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THOSE MURDEROUS MONKS OF PASCO COUNTY

Dear Sir: Permit that I write you these few lines in regard to conditions in this part of Florida. Pasco County, the stronghold of the St. Leo Monks, is ruled politically and otherwise by this gang of crooks. In that monastery the Sturkie resolutions were concocted; this same people dispatch the news of the T. E. Pearce murder and Sheriff Sturkie, after conferring with the hierarchy had his theory about the murder, and would not make any effort to bring the guilty parties before the bar of justice.

Now, one of the fellows we suspected has left the state. My grandfather fought for the liberty of our country, under General LaFayette, and now my children will have to do the same, if the hierarchy is not stopped from ruling this country.

These arrogant monks own the 12th part of Pasco County and pay not one cent of taxes and live like kings and work the poor people to death. My son had bought 40 acres of land, and as the land joined their lands, they entered suit against him, and got my son's lawyer to let it go by default, and my boy did not know it until the 60 days were passed, so he could not reopen the case.

As soon as the primary was over, and we heard that Park Trammel was elected, we knew J. T. Catts would be our next Governor; but the monks got busy and now they are trying to bid us, and put Knott in.

Now I want to tell you that I was afraid that if J. T. Catts is elected the hierarchy will have him assassinated, as I have heard several parties, all K. of C. say that J. T. Catts, if elected, never will be governor of Florida. If you reply to my letter in your estimable paper, *The Jeffersonian*, I would beg you to send me a copy, as I got ruined by this gang of crooks, and I am not able to subscribe to your paper.

If you need more information please write, and I will cheerfully answer the best I can; you know I am a farmer and not much of a pensman.

With my best wishes Mr. Watson, to you and your paper, and that your life be spared, is the sincere prayer of yours very truly,

FRENCH HUGUENOT

The above article appeared on page five (5) of *The Jeffersonian*, Vol. 13, No. 46, November 9, 1916. A marked copy of this issue was mailed me from St. Louis, Missouri, else I would never have heard of it. As soon as I had read this scurrilous attack I wrote *The Jeffersonian* for space in its columns for a reply. To make sure that my letter had been received I inclosed with same U. S. Postal Money Order Number 5055 for an annual subscription. The paper comes every week since then; but no answer to my request has thus far made its appearance. NO USE TO ASK THE REASON WHY.



Monastic community

(courtesy of St. Leo Abbey Archives).

The “French Huguenot,” author of the slanderous article was born of Catholic parents, and received a good education. I have known him for years. He seldom went to church, but he always claimed to be a Catholic. A year ago, thinking, perhaps, it might help him with his suit against us, he joined the Protestant church. So much for his pedigree and his right to style himself a “Huguenot.”

Now here is the cause of the poor man's tears. Almost 18 months ago he came to me in the guise of a friend but with all the finesse of a French diplomat and said:

“Father Abbot, you ought to have, and I want you to have, that forty (40) acre tract south of your Abbey. On August 1st, 1915, I'll get you, a deed for same. I will sell it to you for twelve hundred (\$1200) dollars, at a very low rate of interest and you may pay at your own convenience.”

Before leaving my office he asked the loan of fifty (\$50) dollars as part payment on the land saying he needed the money for some Court expenses.

I answered him that many years ago I had offered the owner eight hundred (\$800) dollars, but that now I would be willing to pay only five hundred (\$500) dollars because the land had deteriorated in value; and that I would not pay him (the Huguenot) or anybody else five cents before our lawyer had passed favorably upon the title.

He left promising to return at 4 P. M. of that same day. He failed to return and the 1st of August came and went also. Then I instituted an investigation. I learned that this tract had some years previously been sold for taxes and that the Manila Investment Co. with headquarters at Tampa, Fla., held the Tax Title. They sold this title to us for forty (\$40) dollars. I did not then record this deed because I thought it worthless excepting in as far as it might possibly cloud the title. I wrote the original owner, Dr. Edmund Wichers, of Gronau, Hanover, Germany, telling him what I had done and at the same time offering him five hundred (\$500) dollars for a Warranty Deed in case he wanted to sell.

