union throughout the Civil War. The Civil War letters, written in diary form, cover William's activities from early in the war until 1866. For the most part, the original spelling has been retained. However, the spelling of the names of certain persons and locations has been corrected and placed in brackets in the text.

Peace Creek

July 4, 1864

My Dear Sir:

On this day commenced my national troubles, and for the good wishes that I had for my country's welfare, and success against the rebel states.

I held against the authorities for eighteen months after the first gun was fired at Charleston, doing all that any man could so in the cause of my country and flag.

At the end of this time, the Regulators got after me for my fidelity to that flag. They threatened my friends with death by hanging, and confiscation, or with the threat that they would not be allowed to live in the country. This caused nearly all of my adherants to leave me, and some of them even became my persecutors and betrayers, implicating several of my best friends. When I saw that I could do nothing more in the cause of the old flag, and that the regulators were determined with Capt. Pearson's Conscript Officers to take me and my friends dead or alive, I made up my mind to settle up my business and leave for the Indian territory, placing the Kisime and a marsh between me and my enemys, where



my friends as well as myself thought I would be safe until such time as the Union troops would take Tampa at Old Fort Brooke in Hillsborough County. Then, I thought I could return and be of service to them in recruiting for a southern regiment to act in the glorious cause of a free Republican government. But, the Union officers never thought it worth while to take Tampa. In the winter of 1862 [late 1862], my foes followed me to my new home, and continued to harass me and my family until my wife begged so earnestly for me to move, that I decided to settle up all my business, and leave for Key West where I might see the old banner that may yet wave to the end of time when man shall cease to war against man, and the lamb and lion may lie down together without fear.<sup>10</sup>

So, on the 10th day of June [1863], I left my family and started for Peace Creek to collect sum money that was due me for the rent of my farm, and to make arrangements with my friends to take care of my cattle and hogs until such time as I could return with safety. While I was at the farm, Lt. Hall, Capt. Pearson's conscript officer was through the country after deserters and men subject to the war with orders to take me dead or alive and one evening about sunset, he passed about 400 yards from me. I had seen him and his party, and stepped behind a clump of bushes until they should pass out of sight. Then I proceeded on to Mrs. Hookers, a widow lady's house. I approached the house on the back side not knowing who mite be there, but on arriving at the negro's house, learned that Mrs. Hooker nor no one else were at the house, and that Lt. Hall was gathering every man in the country, that he had special orders to take my humble self and carry me to Tampa where they would handle your humble servant in a public manner -- for what -- for making free use of his tongue against their

most unholy cause, and for what the seceders claim to be fighting for.<sup>11</sup>

Yet I remained here two days longer before I left for my home in the wilds of the Indian nation. When I left my ever-faithful companion, I did not expect to be absent over three weeks, but was gone six weeks, and when I returned I found my wife and children in a starving condition, with an infant of two months sucking at the breast. We had at this time seven children, my oldest 14 years of age. My family had been living two weeks on the heads of cabbages of the Palmetto tree, stewed in water, and seasoned with tallow and salt. On this they had subsisted for two weeks. My lady had to take her children and go from one to two miles every day to cut this cabbage, and wade a branch of water for four hundred yards, the water taken them up to their waists. Previous to my leaving, the regulators had been to see me and to hang me, but their cowardly hearts would fall them, as I had built my little log cabin in a manner that one man mite keep off ten or 15 men, provided he had four or five guns, the resolution to use them, and a wife with a heart to load as fast as he would shoot them. (the reason my family had been without food for two weeks was that (the regulators?) had been there, turned out my cattle, and taken what they had to eat; tho during the time of my absence, the Indians had been in and killed a deer for them. This was all the meat my wife had to use for the seven weeks)

These poor cowardly men would come by 3's and 4's and the last time, nine came to hang me. But as it happend, I had left home to go to Mr. Willinghams who lived thirty miles from my little fort, on the day previous, to employ him or his son-in-law to help me to move. It would have been impossible for me to carry anything but my

family without help. It was 50 miles to the nearest coast where I could take shipping, and on this route, forty miles of the road was under water from ankle to knee deep, and a place we called the "seven mile hole" was from ankle to waist deep, three miles of this was waist deep.<sup>12</sup>

It took us four days and a half to travel the 50 miles, and it rained incessantly every day we were on the road, and for 4 days after we had gotten on board the bark *Pursuit*, a blockade vessel laying at Fort Cappron [Capron], Indian River. After our arrival at the man of war, we had to lay on board of her for one month and 5 days before we could get transportation to Key West.

During this time we were on board, one of the children was taken sick and nearly died. At last the long looked for opportunity of a passage to Key West arrived, and we went on board of the gunboat *Sagamore* bound there with two prizes that she had captured at Mosquite inlet fifty miles to the north of where we lay. One family and two young men, all refugees from Rebellom; Mr. & Mrs. Livingston, Mr. Jacob Russell and Griffiths, were my co-sufferers names in exile from home and friends.

O war, cruel war, how many have you caused to suffer for clothes and the blessings of life, how many widows and fatherless children have you left to mourn the loss of a kind father, and a affectionate companion?

Before we got out of sight of the noble bank, we saw small sails, and steamed after them. They proved to be blockade runners from the Bahamas, British New Providence. Two days after, we arrived at the port of Key West where I was met by old acquaintances and plenty of Union friends. The same evening I went on shore and obtained a very good house furnished with chairs, tables,

and cooking utensils, and in the meantime bought hams sufficient to meet me for one month for nine dollars from an auction that had taken place just as I landed, and bot some barrel of flour, coffee & sugar. Then I went on board where we remained until the next morning. Everything being ready, we were landed and took possession of our house. The house rent cost me \$18 per month. Besides we made up our minds to live on as little as possible as we did not know when I could get into business, although Capt. Randle of the Gunboat *Pursuit* had given me as good a recommendation as a man could give to another.

In a few days I obtained work at two dollars per day for six days, and in another two days after, I was taken down with diarrhea which helt me two weeks, and then my wife and children were taken alternately with the same complaint, and at length my wife was taken with brain fever. It lasted eight days, and two or three days after she began to mend, I was taken with it, and was on my own back for two weeks. By this time, my funds began to run short, but as soon as I was able, I again went to work at \$2 per day for the admiral packing cotton. I worked eight days at this when I had sixteen dollars more in my pocket, and a day or two after, I went to driving dray for half of what I could make, some days I would take in two, and other three dollars per day. At the end of forty-five days I had to give, up the house I had rented, as the proprietor's family had returned and wished to move into it. But before he demanded the house, he had engaged another for me at \$6 per month which was better for me as my family was large, and income small. This house I kept five months, and during the time worked at small jobs until the 24th day of December [1863], when I took shipping for Nassau, British New Providence, for the purpose of

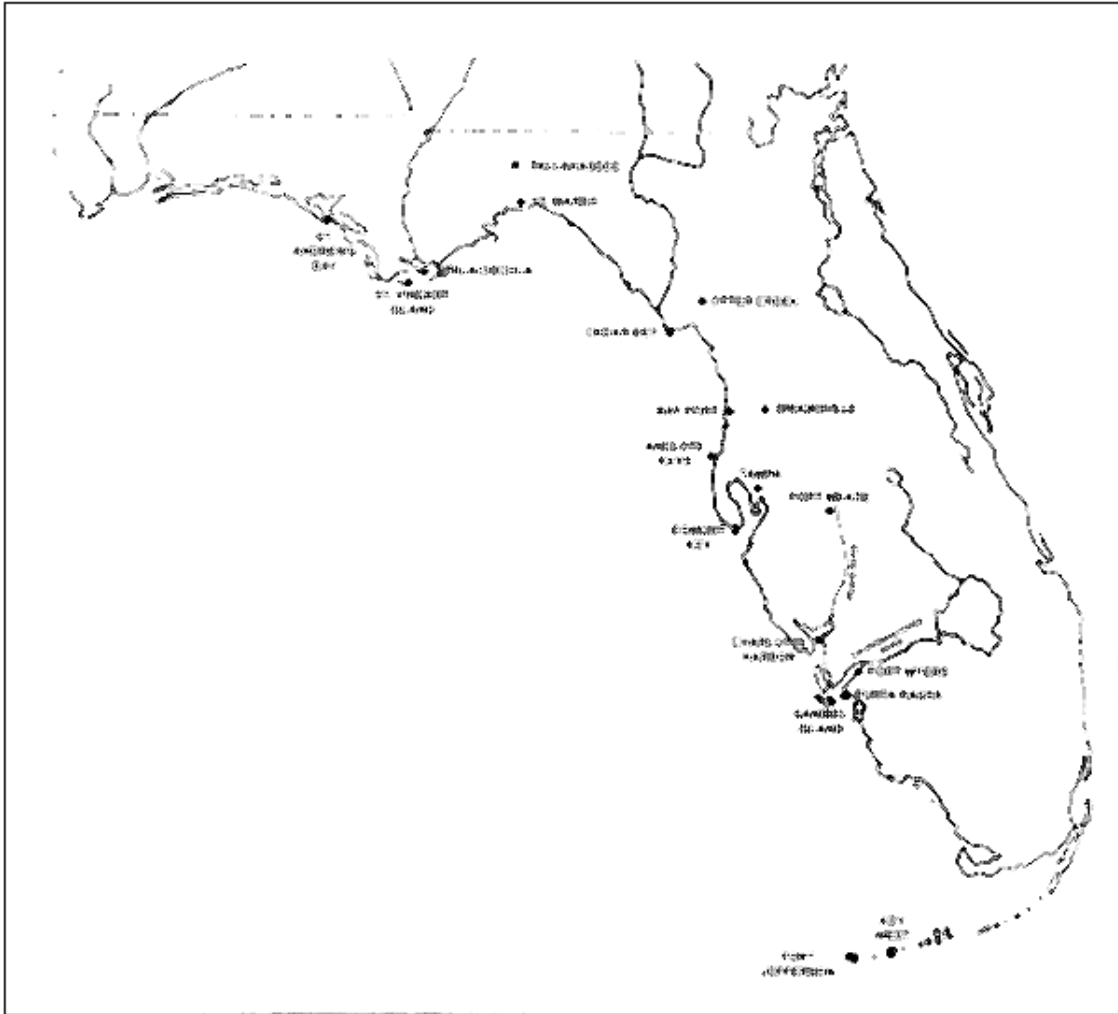
disposing of three thousand dollars in secessionist money, but the Confederate friends would not offer but two dollars and fifty cents on the hundred, and I refused to take it, but sent it to buy cotton. I had much rather my country should capture the cotton, than to let the rebels have it at any price. I remained at this port eleven days paying board at one dollar per day, and on the 12th morning I took sale on board a schooner for Key West.

On the third day out, we found the ship *Jenny Lind* ashore, and bilge freighted with supplies for the commissary department at New Orleans. I worked two and a half days at the wreck, and if the wreckers had not burnt the ship, we would have shared two hundred dollars. But the second nite, the people burnt her, and the court of admiralty cut us down to fifteen dollars per man. The vessel was freighted with meats, bread, potatoes, onions, and other supplies. The steam of the onions made my eyes, and those of several of the men so sore that we could not see our way, or bear the light to touch them. On the third day we returned to Nassau and discharged our cargo, sold the fruit that we had on board for Key West, and the same evening sailed for Harbour Island to take on board another cargo of fruit. We arrived at the above port (Harbour) on New Year's Eve, and spent that day in festivities, the next day sailed for the city of Nassau, thence to Key West. On our way to Key West, we had the luck to pick up thirty bales of cotton that had been thrown overboard by a blockade runner that had been chased by one of our gunboats that morning. I was an eye witness of the affair, I saw the race for ten miles; the gunboat fired several shots at the blockader which fell short, but gained upon her until the seamen threw into the sea about 75 bales of cotton. After that, the English boat made about twenty miles per, her name was the *Fairy of Nassau*, an iron

built boat. We arrived in the harbor a little after dark, and in the morning we went on board her. She was not injured in the least that I could discern. She went to work and discharged her cargo, that night and next day took on board another cargo for Wilmington, North Carolina, and at dark put to sea again.

The second day after our arrival in port, we discharged our cotton and shared one hundred dollars to the man, the vessel drawing five hundred for their share. Four days afterward we sailed for Key West where we arrived three days later. On the 15th day of February [1864] we commenced recruiting refugees for the Union cause, and received an appointment as Lieutenant thru General Woodbury, commanding Key West & (Tortugas ?), and attached to Capt. Crane's command at Fort Myers in Southern Florida, and the same month received the appointment of Second Lieutenant of Company A, 2nd Regular Florida Cavalry, In April [May 1864] made a raid to Tampa, taken that town, and on the 18th of April received the appointment of 1st Lieutenant of Company A. Second regiment of Regular Florida Cavalry.<sup>13</sup>

Returned to Fort Myers, South Florida until May 15, 1864, then made a rade to Fort Meade on Peace Creek where I had moved from in May a year previous to my leaving the Confederate State. On arriving at the above place, I learned that my effects and home had been confiscated, and bought by Mr. Tilles [Willoughby Tillis]. I found it planted in corn, and it was as beautiful as I ever saw, but I burnt the fence, and also his own plantation with the buildings attached. Our soldiers burnt the fences from around Mr. Linar's and Hooker's farms at Fort Meade; in the morning before arriving at mine, the troops were going to pass my farm without setting fire, but I made them burn it



as it destroyed the corn that the rebel would get in the fall to support themselves and horses while raiding against Fort Myers which was one hundred miles south of this point, and if the cornfields were destroyed to the railroad, the distance then would be two hundred miles that the cavalry would have to haul horse feed and subsistence would be impossible, as our own pickets cut them off every ten or fifteen miles on the whole route.<sup>14</sup>

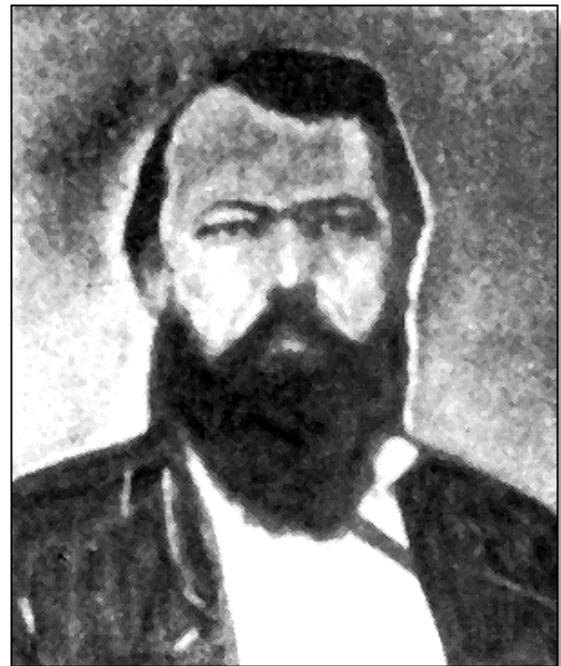
Our refugee soldiers are natives of this section of the state, and the seceders dread our men of two hundred more than they do a thousand of the Northern troops and all their

officers (these are their own words). In July 1864, Capt. Leroy Lesley, after fighting Companys A & B with parts of two black Companys for one and one-half days, came into our lines under a flag of truce to induce Capt. James Green and myself to abandon our flag, and return to our homes with a promise of not being molested by the Confederate authorities, saying we could live in peace on our farms with our familys. But we gave him to understand that we would never lay down our arms until the Old Stars & Stripes waved over their rebellious states again.<sup>15</sup>



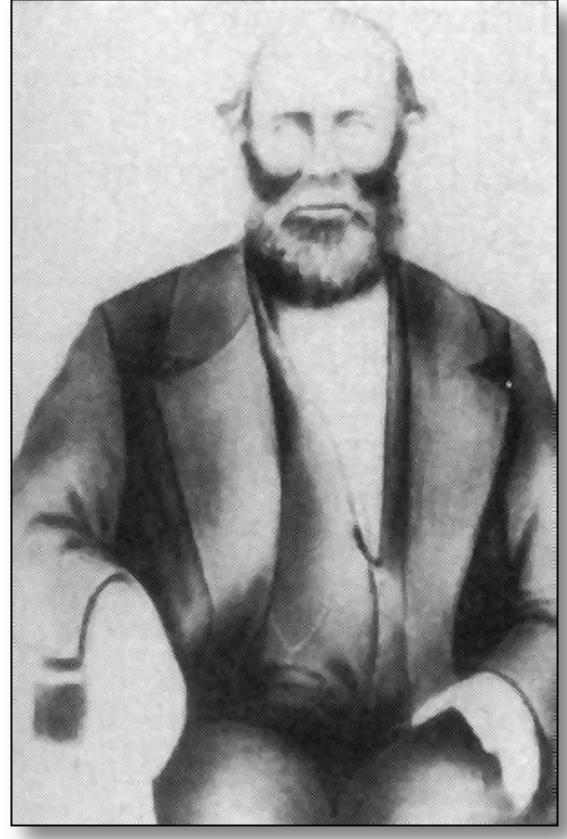
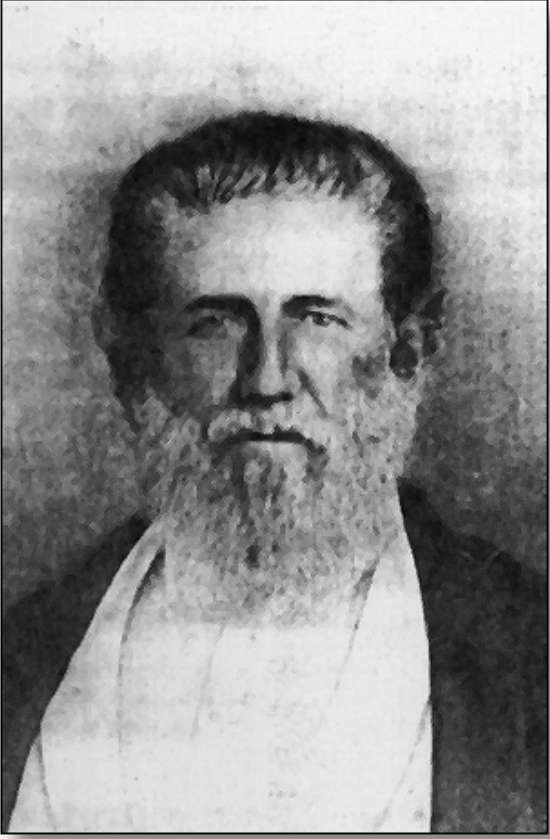
**A black infantryman during the Civil War**  
-Courtesy Library of Congress

