Forging the Florida Frontier

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Recommended Citation
Knetsch, Joe (1994) "Forging the Florida Frontier," Sunland Tribune: Vol. 20 , Article 5. Available at: https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/sunlandtribune/vol20/iss1/5

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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.

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[.]”
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 Choocachetatee Hammock at a place to be named, "Hope Hill". Richard J. Stanaback, in his *A History of Hernando County, 1840-1976*, noted 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. According to an article written in 1919, William Hope owned one hundred and fifty-seven slaves by the time of the Civil War. 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.

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. 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 1856, 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. 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. 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." 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." 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 that 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." 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.

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 Ltut. 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
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."14 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."15 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.\textsuperscript{16} 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.\textsuperscript{17} 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.\textsuperscript{18} 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.\textsuperscript{19}

This same year also saw Sam Hope enter the field of politics. The Tampa-based \textit{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.\textsuperscript{20}

The \textit{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.21 Hope is 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.22 Although Hope may not have wanted war, her 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."23 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.24

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.25

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
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.26 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.27 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.28

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.29

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."30 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-1864.31 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.32 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.33 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. 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. 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. 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.

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.

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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

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."

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, 1926.45

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.46 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 mutch 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 allos 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 deffinately as soon as convenant as the Cedar has not bin Shiped yet.47

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.48

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 Executors 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.  

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.  

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. 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." 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. 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. 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. 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 Cincinnati's convention and Endorsed 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. …

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.

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. Four days later, he pushed for a joint resolution to establish a mail route from Anclote to Tampa, via "Stevison's bridge". 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. 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. 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. Representing Hillsborough County, Hope sat on the Committee for the Legislative Department and on the Committee on Enrollment and Engrossment. 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." 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. 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." 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.” 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.” 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

1 "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.

2 “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."

3 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]


5 "Biographical Sketch of Samuel E. Hope," 1.


7 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.
Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication Number 67. "Florida Militia Muster Rolls, Seminole Indian Wars, Volume 1." 1.

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


Letters and Reports. Letter of April 2, 1859. Hope to Dancy. 66.

Letters and Reports. Letter of May 16, 1859. Hope to Dancy. 71-72

Ibid.


Letters and Reports. Letter of February 2t, 1860. Hope to Dancy. 112-13


"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.

Tampa Florida Peninsular May 26, 1860, 3.

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.

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.

Brown, Florida Peace River Frontier, 140.

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.

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.

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
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.

26 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.

27 Loderhose, 55.


29 Loderhose, 54-55.

30 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.


34 Loderhose, 60-64.

35 Ibid., 72-73.

36 Ibid., 77-78.

37 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.

38 Department of Military Affairs: Special Archives Publication 93. "Florida Soldiers: CSA 9th, 10th, 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.


40 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.

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


43 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.

44 Confederate Veteran, 8 (June 1910), 263.

45 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.

46 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.
Florida State Archives. Series 914, Carton 19.
Letter of June 20, 1877. Hedrik to Corley.

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.

Florida State Archives, Series 914, Carton 19.
Letter of August 12, 1877. Hope to Corley.

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


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


Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of the State of Florida, Seventh Session. 1874. (Tallahassee, 1874), 53.

Ibid., 53.

Ibid., 71.

Ibid., 69.

Ibid., 320-21.

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.

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

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.


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.

Ibid., 156.