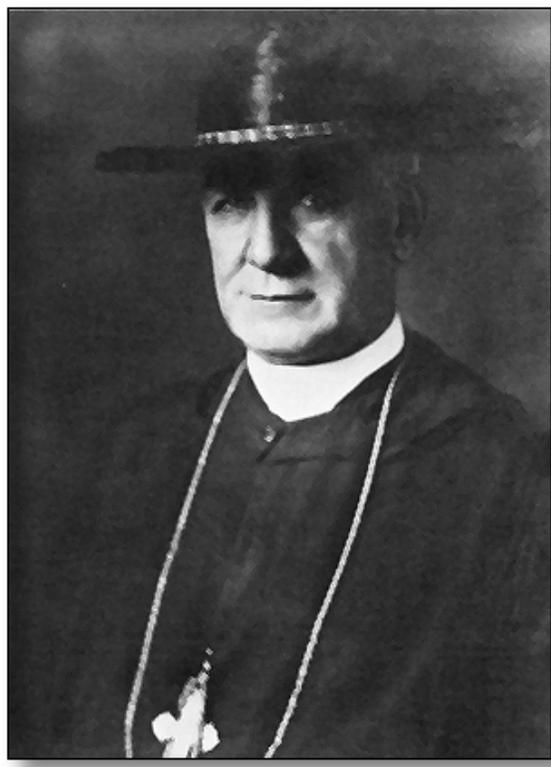
HE ANSWERED BY SENDING THE WARRANTY DEED.

Whilst this correspondence was going on the “Huguenot” applied to the Manila Investment Co. for a deed. Though they had already sold out all their rights to us, they, contrary to all honesty, issued a second paper to our friend who at once took possession. With the aid of his son and a negro this patriotic “Huguenot” started to cut down trees right and left. Before I could get a restraining order from the Courts these vandals had ruined about three hundred (300) valuable trees.

In due time, all the formalities having been complied with, the case was tried before Circuit Court Judge Reaves and *we won out*. The enemy was compelled to evacuate the premises with his litter of hogs, to pay the costs of the Court and the title granted by the Manila Investment Co. was ordered cancelled on the Books of Record.

Both attorneys fought hard for their Huguenot client. I know Judge E. P. Wilson, an ardent Guardian of Liberty and Mr. E. F. Greene will feel tickled to death to learn that a Brother Guardian accuses them of having sold him out to Catholic priests.

Shortly after Tom Pierce was murdered on his doorsteps, some enemy spread the rumor that the Knights of Columbus had assassinated him. Immediately the relatives of the murdered man called on our Father, Albert, pastor of St. Anthony’s Church, San Antonio, Fla. They assured him that the had not spread these reports an that they held no Catholic responsible for their brother’s death. The widow, Mrs. Tom Pierce, told our Brother Leo the same thing.



Abbot Charles

(courtesy of USF Special Collections).

When the wife and the brothers of the victim exonerate the Catholics, how black, base and malicious must be the heart of him who persists in asserting the contrary!

There are nine hundred and twelve thousand (912,000) acres of land in Pasco County. We own nine hundred (900) acres. Of these 900 acres, 240 are taken up by the College, students' playgrounds, farm buildings, farm and pastures. The remaining 660 acres are in the lowlands, or cow-ponds, of Pasco County. We did not purchase them. They were given to us by Northerners who had been "stung." After seeing them they did not consider them worth the taxes levied against them, but thought that possibly, they might become valuable to us some day.

If Governor-elect S. J. Catts is to live until some Catholic bullet or dagger puts him out of commission, he will be found walking this earth when Gabriel blows his trumpet.

Stetson University, a Baptist institution at Deland, the Methodist Seminary at Sutherland, Rollins College at Winter Park, and a host of other institutions of learning are exempted from taxation. Is there then any reason why St. Leo College and Abbey should not enjoy the same privileges? Whenever the citizens of Florida, instigated by narrow-minded bigots, place the properties of all institutions of learning on the tax lists, we will not dodge the issue.

Gentlemen of the Jury, Fellow Citizens of Pasco County; you have read the charges and my answer. What is your verdict? Who is the crook in the case? Is it the man that offers the original owner five hundred (\$500) good American dollars for his acres that had been sold for taxes, or, the smiling artist that tries to get twelve hundred (\$1200) dollars for a gold brick in the shape of a worthless Quit Claim Deed?

Even if we were the murderous aggregation of crooks that the "Huguenot" represents us to be, oh! what melodies would he have sung in our praise what a whitewashing he would have given us, had we been stupid enough to pay him the twelve hundred (\$1200) dollars for that worthless gold brick of his!

ABBOT CHARLES,

St. Leo, Fla.

30 November, 1916.