In the evening the command taken up the line of march for Mr. Walker's for the proposed assisting his family to Fort Myers. We arrived at the latter place the next day at 10 in the morning, and took his lady and two daughters, and arrived at Mr. John Tysons on Peace Creek at 12 noon. We halted for dinner, and in the evening marched and crossed the river at Tyson's Ford, throwing an advance guard of twenty men across in front to clear the way of the enemy in case he should be on that side. But he proved not to be in that vicinity, and we marched three miles farther to Mr. Bogg's farm (a rebel). Here we found sign of the reb, they had been there, and not finding us, had burnt the fences so the cattle and hogs might destroy the potatoes and corn before we should we



**William B. Hooker**  
-Photo from editor's collection

arrive. After setting fire, the enemy returned the same way he had came, supposing we were marching upon the Alifia, and thence to Tampa Bay. Here we encampt for the nite and found plenty of potatoes besides killing



**James D. Green**

- Photo from *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, by Canter Brown, J

six beefs. Just at sunset, a party of our scouts came into camp with three familys but without news. In the morning three more familys came to us with two more of our scouts. A little after sunrise, the command took up the line of march for Fort Myers, now forty miles distant, and marched to the Harvey Sack pond, now ten miles distant. Here the boys had quite a skirmish with a drove of hogs killing several head. Some of them were put on the wagons, the rest the men carried on their bayonets, as they did the goats from Fort Mead. Our train of wagons and women on horseback with children walking in advance of the men was near two miles in length. When we had left Fort Myers we had but one wagon, one cart, and two hundred and fifty men.<sup>16</sup>

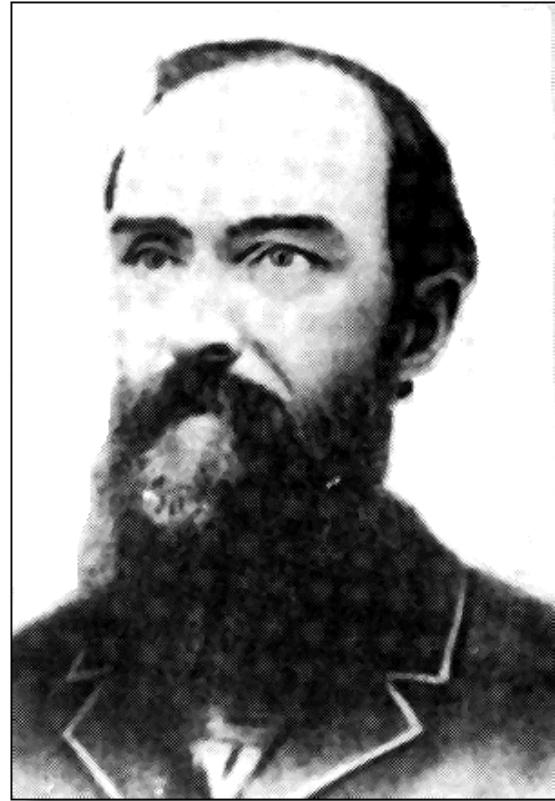
At Shell Creek we halted for dinner the next day, and at 2 in the evening taken up the line of march with fifty of worn-out men through the near way under Capt. Childs and myself. The remainder went by the way of Fort Thompson with the familys as the teams were too much loaded to travel the new road, and for the purpose of driving in a drove of cattle which they found in abundance. The started with one thousand head and drove them to the [Caloosahatchee] River, but meeting up a party of blockade runners, they dropped the cattle for them. These people had landed their goods on the coast about forty miles from Fort Myers, and were hauling them across the country.



**Aaron T. Frierson**

Photo courtesy of Ann McGinn Huddart

The goods and vessels were not worth more than one thousand dollars, while the cattle were worth 12 thousand, and in the meantime they killed one of the best horses we had in the lot, and it belonged to one of our new recruits that had joined on this raid. We brought into Fort Myers, with us one hundred refugee families and 14 contraband. We had left a few refugee men at Mr. Tyson's to learn the news, and to bring in a few more that had failed to meet us with their families. On the 21st of May, our men came into the fort with the families, and on the 22nd of May, 1864, the men were divided into two companies, A and B of the 1st Florida Cavalry under Capt. H. A. Crane and Capt. J. D. Green, I falling to Comp. A.<sup>17</sup>



**John F. Bartholf**

-Photo from *Punta Gorda and the*

**Edmund C. Weeks**

-Photo courtesy of  
Florida State Archives

June 9, 1864

Today three men from Co. B deserted from this camp, supposed to have left for Fort Mead, Peace Creek in Rebellom. Today we tried two men for sleeping on post.

June 30, 1864

We marched from Fort Myers on a raid to Hernando County, made 10 miles and camped for the night. It rained on us today, and everything was wet as water could make it.<sup>18</sup>

July 1, 1864

Today we embarked on board of our small boats for the steamer *Ella Morris*, lying at the mouth of the [Caloosahatchee] River. It was night when we all got on board. On July 2nd got up steam and got to sea at 8 a.m. We got ashore on one of the banks in the channel. The schooner *Seabird* came up with one hundred men on board, passed us a line, and the vessels left. About sunset on July 3rd, we had made about 25 miles during the night. At daylight the wind was quite light, and the day was pleasant. At night we came to anchor in the bay of Charlots Harbour.

July 4, 1864

Today being the day of American Independence, we did not sail, but celebrated the day by dressing our vessels in their best attire of full regalia, and about fifty of our men landed on one of the islands for water and other recreations, getting quite a number of turtle eggs. Some of the men were very contrary on account of the provisions getting short. Their water was cut short for the want of carts; during the first night out, our consort left us, and we did not see her again until our arrival at the Antelope [Anclote] Keys. We sailed on the fifth morning, the weather was quite pleasant, but no wind to drive us along. Today we opened our last batches of bread and bacon.

July 6, 1864

John Tyson, one of our soldiers was very sick, he belongs to Co. B. We had 200 miles to sail before we arrived at our intended landing. The 7th day out was wet and squally. The winds being ahead on the 7th morning found we had passed Edgmont Key

Light 15 miles. Capt. Crane and the Capt. of the vessel got in quite a contention about landing the troops, the latter affirming that he would land them on the island at [Anclote] Keys, and Capt. Crane that he would not land there. This place is about 7 miles from the mainland, and very disagreeable from the mosquitos. We arrived at this place at eight o'clock at night, and came to anchor until morning, when Capt. Carter of the vessel attempted to force us upon the island. Sure enough, the Capt. and soldiers refused to land, and he was compelled to run nearer the main shore where our consort met us after landing her troops, and took our party on board. The vessels that had left us the first night out had not landed their men when we arrived, wasting a day to no purpose or profit to the government. One and one-half barrels of bread and one barrel of bacon was all we had when the troops landed. Here we found a party of ten men that we had started from Fort Myers on the 11th of June. They had a plenty of fresh beef on our arrival, this was all the subsistence we had for three hundred men. The -----schooner, one of our consorts, had used two days rations belonging to Co. A. We were now fifty miles from any other source of supply, while on board these little vessels, our men had to lie cross and piled. As for my part, I have never been cramped so bad in my life, as on board these small craft. We got landed about three in the evening when for the first time, the men could make a cup of coffee, and straighten themselves in seven days.

We took up our line of march, and marched until eight at night, when we encamped for the night. At three in the morning resumed the march, and a little after sunrise we came upon the rebel's pickets, and had a little scrimmage with them, getting one of our men slightly wounded in the ankle. The pickets were 18 strong, we captured 7 of



them and nine horses with all they had, breakfast, pistols, guns, etc. At noon we captured 3 more men at their homes. After dinner, we marched 3 miles further when Capt. Daniels on our side fell sick, and our advance was ordered to halt. A party of men was sent back for a cart left at the house where we got dinner. Here the colored troops behaved most outrageously to one of the familys. They entered the house, tore the women and children's clothing to rags, took a young girl's ring out of a box which her brother had presented to her. They broke the pots, and broke or carried off the crockery and tin ware.

July 9, 1864

This morning we marched about three miles when I discovered the enemy's pickets, advanced toward them with caution, as the main body of our command was about two miles in the rear. The enemy seemed as tho they wished to talk with us, and I advanced about 100 yards in front of my guard to give them a hearing when they acted like running and firing at the same time. Finally, Hancock, one of my men appeared to know one of them, and requested them to meet him halfway. They got within 100 yards of each other, and the man seeing our main command coming up, ran off as fast as his heels would carry him. We then proceeded on about 1-1/2 miles when we came to a branch, and the enemy halted to fight. We soon formed our skirmish lines, and after throwing out a flanking party of thirty men, Lieut. John Miller moved forward all the white troops, leaving the colored troops as a reserve, and in charge of the prisoners that we had captured in the morning before, charged up to about twenty yards of the ford of the creek. When Mr. Miller opened the ball on our right, and about 400 yards distant. At this time, the main body crossed

the ford in single file and poured our volleys into them about 400 yards distance. They broke and ran as fast as their horses could carry them. The three first of our horsemen ran around the ford to fire into them as they should pass, but here they found a pond which the rebs had taken refuge behind; but on my comin, up to the party, we gave them a sho which made them leave in a hurry. About this time, the colored troops came dashing thru the cornfield with the fiercest yell I have ever heard in my life. After the rebs had left, we halted for breakfast. The woman being at home, gave us leave to gather as much corn as we wanted, a few of her chickens, and as much honey as the command could eat, and every man carried a cupful with him.<sup>19</sup>

After breakfast we took up our line of march, but did not get far before we came upon the enemy again, and received sum of their shots. Placing some of our best marksmen in front, they soon left but continued to skirmish with us throughout the day. Towards evening, Capt. Lesley, the Rebel Captain, came to us with a flag of truce for the purpose of inducing Capt. Green and myself to desert the Union cause, and move back to Dixie. We gave him to understand that we would not listen to nothing of the kind, and broke up the conference, dismissed the captain with his flag of truce, and took up our line of march immediately. We had more skirmishing between this point, and Mr. David's [David Hope] house. Here we encamped for the nite finding chickens, ducks, geese, a quantity of yams, plenty of mutton, corn, a barrel of bacon, a cache of syrup - the men did not spare nothing that came in this shape.<sup>20</sup>

In the morning, the command taken tip their line of march until 11 a.m. when we halted for dinner. We re-commenced the march at 3 p.m. for Bayport 18 miles distant, changing

the first intention of the raid altogether, which caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among the men, black and white, as they all thought they were for Brooksville, and within one mile of the town. This was brought about by a man that we do not, nor did we at that time have any confidence in. He is a little cowardly, and we do not think he is true to the interest of the Union cause. He had obtained Capt. Bancroft's [Bartholf] confidence, and we could not induce the captain to proceed to the town.<sup>21</sup>

From David Hope's plantation we marched to Mr. Wm. Hooker's three miles distant, the Capt. being absent carrying his negro property out of reach of the yankees as we were termed. Mrs. Hooker saved the sacking of her effects by furnishing Capt. Bartholf and his officers of the colored troops with dinner and a change of shirts, the refugees and their officers refusing to accept anything but melons which we found in abundance on the farm. After resting about two hours, we commenced the march and burned Mr. Frierson's fences and houses, marched thence to Capt. Lesley's, the officer we had fought the day before, this place was sacked, the corn crib, wagons, and wagonhouse burned to the ground, the dwelling being spared by the family left with it. The lady met us with a flag of truce and begged us to spare her. Capt. Banthoft [Bartholf] thought best to do so, but allowed the blacks to pillage. At the time we marched up to the house, our advance had a little brush fighting with the enemy before the main body of our troops came up.<sup>22</sup> After leaving this place, the command was halted about two miles from Bayport Swamp, and encamped for the night. This man (?) mistook us for friends and gave us all the information he could or was master of, and we turned him loose with orders to hurry on to Capt. Lesley and Capt. Eliser [?] to hurry up that they might capture the gunboats by

joining commands of forces from up the country. But about an hour after dark, our pickets fired upon this poor foolish man who had missed his way and returned to our camp. We then thought best to detain him, and after consultation, to break up our camp and move up to the swamp where we would have but one line of our encampment to guard which happened right for us. At 1/2 mile from this swamp, we heard the enemy horse pickets, but our march was so cautious that they did not hear our march altho we passed about 50 yards from them. After arriving upon the side of the swamp, the main command lay flat upon their arms, while we had out skirmish pickets in front, and fifty men lying in wait on a road leading to the same point but running thru a low place in the ground easy to defend. It was now about 10 at night, and everything fixed for a fight if the enemy dared to show themselves. The party that was on the road proved to be the old Capt. Lesley, as we learned from some ladies who came in to see their sons we had taken the second morning after landing at the [Anclote] Keys. Young [Lesley], the old Captain's son came up, and his father taken him for one of the yankees, fired into him, wounding his own son, and killed my wife's nephew who had been conscripted into their lines. This happened about an hour after we had arrived on our ground. The next morning we searched their ground (about one hour before in camp, one of the runners of the rebs from Bayport had the news that two yankee gunboats was in sight) and picked up their muskets and a cloth hat which was supposed to belong to the dead man killed by themselves. After the rebs had the fight among themselves, they returned to the town of Brooksville about 10 miles in the interior and left the yankees masters of their own encampment and the battlefield.<sup>23</sup>

It was quite pleasing to our boys to see them fight among themselves, and a good lesson at the same time to Our men, in regard to the mode in which they might have to act at some time in the future.

July 11, 1864

On the next morning we arrived at Bayport about 10 o'clock where we found about 100 bales of cotton, placed a guard of colored troops over 40 bales that was stored out of town; one of the guard in lighting his pipe set that on fire, and another party hunting for plunder fired the other lot, but we saved about 30 bales.

When our advance guard arrived in the town, we placed post at the house where the familys were living, but before our guard got around to all the familys, the ncgros had got to Mrs. Carson's [Parsons] and sacked the house breaking up all the furniture. This was done because Mr. Carson had sent the foolish man that I had spoken of before to Capt. Lesley to let him know about our gunboats arriving and when one of them entered the harbor, he went up one of the salt creeks and made his escape. After sacking the place, the troops were embarked for Fort Myers, and about the 2nd day later at sunset at Sharlot Harbor, the steamer Clemons met us with the new Major Weeks on board, who had been to Fort Myers after us to make a raid in East Florida on the Cedar Keys Railroad. He had tried the trip and let the rebs whip him, getting some of his men wounded. On our arrival, we found the post at Cedar Keys without subsistence for their family and the troops belonging to that post. Our two companys had been short for two days, and after arriving here and finding the rations short and the people dying, 4 to 6 per day, became dissatisfied and complained too such an extent that their

officers were constrained to ask permission to return to their own post and familys.<sup>24</sup>

But the Major got mad at the request, and that evening ordered the raid forthwith on the railroad. With three days rations, we marched 18 miles to what is called Otter Station where we found 142 bags of cotton, and attempted to roll it 18 miles to the landing where our barge boats were to meet us, but it proved a failure, and in the meantime, I was ordered with one man to find the nearest landing and best route to roll the cotton. After being absent until 4 p.m. I returned and found preparations for a return to Cedar Keys without accomplishing anything but fatigue, and getting one of our men wounded, several gave out and had to be carried on litters. The troops were marched in the heat of the day, and all night for two nights in succession with but little rest, as the trip had to be made before the enemy could find us out. What was worse was that the rebs were only forty strong. On our arrival at Cedar Keys, our wounded man died from his wound. Another man from Co. A had to go to the hospital with fever contacted from over-fatigue, and this man died also. A nobler man never drew breath of life, or carried the deadly rifle. He left a wife and two children to mourn when they learned his sad fate. He died true to his country is cause, and may his ashes rest in peace, and be with his maker where sorrow and trouble never enter, is my prayer.<sup>25</sup>

Two days after our return to Cedar Keys from the railroad, our subsistence arrived.

July 16, 1864

We embarked on board the Steamship Nightingale for West Florida. Several of our men became sick about this time, and I think their diseases were brought about by ex-

posure while on board the small transports, by the use of bad water and grub, the hot sun by day, and cold dews at night.

We arrived at St. Vincents Island on the 16th where we taken I company of reguees and one of the colored companys on board, and proceeded to St. Andrew's Bay, arriving at the latter port on the 20th. We dis-embarked the troops on board the *Ella Norris* and proceeded up the bay, arriving at a point of land unknown to me by name about daylight, and landed by sunrise on the 21st. Here the men were allowed to make coffee and rest one hour before marching. Took up the line of march at 8 a.m. and arrived at a ferry on Bear Creek about 8 miles from the point of disembarkment at 1 p.m. The major leaving me with 30 men to guard the flat until his return with the command. After the command had passed our of hearing, I had a beef killed, and the men to get dinner, a few of them to go to Mr. Vickrey's field which was in sight for green corn, salt, and honey which they found in abundance, also quite a number of fowls, the rebels having of the family before our arrival on that coast. We therefore took what ever we wished, two of his sons are soldiers with us, and are good Union men. We generally judge our friends by their acts, and not their words.

July 22, 1864

This morning at six o'clock the command returned bringing with them 60 contrabands, nine horses and mules, two wagons and and old oxcart with plunder. After the command had passed over the ferry, I was left with my guard to pick up stragglers, and then move down the river with the flats. Shortly after the command had left, 15 contrabands came to me. After waiting some time, I left my guard at the ferry, and proceeded about two

miles on the road to look for men that might be worn Out and unable to get in without help, but not finding any, I returned, and after taking all on board, and two salt kettles that I had found, proceeded down the river to where the steamer *Ella Morris* lay at anchor in St. Andrews Sound. We arrived about 10 a.m. and embarked on board all my party. At 2 p.m. we steamed up for Capt. Woods old encampment at the mouth of St. Andrew's Bay where we shipped on board the steamship *Nightingale* for St. Andrew's Island, and on the 23rd steamed up for Cedar Keys. The weather was quite fine during all of this voyage at sea and the raid into the interior of the Country. We had taken all the familys from St. Andrew's Island belonging to the refugees, outsiders, and soldiers landing them at Cedar Keys. At sunset on the 24th, we came to anchor and landed three of Our companys, the next morning finished landing the troops and their familys.

This evening the *Ella Morris* steamed up for Appalachocola for what purpose I do not know. Our rations are short, the troops have to drink without sugar. Today I taken dinner with a family, of turtle eggs, fritters, beef, coffee, and pork with some of Uncle Sam's hard tack. Our men had a little pork and beans. Up this island is nothing but a sand hill with a good sprinkling of fleas. Capt. Wood's camp settlement at St. Andres is of the same description, one gunboat lies at this point constantly. Also, at St. Vincent's Island, some of the refugees are very filthy, and of bad character. People who are acquainted with them say that it is their destitution and want which had in a great measure brought about this state of affairs.

The navy has taken advantage of their wants and poverty to seduce the young girls and married ones, some of the latter were mothers of one or two children. Some of

these poor creatures the gentlemen had promised to marry, and after a time have given them the pox, and some the clapp, which they have in the worst form. After these diseases are contracted, the poor things are abandoned to look out for themselves; as a natural sequence the soldiers mixing with them contracts the same complaints. Now once in a while, a strange man comes along and marries one of them, probably for life, or during the war, or sooner shot, as the soldiers have it. There is one poor thing on this island at this time afflicted with this complaint caught in the manner I have stated. She has had the disease about 6 months, is abandoned by everyone, scorned like a brute, destitute of clothing or bedding of any kind, lying upon the naked boards. I believe that the doctors do not give her any medical treatment whatever, and in a short time she must go the way of all the earth, uncared for or lamented by any strangers or relatives. This is not the only case by several which has come under my knowledge within the last six months.

Our troops marched to within thirty miles of Mariana, and then turned back, sufficient to march to the above place and thence to Appalachicola with trouble, and in this route, we could have taken three hundred horses and mules besides 1500 or 2000 contrabands. But the major says he does not wish to get any of his men hurt, forgetting that the only way to end this distressing war in favour of the Union arms is by fighting. What is worse is that all the negro officers are cowardly with the exception of 2 or 3 that I have seen, and besides, this Northern officer will not place confidence in the refugee soldiers. I know that there are no better fighting in the world than these people are, if they have the right kind of officers to lead them, who would treat them like men, instead of this, they are not half-fed or clothed, and when landed under land or na-

val officers, they are ran to death. I have known three hundred men strong on the line of march thru miles when the enemy were three or four miles distant, and two hundred strong. I have seen Major Weeks march his men until they would faint by the way, and have to be carried in litters, as we had no wagons or carts to haul them. This run was on the advance and return march until the troops were safe on board the transports again. The landing at St. Andrew's Bay is a very pretty place for a town, in depth of water about 50 feet, length of wharves about 50 feet. This is all that would be needed to affect a landing.

July 25, 1864

Negroes seem to have the preference at all times, so have their officers over the refugees (ourselves), we are looked upon with distrust at all times.

This is 24 days we have been without but half rations. This day has been fair and pleasant, but heavy rains in the evening. This is the fourth day without meat.

At 10 o'clock we came to anchor off Cedar Keys Bar and by dark landed about half our troops.<sup>26</sup>

July 28, 1864

Without meat - sent a party of Co. A to fish. The *Ella Morris* left the wharf the balance of the troops & familys ashore. Yesterday went on the mainland to kill beef and ----- by accident killed one of his own men in the boat.

July 29, 1864

Sixth day without meat, and a march ordered out on the railroad in the direction of Gainesville. Left Cedar Keys at 3 o'clock and crossed the trestlework at sunset. Marched 8 miles and halted for the men to make coffee, and after resting one hour, taken up our line of march and arrived at the Mr. Chambers farm. Here we found nothing as the old rebel had moved all but the hogs and cattle. We arrived at the latter place at daylight on the 30th, marched until 9 a.m. when the command halted until 11 a.m. for breakfast. After the troops had refreshed themselves, the march was resumed and continued two miles when a halt was called on account of the dense heat, and men fainting by the way. In about one hour after, the command moved Lip to another station and encamped for the day and until the first evening in August when the command took up the line of march for Cedar Keys. At Otter Station we found 140 bales of cotton. On August 1st, I took one man and searched the country ten miles for cotton, and the boat landing and boats that were to meet us and carry of the cotton which we might find. I did not find the boats but found the landing and about 4000 lbs. of cotton in the sand, and captured a fine lot of peaches, and had a good breakfast and dinner of milk and hominy with clabber and syrup.

August 2, 1864

We camped about 10 miles from no. 4 (station ?), and returned two miles for a wounded man that the rebs had shot. They had captured a boy, son of the wounded man. These men had tried to return from our command to Cedar Keys; the father had found that the rebs were close to the house and ran into a cornfield without arms, sat down behind a Stump, but the rebs saw him and shot and wounded him very badly. The devils slipped up on him without saying a

word and blasted away. Today the troops got a plenty of peaches, beef, and green corn.

August 3, 1864

We took Up Our line of march at daylight and arrived at no. 4 at 9 a.m., rested the command one hour, then marched to the post leaving A & B Company to guard the wounded and sick until the boat should arrive to carry them to the post. Companies A & B were Capt. Green and Capt. Crane's companies. The boats arrived about 3 o'clock, when we took up our line of march for the Keys.

The negro officers and soldiers acted more like savages on this raid than like civilized people fighting for equal rights and national existence. They would rob the poor women of their scanty morsels of provisions and clothes, and if one poor woman should beg for a little to give their children, she was sure of abuse. One instance to my knowledge; I visited a house in the morning and found the people in want, and assured them that Major Weeks would not allow the troops to molest them. But when I returned to my camp in the evening, the woman met me with sick child in her arms, and a bitter complaint against the black troops. They had been to her house, killed all the cattle and hogs, the chickens, broken up her bee hives, took 4 gallons of molasses, two quarts of honey, leaving her 1 bushel of corn. Not satisfied with this, when she complained of her treatment, the black devil threatened to shoot her with his pistol, and when ready to leave, asked the lady to lay with him.

Again to my knowledge, they took the bread Out of the oven which the people had just baked for their breakfast on this morning, and which was all that the people had for the day. Chickens fared but slim, and fruit went

like wildfire, there were no pains taken to preserve the truce in the least. The Scoundrels Would curse the women for damned rebel's bitches, and the refugees soldiers as damn rebels and other bad names unbecoming good discipline. I blame the officers of the colored troops for the whole of this abuse as they have but little command over their company. We arrived at Cedar Key a little before sunset, tired and hungry but found no meat yet.<sup>27</sup>

August 4, 1864

The weather continues hot and dry, and the people continue to die at the rate of 4 or 5 a day; the children actually dying from starvation at this post, and there nothing such as nourishment for the sick at the post.

August 5, 1864

Today A & B companys embarked for Fort Myers and arrived at Edgemont [Egmont] at 12 at night. On morning of 6th, we taken in 10 tons of coal and sailed for Fort Myers. This morning I was sent for water on board the gunboat and for one of the rifles that was left on board the *Stonewall Schooner*; when I returned on board the *Ella Morris*, I was put under arrest for obeying orders of Capt. Crane, besides receiving a sharp reprimand and abuse from my own Captain which I returned with interest, our men have been without meat for 10 days today, besides our bread rations are short, water the same.

August 7, 1864

We arrived at Point Ross [Punta Rassa] and disembarked the troops the same day. The crew of the steamer stole guns, blankets, and sundry other articles belonging to the troops.

Here I was treated with the greatest contempt possible by Capt. Crane and Capt. Childs of the colored infantry, U.S.. I was kept on board until daylight the next day, while all the other officers and men were allowed to go to Fort Myers to prepare for the second trip to Cedar Keys. I did not arrive at the fort until the next day at 3 in the afternoon.

I did not have time to prepare myself with anything in the shape of clothing or eatibles, as I was ordered on board the next morning with my company for Cedar Keys. At the end of two days and nights landed our men August 12th at Cedar Keys and rested for the day. On the 13th our rations were landed in bad condition from the steamship *Nightingale*. Barrels was broken open, and subsistence stolen and wasted badly. Sugar barrels half-empty, peas and rice in a great quantity missing. Flour was too rotten to steal. Barrels were eaten to a honeycomb, the flour would sift through the barrels equal to a sieve. The deck of the vessel and the wharf was about 2 inches deep in flour by the time the ship was discharged, and the flour stored.<sup>28</sup>

August 14, 1864

Today the troops detailed for a raid up the Sawanee River under Major Weeks. The major is very close about his movements which I think is a very good thing. Embarked on board the *Ella Morris* for the raid up the river and anchored at the mouth of the river at 5 o'clock in the evening.

August 16th, 1864

Today landed the troops and hunted the channel and staked it before we could get the *Ella Morris* up the river. Ran ashore one

mile from the island and had to land the soldiers. It took three days to get the vessel into the river.

August 16, 1864

Our rations are out, and today we sent a boat up the river to reconnoitre with thirty men, and to get beef. This party met 5 contraband making their way to the blockade. They taken two of the strongest men, and sent one man and two women to the encampment where they arrived at 10 a.m. When the negroes saw our boat coming, they supposed it to be a rebel boat, and ran like deer for the sawgrass, but a few shots soon brought them to a right-about. As for the crew, they do not wish to go up the river, and the captain and his officers are cowardly, being strongly tinctured with sissies. They have put the steamer ashore, and I do not think she will be gotten off under a month unless the ballast is thrown out of her, which the major refuses to do.

August 17, 1864

This morning our two boats were sent up the river and returned with two beeves which were served out to our troops. On the same day that our boats left camp, they met a small boat with 4 contrabands in; two men and two women. The negroes say that there is at Mr. McQuin's plantation about 50 rebs, twenty miles above that point are 100 more, and at Station #4 are 80 more mounted men. These chaps picked up some of their own deserters and negroes that were making their way to Cedar Keys. The contrabands report some sixty deserters about 40 miles from Cedar Keys who have formed themselves into an independent troop, and are ready to help the Union troops whenever they march into the country, and will come to our post

whenever we make our appearance. Today I learned from an officer from one of our gungoats that Mobile had gone up, and Atlanta, Georgia was taken by troops, also Baldwin, and Fort Petersburg blown tip by a mine. The line of communications between Richmond and Petersburg is cut off. The runaways say the rebs.[... ]

August 18, 1864

We arrived at McQuins Farm and Cottrell's. At this plantation we found a good deal of cotton and cattle, hogs, and sheep. The latter of these we went into with a will. Also a plenty of corn and a horse mill to grind it with. This the troops put to good use. On our first night at camp on shore, our colored troops took picket post, got frightened, and fired into one another, wounding one of their own men. This I have found by experience is a common practice, with them.

August 20, 1864

Still hauling cotton. Sent the steamer down the river with 100 bales of cotton. There has been a good deal of rain and wind today. Our troops are grinding corn for bread. Capt White's company went one raid today and brought in one wagon, ten head of horses and mules, four black women, and I white man.

August 21, 1864

This morning at nine o'clock as the steamboat cast loose from the shore, a party of rebs who had concealed themselves during the night in the river swamp fired into the boat Wounding 3 men on board. The enemy did not have time to fire the second round before I had A & B Co.'s of



the 2nd Florida Cavalry deployed in skirmish order under a fence, and poured a volley into them while reloading. I ordered down boat hands to man our four small boats, we gave the enemy a cross-fire from both companys, the boatmen cutting their painters, jumped into their boats, and shoved after the steamer as fast as possible, myself with 36 men from Co. A following them for protection. I think we killed some three or four and wounded several others. The steamer ran 12 miles and tied up to wait for the boats. On overtaking the steamer, I turned them over. After I left with the boats, the command burned the buildings and proceeded down the river to where we had landed the morning before, where I was to await their arrival if I should get there first. But the major having but 4 miles to march arrived about half an hour before me leaving orders for me to be taken on board when I should arrive; but the ship captain refused to wait for all my party to get out of the swamp, and shoved off without me, which caused him to have one hundred rebels to fire into his vessel with no land forces to protect him at Old Clay Landing; whereas if the vessel had waited 20 minutes longer, he would have had 300 land troops to protect his passage at this place. As it was, in a short time I heard a sharp cannonading from the boat, and as near as I could find out, about 200 rounds of small arms. But she passed through without getting a man hurt. The pilot who is a cool-headed fellow, and one of my own men think that they saw several of the enemy fall. We have not yet learned anything as to the injuries sustained by the enemy. It is now 12 o'clock at night, and I scribble by my campfire these hurried lines. We will get all of the particulars tomorrow.

August 22, 1864

We embarked our troops for the Island Station. I forgot to remark that the rebels killed one of our able brothers in arms with us who happened to be seated on a barge of cotton on the bank of the river where we had freighted the steamer the day before. This was done as the boat passed by on her run for life. The pilot of the steamboat was slightly wounded in the back.

August 23, 1864

Embarked in small boats for the *Clyde*, and thence 8 miles to the steamship *Nightingale*, there waiting to receive these troops, cotton and hogs, the fruit of our expedition.

August 24, 1864

The *Clyde* came alongside at 8 o'clock this morning with 3 companys, and 48 bales of cotton. Shoved off again for the rest of the troops, and the *Nightingale* weighed anchor and started for Cedar Keys. Our rations are short, and by night we will be without a mouthful to eat. As I expected, our supplies are out, and the troops are hungry and complaining, being on short allowance 3 days. This evening the troops have commenced stealing ship's stores, but previous to this, some of the men heard me offer the ship's captain 40 dollars for one barrel of beef, and he refused to sell or loan this until his return to Cedar Keys or Key West. We will not arrive at Cedar Key before night if then.

August 25, 1864

Arrived at Cedar Keys at 2 o'clock, disembarked the troops, and found our provisions had given out, and the refugees suffering with hunger. The sick that we had

left on the island we found much improved in health.

August 26, 1864

Major Weeks left for the steamer which we left lying at the mouth of the Suwanee river ashore. The sickness still prevails at this post to a great extent. From 4 to 6 die per day, the diseases are typhoid, diarrhea, and fever with putrid sore mouth. The sickrooms have a very bad smell, and are sickening on entering them, so much so that I have had to leave immediately, or throw up myself from the bad effects they had on me.

August 27, 1864

Five deaths in the garrison today, everything else is as yesterday. At night had seven graves filled with the dead, 3 persons now dying, 9 o'clock at night.

August 28, 1864

The *Ella Morris* arrived at 10 o'clock today with the major from the Suwanee River. Seven buried today. The major and quartermaster Stevens sailed for Key West on board the steamship *Nightingale*.

August 29, 1864

Today I obtained warrants for my non-commissioned officers. We have three deaths at the post today. After dark, we had quite an excitement in camp by a rumor that Fort Myers was captured and burned by the rebs, and that a large body of rebs were at # 4 Station five miles from this point.

August 30, 1864

Four ladies came into the garrison this evening, they live about 10 miles in the interior. For what reason they have come, I cannot tell. They report that there is no soldier nearer than Sodom, which is about forty miles north of this post. They do not know what the numbers of the enemy are, or do they know the number of the enemy killed and wounded in our fight on the Suwanee river. This report I do not believe, but to the contrary I believe they were sent in as spies to learn what damage we had received, and to learn the number of prisoners that we had brought in. They may throw dust in our Northern Officer's eyes, but they cannot do so in mine. I judge from the actions on the day of arrival at the post. On this day, four men came into the post by water from the Suwanee who say they ran away from the rebs. This I believe to be a lie, as three men tried to steal a boat to leave the post in and would have done so but for our guard who were too watchful for them. They had bought up all the Confederate money they could find at the post the day before, and during the evening parade had got their blankets out to sleep out of doors, as they pretended it was too warm indoors to rest. These devils had got wind of our being on the watch for them, and postponed the trial for another time. These men not returning according to time Saturday, the ladies were sent to see what had become of them, and for other purposes not known to us, and to throw dirt into the eyes of the Northern officers as they know there is no use to try to fool the refugees, knowing at the same time that the Northern men have the whole affairs here.

August 31, 1864

The people continue to die as on other days. We had our muster for pay today, which entitles to six months pay. In the last two days we have buried eight persons. On the 29th day of August there were 14 dead bodies on the island, on the 31st 15 more corpses, not buried. On Sept. 1st, 6 corpses, on the 2nd, 7 corpses, on the 3rd, 8 corpses, and on the 8th day, 14 corpses. We now have two dress parades per day, and two drills per day. Another rumor in camp is the rebs met eight of the Fort Myers boys who were on a cow hunt at Fort Thompson and killed or captured nearly all of them.

Sept. 3, 1864

No news today, and no rations yet, three days without bread. The troops are trying to eat some rotten flour, the last sent from Key West, some 200 barrels; this flour has been set outdoors on account of the worms and weevils in it. It is this kind of diet that sickens and kills the people so fast. This flour is as bitter as gall. Six of my men are taken sick today from the affects of this bad flour, have high fevers and vomiting. I think this flour should be thrown into the river, but no one can do it without an order from the commander of the post, or the doctor.

Sept. 4, 1864

Have just come off company inspection, no news today or anything strange.

Sept. 5, 1864

Seven corpses on the island today. Capt. Hall, 2nd U.S. colored Infantry borrowed bread from the gun boat *Clyde*, issued four cakes per man.

Sept. 6, 1864

Today 10 corpses on the island, three of the dead remain unburied two days and nights. The gunboat came to anchor at the bar about sunset. My money has failed, and Lt. Miller refuses to issue to me or sell on a credit, yet he sells to the soldiers of and officers from St Vincent's Island on a credit, telling us that our commissary is at Fort Myers, and if we wish to open an account, we must do it at that post. There are three commissions and two company from Fort Myers at this post, and Miller belongs to this company himself, but appointed A.A.C.S. at Cedar Keys by order of Major Weeks. We will wait until the major returns from Key West, he left this post about seven days ago for the above port. One more corpse tonight.

Sept. 7, 1864

Today I am officer of the day. 8 more deaths on the island. The *Ella Morris* steamer left for Sea Horse Key, and thence to Key West. In leaving the wharf, a mule which the boat had on board for Key West jumped overboard and swam to shore, the boat will return tomorrow to take him on board.

Sept. 8, 1864

The deaths today as usual. The gunboat came into port today, and taken the mule on board, also a fine pedigreed mare to carry to Key West for the Admiral's lady.

Sept. 9, 1864

8 deaths in the garrison this morning, all of disease. The schooner *Harriet* arrived this evening with subsistence, and Major Weeks, who on his arrival found his headquarters

turned into a house of assassination, and his orders disobeyed by Capt. Hall of the 2nd colored infantry, and others. These matters had been reported to the major on his arrival at the blockading vessel, and when he came ashore and found the reports confirmed, got drunk on the strength of it; and after sunset in passing one of the sentinels found him sitting on the ground at his post, then turned back and kicked him. The sentinel made an attempt to get up, slipped and fell down, his gun falling over his muzzle first and stuck in the ground. The major caught the gun, and the man broke and run, and the major fired at and mortally wounded the man, then going up to him, struck him with the breech of the gun on the side. The blow was so hard as to break two of his ribs which the doctors say caused his death sooner to take place. The major was then arrested and placed in close confinement to his quarters with a double guard until the next morning, when he was conveyed on board the schooner, and she was moved out in the stream under a strong guard until the next morning, Capt Stebbins on board in charge to see him safe to Key West to await his trial. He did not like his guard as they were all black troops. These troops were without ammunition, the fact was reported to Capt Andrews who had them supplied from his company, and the vessel proceeded on her way to the gunboat lying at the bar. The gunboat refused to let the vessel pass, and took the major from the schooner, not allowing Stebbins or his guard on board the gunboat. He returned to the island with his guard, Capt Andrews acting commander of the post was treated in the same manner, these two officers were taken alongside the gunboat, but not allowed to go on board with their prisoner and negro guard. Lt. Hilty of the 2nd U.S. colored infantry was ordered on board to take charge of the prisoner with the dispatches.<sup>29</sup>

Sept. 10, 1864

Eight deaths today in the garrison, no other news.

Sept. 11, 1864 - Cedar Keys

Dear Wife:

The rebs ar at # 4 station four miles from this post, and I epect to march every moment, I f anything happens to me, it is my wish that you go to Ohio or Illinois, as you may choose, to my relatives who will be proud to see you and the children, and when there, see to their schooling, above all things, do not neglect this point.

We have -5 deaths today, and I have summoned up courage to visit the sick in the hospital. There I found 5 persons very low, and who I do not think can recover. The ward rooms are in very bad condition and smell awful. One of the patients here is a man who has been blown up by a torpedo, the flesh on his arms has all sloughed off to a great extent, and his eyes are blown out so that he will never see anymore. I have not learned how the accident occurred but will the first opportunity I have.

Sept. 12 - 5 deaths at the post today. This evening I had to receive the dress parade as the post commander had gone to Way Keys, and the others are all sick. No other news today.

Sept. 13 - The sickness a little abated, and no deaths or other news.

Sept. 14 - Ordered to march for #4 station to oppose the rebs, crossed the channel, and learned that the rebels had retired, received orders to return with my command. This is

all the news I have to communicate at present, but remain until death –

Your husband,  
Wm McCullough

Sept. 15, 1864

Nothing new in camps today, the health improves a little, the people are becoming more and more dissatisfied with his post and their noble brethern, and the officers who command them. This is caused by the treatment and contempt which they receive from the Northern officers, as they allow their colored soldiers to abuse them by calling damn deserters, and their wives and daughters damn rebel bitches; yet they bear it with great patience believing the government will get them righted. These matters have been reported to the major of the regiment who says he will have them separated as soon as possible. He promised me that the colored troops should not move with him anymore.

I have noticed that when these gentlemen of color are left in camps as a guard for protection of the women and children, that after night they would go around camps and insult them most grossly by asking them and the daughters of the soldiers to sleep with them. At the time while the troops were in West Florida, these gentlemen were left behind with the familys at St. Vincent's Island. One night the black devils went to a tent of a mother who had one small daughter about 10 years old, and another about 15. The grandfather of these girls was at the tent when they came, some of the hellhounds raised a conversation with him. The oldest daughter was not well at the time, and had gone to bed. Her feet were close to the back or outside of the tent, and one of them discovered the position of the feet, and

worked his hand through the palmettos and got hold of the feet and endeavored to pull the girl thru the tent when she called to her mother for assistance. The grandfather requested them politely to behave themselves or retire. When they abused him badly, the old gentleman threatened to report them. The black fellows left and got their arms and came back. The old man sent the little girl off to rouse the refugees that were on this island to his assistance. Some 15 got together, and one went to the officer of the day. In the meantime, the rascals took the hint and left. The officer came up and enquired the difficulty. When he heard the old man's story, he seemed to doubt the matter, and left saying he did not believe the report, saying also that he knew the colored soldiers would not conduct themselves in such a manner. The man told the officer that if the military law could not protect them after they had left their all to keep from fighting against the government of their fathers, and had claimed the protection of that government, then they would protect themselves; and let the blame or consequences rest on those who fall to do their dutires as the agents of the government.

There was no further difficulty then as the troops returned from West Florida in a day or two. The black fellows might be seen every evening after sunset with their arms out in the bushes near the old man's tent, for what purpose I never knew unless it was to frighten him. If to shoot him, it would have been a dear shoot for not an officer or man would have been saved alive on the island, not all the refugees officers in the Union army could stop the matter.

Sept. 20, 1864

Six deaths in camp today, and myself quite sick with a raging fever, pains in my back,

head, and shoulders, so sick that I cannot take any notice of passing events, half-witted and crazy; so much so that the man that I had awaiting, left believing I would die.

Sept. 26, 1864

Up and a-kicking, not able to stir much, the general health improves a little. Three burials today. Colonel Townsend arrives to take command of the post, and appears to be quite a strict disciplinarian, which is needed badly at this post. Now I am in hope of seeing things change for the better, I am aware that they can not be made any worse without going into open war, and it will not take too long to bring this about in the present state of mind of the men and women. They now want their officers to march them into the country and thence to Fort Myers where they can operate against the rebs, and get their family home to improve their health. If the Northern officers had the same feelings as the refugees for the government, the war would end in South Florida, the people are anxious to get their families into the country so as to lighten the burden of the the government in subsistence and transportation, they cannot care for the money no further than to clothe their women and children, but to the contrary with the Northern officers who wish the war to go on, this is so with 9/10 of them, especially those in command of the colored troops. We judge from the fruit it bears. These men do their uttermost to get into quartermaster and commissary departments where they remain as long as possible, and when about to be detected in their rascality, apply to be relieved and return to regimental duties. This game was played at Fort Myers to a great extent by Lt Charles Ames, 2nd U.S. Colored Troops, from Dec 1, 1864 to Jan 18th, 1865. He had charged me on his officer's charges; he charged me with

\$139.99 which is more than it cost me for the support of my family and house rent in Key West, which is the dearest place in the world. I applied to have my orders, and Lt Ames officer's accounts investigated, and was refused for fear of hurting some one's feelings. Therefore my wife and children must suffer for a petty swindler of the government and a brother officer, and this officer belonging to the 2nd U.S. Colored troops.<sup>30</sup>

Sept. 27, 1864

Nothing in camp today - men knocking rats out of the cabbage trees which causes quite an excitement and fun. Our men all turning cobblers and tinkers in camp, cooking utensils are scarce, also tinware and crockery. The men are cutting up flour cans and making tin plates and cups. For beginners in the tin business, their work is quite nice, and answers a good use. Some of the boys are working on watches, beating out silver or tin for faces, or in other words, crystals.

Sept. 28, 1864

Nothing new in camp today, the health is still improving, about 5 deaths the past two days. Made out a furlow for private John Whidden to return to Fort Myers on travel absence for 30 days as he is sick and not fit for duty. Am officer of the day today, and received the parade, as the colonel was away and all the other officers are sick.

Sept. 29, 1864

Off duty and sick, and homesick. Negro officers shooting at the refugees in a boat who have a pass to go fishing. These

damned black devils are stationed on Way Key, and the refugee soldiers are on Depot Key where headquarters are kept, and a boat cannot leave the island without the colonel's permission, as the boats are under a strict guard. These matters I am an eyewitness to, the matter has been reported to Col. Townsend who pays no attention. This is almost an everyday occurrence, and has been since the Maj. Weeks affair at this post. These are provable, and I dare any man to dispute them, and put me to the proof of them.<sup>31</sup>

Sept. 3[0], 1864

Embarked my men on board of the schooner *Tortuga* at 11 a.m. taken on board 10 casks of water, and giving a short adieu to B Company (who belong to Fort Myers, and most of them have familys there as well as ourselves) at 12 noon weighed anchor and sailed with a light wind and a strong tide against us. Run ashore about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the wind having died away.

Oct. 2, 1864

Swung off the bank in the night and hoisted sail with the wind fresh and ahead. Ran about a half-mile, and struck another bank on the other side of the channel. Here we lay until the 3rd at 3 o'clock in the evening. By the help of the *Clyde's* crew was towed about 4 miles out to see and then dropped to shift for ourselves. I had four sick men on board, two of them very sick who I did not expect to get to Fort Myers alive.

Oct. 5, 1864

Made Chartooths [Charlotte] Harbour 20 miles to the eastward at 11 a.m., ran all day

with but little wind, we had at nite made about six miles with the wind springing tip. The captain lay offshore all night, the wind continued to freshen, and we had to shorten sail. At daylight, no island was to be seen and we sailed until 12 o'clock before we discovered land, and at 3 o'clock we made the Bay on the Bar of Cinnabar [Sanibel], and just at sunset landed at Pointe Rossa, 18 miles west of Fort Myers, and on the Mouth of the Cinnabar River. Here I taken 9 men into one of the Fort Myers boats which was kept at the point for an express boat, and at 4 a.m. we made the Fort. As soon as possible I dispatched boats after the remainder of the company and had them all here before night at the post; in the meantime had received and receipted for Capt. Crane's Company property, and the old man was on his way to take command of the rest of the 2nd cavalry at Ceday Keys. Nothing more of any importance Occurred but small beef raids until the 20 of Feb. 1865.<sup>32</sup>

Feb. 20, 1865

At 12 o'clock this day, Major Munden [Munnrclyn], Major Hendry, and Brevet Major Footman made their appearance opposite our post, demanding the surrender of the garrison. This being refused, 20 minutes were given to secure our women and children of which we had about 500, and 150 refugees. After about half an hour after the demand for Surrender was made, the action commenced by the enemy artillery. A brisk fire was kept up for two hours artillery firing. Our commanding officer supposing the rebs were about to make their battery closer, ordered myself and 20 men Out as sharpshooters and marching to within 600 yards of the rebel lines, placed my men behind trees and palmettos, ready for them if they should advance with a view of better position, so

we could pick off their artillerymen, then seize their guns and retire behind our own battery. But two of my men getting up from their hiding place were seen by the enemy and sent out their sharpshooters to oppose us. Now our fun commenced in earnest, our arms being so far Superior to theirs in distance that the boys made them get in a hurry. Such falling down, rolling over, getting up and running I have never saw in my life. Seeing that we had the advantage, thought it best to advance 200 yards further, and opened a sharp fire from there on their battery that compelled them to move off in a hurry, leaving several bunches of lint and bandages, splints, and two Muskets. They halted 300 yard back, and opposite our battery. We, moving up and firing fast, they fired but one shot from this point, and receiving a shell from our battery, limbered up in a hurry, and retreated two miles, then camped for the night. About 2 o'clock, the enemy abandoned their camp and retreated in a hurry leaving about half of 15 beeves, dropping their bags of corn haversacks, belts and pouches, sum of which contained from 58 to 100 caps all in good shape, several pairs of shoes and socks, and one horse.<sup>33</sup>

On the 20th day of February, the morning before the rebs made their appearance, I had received a printed order for discharge by order of Major [General] E.R.S. Canby, commanding the department of the Gulf and Mississippi. This order gave me a dishonorable discharge, and no final pay until I should satisfy the pay department that I was not indebted to the government.<sup>34</sup>

This was accomplished through Capt. Childs, 2nd U.S. colored Infantry stationed at Fort Myers, Florida, and thru 2nd Lieut. J A Miller, AACS, at Cedar Keys, Florida. I swear if there was a cause for my discharge, it was these two men's fault. Captain Childs had reported me as being neglectful and

inattentive to duty, which I can prove to be false, and have the proof in my hands to show, but the main cause was that he knew that he had swindled the government badly, and my being an officer, knowing the facts made me a good witness for the government, and I have the testimony of every officer with whom I served in my favor, both at the post of Fort Myers and at Cedar Keys, Florida.

I Swear that Capt. Childs has used the most gross and abusive language to me, this because he believed that I would prefer charges against him. Sometimes he would threaten to arrest me and put me in close confinement, then when he thought he had intimidated me, promised to stand by and do all that he could to help me along; this provided I would attend to the business inside my own company, and let all the others alone. He often swore that all the officers of the 2nd Florida Cavalry would go up the spout, and as for Capt. James D Green, he would god damn his sole, if he Capt. Childs did not go up; if he had the power to do it, and go to the dry Tortugas. This language was used to me because I had endorsed a set of charges which one of my men had drawn against Capt. Childs, and two others that Capt. J.D. Green and Capt. Bartholf had preferred against Capt. Childs. The officers being under arrest could not send their charges to Headquarters while under arrest, and the offence being so grievous, I felt it my duty to my brother officers and the government to sign them.

Then Capt. Childs promulgated through the garrison that he was the cause of my discharge, and he had to do it to save himself, and he was afraid that if I obtained an honorable discharge, I would ruin him.

The Captain is at large with his rank, without chastisement or correction, nearly



having been superceded by Capt. James Doyle in the command of the post. Capt. Doyle belongs to the 110th New York Volunteers.

Capt. Childs had had the audacity to say to my daughter Frances that he was the man who caused my discharge, that he was obliged to do it to save himself, but that it had gone further than he thought it would go, that it was so, and he could not help it. He dare not do anything in the matter, as he had done what he could to bring it about. My daughter says she will be qualified to this statement. He further stated to her that if he dared to he would help me out of the difficulty, but being placed as he was, he could not do it, but if it was himself, he could get out of the difficulty.<sup>35</sup>

Cedar Keys, Florida  
Sat., April 1, 1865  
My Dear Wife,

Today at six o'clock I went ashore to obtain evidence to lay before the court whose duty is to inquire into my conduct as an officer, and the reasons for my discharge, and meeting Major Weeks on the wharf, bid him good morning.

The Major appeared to be in a bad humor, and asked me what I was doing at that post, and without waiting for an answer, ordered me on board the vessel, and to remain on board and not to come ashore again. The Major then went to his quarters.

There being no boat to take me on board, I taken the advantage to go to one of the refugee officers quarters, and wrote a request to the Adjutant's office for permission to go on shore to obtain what evidence I could in my case, and shortly afterward went on board. About 10 o'clock,

the orderly brought me a note with permission to go on shore. I remained on shore all day, and even slept on shore, and having finished all the business I had at Cedar Keys, went back on board and remained until she sailed.

Arrived at Key West en route for Ponta Rossa on the 6th of April, sailed for Ponta Rossa on the 9th by the way of Cedar Keys with about one hundred refugees and seventy-five contraband.

I left Cedar Keys on the 13th for Ponta Rossa [Punta Rassa]. I find all our men very much dissatisfied with their new officers, and they have signed petitions for Lieutenant Miller & myself to be reinstated and returned to duty. I do not think their petitions will receive any notice. On the 6th one of our gunboats lying off the post of Cedar Keys captured a small sloop with 3 bales of cotton on board, and two double barreled shotguns. This boat was bound for Havana. The cotton will go as other captured property has gone, and as you have seen it go heretofore.

(Wm McCullough)

April 21, 1865  
Capt. Crain: [Crane]  
Dear Sir:

I seat myself to give you a small history of a fuss between myself and the man you once befriended, when in reality he ought to have been hung. Francis A. Ivey, the man you enlisted after you knew him to be a traitor to the government, and that he was one of the very men who broke up the lighthouses at Keybiken and Jupiter. Besides you know he did kill White and McQuin, all these facts you had at hand, and could prove the crimes against him. Yet this man has done and is

still doing all he can against you, and now for my story.<sup>36</sup>

On the 20th day of April, Seargent Ritter of Co. A of your old regiment received orders to get up all the refugees to clean up the ground for an encampment for familys. Ivey came to me, I stated to him that I had my official business to attend to, and that Sgt. Ritter had nothing to do with me. Ritter came to me and apologized saying he had not sent Ivey to me. I told him to tell Corp. Ivey that I would thank him to attend to his own business and let myself alone. At this, Ritter left, and in a few minutes Ivey came back to where I was talking with another man and moving my plunder to my camp so that I could get to work and finish up my returns that I had commenced at Fort Myers previous to the abandonment of that post by Capt. Doyle; and the first I knew of his presence, caught me by the collar jerking me around, with a heavy blow to my temple, and another one in the eye staggering me back from him at some distance. I then turned to leave him but he continued to follow after me, and striking at me, at length I caught his hand and held him fast, as I can hold off Ivey. Sgt. Edwards of Co. B came up and told me to let go of Ivey. I did so, and Ivey taken out his knife and swore he would cut my god dam throat. There being a heavy piece of wood by me, I picked it up for the purpose of defending myself, but Sgt. Edwards of Co. B stepped in between us and made Ivey put up his knife, I laid down the piece of wood, then left them as I thought. But Ivey followed immediately after me using the words "I wish I had my gun, I would shoot you," and casting an eye back, saw that he was going to take hold of me again. I moved somewhat faster, and seeing my saber, sprang for it, had nearly drawn the blade out when Ivey caught the point of the scabbard pushing toward me, Edwards taking hold of my right hand trying to push

the blade into the scabbard. In the scuffle, my feet caught in a small barrel hoop, and I fell, with my head under the bow of a boat, and between a large box, falling on my back. Ivey thrust his finger into my eye, and I caught his hand and pullet it out. Doctor Deshon of Co. B came up with Joseph Stephens and others, and taken them away. As I got up, Ivey threw a piece of stove coal at my head. I saw it and dodged it. He then left with a threat to shoot me and somebody else.

In about half an hour, Lt. Drew came to the island and I reported the case to him. He said he would have the matter attended to, and send Ivey to Depot Key, but the wind raising so high directly after, it was impossible for a boat to leave, and the matter delayed until the next day. In the meantime, I had an interview with Lt. Drew and stated all the particulars in the case. He said he would have him arrested and charges prepared against him. So the matter rested until the next morning.

The water being smooth, Ivey and myself and Edwards with a boat party proceeded to Depot Key. I went to the quartermaster's office to draw up a statement against Ivey today before his Co. commander, and Major Weeks commanding the post.

In a few minutes Sgt. Carlton came to me saying that Major Weeks wished for my presence. I went to the Major's quarters and he was at breakfast. I told the Sgt. to call me when the major was ready, as I wished to write a few more lines. In about five minutes, the sgt. came to me. As we stepped out of the office, we met Major Weeks, passed the compliments of the morning. The Major requested me to go back into the office and wait for a moment, as he wished to speak with Ivey; about five minutes after, a black corporal and two of his noble

brothers came with their arms, bayonets fixed, and conveyed me to the guardhouse where I remained until ten o'clock the next day without anything to eat or drink, as he thought. But unknown to him, I sent to Capt. Green for paper and ink with a request that he would call and see me on important business. In a few minutes he came, and I told him what had happened, and wished him to take my written statement to Major Weeks. At this he refused, and gave as his reasons that his commission had been taken from him, and he expected that I would receive the same treatment, that Ivey and Edwards had been doing all they could for our destruction and Capt. Crane's, as he knew them to be rank rebels at heart, and that he had done all that he could to prevent the captain from enlisting them. Edwards was assigned to his co., and it was on account of their disloyalty that caused him to reject Ivey from Co. B.

As I said, about 10 o'clock the 2nd day, I was released from the guard house and sent before the Marshal who asked me a few questions about my difficulty, and I handed him the statement I had drawn up. He promised to hand it to Major Weeks, and told me that the major said if he heard anything more from me, he would send me to Key West. I answered that is what I wish as I was brought to the post of Cedar Keys with my family against my will, knowing the place to be a sickly place, and that upwards of 500 people had died there last summer of disease and bad treatment.

I was then dismissed, and went over to Tucker's my old company clerk, where I got a good meal, and commenced to make out my final returns with the hope of obtaining my final pay.

But I was such an eyesore the major could not bear me so near his quarters. He sent an

orderly with orders to go to the wharf and remain there until a boat was ready to go to Sea Horse Key that would carry me off. This key my family was at without shelter or tent, as I had not had time to build one before I was arrested. I complied with the order so far as going to the wharf. The sun shone very hot, I remained there about three hours, then went to the marshal and told him I wished a boat to carry me to the Key. He said there would be one ready in an hour or so. I waited until I was obliged to attend to the calls of nature, and while away, the boat started and I was left. I then went back to Tucker's and slept that night. In the boat that left in the morning, the marshal went to the island, saw my family, and asked them about the difficulty. When Mrs. McCullough told the marshal (Capt. Peas) how the difficulty occurred, he rose with a curse ordering Lt. Drew to send Ivey to Depot Key under a guard. Ivey was sent, and that was all that was done in the matter.

I went to work, made my returns and affidavits that had to be sworn to before the adjutant, and while I was waiting for them, the major came into the offices. Asking me what I was doing there, I told him. There were several men in the office at the time. I was requested to leave the office, and go below. I did so, and about half an hour later, the adjutant came down stairs and had my affidavits taken. He then said the major had told him not to have me about his quarters, as he would not tolerate me on any account.

I told the adjutant that I had several of those affidavits to have taken, and I should call on him to administer in the office or on the street. To this, he replied "I cannot help it." I asked the adjutant if he knew what I had done to incense the major so against me, he said he did not, but the major was very much changed since he had killed the sentinel at the wharf, and since his trial and acquittal at

Key West, he had changed very much towards all the officers of the regiment. As to my treatment by Ivey, there has been no attention paid to it by Major Weeks or the marshall. I have applied for a permit to leave the post with my family for the City of Key West, and have been refused several times. I will try to keep you informed of all that takes place here, and wish you to give me all the news you have, politically and commercialy.

Respectfully yours,  
Wm McCullough

Key West, Florida  
July 4[?], 1865  
Friend Capt. Green,

This is to inform you that I am well at present, and hope this may find you the same.

I arrived at this port on the 3rd and found the General absent at St. Mark, and sent my application to the adjutanat general's office for approval at this place. Have not had a hearing from it, and have written to Mrs. McCullough to apply for permission to take her family to New Orleans.

I have learned there is a steamer at Cedar Keys for the purpose of carrying refugees to the different ports along the coast of West Florida, and then proceed to the above port. I have sent her a few goods and my watch to turn into cash, as she may wish and want funds, and I have none to send her. Yet the government owes me nearly \$ 900 or \$ 1,000 as 2nd and 1st Lieutenant in the 2nd Regiment of the Florida Cavalry, and refuses to pay until I satisfy the pay department that I am not indebted to the government, which of course is right.

My papers have been made out and forwarded last May, and I suppose it will be six months or one year before I am paid, and if I am taken sick, or no work, my family must suffer all this time. So much for true loyalty and zeal for one's country, and the loss of all his personal affects, home comforts, society, and company of one's relatives.

Dear friend, I do not believe that any set of men was ever treated as cruelly as the refugee officers and their soldiers have been in this war. This district bears the name of the black list department, and well it may, for there is a set of the grandest rascals in it as ever lived. Every cowardly scamp or villain that is too mean for other departments are sent here as punishment for sum offence. They are subject to enmity and possible immorality of all kinds, setting the worst examples before the females of this country. They perform sham marriages, and make them believe they are legal, with such these scoundrels live until some other beauty comes along who takes their fancy, then the first one is cast aside, and allurement made to entice the second beauty. There was one exception at Fort Myers, Florida, in Capt. Bartholf of the 2nd U.S. colored infantry.

The officers tells them when the war is over, they will take them home and provide a good home for them, but lo and behold, in two or three months, these young things are thrown aside, some of them in a state of pregnancy, or have contracted a bad disease which will last them their lifetime. Such was the case with a girl at St. Andrew's Bay by an officer of one of our gunboats lying at the point when we made a raid in West Florida. We called and taken about two hundred refugees on board for the post of Cedar Keys, and in that number, found the one mentioned above. After her arrival at the post of Cedar Keys, she lived about three

months and died of pox, perfect rotten neglected by the doctor who was a perfect sot. The commander of the post being drunk two-thirds of his time. Major Weeks had a young lady living with him when his lady came out from Key West, and before he brought his lady ashore, the honorable gentleman sent his miss to the mainland for quiet's sake.

And here is another instance of virtue in an officer of our government service in the person of Capt. Hall of the 2nd U.S. Colored Infantry, commanding the garrison at Cedar Keys, Fla. He pretended love to a young lady from Long [?] County, and married her, tho having a wife in the north. Shortly after his marriage with this second lady, he resigned and was relieved by Capt. Andrews of the 2nd U.S. Colored Regiment. He prepared to leave the post and his second wife behind, but the wife being too faithful to her marriage vows, refused to a separation, and compelled the honorable captain to take her on board of one of the gunboats about to sail for the port of Key West, Fla. They went on board about 3 o'clock in the evening, and directly after dinner was eaten, the lady was taken sick, and before night she was a corpse. The capt. wished to bury her at sea, but to this the ship's officers refused, as the ships were anchored but half a mile from the navy burying ground on the island of Sea Horse Key, and four miles from the headquarters of Capt. Hall's old regiment. The lady had her rings on her fingers at her death, and Hall wished to take them off, but the officers on board would not allow it, as they suspected foul play in the death of the unhappy woman. Lieut. Jones of the vessel went on shore with a party of his own men to open to open the grave, and Capt. Hall appropriated the jewelry to his own use, altho it came by honorable parents of the Young lady. She was very highly respected

by all persons in her father's neighborhood. She was a corpse 6 hours after going on board the vessel. I have forgotten the name of the vessel and captain, Lieut. Jones was one of the officers of the vessel. The vessel's name is on the tombstone of the lady's grave.

This is all at present, give my regards to your lady, and receiving the same yourself.

Wm McCullough

Key West, Fla.  
May 28, 1865  
Dear Dunbar<sup>37</sup>

I arrived at Key West the 27th, and today commenced to clean up the old ship and paint in the meantime. I penned a small note as a request to General Newton for transportation for myself and family to New Orleans. Not getting a hearing from him, I went in person to see him, and found he had left on board of the *General McCullum* this morning at 10' o'clock for Cedar Keys and St. Marks. I then penned a letter to my wife at Cedar Keys, Fla. by the schooner *Matchless* with instructions for her to see the general and obtain a passage to the port of Key West, as I expect to sail for New Orleans in the course of four or five days, and on arrival at this, if I have left, for her to see the provost marshal who will get passage for her and children to New Orleans where I will be waiting for her and children, and will have a house in the city and room to live in until we can get a passage up the Mississippi River to my relatives in Illinois or Ohio.

It is impossible for me to keep my eyes from the northwest channel, the course my family must come to get here.

Another Man of War is just sailing by for the north, the anxious crew is cheering them on their homeward bound passage. They give them three hearty hip, hip, hoorays, then all is quiet again. Jasper, today I have sold my library at a very low price to obtain what funds I possibly could for my family to bear their expenses to the far west. This library is one I have collected since I came into the Union lines. You know I cannot do without reading matter, these books I have worked hard to get, and what reading and writing I have got was obtained after my day's work was done. I also occupied my Sundays in reading and writing. My little library consisted of three hundred and fifty volumes of assorted works. This library I have sold, as I do not know that the general will give my family transportation. He may be induced by Major Weeks, who is my deadly enemy, not to furnish transportation for them, and I do not know what his ill will can be for, unless he is afraid I will get where I can give evidence against a man by the name of Ivey, a member of Co. A, 2nd regiment, Florida cavalry. Even should this be the case, there is plenty of evidence that can be obtained against him. He is a grand rascal, and imprisonment is too good for him. He has, at one time to my knowledge, stabbed one man, a soldier of the U.S. army at Tampa, at another time shot at his brother-in-law, and again at Fort Drum in Brevard County he killed Wm White by shooting him, having placed himself in ambush, and as White approached, shot him - leaving a wife and two little children, the oldest not two years old, thirty miles to where the widow could get help and assistance, she being in a forward state of pregnancy. Previously to his killing White, he also killed a man by the name of McQuin, and tried to make it appear that White had done the deed - but we all knew White to be better disposed, and then White Could prove where he was when the murder

was done, and Ivey Could not prove where he was. This is the man that Major Weeks has protected against law and justice, and the same man that broke up the light house at Keybysken Bay, Fla., and threatened the men at the place with death if they had anything to say about it, then proceeded to Jupiter and destroyed the lighthouse at that point. Yet Major Weeks himself, guilty of murdering a sentinel while on post by shooting him, is the man to protect crime so heinous, and while guilty of these acts, are acquitted by court martial, returned to duty, and promoted to the rank of full major of 2nd regiment of Florida Cavalry -while other men of known loyalty and zeal for the welfare of the country sacrificing home and family comforts are cast aside as being worthless, and the honorable Major being guilty of a great misdemeanor is held to office and promoted still higher for all other offices that may be vacant by deaths or other \_\_\_\_\_[?].

For all this the government is not to blame, but the combination of surrounding scoundrels at the head of affairs. Charges have been preferred against a number of officers on the West, Southwest, and South Florida. The charges have been sent to General John Newton, commander of the district of Key West and Tortugas. These very papers have been handed back to the officers that were preferred against in part, in one instance, Major Weeks told me that it was so in regard to charges preferred against himself, that he stuck the lamp to the papers with his own hand in the presence of General Newton, and he laughing at the papers burning.

Jasper, when Ivey came to Fort Myers and found me and my family there, it taken him quite by surprise, and he commenced concocting means for my ruin, the opportunity he has found under Major Weeks

commanding post Cedar Keys, and 2nd regiment U.S. Florida Cavalry.

Wm McCullough

Key West, Florida

June 21st, 1865

Dear Charly:

Today I have written to Mrs. McCullough sending her fifteen dollars, all the funds I have on hand.

I have also received a letter of character from H. A. Crane, late commanding officer of the 2nd Florida Cavalry, and Capt. Charles How, Collector at the port of Key West, has promised to give me a letter of recommendation of character.

We are trying our engine to see if it will work, and carry us to your city of New Orleans, We will sell for that port as soon as our engine will work. My family I left at Cedar Keys, and do not know where they are at present, they may be at Tampa, but this I do not know. It has been a month since I saw them, and three weeks since I have heard from them.

The times are dull at this place, the city of Key West is quite healthy at present, two tugs left this morning for Pensacola and thence to New Orleans. Dear Charly, I have been quite sick for days, but am better at present. The old *Alliance* is the dirtiest ship that I ever saw, and the old man feeds his men very bad, sometimes not more than half-rations, and badly cooked. Wages is \$ 40 per month, and one ration, such as it is.

I am in hopes I will get a letter from my family before we sail. I wrote to Jasper, my adopted son. He is in Co. A, my old regiment. I am looking for the schooner

*Matchless*, U.S. Transport with all the eyes I have, with the hopes of seeing my family, or getting a letter before we sail for your port.

I attribute my difficulty to Major Weeks fault, and may God reward him for his bad treatment of me and mine. If I had been deserving of this unkindness, I would not bemoan and complain of the treatment. It is thought that we will sail today, but I think it doubtful. This is the 22nd, and I will not close this until I know we will sail. A steamer arrived in port this morning from Pensacola. I have not learned her business or where she is bound.

June 23rd - this morning I have written to Capt. James Doyle of the 110th New York Volunteers for his certificate showing that the company and company property for which I was accountable, was removed from the post of Fort Myers, from under my control before an officer had been appointed to receive and receipt to me for the same, and stating to him that it would put me to a great deal of trouble to get my pay without his certificate. This gentleman is stationed at Fort Jefferson, Tortugas, Florida.

A sailing vessel is in the north channel this morning, it is thought to be the schooner *Matchless*, the tug has gone after it as the wind is light, and tide strong against. Two large steamers passed this morning in the southwest channel, one to the west, and one to the east. Could just see their hulls in the distance. The schooner *Harriet* is taking on board subsistence for the troops at Tampa and Cedar Keys. Two prisoners of war was put on board the *General Sheridan* this morning bound north.

June 24 - This morning we leave Key West for New Orleans by the way of Cedar Keys, Fla. Our vessel's engine is broken down, and we will make slow progress, and I therefore

forward this to prepare you for my arrival, and am in hopes of that of my wife and family. This is a pleasant day, and the sea smooth. I now close with a wish for your welfare - believe.

In haste,  
Wm McCullough

Key West, Florida  
June 25, 1865  
Dear Jasper,

I will address a few lines to you. Saw two large steamers and schooner in route for Key West, on board the schooner I think my family is, as they may have obtained transportation of the general. If so, may God reward Maj. Weeks for his cruelty to me and them. The day is very fine, and the sea as smooth as the deck we stand upon. We have the schooner *Harriet* in tow with subsistence for and beef cattle on board for the troops at Cedar Keys, and several passengers for the same place.

The captain who is Baker by name is not the man he has represented himself to be, and has not done by me as he promised in relation to my family; he promised to use his influence with Major Weeks and the General if I would ship with him, and he has not done so to my knowledge.

This morning we had stinking salt beef for breakfast, seasoned with a few maggots. Our coffee, or water spoiled by the old grounds from the cabin table, and sweetened by order of the captain. The best part of our rations are used in the cabins for the benefit of the ship's officers and passengers. This fact can be proven by the cook, and second; the officers are not allowed to draw rations, but can buy from the commissary at government prices, and get pay in lieu of subsistence. As

for pork, the hands hardly ever see any, as it is all put on the table in the cabin. More ruff this evening and through the night.

June 26th - 10 o'clock, the engine broke down, and we turned the schooner *Harriet* loose to make the best of her way to Cedar Keys. Our fire room has 4 feet of water in it. Ship's pumps in engine room will not work, all hands called to ball water out of the ship, and she rolls awfully, the seashore is four miles distant. Taken in sail and let go of the anchor. Today the fire room became so hot, our firemen were burned out, the 2nd engineer, myself, and four men sick.

June 27 - Weighed anchor and steamed up for Egmond Key during the remainder of the 26th, and converted our low pressure to a high pressure, making about four miles per hour, and made Egmond Key at 6 o'clock. John Collier came on board thinking we wished a pilot. I asked him if he knew anything about my family, he did not. I then gave him instructions to say if he saw them, that I was on my way to New Orleans, and for them to go on to Key West, and thence to New Orleans. I expected when I saw Collier to remain at Egmond for three or four days, but left the port before Collier got out of sight, as the captain was afraid his crew would leave him on account of condition the vessel was in, and the grub so bad. It is likely we will call in at Cedar Keys, then if possible proceed to Pensacola, and New Orleans. If not able to proceed, will do some repairing and then sail again.

Made Seahorse Key on the 28th at daybreak, and at 9 o'clock lowered away a boat and pulled ashore at Depot Key. Reported to Major Weeks the condition we were in, and stated that we had turned the *Harriet* adrift, as it was impossible for us to bring her in tow. At the same time learned that my family was still there, and through Capt.



Peas, acting Provost Marshal, obtained transportation for them on board of our vessel to New Orleans, tho with the loss of everything in the shape of household goods as Capt. Bacon would not wait after he had the family on board saying he had positive orders from Major Weeks to sail in an hour from the time we started from his quarters. If this be true, it shows against Major Weeks - it shows him to be a tyrant over me, because he knew when he gave the order that Capt. Bacon could not reach his vessel in an hour's time, as we had 8 miles to pull, and the tide against us, running at the rate of 5 miles to the hour, it being flood.

In the evening we had a smooth sea and light wind, on the 29th, sea smooth and weather moderate. On my arrival I found Mrs. McCullough quite unwell, and most of the children also, caused from living on bad provisions issued to them from the commissary; the flour being black, rotten, and very bitter. As for meat, they had codfish, rotten and stunk very bad; all that was left behind, and I gave them my own allowance on the voyage to Orleans. My wife looked more like the dead than the living. She told me that the negro soldiers had been very abusive once or twice in my absence to her had used the refugees and familys very bad, going to their tents at night and stealing, pulling some of the women out of bed and actually having connections with them. This conduct was reported to the Co. officers, and the satisfaction they received was if the woman would point them out, they would be punished, but this was a matter of impossibility as the night was dark, and the negro darker if possible. When the woman would threaten the negro with their officers, they replied they did not care a dam, as the officers had told them if they the soldiers would pull them the officers to the island, they might do as they pleased. This language

is a provable fact, and deny it who will; and for this trash and some of their officers, a few in our northern and western states are posing with the highest plaudits possible.

Yesterday, two of the deck hands were called upon to pass coal into the coal bunkers, and today we all were ordered to do the same work. I told the first mate I would not do it as I had shipped on for a deck hand and not a coal passer, but after reconsidering the matter, I did not think it right to impose upon the rest of the deck hands. We only had four deck hands in all, and it was hard for them to pass coal and keep a regular watch on deck, the ship had but two coal passers. This was Bacon's fault, as he was afraid to call on the S.M. for a full crew and full rations for them, not knowing his duty as a master of a vessel. This was the first time he had had a ship under his command, and he was afraid he would lose this one, as he did on his arrival at the city of New Orleans, as there is no man or men on earth that would bear the treatment received from this man. Mates, all hands, went to the S.M. at Orleans and made their report, and the captain was discharged from the command, but retained in charge of the crew as watch. When the men saw this, they all left the ship, and Baker could not get another man to go on board of the vessel with him, and the S.M. was obliged to get another man in his place.

On the 30th, the sea rough and rolling so as to take water on deck. The wind very light. Mrs. McCullough and daughter Frances sick. Coaling as usual on this ship at sea.

July 1, 1865

Head wind and rough sea, coaling as the day before. Today meat is out and water short. Two large steamships in site, one passing to

westward, the other to eastward. Sea heavy, and the vessel rolling at a terrible rate. Passing coal as the day before, and arrived at the bar of the great Mississippi River at 8 o'clock p.m., and quarantine ground at 8 o'clock Sunday night. Without meat from the 1st of July to the 4th, and scrubbing and coaling as when at sea. The hands not excused from scrubbing or coaling on the 4th day of July, but thinking too much of this day, I refused to work, knowing we would lay here at anchor until the doctor should see fit to release our vessel; and applied to the captain for a boat to cross the river and obtain supplies for my family. The captain concluded to cross with me, and the engineer. I bought one ham, some butter, and a few vegetables which my family needed very badly as the scurvy began to make its appearance on them.

While lying here, expended fifty dollars in buying vegetables, melons, etc. for them. For 15 lbs of ham I paid 5.35, 50¢ for 1-lb of butter, 3.50 for two bushels of potatoes, melons 20 to 50¢ a piece, tomatoes 20¢ a dozen. My wife and children without for four days except for my rations. At the quarantine ground, Bacon the Capt. equivocated about our sailing from the Port of Key West, first said we sailed from Key West, then said we sailed from Cedar Keys - in fact both stories were literally true as we had sailed from both ports, but his contradictory reports tied our vessel up where our men are worked with tea or coffee and but half bread to appease hunger. What coffee the hands got was water poured on the coffee grounds that came from the cabin table, and sugar sufficient to make it taste sickening.

July 5, 1865

Sailed at 7 o'clock for New Orleans - a large propeller came to anchor eastern of us last

night with a large monitor in tow, and steamed up the river just ahead of us. This is two monitors that have passed while we lay here at this place. Then the Steamship *Mississippi* and another large one passed up the river in a race about 11 o'clock. We arrived at the great empire city of New Orleans at 5 o'clock on the morning of July 6, and landed my family, paying 10 dollars a month's rent in advance.

On the 7th day of July, all the hands were discharged in the evening. Now it is root pig or die poor in a strange city among strangers. I was quite sick today, but better this evening. My dear friend, this is the darkest day I have ever seen; a wife and seven children, all helpless and in want, looking to me for their support in food and clothing, and having but 10 dollars and 50 cents in my pocket, in a strange city with 2/3 of the inhabitants seceders who look upon me and all refugees as enemys to the confederacy and her cause. All this I do not care about, but the treatment I have received from the government officially, having been wrongfully dismissed from the service of my beloved country, without a trial by military court, or even a hearing from the board of investigation that I had succeeded in getting at Punta Rosa, Florida, Capt. Harding of the 99th U.S. Colored Infantry being president. I am turned off without a final settlement until I satisfy the pay department that I am not indebted to the government. My returns were made out and forwarded on the 10th day of last May, and no return from them yet. The officers with whom I was connected forwarded a letter of recommendation to Gen. Newton commanding the district of Key West and Tortugas, and asked that a board of officers be detailed to inquire into my conduct as an officer, also my papers. The board was therefore detailed, met, examined the case, and forwarded their proceedings to the

general for his approval, and my re-instatement in my company. This I was told by the president of the court, but from the general I have not been able to hear, neither have my friends. I therefore am cast among strangers to live the best I can, after being driven from my home and effects because I would not fight against the government that I was reared under. I have 60 dollars due me for work on the *Defiance* transport ship in the QM Quarter Master's employ. This money I am not able to get for some time yet, as the QM is very slow in paying his men, and Capt. Bacon does not know how to make out his payrolls. I have been in the city several days, and have not got work; have taken letters to General E.R.S. Canby to see if he could not get a hearing from the proceedings of the court of inquiry at Punta Rossa.

As soon as he opened the letters and looked at two of them, he handed them back, saying he could do nothing with them, or in the matter. This he must have known that I knew to be a falsehood, having been placed in the position that I was in the army, and the number of years that I had served in the regular army, being seven years and six months in the Indian wars as a volunteer in the state of Florida.

After his refusing to assist me in getting a hearing from the court, I asked him for transportation for myself and family to the city of Cairo, Illinois, near to where I had some relatives living, and near to my home in Ohio. But to this he flatly refused and said he could not. Thinking that I had mis-understood, I asked him again saying, "you cannot?", the answer being, "No sir, I cannot". Here he must have known that I knew he lied as there were positive orders from the war department to furnish all soldiers with free transportation home, and I had a copy or the order with me. He said he

had received no such order and could not do it.

I then left the office - as I left the office, he referred me to an officer in Florida, the Provisional Governor of the state. And so my family and self must die or perish in the city waiting for an answer from the governor of Florida. But I thought otherwise, and five days after applied to the Quartermaster for transportation to Cairo, Illinois, and on the letters of recommendation obtained it, and steamed up the river on the night of July 29 with four companys of the 11th Missouri volunteers.

This is all at present from your adopted father.

Wm McCullough

Dear jasper:

This is August 3rd, and left Cairo, Illinois for St. Louis, Missouri, from there we expect to go to Hamilton, Illinois, and employ an attorney to collect my pay, if necessary, then go to work at whatever turns up.

Arrived at Hamilton, Hancock County, Illinois on August 7th, 1865. Four days after, went to to work on the railroad at 2.25 per day. Family is all sick with chills and fever. James has the ganders badly. I keep very well, and think this to be a healthy country.

Now for some of the suffering at Fort Myers and Cedar Keys, Florida. The commanding officers at Fort Myers would make details for beef raids and scouts into the interior, the[n] visit the family who had the best looking wife, and by his greenbacks and prizes of female clothing sent for to Key West, or captured from the enemy country,

for from the small blockade runners of the rebs, induce the loving wife to cohabit with him. These women and their children were mostly destitute of wearing material and bedding, having left behind all when they came into our lines. In some cases, the commander of the garrison caused the wife to leave their husband, as in the case of Mrs. Susan Yates, the wife of Wm. Yates, a private in Co. A, 2nd Florida Cavalry, and stationed at Fort Myers. The captain formed the plan of a raid into the northeast corner of Mani[tee] County, and the southwest corner of Brevard county. These countys are in the southeast part of Florida, and bordering on the bays and mouth of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic coast.

I was detailed to take charge of this party of thirty men, and make a raid 80 miles into the interior of the country and heart of the stock range of the rebs where there was danger of meeting numerous partys or rebel beef hunters. Their partys numbered from 25 to 30 men. My being so well acquainted with the country, and men that I would have to contend with, I picked the best and most tried men of Companys A & B. In making choice of my men, I left Wm Yates out of the detail, not that I doubted his bravery and loyalty, but because I had seen the intimacy that was springing up between Mrs. Yates and Capt. Childs of the 2nd U.S. Colored Infantry, who commanded the post, and had been in command from about the 10th of April, 1864.

When I made my report of my detail and application for subsistence, Capt. Childs wished to see my list, and running his eye over it, said that he did not see Yate's name on here. My answer was, "No, sir, I do not want him, as he might do me some damage." Capt. Childs said, "I don't care a dam, I want him to go, and he must go." I answered that if it was an order, I would take him, and thus

the matter rested. During the next night, an express came up the river informing the commanding officer that the small transport vessels were lying at the mouth of the river awaiting the troops to make a raid in Hernando County. This raid had been planned about a month before, and their arrival relieved me from the painful duty of taking Yates with me, or of even going myself on the Levey Co. [?] raid, as it was necessary to take all the troops possible on the Hernando raid, there being a good many rebel soldiers in there.<sup>38</sup>

On this raid, our men suffered awfully with the heat of a hot July sun on the decks of the small tenders that we had to use to transport us up the coast to our landings in Hernando Co. On the passage our subsistence and water run short, and we did not dare go ashore as we did not wish to appraise the rebs of our approach and intentions. After being 5 days on board these vessels exposed to the hot rays of the sun, two heavy rains, and heavy dews we arrived and landed at the Antelope's [Anclote] Stand where we obtained plenty of good fresh water, and a fine beef that scouts of ours had killed a few moments before we landed. We had ten boxes of hardtack, this being brought ashore and equally divided among the men, when all hands went to work and made coffee and broiling their fresh beef which sent its fine flavor thru the air. Methinks I smell it now, as I am scratching these lines to you. This raid was a cotton stealing and plundering raid, as a few of the captains of our gunboat tenders had learned that the Mr. Yulee's plantation was near their cruising ground, also a Mr. Parsons who possessed a great deal of nice rich household goods and some cash which might be got for their own use, and that of their Chums. The government might go to the devil for them. So we landed about 170 refugee soldiers with nearly two full companys of negro troops, and marched

80 miles while the vessels lay off waiting our arrival in the rear of the little town of Bayport. On Our march, we skirmished with the enemy 1-112 days, having one man slightly wounded in the lower part of the leg. Capt. Childs turned over the command of the land forces to Capt. Bartholf of the 2nd U.S. Colored infantry, and himself remaining on board of the *Stonewall*, to approach the town in front by water. This move was made so that Capt. Childs could watch the operations of the navy officers to see that they did not land and go to pillaging before his brother negro officers came tip to share in the general pillage. The negro troops on their march by land behave most outrageously to the women of the country, some of these women have husbands in our ranks. They attacked one poor family, it is true the man was in the ranks against us as near as we could learn from his neighbors, but Our noble soldiers stripped the women of all the clothing they Could find but what the women and children had on their backs. In the meantime, searching the house and boxes for cash and jewelry. In one small box they found a ring made of pure gold and given to the sister by a brother who had been conscripted into the rebel service. The child begged with streaming eyes for her brother's gift without avail. The girl went to the captain who at first did not heed her tears, at length the officers of the command spoke of the brutality of making war and plundering women and children, then and not until then did the commander inquire for the man who took the ring. After having the man pointed out by his brother soldiers, the rascal denied having it to the captain, saving he did not take it. The black rascals even taking the tin pans, coffee pots, and post which this property the troops had no use for, and had to leave it on the road.

Again, farther on the march, the officers in command promised Capt. Wm. Hooker's

family protection if they Would give them breakfast and a shirt each. This the ladies promised to do, and did it in good faith, but on the eve of taking Lip the line of march, the negro troops were pillaging in the out houses. At length the order for marching came, and Capt. Bartholf being somewhat in the rear of the command, ran thru a patch Of gourd vines, and as was getting over the fence, discovered his negro troops picking tip goods Of some kind, and went back, took tip his armful of lady's wear, cleared the fence, mounted his horse, and rode to the front with his arms full Of lady's dresses, underskirts, chemises, like a true and gallant officer of the government, and army of the U.S., and commanding on this raid. I being left behind to see the last man leave, about the time the last man got over the fence, one of the ladys saw her shawl, and requested the man to give it to her, and seeing he refused, asked me to get it for her which I did, remarking to the man that we were not at war with women and children, that by kind acts we would gain many friends to the Union cause.

Left with the last man and marched about 15 miles, and encamped for the night between two large ponds of water, the road running between same in Our possession, the rebs Could not charge us but by the two flanks, nor get close up to reach us with shot, as Our arms carried to a greater distance.

This night the rebs sent their scouts to look after us, and running into our picket posts were fired into, when their Mounted man retired leaving one of their men in our charge and care, and after a small consideration concluded to take up our line of march and proceeded to the side of Bayport Swamp, knowing if the rebs got in possession of the road leading to it, they would form an ambuscade, and with their two 12 lb. howitzers, would be able to rip us

back, or cut our command to pieces, and not be able to tell their whereabouts until fired upon. A night march is rather a nice thing with a wily foe watching your every move, sides, front, and rear, having but three miles to march to give the desired place, and if obtained before the enemy, a place of safety against any number of cavalry, as the swamp was four miles wide and nearly 100 miles long.

If we should be overpowered by number or artillery, we could take to the swamp, and the rebels might shoot and be damned. They might as well look for a rabbit as LIS in this dense swamp. The rebels made their appearance in about an hour after we had laid down our arms, and opened fire into one another, supposing that when we had passed their advanced pickets that we were one of their parties that was to form the ambush, and when their ambushing party came up, Capt. Lesley opened fire into his own son's ranks, wounding his son, and killing one man. How it happened that the old Captain did not do more damage is beyond my comprehension, as the distance was not over 30 yards when the fire opened. After daylight we explored the battle ground where the rebels fought between themselves, and picked up one musket, and one hat with a ball hole through it, and a good deal of the wearer's hair sticking in it.

About 42 o'clock we made the little town of Bayport, tired and hungry. On our arrival we found plenty of pork, bacon, hams, corn meal, butter, a barrel of lard, molasses, and sugar. This the men were allowed to wash and use as they pleased, knowing at the same time their rations were short, and no source whence to get supplies in reach in this place. The troops used Mr. Parsons very bad, smashing up everything in the house and in the yard. The negro troops must have destroyed nearly three thousand dollars

worth of property, besides what the navy officers had made use of, looking glasses, family pictures of the families for a hundred years back, one of them very heavy plated with gold, the frame did not cost less than fifty or a hundred dollars.

This an officer belonging to Co. A Florida Cavalry taken and placed on board the Schooner *Ariel* in care of Capt. Russell who commanded her. During the return voyage, the vessels became separated, and Capt. Russell appropriated the picture to himself, and sent it north to his family. When Lieut. Miller called on him for the picture, he knew nothing about it. Lieut. Miller said to him that if he did not produce it, he would report him and all the grand scamps concerned in the pillage affair, as it was most shameful. Capt. Russell promised to return the picture, but I do not know if he did or not.

Hamilton, Illinois  
Hancock County  
July 23, 1866  
Dear Friend:

I embrace this present of addressing a few lines to you hoping they will find you as well as they leave us. I have not done much this past winter as I taken a bad cold which settled on my lungs and troubles me very much.

I have seen several of my relations since my arrival here. I do not like this Country much, not that it is not productive, but so muddy a good part of the time. And then again a man as poor as I am, without money or means, cannot make a living here in the winter. The poor man is more beholden to the rich man here than the slave to his master in the Southern states, and is talked to worse.

Frances (my oldest daughter) hired to a gentleman of a large family at eight dollars per month. During fine weather, the boys and hired hand Would milk, but when it turned cold and blustery, Fanny had to do the milking, and bring the water the family used for washing, drinking, and cooking near 300 yards Lip a very steep hill. This she done when she had her monthly periods upon her.

During the time of my residence in the slave states for 24 years, I never knew the slave woman to work out, or do any thing that Would wet their feet. In this respect I think the employers more oppressive to the hired man or woman here than the slave master. By this you may think me in favor of slavery, but it is not so.

Dear Friend

I have not got my pay yet. I have written to Key West for certificates, also I Tampa Bay, and Cedar Keys, Fla.

I have written Adjutant Pretty for his certificate, and to have the letters that must be there for me, also for a hearing from the board of investigation that I had called in my behalf, but do not get a hearing from either place. I attribute it all to Major Weeks, as he is one of the grandest villains in the U.S. Army. There is no doubt in my mind but what he has swindled the government out of several thousand dollars in captured goods and furniture. In July, 1864 he made a raid in middle Florida, and landed at Apalachicola, taken various property, chairs, bedsteads, and piano worth four or five hundred dollars. The piano he gave to a miss that he favored - few officers made a business of keeping - a few of the chairs he kept for his own use. Tables, chairs, sofas, and lounges he sold, and I believe he put it

in his pockets, as there is no account on the quartermaster's books.

There were nearly four or five hundred head of cattle shipped to Key West, and the Island Of Cuba by Capt. Ames of the 2nd U.S. Colored Infantry, acting quartermaster at Fort Myers. These cattle accounts cannot be found on his books. These cattle were shipped on government vessels, and driven into the shipping on private refugee soldier and refugee officer horses belong to the 2nd regiment.

The month of April, these troops made a raid into the country and picked up the horses that they had been obliged to abandon when driven from the country by the rebels, because they would not take Lip arms, and fight against the government they were born Linder. The poor men brought in to the post of Fort Myers one hundred and nine horses, one of them belonging to Lt. McCullough's daughter, and was used by him in the service of the government in raids, and driving these same cattle. This animal was captured on the 20th day of February, 1865 by the rebels, the horses were in the woods on grass, as the quartermaster was too poor to have forage on hand. Out of the 109 horses brought into the fort; on the 14th or 15th of April, there were but 39 living, the rest having been killed in the service in raiding and driving cattle for the garrison and to ship by Quartermaster Ames.

Major Weeks used to make raids by way of No. 4 with his refugee troops and negro troops, getting these wounded and sometimes killed, then would retreat over a burned trestle for miles. In these burned places, the troops had to walk on irons (rails). Then in a few days after the fight, he would send a Lt. with a boat party Linder a flag of truce, and Lt.'s would gamble and run horse races with the rebels, sometimes be

absent all night with them, then return late next morning.

Major Weeks, several times to my knowledge, sent poor women to an island, desolate and without shelter upon it. They were banished for 40 days without fire, water, or rations, there being no fresh water on the island. At length it rained very hard for several days, and the women raised a distress signal. As it happened, that morning one of our gunboats came to anchor in the Channel and on seeing the flag, went to their rescue, and finding them without bread or water, and no means of getting fire. This vessel was the *Clyde*, and Lt. Jones was the officer that went to them.

Again, Major Weeks taken a girl of 16 years and sent her to the mouth of the Suwannee River with a boat party of negro troops who put her ashore 20 miles from any human being, she made her way back to Way Key where the 99th U.S. Colored Infantry were garrisoned. The officers put her into a boat and sent her to Sea Horse Key where the refugee women were living. Major Weeks found out that she was living with the refugee family and sent another negro boat party who carried her to #4 station without a Mouthful to eat. When the negroes left her they gave her their rations of hard bread and pork, as they carried their dinner with them, and done without their dinner or supper as they did not get back till late in the night. Charley, for the proof of what is here stated, I refer you to Capt. J.D. Green, and the officers of the two garrisons, Doctor Wilcox (a citizen), in fact, by all the people at the garrison, both women and men.

Respectfully,  
Wm. McCullough

For this I was hunted like a wild beast of the woods, and driven from my home, and all I possessed in the world, but my beloved family. These I contrived to take with me by the help of friends, and the rebels who caused me and mine all this trouble, have seen the consequences of a thousand errors, continued still to blunder, and whose ages has only added obstinacy to stupidity, is surely the object either of abhorrence or contempt, and deserve not that their gray hairs should secure them from insult. Much more, sir, are they to be abhorred, who as they have advanced in age, have receded from virtue, and became more wicked with less temptation, who prostitute themselves for money which they cannot enjoy, and spends the remains of their lives in the ruin of their country's bliss.

But youth, and the great zeal with which I taken in the welfare and preservation of the glorious cause of the Republican States was not my only crime. I was accused of taking, a theatrical may imply some peculiarities of gesture, or a dissemination of my real sentiments, and an adoption of the opinions and language of another, in the first sense.

Sir, I consider the charge too trifling to be completed, and deserves only to be mentioned by to be despised by you, and all Union men. I am at liberty like all other men to use my own language, and though perhaps I may have some ambition to please the chivalry of the southernman, I shall not lay myself under any restraint nor very solicitously copy their diction, or their mind, however matured by age or moulded by experience. But if any man shall by charging me with theatrical behavior imply that I utter any sentiments but my own, I shall treat him as a calumnieton(?) and a villain.

Nor shall my protection shelter them from the treatment they deserve at my hands, I



shall on such occasions without scruples trample upon all those forms with which with wealth and dignity entrench themselves; nor shall anything but age restrain my resentment - age which always brings one privilege, that of being insolent and supercilious without precedent. But with regard, sir, to those whom I have offended, I am of opinion that if I had acted, and saved my property, a broad part, I should have avoided their censure, the heat that offended them is the ardor of conviction, and that zeal of the service of my country, which neither hope nor fear shall influence me to not support in every instance, and assist to put down all such cursed wars as the last. I will not sit unconcerned while my liberty is invaded, nor look in silence on public robbery of all the glorious institutions handed to us by our noble ancestors. I will exert my endeavors at whatever hazard to repel the aggressors, and drag them, the thieves to justice, whoever may protect them in their villainy, and whoever may partake of their plunder. (And this, my dear boy, should be your answer)

Remember the villainous conduct of Capt. Childs, commanding at Fort Myers, Fla., and of Major Weeks commanding at Cedar Keys and Depot Keys, Fla. for their rascality.

All the officers of the rest of the 2nd Florida Cavalry were dishonorably dismissed from the service, for what -- because as officers, they had the power to prefer charges against the miscreants, this they had done, the charges were destroyed by the commanders themselves, since they had to pass through their hands before they could reach the district commanders and department commanders.

Before the same officers could frame anew the charges and contrive a plan whereby to get them (2nd set) through, they all received

dishonorable discharges for signing provision returns not agreeing with morning reports, and inattentiveness to duty. This without a trial by any kind of tribunal whatever. They were cast off without any pay until they should satisfy the pay department. Most of these officers had large families, and had abandoned everything they had in the world for the constitution they were born under; and this is the honor and thanks they received in return.

Some of the officers made written statements and sent them by hand to the war department by Mr. John Miller, if ever heard from it is more than I know of. Major Weeks put every impediment in their way that he could to prevent them from making correct returns to the departments, putting one of the company commanders in the guardhouse, and forbidding his adjutant to allow the officer in his - the adjutants - office. This was in the month of May, 1865, and this officer used all his efforts to get transportation for himself and family to the City of Key West where he could support them, but without effect. On the 24th of May, he shipped on board of the steamer *Alliance* as a deck hand, and did not succeed in getting his family until the 29th of June. When the steamer *Alliance* called into port at Cedar Keys for a few moments to repair her engine on her route to New Orleans, the family was very unwell caused by the bad subsistence issued them. The flour was rotten, as for pork or beef, they had none, their meat was codfish and stunk, being rotten. In the summer of 1864, the families at Cedar Keys died off like cattle with bloody -----(?) caused by living on the same kind of subsistence, with the exception of the codfish.

What I have stated here, I refer the world at large to the officers of the 2nd U.S. Colored Regiment and the 2nd Florida Cavalry who were stationed at the garrison from the

months of July thru November, 1864, saw the people die, and their burial. I will close this and write again in a few days. Be a good boy and save your money. Come to see me in the spring.

Wm. McCullough<sup>39</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Original Original Census Schedules, 8th Census, 1860, Hillsborough County, Florida (Population Schedule); William McCullough's account of his early years, typescript in possession of Colleen C. Uhl, Bountiful, Utah.

<sup>2</sup> William McCullough, "Scenes and Adventures during 5 years service in the United States Army," typescript in possession of Colleen C. Uhl, Bountiful, Utah, 1-11.

<sup>3</sup> Spessard Stone, "William McCullough-Polk County Unionist," *Polk, County Historical Quarterly* 20 (March 1994), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Family group records of William McCullough, prepared Colleen C. Uhl, Bountiful, Utah. The nine children who reached maturity were: Elisabeth Frances (1848-1912, Mrs. Charles Henry Griffith), (2) Mary Orelia (1852-1935, Mrs. George Luther Gilbert), (3) David Washington (1855-1917), (4) Charles Henry (1857-1937), (5) Flourance Euphemia (1860-1929, Mrs. James McCarty), (6) James Franklin (1861-1937), (7) Alice "Emma" Adelaide (1863-1935, Mrs. John Franklin Casey), (8) Ida Mable (1866-1948, Mrs. William A. Walker), (9) Clara Inda (1870-1898).

<sup>6</sup> Stone, " William McCullough-Polk County Unionist," 6; Letter from Ida M. Walker to E. L. Bally, Director, Dependent Claims Service, found in Civil War Pension files of William and Nancy McCullough, National Archives (hereafter NA). Excellent accounts of the 1849 trading post raid are contained in Janet Snyder Matthews, *Edge of Wilderness, A Settlement History of Manatee River and Sarasota Bay, 1528-1885* (Tulsa, OK, 1983), 183-185, and Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 80-84.

<sup>7</sup> Stone, "William McCullough-Polk County Unionist," 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, April 4, 1954. See also Snyder, *Edge of Wilderness*, 232-233 and Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 112-113.

<sup>9</sup> Stone, " William McCullough -Polk County Unionist," 6.

<sup>10</sup> Regulator organizations were active in the Fort Meade area before the Civil War in 1858 and also after the war ended. The Confederate Congress enacted a conscription act, April 16, 1862. Although initially exempt, McCullough fell Linder the law when it was amended in September 1862 to include men between 18 and 45. Based at Tampa, Capt. John Pearson's company "scour[ed] the woods, looking after deserters and conscripts." *Tampa Tribune*, October 26, 1958; Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 152; Canter Brown, Jr., "Tampa's James McKay and the Frustration of Confederate Cattle-Supply Operations in South Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 70 (April 1992), 423-424.

<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Hooker was Cuthbert (Lanier) Hooker, daughter of Lewis Lanier and widow of John Irving Hooker. Hooker, a wealthy cattleman and brother of William B. Hooker, was one of Fort Meade's earliest settlers and died January 2, 1862. Mrs. Hooker later married Julius C. Rockner, October 13, 1864. Kyle S. VanLandingham, "John Irving Hooker 1822-1862," *South Florida Pioneers* 15/16 (January/April 1978), 8-9.

<sup>12</sup> William Henry Willingham moved to the Kissimmee Island section east of Lake Arbuckle, on Chloroform Branch, in 1858. By 1863, he owned 4,050 head of cattle on the open range. Kyle S. VanLandingham William Henry Willingham 1816-1886," *Youth Florida Pioneer* 10 (October, 1976), 9-11; Polk County, Tax Book, 1863, Florida State Library. McCullough's hideout, apparently east of the Kissimmee River and "thirty miles" from Willingham's may have been In the Basinger-Fort Drum area.

<sup>13</sup> William McCullough was enrolled as 1st Lieutenant, Company A, 2nd Florida Cavalry,, Linder Capt. Henry A. Crane, April 18, 1864, at Fort Myers. He had served as 2nd Lieutenant "since 22nd day of February." Fort Myers was occupied by Union troops in January 1864 as a "haven for Confederate refugees, and Union supporters and sympathizers.

Gen. D. B. Woodbury, commander of the District of Key West and Tortugas, intended Utilizing the post as a base for gathering cattle from the numerous wild and domesticated herds in the area, launching regular forays into the countryside, and up the coast as far as Tampa and Bay Port, assisting the Union Navy in the blockade of the Gulf Coast, and attracting escaped slaves from the small number of such in South Florida." William McCullough, Union Service Record, Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers from Florida, RG 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, NA (hereafter cited as Ser. Rec. RG 94). Irvin D. Solomon, "Southern Extremities: The Significance of Fort Myers in the Civil War," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 72 (October 1993), 132-133. The raid on Tampa occurred May 6-7, 1864. See Kyle S. VanLandingham, "The Union Occupation of Tampa: May 6-7, 1864," *Sunland Tribune* 19 (November 1993), 9-16. For a study of the 2nd Florida Cavalry, see George E. Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, and Contraband Civil War on the Florida Gulf Coast 1861-1865* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1993), 115-133.

<sup>14</sup> There were three raids into the Fort Meade area in the spring of 1864. On March 13, a force Linder Lt. James D. Green, accompanied by Lt. William McCullough, left Fort Myers to capture supplies and obtain recruits. Willoughby Tillis' farm was sacked but not burned and Thomas Underhill a prominent Confederate, was killed. On April 7, Green, McCullough and a troop of men engaged Confederate forces at Bowlegs Creek where Rebel James Lanier was killed and Henry Prine wounded. Tillis' home was burned on this raid. On May 19, after the Tampa occupation, Crane, Green, McCullough and the 2nd Florida Cavalry, along with soldiers from the Second U.S. Colored Troops captured and burned Fort Meade. This last raid was under the command of Capt. Jonathan W. Childs of the U.S.C.T. Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; 163-165, 167-169.

<sup>15</sup> Moving forward to the Bay Port-Brooksville expedition in July 1864, McCullough mentions Capt. Leroy G. Lesley. Lesley was a Methodist minister, former captain of mounted Volunteers in the Third Seminole War and during the Civil War, commander of a "cow cavalry" company stationed at Brooksville. Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; 108, 167.

<sup>16</sup> McCullough returns to the aftermath of the Peace River raid. Mr. Bogg's was Francis Calvin Morgan Boggess, lieutenant in Francis A. Hendry's Company A, Florida Special Cavalry or Cattle Guard Battalion, Linder the command of Major Charles Munnerlyn.

The "cow cavalry" was the brainchild of Capt. James McKay, Confederate commissary agent at Tampa. Robert A. Taylor, "Cow Cavalry: Munnerlyn's Battalion in Florida, 1864-1865," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 65 (October 1986), 198, 203.

<sup>17</sup> Henry A. Crane, a New Jersey native, was living at Tampa when the Civil War began. A former newspaperman, veteran of the Third Seminole War and prominent political figure, Crane advocated secession in 1860 but soon sided with the Union and left Tampa in 1862, making his way to the Indian River. He joined the U.S. Navy as "acting volunteer master's mate" and served until 1864 when he became a captain in the 2nd Florida Cavalry. Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, and Contraband*, 59-68; Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, December 1, 1860. James Dopson Green, a native Southerner, was living in Hillsborough County in 1841. During the 1850's he settled South of Fort Meade at what became known as Fort Green, in present-day Hardee County. A soldier in the Third Seminole War, he sided with the Union during the Civil War. Originally a 1st Lieutenant, in May 1864 he became captain of Company B, 2nd Florida Cavalry. Spessard Stone, "James D. Green: South Florida Unionist," *Sunland Tribune* 18 (November 1992), 25-28.

<sup>18</sup> H. W. Bowers, Asst. Adjutant General, filed this report of the Brooksville-Bay Port expedition of July 1864: On the 1st ultimo, an expedition, consisting of 120 men of the Second Florida Cavalry and 120 men of the Second U. S. Colored Troops, total 240, the whole Linder the command of Capt. J. W. Childs, Second U. S. Colored Troops, embarked from Fort Myers, Fla., for Bay Port, on the west coast. On landing, the enemy's pickets were discovered and skirmishing commenced. Our troops followed the enemy into the interior to Brooksville, a distance of 40 miles, occasionally skirmishing with them. Seven prisoners and 15 horses were captured, and 13 contrabands brought in. The plantations of Captain Hope, Captain Leslie and sons, and Captain Hooker, all commanding guerrilla parties of the enemy, were destroyed. Our loss was 1 man slightly wounded. At Bay Port 60 bales of cotton were captured; of this the navy 7 bales; the remainder was accidentally burnt. It was designed to bring off the whole of it. The troops returned to Fort Myers in safety. H. W. Bowers to Maj. George B. Drake, August 6, 1864, United States War Department, War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (hereafter ORA), 128 vols (Washington, 1880-1901), ser. 1, 35, pt. 1, 405-406. Capt. Henry A. Crane's report is as follows:

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I have the honor to report that a detachment of 2nd Fla. Cavly. consisting of companies "A" & "B" numbering 133 men, left Fort Myers, on the 30th June last for the purpose of raiding in the vicinity of Brookville & Bayport.

Arrived at Anclote Keys on the evening of the 7th Inst., landing and marched at once for Brookville, and encamped some three miles from the River. (Is it proper here to state that the Command was under Capt. Childs, who had with him some 120 U.S. Colored Troops) ----On the morning of the 8th discovered smoke from Camp fires in front; & was assigned the command of the Advance Guard of 10 men, who on approaching the Camp immediately charged them, capturing 4 prisoners 8 horses & several small arms, &c &c. This camp originally consisted of 18 men & horses. Resumed our march & soon discovered the Mounted Rebels in our front, & a series of skirmishes continued for 2 days, without any serious disaster or loss (only 1 man, Prvt \_\_\_\_\_? C.A. slightly wounded). Destroyed the plantations of D. Hope, the notorious (Capt Lesly, Frierson, Ellis, Bloodgood &c &c. These men are active rebels Or Guerillas. On arriving within 1 mile of Brookville, & ascertaining that the place was entirely deserted, determined Capt Bartholf to turn towards Bayport & reached the swamp 4 miles from that place late at night, formed a line of Battle and lay on our arms. During the night (11 PM.) a singular firing took place among the Rebels, 3/4 of a mile in our rear. The result of which we could not learn.

On the morning of the 11th arrived at Bayport & found the Town in possession of Capt Childs, who with a small force had previously sailed from Anclote Keys. This place we secured all the provisions on hand & left on the evening of the 13th with U.S. Schnr "Seas Bird" "Ariel", & Sloop "Rosalie", " & arrived at Tampa on the evening of the 14[?]. Henry A. Crane to Maj. E. C. Weeks, July 16, 1864, RG 393 Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920 [Vol. I], Entry 2269: Letters Received 1861-1868, NA (microfilm at P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville) [hereafter, Crane Letters]. For a Confederate version of the Brookville raid, see Thomas B. Ellis, Sr. "Confederate Diary of Thomas Benton Ellis, Sr., Company C, Hernando Guards, 3rd Florida Infantry, July 1861-April 186-5," manuscript collection, P. K. Yonge Library Of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

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<sup>19</sup> John A. Miller enrolled May 26, 1864 at Fort Myers as 2nd Lieutenant in Company A, 2nd Florida Cavalry. At Cedar Key, he had the title AACCS, in the commissary department. Miller, Ser. Rec. RG 94.

<sup>20</sup> David Hope was a planter who lived near Brooksville in Hernando County. In 1864 he owned 440 acres of land and 14 slaves. An early pioneer of Hernando County, Hope was a neighbor and business associate of Capt. Leroy G. Lesley. Together, they owned salt works at the Gulf of Mexico, 25 miles southwest of Brooksville. Hope was a 2nd lieutenant in L. G. Lesley's company Hernando County, Tax Book, 1864, Florida State Library; Richard J. Stanaback, *A History of Hernando County*, 1840-1976 (Orlando, 1976), 14; Gainesville Cotton March 19, 1864; Tampa Tribune, December 6, 1959.

<sup>21</sup> John Bartholf was captain of Company I, 2nd U.S. Colored Troops. Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, and Contrabands*, 155. Brown's *Florida's Peace Rive Frontier* includes much on Bartholf's later role in South Florida's development.

<sup>22</sup> Capt. William B. Hooker was Florida's leading cattleman until 1861 when he sold 10,000 head to James McKay. He moved about two miles west of Brooksville in early 1862 to become a planter, and by 1864 he owned 1117 acres and 19 slaves. Brown, "Tampa's James McKay," 412, 415; Hernando County, Tax Book, 1864, Florida State Library; Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, August 17, 1867. Aaron Frierson owned four plantations near Brooksville. In 1864 he had 1285 acres of land and 12 slaves. He was in the "Home Guard." Harry G. Cutler, *History of Florida; Past and Present* 3 vols. (New York, 1927), III, 288-289; Hernando County, Tax Book, 1864, Florida State Library. The editor expresses his appreciation to Mrs. Ann McGinn Huddart of Spring Hill, FL, for providing material on the Frierson family.

<sup>23</sup> Capt. Crane reported on the accidental shooting of Capt. John T Lesley: "In their skirmish among the "Rebs" themselves, Maj. John Lesly (Reb) was severely wounded in the arm, I killed with 3 others Wounded. It afforded us no little amusement at the time." Henry Crane to Capt. H. NN". Bowers, August 20, 1864, Crane Letters. Lt. David Hope Of L. G. Lesley's company may have been the man who wounded Capt. John T Lesley. Leroy G. Leslie [Lesley] to John T Lesley May 7, 1865, Theodore Lesley Collection, copy in possession of editor. Emory Campbell, McCullough's wife's nephew, was

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killed in the "friendly fire." *Tampa Tribune*, December 6, 1959.

<sup>24</sup> The Carson referred to was Maj. John D. Parsons, founder of Bay Port in 1842. Stanaback, *A History of Hernando County 1840-1976*, 13, 22, 4. Edmund C. Weeks was born in Massachusetts in 1821, the son of a sea captain. He was educated as a doctor, but in 1861 joined the U.S. Navy as an Acting Master's Mate. He enrolled at Cedar Key, June 1, 1864 and was commissioned major of the 2nd Florida Cavalry. He served as commander of the regiment at Cedar Key. After the war, Weeks remained in Florida and became active in politics. He was Republican Lieutenant Governor of Florida in 1870. He later served in the Legislature from Leon County in 1877 and 1885. Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, and Contrabands*, 203-204; Weeks, Ser. Rec. RG 94; Jerrell H. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction 1863-1877* (Gainesville, 1974), 133; John Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida* (Jacksonville, 1888, facsimile ed., Gainesville 1964), 117, 118, 290, 296, 303; Office of the Clerk, Fla. House of Representatives, *The People of Lawmaking in Florida: 1845-1975* (Tallahassee, 1975).

<sup>25</sup> See Bowers to Drake, August 6, 1864.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Capt. Crane, writing on August 20, 1864, from Fort Myers, first alluded to the friction between the "Cold Troops" and his men in the 2nd Florida Cavalry: "I will now touch upon a subject that I would fair leave out, but cannot. It has become really necessary to separate the Cold Troops from the Refugee families. During our last months absence they have become greatly demoralized, and to such an extent has it been carried, that a long continuance can only tend to open irruption, & all this from a laxity of discipline that is truly unpardonable. Our women have been repeatedly insulted – Officers threatened. Horses stabbed with bayonets & otherwise injured. My authority defied by the Guards. My person & house stoned, hissed at, threatened with death & this in the immediate presence of an Officer (Capt Willet) Without a remonstrance or an attempt to subdue open Mutiny to the disgrace of a Military Garrison. I view of all these Matters I would respectfully ask that they may be withdraw from this Post or that my command & the refugees may be sent away." Henry Crane to Capt. H. W. Bowers, August 20, 1864, Crane Letters. Crane again wrote to Bowers on September 4, 1864: "I am anxiously waiting the return Of Our Cos. as it is almost impossible to get along with the Cold Troops. I am fully satisfied that each should be separate to

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accomplish anything, -- The ignorance of the one & the sensitiveness of the other, tends to make every duty unpleasant. In fact the efficiency of the 2nd Cav. has been seriously injured by that connection & do hope you will impress the Genl Comdg with this matter. Our recruiting has been killed off almost entirely, & desertions have commenced to ? , I do not know when. The small force now here (40 men) apparently adds to their impudence & Insubordination." Henry Crane to Capt. H. W. Bowers, September 4, 1864, Crane Letters. Companies D and I of the 2nd U.S. Colored Troops were described by, their white commander, Capt. John Wilder as "the very *beau ideal* of black soldiery." Irvin Solomon, in "Southern Extremities: The Significance of Fort Myers in the Civil War," paints a very sympathetic portrait of the U.S. Colored Troops. One wonders how he would have dealt with McCullough's observations. See also, Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, and Contraband*, 134-143.

<sup>27</sup> See Bowers to Drake, August 6, 1864.

<sup>28</sup> Crane wrote on August 15, 1864: "Capt Green's Co. with 60 of my own have been sent to Cedar Keys. - How long they will remain there I cannot tell; The point is not important for a large force, as there is greatest difficulty in getting to the main land, & nothing of importance (except cotton) after you get there" Henry Crane to Capt. H. W. Bowers, August 15, 1864, Crane Letters. For an account of Cedar Keys in the Civil War, see Charles C. Fishburne, Jr., *The Cedar Keys in the Civil War and Reconstruction 1861-1876* (Cedar Key, FL, 1982).

<sup>29</sup> For further details of the Weeks case, see Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, and Contrabands*, 164

<sup>30</sup> See Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, and Contrabands*, 162

<sup>31</sup> When McCullough referred to "Negro Officers," he meant the white officers of the U.S. Colored Troops. Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 165-166.

<sup>32</sup> The returns of Cedar Key for October 1864 state McCullough was "with his company at Ft. Myer-Left the post Oct. 2." McCullough, Ser. Rec. RG 94.

<sup>33</sup> For an account of the Fort Myers battle, see Rodney E. Dillon, Jr., "The Battle of Fort Myers," *Tampa Bay History* 5 (Fall/Winter 1983), 27-36. See also, Solomon, "Southern Extremities," 148-151. Capt. James Doyle, commander at Fort Myers, wrote on February 21, 1865: " I have been informed that

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Lieut. William McCullough has been dismissed from the service, but having no official notice of it I sent him out in command of the skirmish line, where he rendered good and efficient service." Capt. James Doyle to Capt. E. B. Tracy, February 21, 1865, in *ORA* ser. 1, 49 pt. 1, 54.

<sup>34</sup> William McCullough and 1st Lieutenant John W. Platt of Company B, 2nd Florida Cavalry were "dishonorably dismissed from the service of the United States, for signing provision returns not agreeing with morning reports, and for general incompetency and inattention to duties," January 24, 1865, by Gen. E. R. S. Canby, Special Order No. 24, H.Q. Military Division of West Mississippi. McCullough, Ser. Rec. RG 94; Civil War Pension files of William and Nancy McCullough, NA; Stone, "William McCullough-Polk County Unionist," 6.

<sup>35</sup> Capt. James D. Green of Company B, 2nd Florida Cavalry preferred charges against Capt. Jonathan W. Childs of the U.S. Colored Troops late in 1864. Joined by McCullough, Green alleged "gross corruption and immorality . . . mock marriages were celebrated, gambling encouraged, beef cattle [sic] driven in and sold for the benefit of the officers, the Refugees deprived of their rations and supplied with unwholesome flour"; Capt. Ames, quartermaster "kept a harlot in the commissary, sold hides for his own benefit and shared in the fraud of the Ration Department;" the post surgeon Dr. Carroll "neglected the Refugee families in their sickness nor would allow other doctors to attend them." Green and McCullough were placed under arrest, Green for 50 days, McCullough for 40. See Stone, "James D. Green: South Florida Unionist," 26, and Stone, "William McCullough-Polk County Unionist," 6. See also Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, and Contrabands*, 162-163.

<sup>36</sup> Francis A. Ivey, a native of Alachua County, Florida, enlisted in June 1864 as a private in Company A, 2nd Florida Cavalry and was promoted to 1st Corporal, June 17, 1864. He was mustered out November 29, 1865. Richard M. Livingston, "Francis A. Ivey 1829-1871," *South Florida Pioneers* 12 (April 1977), 5-6. At a meeting of the "citizens of Indian River Brevard County held ... 28th of August 1861, . . . Cpt James Paine, Francis Ivey, A. Oswald Lang and John Whitton" were thanked for their "prompt action in putting out the Lights of Jubeter and Cape Florida." Meeting of Citizens of Indian River, Brevard County, August 28, 1861, folder 3, box 1, State Governors, Incoming Correspondence, Gov. Perry's Gen. Correspondence, 186061, RG 101,

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series 577, Florida State Archives. Ivey was killed by "Long John" Whidden June 11, 1870. Spessard Stone, "The Outlaw Long John Whidden," *Sunland Tribune* 18 (November 1992), 80-81.

<sup>37</sup> Jasper Dunbar was McCullough's adopted son. He was born ca. 1846 in Georgia and enlisted at Key West, March 14, 1864 as a private in Company A, 2nd Florida Cavalry. He was mustered out at Tallahassee, November 29, 1865. Dunbar, Ser. Rec. RG 94.

<sup>38</sup> William Yates filed charges against Childs but withdrew them February 7, 1865. Statement of William Yates, RG 393 Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1900 [Vol. 1], Entry 2269; Letters Received 1861-1868, NA (microfilm at P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville).

<sup>39</sup> William McCullough was vindicated when his order of dishonorable dismissal was revoked, May 31, 1866. He was "honorable discharged as of the date of the order of dismissal," in orders from the Adjutant General's Office of the War Department. This order was "amended so as to discharge him to date Feby. 20, 1865, he having continued on duty with his command until that date, in orders from this office dated April 5, 1867." In February 1868, the McCulloughs resettled on a 60-acre farm at Kahoka, Clark County, Missouri. William unsuccessfully applied for a disability pension and died at Kahoka, Missouri, April 2, 1890. Nancy was successful in her application for a widow's pension and died at Kahoka, August 31, 1908. Civil War Pension files of William and Nancy McCullough, NA: Stone, "William McCullough-Polk County Unionist," 6.

# THE OAKLAWN CEMETERY RAMBLE - 1994

By ARSENIO M. SANCHEZ



**Students from St. Joseph School**

The Tampa Historical Society had its Annual Oaklawn and St. Louis Cemetery Ramble on April 24, 1994.

The Knights of Columbus Honor Guard and students from St. Joseph School dedicated the raising of the United States flag for the first time at the cemetery. The students recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, and sang patriotic songs.

The students were guided by Sister Isabel, principal and superior of St. Joseph School. They received the support of Sisters Wilma and Inez and Barbara Rebon music teacher of the school.

A memorial monument for Levi and Nancy Collier was also unveiled at the Oaklawn and St. Louis Cemetery Ramble. This monument was a culmination of the efforts of Charles Brown, President of the Tampa Historical Society, Julius J. Gordon, Jo Ann Haskins Cimino, and former THS president George



**Dedication of the Collier Family Monument**

B. Howell and the contribution of Myrtle Hill Memorial Cemetery. Great-great-great-grandson, Patrick T. Cimino gave a history of the role of the Collier family at Fort Brooke and in early Tampa.

Levi Collier is considered to be the first Anglo-American to permanently settle with a family in the Tampa area, initially coming to the area in 1823.



**Arsenio Sanchez, on right, with Greg Schiderer, diocesan representative**

Genealogical notes written by a descendant in the 1920s and based on family Bible records, since destroyed, indicate, that Levi

was born in Springfield, Massachusetts on March 19, 1791, the son of Uriah Collier a Revolutionary War veteran, and his wife, Betsey Manning. Uriah and Betsey are known to have lived near Orange, Massachusetts, and the family appears there on the 1790 Census.

Levi Collier left Massachusetts about 1812, when he was about 21 years old and traveled to what was then Spanish East Florida, arriving in the vicinity of the St. Mary's River, north of present-day Jacksonville. On March 22, 1813, Levi married Nancy Dixon, the daughter of a local landowner, John Britton Dixon and his wife Sophia Knight.

It may well have been Florida's newly acquired status as a U.S. territory that encouraged Levi Collier to begin seeking new land, although some reports say that he wanted to be near water for his health. Collier, along with a few other pioneers, made at least one scouting trip to the Tampa area, leaving his wife and children behind. In late 1823, he came upon Tampa Bay and the location of present downtown Tampa. Although the site was deep in Indian territory, Levi chose a home-site near the Mouth of the Hillsborough River. He returned home, packed up his family and their belongings and returned to Tampa in April, 1824. Upon their arrival, the Colliers found that the U.S. Army had moved in and appropriated their selected site for what was to become Fort Brooke. The Colliers located another site directly across the river from the fort and built their initial homestead there. About four years later they moved to a site seven miles east of the fort to what was later known as "Craft's Spring," on Six Mile Creek.

The Colliers established a farm where they are supposed to have cultivated the first

cotton in South Florida and supplied foodstuffs to the army and visiting ships. At the outbreak of the Second Seminole War, the Collier homestead was burned by an Indian raiding party, but the family escaped injury, having received warning and taken refuge at Fort Brooke. In later years, Levi Collier became keeper of the lighthouse at the mouth of Tampa Bay.

Levi and Nancy Collier had eleven children, seven of whom grew to adulthood and married the children of other early settlers. Today, their descendants in the Tampa Bay area are numerous, bearing the surnames Bell, Cimino, Covacevich, Haskins and Jackson, among others. Levi and Nancy are buried in Oaklawn Cemetery, Tampa.

*JoAnn Haskins Cimino provided the historical data on the Collier family for this article.*



## 1994 D. B. McKAY AWARD

Ferdie Pacheco, who grew up in Ybor City, is the recipient of the 1994 D. B. McKay Award. As a pharmacist, doctor, boxing analyst, novelist, screen writer and artist, Pacheco has had an eventful life.

He is the author of the novel *Renegade Lightning* and of two books of nonfiction, *Muhammad Ali: A View from the Corner* and *Fight Doctor*, an account of his life as a physician in the fight world. Dr. Pacheco practiced medicine from 1958 to 1980 and served as Muhammad Ali's personal physician from 1963 to 1977. In recent years, he has served as boxing color commentator for NBC-TV, Showtime, and Univision. In 1990, he received an Emmy for writing, producing, and narrating the NBC special "All Wins the Title." He is also a painter and has exhibited one-person shows in London, Paris, New York, Miami (where he now lives), and other cities throughout the United States.

In 1994, Pacheco's memoirs, *Ybor City Chronicles* was published by the University Presses of Florida.

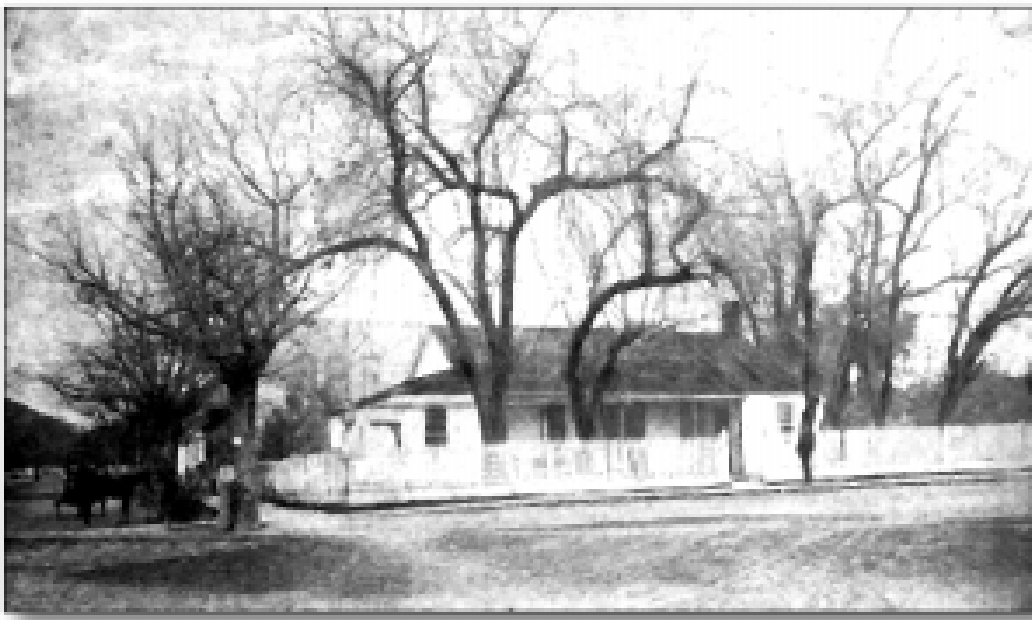


**Ferdie Pacheco, M.D.**

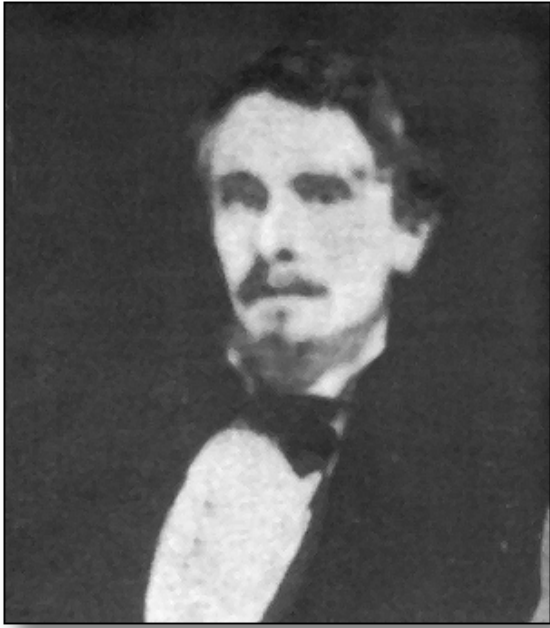
## TAMPA PASTIMES



**Rev. Leroy G. Lesley family - 1857**  
**Left to right: Leroy G., Mary C., Indiana (Livingston), and John T. Lesley**  
-Photo courtesy of John T. Lesley, Sr.



**Hillsborough House Hotel, located on Lafayette Street, ca. 1890s**  
-Photo courtesy of Pat Moran



**Simon Turman, Jr., born about 1829, came with his parents to Hillsborough County in 1843. He purchased the Florida Peninsular in 1855 and served as editor until 1858 when he sold the paper to William J. Spencer. He returned as editor in 1860. He succeeded his father as Judge of Probate when Simon, Sr., died in 1858. Turman died in 1864 as the result of a wound received while serving in the Confederate Army.**

-Photo courtesy of Florida State Archives



**Madison Post - 1815-1867**

**A native of New Jersey, Madison Post arrived in Tampa in 1849 to operate a hotel. He was Tampa's third mayor, elected in 1858. His wife, Maria Jane, was the daughter of Joseph Moore. Post was an active Freemason and political leader.**

© Ruth Diane Moore Rodriguez, 1994

## MEET THE AUTHORS



**Canter Brown, Jr.**



**Charles A. Brown**



**Hampton Dunn**

**CANTER BROWN, Jr.** is a native of Fort Meade, Florida and received his B.A., J.D. and Ph.D. degrees from Florida State University. His 1991 book, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*; received the Rembert W. Patrick Award from the Florida Historical Society. An acknowledged expert on 19th-century Florida history, Brown is the author of many scholarly articles.

**CHARLES A. BROWN** was born in Omaha, Nebraska. He received his B. A. Degree from Saint Leo College. Living in Tampa the majority of his life he has been General Manager of Brown's Trophies, Inc., for the past twenty years. Always interested in the history of our community, he was the Centennial Chairman for The H. B. Plant Hotel. Currently President of the Tampa Historical Society, he is writing a book on the history of Bayshore Boulevard.

**HAMPTON DUNN** is past president of the Florida Historical Society and is official Hillsborough County Historian. He has been in the Communication fields of newspapers, radio and television broadcasting, public

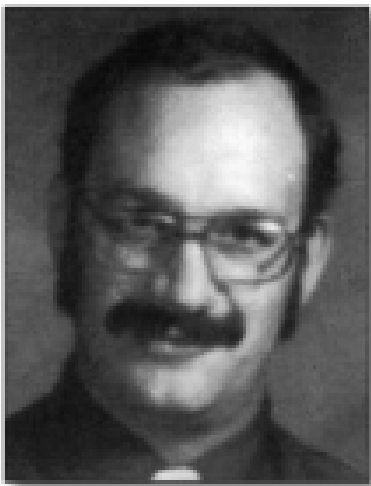
relations and magazine writing for nearly 60 years. He is author of 18 books on Tampa and Florida historical subjects and is also in demand as a public speaker on many subjects. And he's a native Florida "Cracker."

**LELAND HAWES, JR.** is a native Tampan who grew up in Thonotosassa, where he published a weekly newspaper at age 11. A graduate of the University of Florida in 1950, he worked as a reporter for *The Tampa Daily Times* for two years, then for *The Tampa Tribune* in various capacities since then. For the last several years he has been writing a history/heritage page.

**DR. JOE KNETSCH** received his B.S. degree from Western Michigan University, his M.A. from Florida Atlantic University and his Ph.D. from Florida State University. He is employed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as a Senior Management Analyst II. His primary function with the Department is to research Florida's history for early methods of transportation and the usage of Florida's



**Leland Hawes**



**Joe Knetsch**



**Arsenio M. Sanchez**

water-bodies. He is currently Vice President of the Florida Historical Society.

**ARSENIO M. SANCHEZ**, a native of West Tampa, has been researching the history of West Tampa, and of the Tampa area. Sanchez attended Jesuit High School and graduated from Plant High in 1937. He served in the Navy during World War II and graduated from the University of Florida in 1951. He is a past member of the Tampa Historical Society Board of Directors.

**WES SINGLETARY** is a native of Tampa and is presently working on a Ph.D. in history at the Florida State University. A

past contributor to the *Sunland Tribune*, Wes is continuing his doctoral research into the life of Al Lopez, Tampa's first big league baseball player. Wes has been happily married to the former Toni Zarate of Cheyenne, Wyoming, for thirteen years and they make their home in Tallahassee.

**KYLE S. VanLANDINGHAM**, is a sixth-generation Floridian. He received his B.A. degree from Maryville College in Tennessee and his J.D. degree from Cumberland School of Law of Samford University. He is the author of several historical and genealogical books and has been Editor of the *Sunland Tribune* since 1991.



**Kyle VanLandingham**



**Wes Singletary**

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